

Summary of Proceedings
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Tuesday, June 9, 2026
5:00 p.m., Mary T. Norton Board Room and via Zoom

Trustees Present: Edward DeFazio (Vice Chair); Stacy Gemma (Secretary/Treasurer); Roberta Kenny; Vincent Lombardo; Jeanette Peña (Chair); Christopher Reber; Lissa Santiago; Harold Stahl; and Frances Teabout.

Trustees Absent: Frank Gargiulo, Joanne Rivera (Student Alumni Representative), and Silvia Rodriguez.

Comments from the Public:

Dr. Sirhan Abdullah offered comments.

Good evening, members of the Board, faculty, staff, and colleagues. My name is Dr. Sirhan Abdullah. I'm a professor here in Medical and Health Sciences, and I'm also honored to serve as the newly elected President of the Professional Association representing our full-time faculty.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and express my appreciation for the strong, positive collaboration and relationship that has existed among the faculty, the administration, and the Board. Over the past several years, we have enjoyed a collaborative partnership that has allowed us to accomplish many important goals.

As we look to the future, I am committed to continuing this collaborative approach and working together to address our challenges. I would also like to recognize Dr. Reber as he prepares to begin the next chapter of his leadership journey. He has been an outstanding partner, and we wish you nothing but the best. Thank you.

1. President's Report

President Reber offered the following report.

Before I share my report, I want to share with you that my husband is here tonight, Kerry Stetler. It's the first time he's attended a Board meeting.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you, Kerry, and to share with all of you that a president's spouse does so much that you don't see, which makes it possible for me to do my job. I work literally every day of the year. I come home late often. I might come home grouchy, and I'm often away. If it weren't for Kerry taking care of our family, our home, and all of our needs, I would not have been able to do this job.

He has also been an incredible counselor and someone I love deeply, and I just want to say thank you.

Good evening trustees, colleagues, students, and friends.

Today is my last meeting of the Board of Trustees, and my last day in the office as your president. It has been the honor of my life and career to work side by side with all of you over these last eight years. I will always love Hudson County Community College and its people, and I feel grateful and very satisfied that I leave the college in a better place than when I began as your servant leader president in 2018.

We've been through a lot together: Middle States reaffirmation of accreditation in 2019, the first time in decades the College did not receive warnings and the burden of required follow-up reports and negative press; quite to the contrary, we received commendations. The pandemic and its subsequent impact on enrollment losses across the country. With HCCC's enrollment decline during the pandemic reaching a low-water mark in 2020-21, including a 40% decline of new students in fall 2020 as the pandemic grew to full force, enrollment began to trend back upward starting in 2022-23. This year, both headcount and credit enrollments have surpassed academic year 2018-19, the last full pre-pandemic year and my first year in office. Enrollment growth over this period represents one of the strongest multiple-year increases in the 50-year history of the College.

Together, we have developed two strategic plans through robust college- and community-wide engagement, and focused on our shared values and priorities of student success, and institutional engagement and excellence – formerly known as diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We all benefitted from three successful cycles of union contract negotiations recognized statewide and beyond for inspirational evidence of trust and collaboration in service of our faculty, staff, students, and college mission.

We celebrated the renovation and opening of the Student Center that has become the beloved living room of the campus for students, faculty, staff, and others.

We are all excited with the planning for and imminent debut of HCCC's new athletics program that will be housed in the College's state-of-the-art 11-story Center for Student Success now under construction. This spectacular facility that is nearing completion is the outcome of the strong and historic partnership of Hudson County and Hudson County Community College that has endured over the years – and, early on, inspired the explosion of growth we now see around us in Journal Square.

Very importantly, we deeply value our collective caring for one another, including navigation of national and world issues and conflicts profoundly affecting our HCCC and surrounding communities in recent years. Together, we have developed and grown our Hudson Helps Resource Center and its wraparound supports for students that include mental health and social work counseling through partnerships with NYU, Rutgers, Fordham, and other Master of Social Work programs at partnering universities.

Working in close partnership with the New Jersey Reentry Corporation, the Hudson County Department of Housing and Community Reintegration, funders, and other partners and colleagues, we are now offering a growing array of educational courses and degree programs that have benefitted thousands of incarcerated, reentry, and court involved citizens, providing second chances that are life changing for those served, their families, communities, schools, churches, and beyond.

We celebrate building and achieving trust and high student, faculty, and staff morale now deeply embedded in our college culture. We value our college-wide commitment to employee professional development that has led to high employee morale, low employee turnover, opportunities to promote our workforce from within, and myriad examples of faculty and staff going far beyond the call of duty to

serve our students, our community, and our mission that is the foundation for all continuous improvement outcomes we have benefitted from and celebrate.

