

SUFFOLK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
BOARD ROOM, LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER  
MICHAEL J. GRANT CAMPUS, BRENTWOOD, NY  
SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

The meeting was held on Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 4:25 p.m. in the Board Room of the Learning Resource Center, in Brentwood, NY.

PRESENT:

|                       |                                                |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Shirley Coverdale     | Chair                                          |
| Gordon Canary         | Vice Chair                                     |
| Gemma deLeon-Lopresti | Vice Chair                                     |
| Belinda Pagdanganan   | Trustee                                        |
| John Dolan            | Trustee                                        |
| Jerome Bost           | Trustee (via zoom)                             |
| 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                       |
| Angelica Rivera       | V.P. for Human Resources                       |
| Dr. Irene Rios        | V.P. for Academic Affairs                      |
| Sara Gorton           | Interim V.P. of Business and Financial Affairs |
| Dr. Donna Ciampa      | Interim Executive Dean, Grant Campus           |

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The meeting of the Board of Trustees was convened at 4:25 p.m.

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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 August 21, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting. Trustee Pagdanganan so moved, Trustee Dolan seconded. The motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously (6-0).

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Chair Coverdale then introduced Interim VP of Business and Financial Affairs, Sara Gorton, to present the College's financial report. Preliminary audit work has begun for FY'25. The auditing firm started preliminary audit work over the summer and will be onsite later this fall to complete their field work. Tuition and Fee revenue for FY'25 is doing well and exceeded budget by more than \$2.5M. Other revenue, such as rents and interest, is also trending over budget by \$2.5M. Total revenue is projecting to exceed

budget by 2.6% (about \$6M). On the expenditure side, personnel costs are projecting over budget about \$1.5M. The increase in personnel costs is due to the increase in enrollment and the related costs. Employee benefits are also projected to exceed budget by \$3.7M. Other expenses are tracking under budget, showing some savings of \$1.2M. Total expenditures are projecting to be over budget by \$5M. The College is going to be able to reduce the use of fund balance reserves by approximately \$900K.

In regards to FY'26, the Fall semester for both full-time and part-time tuition is tracking over budget by about 5%. VP Gorton reviewed the two resolutions with financial impact to the operating budget on the Board's agenda:

- SUNY has provided the College additional funding called Restricted Operating Aid, in connection with the SUNY ReConnect in the amount of \$180K. This will help support the ReConnect Programs administrative costs and some other expenses that go along with advertising for SUNY ReConnect.
- SUNY has also provided an additional \$939K to support high-demand programs.

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President Bonahue then provided an overview of College Resolutions 2025.45 to 2025.52. Jon DeMaio, Interim Associate Vice President for Facilities and Project Management addressed questions regarding Resolution No. 2025.45.

Chair Coverdale called for approval of College Resolutions No. 2025.45 through 2025.52. Trustee Dolan so moved, Trustee Pagdanganan seconded. The motion to approve College Resolutions No. 2025.45 through 2025.52 was approved unanimously (6-0).

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2025.45 – Awarding a Contract for the Design of the Workforce Development and Technology Center Expansion on the Grant Campus (CP2178)**

**WHEREAS**, the design phase of Capital Project No. 2178 has been approved by Suffolk County and the State of New York for funding, and funds have been appropriated by the Suffolk County Legislature, and

**WHEREAS**, the College issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified firms to provide design services in connection with the construction of an expansion of the existing Workforce Development and Technology Center at the College's Michael J. Grant Campus in accordance with the College's Procurement Policy, and

**WHEREAS**, the College's designated evaluation committee reviewed the proposals received in response to the RFP and determined that the proposal submitted by BBS Architects, Landscape Architects & Engineers best meets the needs of the College, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that the College President or his designee is authorized to enter into a contract with BBS Architects, Landscape Architects & Engineers, in an amount not to

exceed \$162,736 for design services in connection with the construction of an expansion of the existing Workforce Development and Technology Center at the College's Michael J. Grant Campus, as more fully detailed in the RFP, upon such terms and conditions as shall be approved by the College General Counsel.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.46 – Accepting and Appropriating a Restricted Operating Aid Increase from the State University of New York (SUNY) for High-Demand Program Expansion and Support**

