

SUFFOLK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
EASTERN CAMPUS, RIVERHEAD, NY  
LECTURE HALL, MONTAUKETT LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER  
MARCH 20, 2025

The meeting was held on Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in the Lecture Hall of the Montaukett Learning Resource Center, in Riverhead, NY.

PRESENT:

Shirley Coverdale	Chair
Gordon Canary	Vice Chair
E. Christopher Murray	Trustee
Belinda Pagdanganan	Trustee
Jerome Bost	Trustee
John Dolan	Trustee
Dr. Edward Bonahue	President
Ashley Pope	General Counsel
Mary Lou Araneo	V.P. for Institutional Advancement
Shady Azzam-Gomez	V.P. for Information Technology Services
Dr. Patty Munsch	V.P. for Student Affairs
Dr. Irene Rios	Interim V.P. for Academic Affairs
Kaliah Greene	V.P. Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
Angelica Rivera	V.P. for Human Resources
Sara Gorton	Interim V.P. of Business and Financial Affairs

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The meeting of the Board of Trustees was convened at 4:00 p.m.

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Chair Coverdale asked Carol Wickliffe-Campbell for the recognition of guests. Ms. Wickliffe-Campbell recognized and thanked Legislator Mazzarella for attending the meeting.

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Public comments on agenda items: none.

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Chair Coverdale requested a motion to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting. Trustee Bost so moved, Trustee Pagdanganan seconded. The motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously (6-0).

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Chair Coverdale then introduced Interim V.P. of Business and Financial Affairs, Sara Gorton, to present the College's financial reports as of February 28, 2025. VP Gorton reported the FY'25 Spring tuition revenue projection for both full-time and part time is a little over budget by about \$1.3M, approximately 4%. Similarly, the College is seeing an increase in related fees, about \$2.5M. These are projected totals, as the College's Summer term registration starts this month. The College is still projecting increases in other revenue, and the total projection for revenue is about \$4.3M over budget. As enrollment increases, the College is also seeing increases on the expenditure side. Personnel costs are trending over budget by about \$1.3M. The biggest increase is the \$3M increase from EMHP. In total, projected expenditures are trending about \$3.9M over budget.

VP Gorton also explained an adjustment made for uncollectible accounts. Every year the College is required as a generally accepted accounting principle to do an aging of its accounts receivable. This usually leads to an adjustment in tuition revenue for those accounts that the College doesn't collect in the year. She does not like to show this at this point as an adjustment to revenue, because she wants the report to reflect and acknowledge the work that's been done for the semester. At the end of the year, the College will most likely have an adjustment for uncollectible accounts. She used \$1M, which is an average of what is typically seen. She reflected that in the revenue report for this month's update to the Board. The current projected use of fund balance is about \$5M, and the budgeted fund balance usage was just about \$4.5M, which is about \$565K of additional fund balance usage over what was budgeted this year. The College will continue to monitor and make any adjustments to expenditures where possible. She believes that the \$565K is something that the College should be able to cover with cost control and cost management.

For FY'26, VP Gorton reported all of the departmental budget meetings have been completed, and the process of compiling the requests is underway. The Board Budget & Finance sub-committee is meeting on March 31<sup>st</sup>, where they will finalize the requests and identify any changes to tuition and fees in preparation of presenting the budget to the Board for approval at the April meeting.

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President Bonahue provided an overview of College Resolutions 2025.11 to 2025.15.

Chair Coverdale called for approval of College Resolutions No. 2025.11 through 2025.15. Trustee Dolan so moved, Trustee Canary seconded. The motion to approve College Resolutions No. 2025.11 through 2025.15 was approved unanimously (6-0).

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.11 – Reappointing A Member to the Ethics Board for the College Board of Trustees**

**WHEREAS**, the purposes of the *Board of Trustees Code of Professional Ethics* include providing guidance to the members of the Board in the exercise of their fiduciary duties; providing a procedure for disclosure of potential conflicts of interest; establishing

minimum standards of conduct; and creating an Ethics Board for the Board of Trustees, and

**WHEREAS**, the four-year term of Ethics Board member Paraskevi Zarkadas, Esq. expired on March 15, 2025, and

**WHEREAS**, the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees recommends reappointing Ms. Zarkadas to the Ethics Board for an additional four-year term, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that Paraskevi Zarkadas, Esq. is hereby reappointed to serve as a member of the Board of Ethics for the Suffolk County Community College Board of Trustees for a term of four (4) years, from March 16, 2025 through March 15, 2029.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.12 – Approving Monthly Sponsor Services for Suffolk County Community College**

**WHEREAS**, the State University of New York Regulation No. 602.7 requires Suffolk County Community College Board of Trustees to review and approve all Sponsor provided services and their estimated value in advance of the service being rendered, and