We further celebrate the development of a new college endowment currently valued at \$2.5 million and poised for significant growth going forward. I am personally proud to have established an endowed scholarship fund through my own payroll deductions over the past six years that now has a principal of \$50,000 and is available for others to contribute to going forward. Earnings on this fund will benefit international, undocumented, and additional students who face particular challenges such as acute financial constraints and difficulties finding work.

And we all are enormously proud of our deep engagement with Achieving the Dream. Our collective initiatives as one of the nation's few Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges of Distinction have led to multiple mission-centric outcomes such as the Hudson Scholars program and our focused efforts in every part of this college to achieve continuing increases in student retention, degree completion, transfer, and the achievement of our students' goals – work that has led to a 47% increase in three-year completion rates since 2018, along with six record graduating classes in the history of this great college.

Most recently, we celebrated the all-time record 1,735 graduates at our May Commencement ceremony held at Sports Illustrated Stadium.

The remarkable collective success of the nearly 6,000 students served through the Hudson Scholars program over the last five years includes a 70% reduction in previously long-standing equity and achievement gaps at this College. The playing field for our diverse students is leveling before our eyes. Please continue this critically important body of work informed by data and best practices!

And, quite remarkably, our investments in student success and employee professional development have led to increased retention and steady increases in enrollment that have generated tuition and fee revenue consistently greater than the cost of the investments – every semester since the pandemic. Guided by the belief that even the most vulnerable and at-risk students can achieve their goals with proper support, we have implemented several data-informed initiatives that invest directly in the success of our students, and in the financial health and mission-centric outcomes of this College. Hudson Helps, along with the College's Food Pantries, provide meals at no cost to some of the most at-risk-for-not-completing students at HCCC. Despite the Food Pantries' operating costs, it is estimated that Hudson Helps and the HCCC Food Pantries generate more than \$1,000 in annual net revenue per student when accounting for the pantries' significant effects on a student's likelihood to persist.

The Hudson Scholars program represents an investment in the college's student success mission through its commitment to smaller counselor caseloads and the disbursement of financial stipends tied to a student's level of program engagement. But consider this: Hudson Scholars students are more than twice as likely to graduate in three years, and four times more likely to graduate in two years. Every \$100 spent on Hudson Scholars student stipends is associated with an over 14% increase in a student's likelihood of completing their credentials. Hudson Scholars generates approximately \$320 per student in net revenue, and with every \$1 spent on Hudson Scholars stipends, the College earns back around \$3.23 as a result of increased tuition associated with the increased retention and enrollment of our students. And I'm proud to observe that between 2019 and now, the ratio of HCCC students connected to an intensive student support model like Hudson Scholars and EOF has grown from 4% to 40%.

Informed by research indicating that students who enroll in summer courses between their first and second academic years are 6-10 times more likely to graduate on time, the College relaunched its "Free Summer Advantage" program in 2025 after a successful pilot in 2022. A "last-dollar" initiative

offering up to 7 credits at no out-of-pocket cost to continuing students, the program resulted in historic summer enrollment at HCCC last year, and has already surpassed that record for the current summer 1 term. As a result of this dramatic increase in enrollment – coupled with a 43% subsidy from grants and scholarships, the “Free Summer” initiative generated over \$1.5 million in net revenue during summer 2025 alone.

Indeed, these and related college-wide investments over time have generated sustained net income, leading our ATD Data Coach, Dr. Rene Garcia, to coin a phrase now common at HCCC: “It pays to invest in student success!”

Trustees, as you and the administration review institutional expenses now and going forward – an important undertaking that I fully support – I implore you to do so with a wholistic view of the interrelationships between expense and revenue. Reducing expenses that lead to losses of revenue – greater than achieved expense savings – benefits no one and can lead to reversing the steady course of continuous improvement we all own and celebrate in service of our students and College Mission.

And on that note, let us all take stock of Hudson County Community College achieving unprecedented excellence in every area that has been recognized with a plethora of local, state, and national awards, recognitions, and grants over the last eight years. All of our myriad points of pride are the result of the inspirational engagement of the entire HCCC family around the shared values and priorities of helping all students succeed. Indeed, these values and priorities are widely shared among our 1,000 employees and 24,000 students.

Interim President Dr. Lisa Dougherty has provided exemplary leadership and support for all of our successful initiatives to get more and more students to the finish line in the achievement of their goals and their successful transition to further education and gainful employment. Lisa and our skilled and dedicated Cabinet will continue to lead our college with dedication, excellence, and integrity in HCCC's student centered mission that is transformational, with impacts and outcomes benefitting people and communities across locations and generations.

