

**Summary of Proceedings
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Tuesday, October 14, 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; Roberta Kenny; Vincent Lombardo; Jeanette Peña (Chair); Christopher Reber; Harold Stahl; and Frances Teabout.

Trustees Absent: Joseph Doria and Silvia Rodriguez.

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 trustees, faculty, and staff.

I'd like to share a quick update on what our student clubs and organizations have been up to this October, along with some exciting upcoming events.

Before I continue, I would like to take a moment to recognize two members of the Student Government Association (SGA) who are here with me today: Josue Prawl and Janvi Patel.

We are hosting a Halloween event on October 30 in collaboration with the Latin Society and we are also working with Phi Theta Kappa on their Honors in Action proposal and College Project.

The Business and Accounting Club has their first field trip to Saint Peter's University on October 28, while the ESL Club is holding a Board Game Night on October 16 in the Student Center.

The Student Parent Alliance will host their Fall Family Fiesta on October 25, and Sisters Empowering Sisters are planning their upcoming "They Lead: Dress for Success Edition" event.

The Health and Medical Sciences Club held an Information Table on October 14, and the Latin Society recently celebrated Hispanic Serving Institution Week with multiple events, including their upcoming Noche de Brujas on October 24 with several collaborators.

Kultura is teaming up with Saint Peter's SPARK and other colleges for an off-campus Karaoke Night on October 24. The Culinary Club continues their Complimentary Soup Days every Wednesday, plus a Food Network Speaker on October 24 and participation in the Open House on October 18.

It's been an exciting month full of engagement, collaboration, and creativity. Our clubs continue to bring students together to learn, connect, and grow. We're excited to carry that energy into November. Thank you.

2. All College Council Chair's Report

All College Council Secretary Irma Williams offered the following report.

Good evening, everyone. My name is Irma Williams, Associate Registrar and Secretary of the All College Council (ACC). I joined the College in 2017 after working at several four-year institutions. Having grown up in Union City, it is meaningful to be back serving the community I came from.

I am pleased to introduce Benny Youssef, Vice Chair of the ACC, who will speak on behalf of our Chair, Fernando Garcia. Benny has been teaching English and Literature at HCCC since 2023 and serves as an advisor.

All College Council Vice Chair Benny Youssef offered remarks.

Good evening, trustees. As Chair Fernando Garcia could not be here tonight due to prior engagements, I am happy to offer tonight's report on the great things happening in the ACC. But first, I'd like to talk about some of the exciting events that have already happened in October, as well as a few important upcoming dates.

On Sunday, October 5 HCCC was well-represented at the 50th Annual Hispanic State Parade of New Jersey, a day celebrating the rich cultures that make our community so special.

On October 8, the HCCC Foundation Donor Scholars Reception took place, recognizing high achieving scholarship recipients this academic year.

This upcoming Saturday, the college will host its 50th Anniversary Homecoming Block Party and Open House. There will be live music, food trucks, guided tours, games, and so much more. I hope to see you there!

On November 7, the Museum of Jersey City History will open a special exhibition celebrating "50 Years of Excellence for HCCC."

To cap it all off, just this month it was announced that the college achieved 8% enrollment growth for fall 2025.

Exciting things are happening within the ACC. All of our subcommittees are fully staffed, and we are continuing to bring in new members, thus strengthening the college as a whole. I am happy to announce that on Friday, November 7, the first meeting for the Charter Revision Taskforce will be taking place. A core group of faculty, staff, and administrative liaisons have been assembled with the task of revising the ACC Charter. This is a priority for the ACC, and we are excited for the work to commence.

And without further delay, here are the committee reports.

Development and Planning:

Under Dr. Chris Cody's leadership, Development and Planning is working with Advancement and hopes to support the College's mission by exploring the viability of an ACC sponsored student scholarship. Moreover, the committee is also creating a "how-to" document to retain institutional knowledge and pass along to future subcommittee leadership, a model we hope to adopt with all our subcommittees.

Technology:

Under Dr. Robert Kahn's leadership, a robust conversation continues to take place about the Chromebook program here at the college, with special focus on developing training materials and events. A student survey is being developed about the efficacy of the program. Finally, the Technology committee has confirmed intentions to increase community awareness about Enterprise Applications by launching a comprehensive web page.

College Life:

Paula JnoVille Roney's team is busy preparing for the Holiday party. I am confident they will continue to build on last year's success. A few dates have been identified, and they are working with internal partners to finalize preparations. For the spring semester, College Life is hoping to launch Hudson Huddles, a speaker series exploring personal stories and overcoming obstacles. Potential speakers have been identified, and plans are underway to announce the event.