**WHEREAS**, the regulation also requires the approval of the payment of each Sponsor Service satisfactorily performed, and

**WHEREAS**, health insurance is considered a Sponsor Service, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that the health insurance payment to the County of Suffolk in the amount of \$3,614,840.42 for the month of February 2025 (*Attachment I*) is hereby approved by the Board of Trustees.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.13 – Accepting a Grant Subaward from the Research Foundation for the State University of New York (SUNY) for a Project Entitled, “Power Systems Laboratory for Renewable Energy Transmission and Integration”**

**WHEREAS**, Suffolk County Community College has received a grant sub-award in the amount of \$36,677, from The Research Foundation for The State University of New York (SUNY), for a project entitled, “Power Systems Laboratory for Renewable Energy Transmission and Integration”, for the period of July 22, 2024 through June 30, 2025, and

**WHEREAS**, this project will allow SCCC faculty to participate in the development of content to train the entering public utilities workforce in the skills necessary to support the expanding sustainable energy grid, and

**WHEREAS**, matching funds are not required, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that a grant subaward, in the amount of \$36,677, from the Research Foundation for The State University of New York (SUNY) for a project entitled, “Power Systems Laboratory for Renewable Energy Transmission and Integration”, for the period of July 22, 2024 through June 30, 2025, is hereby accepted, and the College President, or his designee, is authorized and empowered to execute any necessary documentation, including a contract with the administering agency, in such form as shall be approved by the College General Counsel, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the 2024–2025 College operating budget be amended to reflect this grant award.

Project Director: Dr. Wesley Francillon, Academic Chair; Assistant Professor of Engineering

Note: No full-time personnel

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.14 – Accepting a Grant Award from the Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP) Hosted by the SUNY Research Foundation of Stony Brook University (SBU) to Carry out a Project Entitled “Alewife Monitoring on the Peconic River System: Grangebel Park and Woodhull Dam”**

**WHEREAS**, Suffolk County Community College has received a grant award in the amount of \$12,500 from the Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP), hosted by the SUNY Research Foundation at Stony Brook University (SBU), to carry out a project entitled “Alewife Monitoring on the Peconic River System: Grangebel Park and Woodhull Dam,” for the period of February 28, 2024 through October 31, 2025, and

**WHEREAS**, the project will provide funds to assist the Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP) a non-profit organization associated with SUNY Research Foundation at SBU, in monitoring alewife populations at the fish pass on the Peconic River in Grangebel Park and Woodhull Dam, and

**WHEREAS**, matching funds are not required, and

**RESOLVED**, that a grant award, in the amount of \$12,500 from the Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP), hosted by the SUNY Research Foundation at Stony Brook University (SBU), to carry out a project entitled “Alewife Monitoring on the Peconic River System: Grangebel Park and Woodhull Dam,” for the period of February 28, 2024 through October 31, 2025, is hereby accepted, and the College President, or his designee, is authorized and empowered to execute a any necessary documentation,

including a contract, with the administering agency in such form as shall be approved by the College General Counsel, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the 2024–2025 College operating budget be amended to reflect the applicable portion of this grant award.

Project Director: Dr. Kellie McCartin, Assistant Professor, Marine Biology

Note: No full-time personnel

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.15 – Amending the College Budget for a Grant Award Increase from the County of Suffolk, Department of Health Services, to Receive Funds for a Mental Hygiene/Opioid Settlement Funding Contract**

**WHEREAS**, the 2024–2025 College operating budget provides \$257,924 of remaining funds from the County of Suffolk, a municipal corporation of the State of New York, acting through its duly constituted Department of Health, for the distribution of the Mental Hygiene/Opioid Settlement Funding Contract, for the period of September 1, 2024 through August 31, 2026, and

**WHEREAS**, the grant award has been increased by \$440,908, bringing the total amount of the grant award to \$698,832, and

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary to amend the 2024–2025 College operating budget in the amount of \$440,908 to provide for the increase in the grant award, and

**RESOLVED**, that the 2024–2025 College operating budget be amended to reflect an increase in the amount of \$440,908 from the County of Suffolk, a municipal corporation of the State of New York, acting through its duly constituted Department of Health, for the distribution of the Mental Hygiene/Opioid Settlement Funding Contract, and the College President, or his designee, is authorized to execute any necessary documentation, including a contract amendment, as approved by the College General Counsel with the administering agency.

Project Director: Dr. Hector Sepulveda, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

Note: No full-time positions

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Chair Coverdale called for the Committee reports.

