

**Summary of Proceedings
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Tuesday, September 16, 2025
5:00 p.m., Mary T. Norton Board Room and via Zoom**

Trustees Present: Lisa Camacho (Alumni Representative); Edward DeFazio (Secretary/Treasurer); Frank Gargiulo; Stacy Gemma; Jeanette Peña (Chair); Christopher Reber; Silvia Rodriguez; Harold Stahl; and Frances Teabout.

Trustees Absent: Joseph Doria; Roberta Kenny; and Vincent Lombardo.

Comments from the Public: There were no comments from the public.

1. Student Government Association President's Report

Student Government Association President Rifaya Dubash Khajamohideen offered the following report.

Good evening, everyone. My name is Rifaya Dubash Khajamohideen, and I'm in my sophomore year at Hudson County Community College. I'm very honored to serve as the President of the Student Government Association (SGA) for the 2025-2026 academic year.

I'm excited to begin this new year alongside my fellow student leaders, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to represent the student body.

I'd like to introduce two of my executive board members who are here with me today: Aaron Garcia and Anu Bisht.

SGA Secretary and Director of Record Keeping Aaron Garcia offered remarks.

Hi, Board of Trustees. My name is Aaron Garcia. I'm the Secretary and Director of Record Keeping for SGA. I'm also a peer leader for the 2025-2026 academic year, and I run a club called the Student Programming Board (SPB). Thank you.

SGA Senator Anu Bisht offered remarks.

Hi, Trustees and everyone. My name is Anu. I'm an accounting major and a second-year student here. I'm a senator in the Student Government Association. I'm also the Secretary of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society and President of the Honors Student Council. The collaboration between SGA and PTK is allowing us to install water-based bidets in the accessible restrooms across our campuses. Thank you so much.

SGA President Rifaya Dubash Khajamohideen resumed remarks.

This fall semester has started with great momentum. In August, over 62 student leaders attended our HCCC Club and Organization Leadership Training Day, where we learned about event planning, teamwork, and the importance of leadership on campus. It was an inspiring way to start the year, and we're excited to put those lessons into action.

We're also looking forward to our upcoming Fall Involvement Fairs, which provide students an opportunity to connect with clubs and organizations. These events are taking place this week and next week on both campuses.

The American Chemical Society, advised by Professor Raffi Manjikan, attended the Bergen Community College STEM Symposium this summer. Students learned about STEM majors in higher education, explored transfer opportunities from two-year to four-year college STEM programs, and gained insights into enhancing success in STEM careers.

Our Society of Physics Students will attend the National Astronomy and Physics Conference from October 28 to November 1.

PTK is working on their College Project in collaboration with the SGA, which proposes installing bidets in accessible restrooms to promote inclusion and sustainability.

The Honors in Action Project will explore how stories are told, comparing traditional storytelling with social media across cultures.

Upcoming events from our clubs include a Know Your Rights workshop with pro bono lawyers, Multicultural Day, Conversation Cafés, semester kickoff events, and Hispanic Heritage Month programming. These programs reflect the diversity, creativity, and dedication of our students.

This year, the SGA is committed to amplifying student voices on campus, fostering inclusion, and building a strong sense of community across HCCC. We look forward to collaborating with faculty, staff, and administration to ensure our students have the best possible experience.

Thank you again for your time and support. We are proud to represent the student body today, and I look forward to sharing updates throughout the year.

2. All College Council Chair's Report

All College Council Chair Fernando Garcia offered the following report.

Good evening, everyone. It's an exciting new start to the academic year for the All College Council following the recent elections over the past couple of months. During the summer, we held a retreat to bring everyone together and transition from the old team to the new one. I'd like to begin by introducing the new executive team: Benedetto Youssef is our Vice Chair, and Registrar Irma Williams is our fantastic Secretary, she truly does it all.

We warmly welcome the new members and are excited to collaborate with the board, administration, and the new SGA. In August, the College held a service day, convocation, and our first official meeting of the new All College Council. We've established several key priorities for the term, including updates and changes to the Council Charter, which we're addressing through a newly formed task force.

We're also reorganizing our committees to ensure the Council operates as efficiently and effectively as possible, meeting the needs of both students and faculty. Our September meeting will be held in person at the North Hudson campus, and we're thrilled to begin engaging with the community there.