Faculty Senate:

Under the leadership of Dr. Kade Thurman and Dr. Jeanne Baptiste, the Senate had a busy start to the year. The Universal Grading Policy will be voted on at the upcoming ACC General Meeting. Moreover, the Senate continues to work with internal partners on two other important Governance Recommendations (GRs): Children on Campus Policy, and the Incomplete Grading Policy. We hope to bring these additional GRs to a vote before the Fall semester ends.

Space and Facilities:

Professor Inez Cruz's team is excited about the progress on wayfinding at the College; installation of new LED display signs is underway as part of the wayfinding initiative. Additionally, conversations are taking place with internal partners about the traffic patterns and congestion around the parking stackers. Finally, OSHA training compliance is being explored with Jack Quigley and other internal partners.

Student Affairs:

Under the leadership of Arianne Calle, Student Affairs is meeting with different offices (Continuing Education and Workforce Development, Accessibility Services, Advisement, Career and Transfer Pathways, and so on) to gain more insight into their processes and how they support CEWD students. The committee is also adding more students to college-sanctioned committees/meetings. We anticipate getting student population feedback on this initiative.

This concludes committee reports. I'd like to thank everyone who made this report possible, including but not limited to: ACC Secretary Irma Williams, ACC Chair Fernando Garcia, all the committee chairs and members, Dr. Reber, Cabinet, and the entire college community. I look forward to reporting on more progress at our next meeting.

3. President's Report

President Reber offered the following report.

Good evening, Trustees, Hudson County Community College 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 Milwaukee, WI, where I am attending a higher education convening of seasoned leaders who are mentoring rising stars and future college presidents. I am honored to be mentoring Dr. Darian Senn-Carter, Professor and Director of Criminal Justice at Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland. Darian and I are meeting virtually all of this year and are enjoying our on-ground engagement here in Milwaukee with other current and future college presidents from around the nation.

Rifaya, thank you for your report, and congratulations to all members of the Student Government Association for a strong beginning of the academic year. And, Irma and Benny, thank you also for your report and your leadership of the All College Council in collaboration with Chair Fernando Garcia.

Under the leadership of Dr. Christopher Conzen, Hudson County Community College's *Early College Program* continues to grow and flourish in course and program offerings, and students and high schools served. The HCCC Early College Program offers area high school students a significant jump start on their education and career journeys. Data show that students earning college credits while in high school are significantly more likely to eventually earn baccalaureate and graduate degrees. These opportunities lead to increased student success and the narrowing of traditional achievement gaps.

Early College saves students tuition while enhancing economic mobility. A growing number of the more than 1,000 area high school students taking HCCC courses are earning their associate degrees from the College while still in high school. Last year, 48 high school students were awarded their associate degrees at the College's May 2025 Commencement Ceremony in Harrison several weeks before graduating high school, and we expect that number to grow steadily each year going forward.

Over the past several years, 155 students have earned an HCCC associate degree while in high school, and we expect more than 100 high school students to graduate at our Commencement next May, including our first degree cohorts from Innovation High School in Jersey City, and County Prep High School.

Enrollment in the HCCC Early College Program has increased each fall since 2022. This fall, more than 1,050 students are enrolled, a staggering 19.3% increase over last year. HCCC maintains partnerships with local high schools throughout Hudson County as well as in Newark, West Orange, Irvington, and Cranford. We thank Dr. Conzen and his dedicated team members, and I am pleased to now introduce Chris to share more about the outcomes and vision of the Early College Program going forward.

Dr. Christopher Conzen, Executive Director of Early College, presented Early College Program.

Thank you, Dr. Reber, and good evening, everyone.

I am pleased to share updates about the Early College Program, though I must say, much of the success is thanks to my team. I just get to be the one representing them tonight.

The Early College Program is open to all Hudson County high school students. For those outside the county, participation is possible through articulation agreements with their districts.

Students in the general program pay 50% of the in-county tuition rate, and all non-course-specific fees are waived. The only additional costs are lab fees and textbooks, although our Zero-Cost Textbook Initiative continues to expand, helping to ease those burdens while allowing more prospects to participate.

High school students are not eligible for federal or state aid, so this program gives them affordable access to college-level coursework. Students can take any course for which they meet the prerequisites, except for programs that require separate admission or licensing steps, like Nursing or Radiography.