Vince Lombardi once said, “the achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.” In the years ahead, I am confident the transformative outcomes and mission-centric points of pride such as those I have mentioned this evening will further grow and blossom through the continued unwavering and caring engagement of everyone in this inspirational college!

Trustees, colleagues, students, and friends, it has been an honor to serve and support all of you on this inspirational and life-changing journey. I wish the HCCC family much continued success! It Takes a Village, and Hudson is Home!

Trustee Jeanette Peña offered remarks.

Beautiful!

Regular Monthly Reports and Recommendations

1. The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 7, 2026 were approved.

The following actions were taken concerning **Fiscal, Administrative, Lease, and Capital Recommendations** brought forward by the Administration and endorsed by the Finance Committee.

1. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Internet Services to be funded from the operating budget, at a cost not to exceed \$257,676, was approved.

2. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Altice Media Services Contract for Cable Advertisements to be funded from the operating budget, at a cost not to exceed \$77,316, was approved.
3. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of News 12 Media Services Contract for Cable Advertisements to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$72,320 was approved.
4. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Effectv Media Services for Cable Advertisements to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$50,000 was approved.
5. Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Specialty Food Products for Culinary Conference Center from Baldor Specialty Foods, Inc. to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$85,000 was approved.
6. Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Specialty Food Products for Culinary Conference Center from Driscoll Foods, to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$60,000, was approved.
7. Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Seafood Products for Culinary Conference Center to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$50,000 was approved.
8. Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Dairy Products for Culinary Conference Center to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$80,000 was approved.
9. Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Meat Products for Culinary Conference Center to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$80,000 was approved.
10. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Contract with WW Grainger for Supplies and Equipment to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$85,000 was approved.
11. Resolution Authorizing Strategic Advisory Services for the Hudson County Community College Board of Trustees at a cost not to exceed \$50,000 was approved.
12. Resolution Approving Naming Policy was approved.
13. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Liability and Casualty Insurance to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$568,560 was approved.

The following actions were taken regarding **Personnel Recommendations** brought forward by the Administration and endorsed by the Personnel Committee.

1. The retirement of an Assistant Professor was approved.
2. The resignations of an Associate Director of Gateway to Innovation and an Academic Counselor were accepted.
3. Appointments of Full-time Staff were approved.
4. Appointments of Temporary Full-time Staff were approved.
5. Authorizations of Part-time Staff through June 2027, as needed, were approved.
6. Appointments of New Hire Adjunct Instructors were approved.
7. The following Modifications to the Staffing Table were approved:

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Current Approved Title	New Title/ Classification	Incumbent	Current Salary Grade	New Salary Grade	Current Salary	New Salary	Effective Date
Executive Director, Secaucus Center and Early College Programs	Acting Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment	Christopher Conzen	122	Same as Current	\$ 140,804	Same as * Current	June 10, 2026
Associate Director, Early College Programs	Acting Director, Early College Program	Cristhian Altamirano	115	Same as Current	\$ 71,202	Same as * Current	June 10, 2026
Senior Assistant Director	Associate Director	Alexa Yacker	113	115	\$ 58,853	\$ 69,868	July 1, 2026
N/A	Program Manager, Shipyard Workforce Development and Training (Grant Funded)	Vacant	113	N/A	N/A	N/A	July 1, 2026
N/A	Student Success Coach, Shipyard Workforce Development and Training (Grant Funded)	Vacant	110	N/A	N/A	N/A	July 1, 2026
The following modification was tabled.							
Associate Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning	N/A	John Urgola	124	124	\$ 129,063	\$ 136,400 **	July 1, 2026

*Stipend to be added for temporary promotion.

**Salary increase reflects equity review and adjustment

8. Approvals of Travel Requests were passed.

9. Resolution for the Appointment of an Interim President was approved.

The following actions were taken regarding **Academic and Student Affairs** as brought forward by the Academic and Student Affairs Committee.

1. Resolution Authorizing an Addendum to the Existing Agreement Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) for the Delivery of the Summer Training Institute was approved.
2. Resolution Authorizing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and Cliffside Park Library was approved.

3. Resolution Authorizing Agreement Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and Education Design Lab for the AI + Durable Skills Work-Based Learning Design Challenge was approved.
4. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and Cannabis Connoisseur was approved.
5. Resolution Authorizing No-Cost Extension of Agreement Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and the Hudson County Department of Family Services and Community Reintegration for the Continued Delivery of the Academic and Workforce Pathways Program in Partnership with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation was approved.
6. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Affiliation Agreement Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and Stanlaw Fitness was approved.

The following actions were taken regarding **New Business**.

1. Resolution Amending Resolution #2 from the May 7, 2026, Board of Trustees Meeting was approved.

The **meeting was adjourned** at 5:26 p.m.

The minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, upon approval, are available in the College Library, the President's Office, and on the College website.