We have a broad agenda for this term, which I'll share in more detail at our next meeting. For now, I'm excited that we're here and ready to work with all constituents and stakeholders. Thank you.

3. President's Report

President Reber offered the following report.

Good evening, Trustees, HCCC family members, and friends.

Before I begin, I ask you to join me in a moment of silence for victims of war and violence in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, India and Pakistan, Africa, and other parts of the world.

Moment of Silence.

Thank you.

We condemn violence and hatred of all kinds, including racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia.

We support one another in times of difficulty and are committed to a community that is respectful of – and safe for – everyone.

This evening, I join you virtually from the offices of the American Association of Community Colleges in Washington, DC, where Dr. Nicholas Chiaravalloti and I are attending an “Advocates in Action” convening and hearing from speakers, leaders of government, and our community college sector about the federal political landscape and nationwide advocacy for community colleges.

Rifaya, thank you for your report, and welcome to your new role as president of the Student Government Association! We look forward to your monthly reports and hearing about the always exciting activities of SGA this year!

And, Fernando, thank you also for your report. We look forward to hearing from you at each board meeting about the important work of the All College Council.

Trustees and others, I am especially sorry not to be with you at the college this evening to celebrate and thank former trustee Pamela Gardner. We thank Pamela for her years of service as a trustee and former board officer.

As we all know, Pam has made a transformative impact on the college's growth, development, outcomes, and points of pride. Her appointment to the board expired recently, but we are grateful Pam continues to serve the college as chair of the HCCC African American Community Outreach Committee, and she plans to remain involved in the life of the college. Just last week, Pam participated in the spectacular multiple event kickoff celebration of our 50th anniversary, and she attended our fourth annual 9-11 Memorial Commemoration.

Pam has served as a trustee since 2017. During her time as trustee, Pam represented HCCC and all community colleges in the Northeastern United States as an elected member of the Association of Community College Trustees Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She also represented the Board of Trustees at regular meetings of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, and she served with me on the NJCCC Federal and State Policy Committee in addition to so many other involvements in support of the college, our students, and the community.

For several years, Pam served the board as secretary/treasurer, followed by vice chair, and she chaired the Board Committee on Academic and Student Affairs in addition to serving on the Personnel Committee.

Members of the HCCC family, please join me in thanking Pamela Gardner for her exemplary leadership, guidance, advocacy, and support!

Pam, the trustees have a plaque for you that reads: "Pamela Gardner, Dedicated Trustee and Vice Chair, From Your Friends at Hudson County Community College. YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE! November 2017-June 2025"

In addition, the trustees have purchased a lifetime membership for you in the Association of Community College Trustees, enabling you to continue participating in all ACCT activities including the upcoming ACCT Leadership Congress that will be held next month in New Orleans, where the college will be presented two awards.

And, Pam, on this evening's board agenda is a resolution naming you HCCC Trustee Emerita in recognition of all you have done and continue to do to support this college's inspirational mission.

Chair Pena is presenting these to you, and I now turn this over to her for remarks, after which we will invite others who wish to speak, followed by your remarks, Pam.

Chair Peña offered remarks.

I want to talk about Pam, the person.

In light of everything happening in the world today, and the environment we're living in, I want to thank Pam. Thank you for being a friend, a trustee, and a colleague I've had the privilege of working with.

Pam and I didn't always see eye to eye, but the respect Pam showed me, and the respect I showed her in return, meant a great deal. Even when we disagreed, I valued what she had to say. And for that, I'm grateful. Thank you for the person you've always been here and I'm glad you're still around.

Shirley Fields and Patricia Jackson of Seniors on the Move offered remarks.

We came here to support our friend, Pamela Gardner. She's the best coordinator you could ever have, truly the best. Pam, thank you for being present for the community. Whenever we need help or service, Pam shows up. Thank you so much. We love you, and we'll continue working with you.

Reverend Dr. Dorothy Patterson of Wallace Temple AME Zion Church offered remarks.