We currently have 21 partner high school districts, including culinary agreements with high schools in Passaic, Essex, and Union Counties. Our College's culinary program allows us to collaborate with those areas, as their local community colleges do not have culinary offerings. We have degree pathways in Business Administration, Liberal Arts General Studies, Science and Mathematics – General, and Environmental Studies. Some students pursue degrees independently, completing all 60 credits within four years of high school.

Currently, 461 students are enrolled in degree pathways, with 107 on track to earn degrees in 2026. As Dr. Reber mentioned, last year's number was 48, so I am hopeful we will reach all 107. While a few students may face challenges, having over 100 early college students cross the stage at Sports Illustrated Arena will be a huge point of pride for us.

Most degree pathways include dual enrollment courses taught at the high school level but aligned with our college curriculum. These courses are approved by our deans and taught by high school instructors who are vetted and meet our qualifications. Less than half of degree credits can be earned this way, ensuring students take at least 30 credits directly from college faculty. Many students complete their degrees online, which has expanded access, especially for students from the Hudson County Schools of Technology, who have limited time for in-person attendance. Eighty percent of our early college students take a combination of dual enrollment and college-taught classes each semester.

In fall 2025, Early College students represented 13% of HCCC's total unduplicated headcount and 18% of new students. The New Jersey community college average is about 15%, so we are on par with statewide participation. The variance is partly due to the lack of statewide funding for dual enrollment in New Jersey. States with higher adoption rates, like Texas, have some form of state funding, allowing up to 40% of high school students to participate. Nationally, high school students account for 12% of total enrollment and 21% of community college enrollment.

Demographically, our Early College students mirror the overall HCCC population, with approximately 37% identifying as Hispanic, countering the national trend of overrepresentation among white students. In fall 2024, 93% of Early College students earned passing grades. We have two academic counselors dedicated solely to this program, supporting both degree-seeking and non-degree students. Between the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 academic years, total Early College headcount rose by 27%, new student headcount rose by 25%, and total registered credits increased by 48%. This growth is largely due to the increase in degree-seeking pathway students and benefits the entire college.

Our degree pathway partnerships include the Hudson County Schools of Technology. Trustee Gargiulo played a key role in supporting our first cohort to earn an associate degree in environmental studies in 2019-2020. Currently, 119 students from County Prep and nearly 140 students from High Tech are pursuing degrees in science and mathematics or environmental studies. Our culinary partnerships continue to expand. Four high schools now send students to campus for classes at the Culinary Institute, including our first out-of-county partner, Irvington. Long-standing partners include Harrison, Lincoln, and Union City High Schools.

The success of the early college program relies on collaboration across the college. Notable contributors include:

- STEM: Dr. Nadia Hedhli and Dr. Abdallah Mohammad Matari, who work with High Tech to design courses aligned with college standards.

- Business, Culinary Arts, and Hospitality: Dr. Ara Karakashian and faculty, who retooled schedules for high school participation.
- Humanities and Social Sciences: Professors Antonio Acevedo and Gilda Reyes, who adapted courses for dual enrollment.
- Nursing and Health Professions: Professor Karen Hosick, who developed a dual enrollment pathway in personal fitness leading to a certification.

These staff members make it possible for students to succeed.

Finally, I want to highlight some student milestones:

- Our first graduating cohort from Kearny High School
- Culinary students from multiple high schools now studying on campus
- Early College students inducted into Phi Theta Kappa for academic excellence
- Our annual Early College Recognition Event, which encourages non-degree students to matriculate at HCCC after graduation

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions.

Chair Jeanette Peña had an inquiry.

Thank you, Dr. Conzen. I do have a question and I admit, I am asking this with my “mom hat” on.

I appreciate the value of the program, but I sometimes wonder whether it blurs the line between high school and the college experience. How are we ensuring these students are getting a true sense of college life, especially when many are taking classes online?

Dr. Christopher Conzen offered remarks.

That is a great question. We do have several cohorts that take courses in person, for example, students from Kearny, Bayonne, Innovation, and County Prep. In addition, our office runs programming to help all students transition into the college environment.

We emphasize to students and parents that Early College is not simply about earning credits; it is about becoming college students. Some Early College students even participate in clubs, organizations, and service projects, and several were inducted into Phi Theta Kappa.

While not all students can come to campus regularly, we strive to provide engagement opportunities so they experience college culture and community.

Chair Jeanette Peña offered remarks.

Thank you. That is reassuring. I think as a parent, I just want students to enjoy high school while still preparing for college, but this is truly wonderful work.

President Reber offered closing remarks.