Trustee Pagdanganan reported for the Student Success Committee. The committee met on March 10th and had a few guest speakers: Dr. Daphne Gordon from the Entrepreneurial Assistance Center, and Dr. Jennifer Browne and Dr. Diane Fabian from Health Care Studies. Dr. Gordon shared information regarding the Entrepreneurial

Assistance program, which is a 60-hour training program that focuses on successful ways to build a business. They are currently working closely with SUNY REACH (Racial Equity for Adult Credentials in Higher Education), which is a program for students 25-64 years old that has created Google Professional Certificate. Over the summer they will be partnering with NYS Department of Labor and EOP, running a program with the Summer Youth Employment program. Dr. Browne and Dr. Fabian then gave their presentation on the new Healthcare Studies A.S. program. This was created out of student demand. Within this major, students can prepare to enter physical therapy, dental hygiene, nursing, occupational therapy, nutrition, health information administration, radiology, sonography and other health-related careers. The program started in Fall 2024 and had approximately 900 applications with almost 700 enrolled, making this the fifth largest degree program at the College. For Spring 2025 they had just under 700 applications, with a total of 1000 students enrolled. It is now the second largest degree program at the College. As of March 2025, the Fall 2025 semester has 549 applications, and it is expected to double by the end of the summer.

Vice Chair Canary reported the Governance Committee had not met and planned to meet in April. Instead he and Trustee Dolan gave an overview regarding their meeting with Dr. Ryan Hartnett, the VP Liaison from Middle States. Trustee Canary said that given the history with accreditation visits, he is very confident that the College is going into this new accreditation cycle ahead of the game. During the meeting, Dr. Hartnett expressed he was here to help and offer recommendations on the College's current status. The College and Board should focus on Standard I: Mission and Goals; and Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration. Vice Chair Canary said he shared with Dr. Hartnett and he was pleased to hear that the Board had established its own Board of Ethics Committee to assist with identifying any conflicts of interest. Other items discussed were yearly Presidential evaluations, Board self-evaluations, and administrative policy and procedure reviews. Overall, Vice Chair Canary said they had a very productive meeting. Trustee Dolan agreed with Vice Chair Canary that it was a productive meeting where he learned a lot about the accreditation process. He thanked and recognized Dr. Bonahue, and Dr. Tacke-Cushing for the outstanding work being done with the self-study group.

Trustee Murray reported for the Personnel Committee. He reported the committee met on March 19th. The committee received a mid-year update from the President, which included a summary of the President's strategic and management activities over the last month, as well as a review of the indicators of institutional performance, shared previously with the Board. The Committee plans to administer its annual evaluation survey of the President's performance, and the President is submitting contact information for internal and external stakeholders to receive the survey, in accordance with the Board's evaluation policy. The survey will be administered over the next several weeks.

VP Araneo reported for the Foundation. VP Araneo was pleased to announce the Foundation received payment for its first sponsorship donation to name one of the service repair bays in the new Automotive Technology Training Center. The first donation was received from Andrew Habberstad, owner of the Habberstad Auto Group

and Habberstad Powersports. College Gifts Coordinator Maggie Eng-Salvaggio continues to meet with Long Island dealership owners to discuss the options for naming sponsorships appearing both outside and within the building. Last week, the College welcomed Kara Cannon, Chief Executive Officer of Enzo Biochem, for a visit to the Grant Campus. Ms. Cannon met with students currently enrolled in biology classes, and she shared how research in the life sciences sector is a driver for our economy. She addressed questions related to careers in technology-focused companies and how entry-level jobs can be real stepping stones to in-demand careers. She later met with faculty and academic administrators in the science disciplines to discuss curriculum and professional pathways for our students. Follow-up conversations are scheduled related to potential connections between the College, Enzo Biochem, and other companies engaged in the sciences. Lastly, she reported the Foundation's 41st Annual Golf Classic, which will be hosted at Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton on October 20th honoring Ryan Kesner, is sold out.

Trustee Pagdanganan reported for the Association. The Board of Directors met on February 26th with the Bonadio Group for a review of the audit. The Board of Directors discussed fund balance with the audit firm and agreed that a strategy regarding use of fund balance needs to be determined. The audit indicated that all activities were keeping with standard accounting practices. The Board of Directors continues to monitor the progress of the Peconic Café and revenues received for the child care centers.

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Chair Coverdale moved to the Chair's report. Chair Coverdale thanked everyone who played a role in the advocacy trip to Albany, and noted she heard very positive things happened. She is glad that the College's enrollment trends are going in the right direction, and everybody is seemingly aligned to move forward and do exciting things. That said, she heard SUNY Chancellor King, who is a former Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education, was asked to comment on the pending dissolution of that department. She echoed his opinion that the commentary about this dissolution not impacting students, student loans or Pell grants, and support people with disabilities was quite disingenuous, and warned all to maintain vigilance as well as unity in pursuing the mission and to know that there are difficult times ahead as well as opportunities. In the midst of all that she encouraged the College family to be attentive and concerned for their own mental, physical, financial, well-being and to look out for that of not only the students, but each other as they go forward.