It is because of Trustee Pamela Gardner that I'm part of the African American Outreach Committee here at Hudson County Community College. To me, she exemplifies commitment. She's creative, she's active, and she takes what she does seriously. She's not someone who works alone or seeks credit for herself. She brings people together so we can all work collectively. Because of her, Hudson feels like home to me. And I understand what that means; it's a unified body of people coming together to educate and uplift one another. You've done so much more than I can say here, Pam. The people in this room don't represent all the lives you've touched, whether in the community or among students. This room wouldn't be big enough to hold them all. You're not a selfish person, you collaborate with others, even when you don't agree, because you understand the cause is bigger than any one person. I'm grateful to call you a friend. God bless.

Lisa Harris of African American Outreach Committee and Delta Sigma Theta (ΔΣΘ) Sorority Inc. offered remarks.

Pamela Gardner has been my mentor since childhood. Then we became sisters as part of a sorority. Now she has introduced me to the African American Community Outreach Committee here at the college and we continue to work together. I'm standing in for our chapter president LaTonya White, who's on her way. I'm also a proud member of ΔΣΘ Sorority Incorporated, a public service sorority founded in 1913 at Howard University. LaTonya wanted me to wish you the very best on behalf of all 355 members of the North Jersey Alumnae Chapter of ΔΣΘ.

Reverend Dr. Bertha Reels of Higher Dimension World Ministry offered remarks.

Good evening, everyone. Pam is my secret weapon. Whether I'm going through tough times or celebrating good ones, she's always someone I can talk to. Sometimes, even pastors need someone to talk to, and Pam has been that person for me. Thank you, Pam. Thank you for being a friend, a sister, a mentor, and for holding onto my secrets. God bless you.

Dr. Yeurys Pujols offered remarks.

Good evening, Madam Chairwoman, trustees, students, faculty, staff, and friends.

Today, I want to add my voice to those recognizing Trustee Pamela Gardner as someone I'm proud to call a friend. I feel truly fortunate that, through my role at the college, I've had the honor of working closely with her in many different areas. I'll take a moment to list just a few, though some may overlap with what President Reber already mentioned.

Back in 2020, we saw a clear need to do more in recruiting Black and African American students. That's when the African American Community Outreach Committee was formed. Pamela Gardner and I have organized every agenda and officiated every meeting since then. It's been a pleasure working with her. This group has brought together faith and community leaders to support higher education and credential attainment for Black and African American students, and all students.

Over the years, Pamela and I, along with Chris Reber and other community members, have presented at four or more national conferences of the Association of Community College Trustees. We've spoken on topics like college priorities; diversity, equity, and inclusion; professional development; and the role of trustees.

Pamela Gardner, Dr. Wakefield, Dr. Yearwood, and I also presented an encore of one of our sessions at the recent Social Justice Symposium. Pamela was also instrumental in launching our annual Juneteenth celebration. This year marked our fourth annual program, and every time we finish a successful event, we ask ourselves, "How do we go bigger? How do we do better?" And every year, we do, thanks to her.

Working with Pamela has also introduced me to some incredible people making a difference in our community. You've heard from some of them tonight: Lisa Harris; Brenda Beaufort; Reverend Dorothy Patterson; Reverend Bertha Reels, founder of Sarah's Daughter Domestic Violence Prevention Center; and Shirley Fields from Seniors on the Move. It's always a pleasure to see you all. I know I can't list everything Pamela has done for the college; there's just not enough time. But I want to say thank you. Your presence makes things better. You make a difference. Thank you.

Andrea Gardner, sister of the Trustee Emerita and of ΔΣΘ Sorority Inc., offered remarks.

I'd be remiss if I didn't say something about all that Pam has done for this college. When Pam is involved in something, it becomes a full-time commitment. You can end up volunteering without even realizing it, because if Pam knows you well, you're already recruited. She always has something meaningful she wants to do, and she brings people along with her. I thank the college for acknowledging all that she's done. But truly, you don't know the half of it. When Pam is involved, she's really involved. Whether it's the key program, a committee, or any initiative. She gives her all and always strives to make everything she touches the very best it can be. Pam is a gem. Thank you for everything you've done for the college – and for everything you continue to do. We love you.

Trustee Emerita Pamela Gardner offered remarks.

That was a lot, thank you.

You know, we always hear the phrase, "Give them their flowers while they can still smell them." Well, I can smell these flowers, and I thank you all so much. I'm grateful to everyone who came out to support me.