If I may add, Dr. Conzen and his team are serving a remarkably diverse group of students. For many, this is their first step toward becoming the first in their families to earn a college degree.

This program has a profound impact on equity, access, and aspiration. We know from the data that Early College increases persistence and degree completion, especially among first-generation students.

Thank you, Chris, and congratulations to you and your colleagues for your remarkable leadership that is engaging so many high school students throughout Hudson County and beyond!

Finally, we are looking forward to the second major event in the College's year-long anniversary celebration that will be held this Saturday, October 18.

Our 50th Anniversary Homecoming Block Party and Open House will feature displays of academic programs and student services led by faculty, staff, and students; alumni and community partners who will discuss their experiences, careers, and organizations; guided campus tours; festive family games and activities; live music and entertainment; food trucks; and other fun activities.

We invite all community members to attend this Saturday between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the HCCC Culinary Plaza Park and Culinary Conference Center.

It Takes a Village, and Hudson is Home!

Trustees, this concludes my report.

Regular Monthly Reports and Recommendations

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 16, 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 Purchase of Computers for the STEM Construction Management Lab to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$62,487 was approved.
2. Resolution Authorizing Purchase of Chromebooks to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$44,749 was approved.
3. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of College Campus-Wide Software License Agreement to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$166,397 was approved.
4. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of ITV Technical Support to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$65,376 was approved.
5. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Helpdesk ChatBot Platform for the Office of Information Technology Services to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$52,460 was approved.
6. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Photography Services for the Office of Communications to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$350 per hour was approved.
7. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Photography Services for the Office of Communications to be funded from the operating budget at a cost not to exceed \$175 per hour was tabled.
8. Resolution Authorizing Renewal of Contract for Food Equipment Repair Services to be funded from the operating budget at an estimated annual cost of \$95,000 was approved.
9. Resolution Approving Lab Fees for the Clinical Experiences in Radiography Program to be funded from the proposed lab fees at the total cost of \$47,925 was approved.
10. Resolution Rejecting Award for Renewal of Title V Evaluator to be funded by the Golden Door/La Puerta Dorada Grant at a cost not to exceed \$50,000 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 of English was approved.

2. The resignations of an Assistant Director of Nursing and Director of Student Accounts were accepted.
3. Appointments of Full-time Staff were approved.
4. Appointments of Temporary Full-time Staff were approved.
5. Appointments of Full-time Faculty were approved.
6. Appointments of Temporary Full-time Faculty were approved.
7. Authorizations of Part-time Staff through October 2026, as needed, were approved.
8. Appointments of New Hire Adjunct Instructors were approved.
9. The following Modifications to the Staffing Table were approved:

Current Approved Title	New Title/Classification	Incumbent	Current Salary Grade	New Salary Grade	Current Salary	New Salary	Effective Date
Coordinator, Human Resources (Temporary Full-time)	Benefits and Leaves Specialist	Kandi Ceballos	109	110	\$ 49,906	\$ 54,000	November 1, 2025
Customer Service Manager, CEWD	Assistant Director, CEWD, Hudson Hub One Stop Student Services Center	Brianna Heim	112	113	\$ 59,172	\$ 64,173	October 16, 2025
Director, Faculty and Staff Development	Director, Employee Relations	Amaalah Ogburn	119	119	\$ 87,250	\$ 94,000	November 1, 2025
Recruiter, Enrollment Services	Assistant Director, Recruitment	Royal Ross	105	113	\$ 48,226	\$ 66,860	October 16, 2025
Assistant Director, Human Resources (Recruitment)	Associate Director, Talent Acquisition and Onboarding	Stephanie Sergeant	113	115	\$ 58,226	\$ 66,000	November 1, 2025
Associate Director, Enrollment Services	Director, Enrollment Services	Wajia Zahur	115	117	\$ 72,254	\$ 87,250	October 16, 2025
Part-time Office Assistant (2 Positions)	Executive Administrative Assistant, Human Resources	N/A	N/A	112	N/A	N/A	October 15, 2025
N/A	Director, Talent Management	N/A	N/A	119	N/A	N/A	October 15, 2025

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

1. Resolution Authorizing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and Engage NJ for HCCC to Serve as an ENGAGECorps VISTA Project Partner Campus Site for 2025-26 was approved.
2. Resolution Authorizing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Among Hudson County Community College (HCCC), the Jersey City Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and Turner Construction Company was approved.

3. Resolution Authorizing Amended Articulation Agreement Between Hudson County Community College (HCCC) and Stockton University for Academic Pathways in Cannabis Studies 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.