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Chair Coverdale moved to the President's report. President Bonahue reported on the following:

The Attorney General for the State has approved the dissolution of the Center for Social Justice and Human Understanding, and the College is now moving to transfer the limited assets from the Center to the College Foundation.

### *Enrollment Update:*

President Bonahue reviewed current and historical data. The current data shows that the College has met and exceeded its goal for a 2% enrollment growth in the Spring, and currently, the College has built back to a level comparable to Spring 2021 figures. He thanked everyone involved at the College for continuing the priority of enrollment, registration and retaining students.

### *Academic Affairs:*

President Bonahue reported the College is having conversations regarding the Beacon program. The program allows thousands of high school students to get access to college credit while in high school at a discounted rate. The program is very popular, and it has been generally growing year by year. He thanked Trustee Dolan for being an ambassador from the College to talk about the value of the Beacon program to boards of education, school district administrators, and to students and families. He added, that as the program has grown, the College needs to ensure that it has some academic guardrails in place that support academic consistency and rigor. Academic Affairs, under the leadership of Dr. Rios, is continuing to work with faculty in governance and the Faculty Association on measures that will improve that academic oversight.

### *Budget:*

President Bonahue reported all campuses and divisions have now submitted their budgets for FY' 26, along with requests for replacement positions, new positions, and equipment for the year ahead. In anticipation of the increase in salary and benefits costs, most divisions submitted a flat budget wherever possible. There are cases where increases in inflation or the cost of personnel are unavoidable, and so the College still has some work ahead.

### *Advocacy:*

President Bonahue and Ben Zwirn met with County Executive Romaine two weeks ago. County Executive Romaine understands where the College is and the hard decisions its facing. He promised to assist the College however he can. They also met with the County Legislature's Education and Diversity Committee Chair, Legislator Bontempi. She joins the County Executive in pledging to look for creative ways to bring at least 2% in financial support to the College next year. In conversation with County Executive Romaine and Legislator Bontempi, they pointed out that the State of New York needs to do more, to step up and provide community college students and employees the same kind of support that's gone to K-12 and the State-operated institutions. Based on their conversation, County Executive Romaine sent a letter of advocacy on the College's behalf to the Governor, asking the Governor to do more for community colleges.

There is \$30M in new base operating support for community colleges now proposed in the State Assembly's one-house budget bill. President Bonahue believes the College's students who met with Speaker Haestie might have had something to do with the Speaker wanting to support community college students. He shared that the New York Community College Trustees' association (NYCCT) sent out updated advocacy talking points that can be used if given the opportunity to speak with State representatives and



members of the State Senate and State Assembly. He added, the College is always grateful for the for the support of state and local government stakeholders. However, in light of the rising costs, the path back to a balanced budget needs to include more support from the State and the County. The road toward a balanced budget may have to involve higher tuition, which is why the College will continue to advocate aggressively.

*Other Business:*

The National Offshore Wind Training Center (NOWTC), which has been currently offering training at the Grant campus will not be moving to the Brentwood Center on Crooked Hill Road. The College has had some preliminary conversations about whether it would be possible for NOWTC to continue operating at the Grant campus, either in the current location or in a different location. Their temporary situation seems to be changing to longer-term, and the College will look into charging a rent or lease to produce some revenue.

The College is considering a new policy on the acceptable use of artificial intelligence technologies for members of the College community. It's becoming clear that artificial intelligence is not going anywhere, students and employees are using it. The Cabinet is taking a look at a new policy that would guide permissible uses of artificial intelligence for members of the College community that would apply to students and employees.

*Looking Ahead:*

- On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Grant Campus will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Michael J. Grant Campus.
- On April 17<sup>th</sup>, the next Board meeting, the College will bring a recommendation on tuition and budget for the year ahead, as well as a recommendation on the implementation of an update to the salary schedule for exempt employees.
- On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Assemblyman Tommy John Schiavoni will be hosting a press conference at the Eastern Campus, advocating for State legislation that follows the precedent set at the College, requiring all SUNY or CUNY universities offering public access to swimming pools to provide free use for any and all disabled veterans of the armed forces. That policy was first adopted by the College with Board approval and may be a template going forward for the State.
- On May 19<sup>th</sup>, the Board is invited to this year's Honors Convocation.

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Chair Coverdale called for Roundtable: none.

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Public comments on matters pertaining to the College: none.

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Chair Coverdale requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Murray so moved, Trustee Dolan seconded. The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously (6-0). The meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is April 17, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in the Alumni Room of the Brookhaven Gymnasium on the Ammerman Campus, Selden, New York.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Gordon Canary  
Vice Chair