Over the years, I've brought many of you into the college for different events and initiatives, and you've always shown up. You love this college and all that we do, and I truly appreciate your support.

Thank you, Dr. Reber. Thank you to the Board of Trustees. I've truly enjoyed working with you.

Thank you, Jeanette, for your kind words. No, we didn't always agree, but we always respected one another because that's how we were raised, which is "do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Love one another. Strive to make things better. Leave the world better than you found it." That's what I've tried to do, and I hope I've succeeded.

And I'm not finished yet.

I'm humbled and honored to be named Trustee Emerita. I'm also grateful for the lifetime membership in the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). Through that organization, I've met so many wonderful trustees from across the country. We worked together and did some great things. Some trustees were appointed, like I was, and others were elected. But we all came together with a shared understanding of the importance of community colleges nationwide.

I'm thankful for everyone who sent me a text, called, or reached out in any way. Even our New Jersey Council of County Colleges president, Dr. Aaron Fichtner, sent me a kind email expressing his appreciation for my work.

I want to thank our former Chair, William Netchert, for his encouraging words, and our former Vice Chair, my friend and Omega brother, Bakari Lee. Bakari showed me how to be a good trustee. He led by example and encouraged me to get involved with ACCT, attend workshops, and learn about governance and leadership.

I also want to thank Dr. Phil Linfante, who believed I'd be a good fit for the Northeast Region Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. I was elected twice, once in a contested race against a fine gentleman from Maryland, and once unopposed. I served for four wonderful years.

Thank you to everyone who's here tonight. You've already heard about the members of our African American Community Outreach Committee. They're pastors, community advocates, entrepreneurs, Urban League and NAACP members, and educators. I'm thankful to have my Trinity Lutheran Church family here, and members of the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens. Seniors on the Move are always here, they're always moving and always supporting this college. And of course, my sisters from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, North Jersey Alumnae Chapter.

Thank you for all you've done. I've been a member for 54 years, and I've worked hard, but we don't do it for ourselves or for recognition. We do it for our communities. We've given scholarships, built sisterhood, and served in countless ways.

I've been blessed to be part of this board. It's been a wonderful experience. This college offers so many outstanding programs and opportunities to help our students move forward, and in doing so, it moves all of us forward. I'm proud to have played a small part in our college's mission.

I just want to leave you with this: It's always the right time to do the right thing. Many of you may know the poem that hung in Mother Teresa's home, titled 'Do It Anyway.' Part of it reads: "If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway. What you spend years creating, others may destroy overnight. Create anyway." My friends, keep doing phenomenal things for our students. Work

each day to make this world a better place. Education is the answer. May God bless all of you in your future endeavors. I appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you so very much.

Tamieka Philips, Vice President of the North Jersey Alumni Chapter, ΔΣΘ Sorority Inc., offered remarks.

On behalf of North Jersey Alumni Chapter, I am the first Vice President. Our president, LaTonya White, is on her way here. But I want to acknowledge her, and let you know that we support you, we congratulate you, and we love you, Pam.

Trustee Stahl offered remarks.

Pam and I served together for quite a few years now. And from a fellow trustee's point of view, I want to express my sincere thanks for everything you've done. You've helped advance the college in meaningful ways. Your hard work has put us on the map, not just locally, but across the country. That's something truly appreciated. We may have only had a few sit-downs, fireside chats over the years, but they were memorable. Pam, God bless you. Thank you for all you've done, for all you continue to do, and for making both the Board and the college shine, because they do, thanks to your dedication. Thank you.

LaTonya White, President of North Jersey Alumni Chapter of ΔΣΘ, arrived and offered remarks.

Congratulations, Pam! Thank you for always being a great role model as to what a woman and a servant needs to look like, and for being here for me. You've been here for me for the past few months for something very significant, and I want to be here for you, too. On behalf of all of Deltas, thank you.

President Reber offered closing remarks.

Thank you, everyone!

Trustees, before I conclude, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge last Tuesday's phenomenal kickoff events of the college's year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of HCCC's first graduates!

More than 600 students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, Foundation directors, elected officials, partners, community members and friends participated in the events that began on the first floor of Gabert Library, continued in the Dineen Hull Gallery and on the sixth floor Library Veranda, permeated the Student Center, and later culminated in music, singing, dancing, and a champagne toast in the Culinary Plaza Park.

Highlights included the presentation of Heart of Hudson Awards to President Emeritus Dr. Glen Gabert, Trustee Chair Emeritus Bill Netchert, and Former Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise.

We thank Trustee Silvia Rodriguez for sharing meaningful reflections as the third student ever to register at HCCC when doors were opened in 1974, and her coming full circle as a current member of the Board of Trustees.

And we thank Trustee Chair Jeanette Pena for offering remarks about her personal journey and her experiences at HCCC over many years, beginning as an adjunct faculty member and continuing through years of service as a trustee and now as chair of the Board of Trustees. Jeanette also filled a time capsule that contains pictures and documents to be opened by future members of the HCCC family 50 years from now.

Perhaps the greatest moment of pride was when our inspirational students, Neivi Nunez and Anu Bisht, spoke eloquently about what Hudson County Community College means to them, and how the college is changing their lives.

Our anniversary theme – Fifty and Forward! – will continue to appear and be celebrated in activities throughout the year, including our December Foundation Holiday Gala, and a formal celebration of the opening of the Center for Student Success and the debut of our new athletics program in fall 2026.

We thank Vice President for Advancement and Communications Nicole Johnson, Assistant Dean of Student Life and Leadership Veronica Gerisimo, Assistant Vice President for Communications Jennifer Christopher, the more than 40 members of the HCCC Anniversary Planning Committee that have been meeting and creating this and more upcoming events for the past year, more than 70 volunteers who facilitated all of the celebration activities last Tuesday, and additional members of the HCCC family and beyond. It Takes a Village, and Hudson is Home! Trustees, this concludes my report.

Chair Peña offered remarks.

Everyone, that was beautiful. Thank you. Great energy and such a high note!

Regular Monthly Reports and Recommendations

1. The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 12, 2025 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 Installation of Ethernet and Low-Voltage Cabling to be funded through Chapter 12 at a cost not to exceed \$1,563,166 was approved.
2. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Virtual CISO Services at a cost not to exceed \$341,916 was approved.
3. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Smartsheet Licenses to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$185,893 was approved.
4. Resolution Rejecting Proposal for Video Management System Services for Center for Online Learning was approved.
5. Resolution Authorizing Award of Video Management System for Center for Online Learning at a cost not to exceed \$82,183 was approved.
6. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Bookkeeping Services for the HCCC Foundation to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$76,800 was approved.
7. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Title V Evaluator to be funded by the Golden Door/La Puerta Dorada Grant at a cost not to exceed \$50,625 was tabled.
8. 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 \$80,000 was approved.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Meat Products for Culinary Conference Center to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$60,000 was approved.
13. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Subscription Services for Gabert Library to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$112,861 was approved.
14. Resolution Amending Resolution #2 from June 10, 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$257,676 annually, representing an increase of \$51,156, was approved.
15. Resolution Authorizing Hudson County Community College to submit a Grant application to the Secretary of Higher Education for grant funding under the summer 2025 cycle of the Higher Education Capital Facilities program for the purpose of providing funding for one or more projects of the institution and authorizing all other necessary actions required in connection therewith was approved.

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

1. The resignations of an Academic Advisor, a Program Coordinator of Continuing Education, and an Instructor of OB/PEDS were accepted.
2. Appointments of Full-time Staff were approved.
3. Appointments of Temporary Full-time Staff were approved.
4. Appointments of Full-time Faculty were approved.
5. Appointments of Temporary Full-time Faculty were approved.
6. Authorizations of Part-time Staff through September 2026, as needed, were approved.
7. Appointments of New Hire Adjunct Instructors were approved.
8. Resolution to Amend Children on Campus Policy was approved.
9. Resolution to Grant Trustee Emerita Honorific title 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 Agreement Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and Hoboken University Medical Center for Utilization of HCCC's Simulation Lab was approved.
2. Resolution Authorizing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce was approved.
3. Resolution Authorizing Academic Calendars for Fall 2026 and Winter/Spring 2027 Terms was approved.

There was no **New Business**.

The **meeting was adjourned** at 5:45 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.