**WHEREAS**, the 2025 New York State budget included an \$8 million operating aid increase for SUNY community colleges, with funds directed toward expansion and support of high-demand programs, with release of these funds from the State University of New York (SUNY) subject to submission and approval of a campus plan, and

**WHEREAS**, Suffolk County Community College submitted a campus plan to utilize the College's portion of this the 2025–26 Operating Aid increase for SUNY community colleges, and

**WHEREAS** the College's proposed plan included eight (8) full-time instructional and support position in high-demand programs, and

**WHEREAS** SUNY has approved the College's plan and has made \$939,000 available in support of the said plan, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that restricted, increased operating funds in the amount of \$939,000 from SUNY are hereby accepted and appropriated, and the College's operating budget for 2025–26 is hereby amended, as follows:

| <u>REVENUES:</u>           | <u>AMOUNT</u> |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Restricted Operating Funds | \$ 939,000    |

| <u>APPROPRIATIONS:</u>           | <u>AMOUNT</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Restricted Salaries and Benefits | \$ 939,000    |

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.47 – Accepting and Appropriating a Restricted Operating Aid Increase from the State University of New York (SUNY) for the SUNY Reconnect Program**

**WHEREAS**, the 2025 New York State budget funded the SUNY Reconnect initiative, in which New York State will provide free tuition, fees, books and supplies for adults ages 25–55 who do not already have a college degree and are pursuing an associate's degree in a high-demand field, and

**WHEREAS** the 2025 New York State budget also included an appropriation of \$4M to assist community colleges in implementing the SUNY Reconnect program, with release of these funds from the State University of New York (SUNY) subject to submission and approval of a campus plan, and

**WHEREAS**, Suffolk County Community College submitted a campus plan to utilize the College's portion of this the 2025–26 Operating Aid increase for SUNY community colleges, and

**WHEREAS** the College's proposed plan included a full-time financial aid position and support for advertising and promotion of the SUNY Reconnect program, and

**WHEREAS** SUNY has approved the College's plan and has made \$180,000 available in support of the said plan, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that restricted, increased operating funds in the amount of \$180,000 from SUNY are hereby accepted and appropriated, and the College's operating budget for 2025–26 is hereby amended, as follows:

| <u>REVENUES:</u>           | <u>AMOUNT</u> |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Restricted Operating Funds | \$ 180,000    |

| <u>APPROPRIATIONS:</u>           | <u>AMOUNT</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Restricted Salaries and Benefits | \$ 140,000    |
| Restricted Advertising           | \$ 40,000     |

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#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2025.48 – Amending the College's Traffic and Parking Regulations**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Trustees has previously adopted and, from time to time amended, Traffic and Parking Regulations governing the premises of Suffolk County Community College, and

**WHEREAS**, revisions to the Traffic and Parking Regulations are necessary to address electronic vehicle charging and parking and for consistency with format and contents of the College's current policy structure, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that the revised Traffic and Parking Regulations (Attachment 1) are hereby established for immediate implementation.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.49 – Authorizing a Lease Amendment and Extension with Culinary Arts Riverhead LLC for Lease of the Culinary Arts & Hospitality Center**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to a lease agreement, the College has leased the Culinary Arts & Hospitality Center from Culinary Arts Riverhead, LLC for a 20-year term expiring on November 30, 2027, and

**WHEREAS**, the College wishes to continue utilizing the Culinary Arts & Hospitality Center through July 31, 2028 for the benefit of its students and to provide program continuity through the 2027–2028 academic year, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that the College President is hereby authorized to execute an agreement, upon such terms as shall be approved by the College General Counsel, between the College and Culinary Arts Riverhead, LLC to extend the term of the lease for the Culinary Arts & Hospitality Center through July 31, 2028 at the monthly rent applicable in Year 20 of the original lease agreement.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2025.50 – Accepting a Grant Award from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) for the AI Skills for All Community of Practice, Supported by a Grant from Microsoft**

**WHEREAS**, Suffolk County Community College has received a grant award in the amount of \$10,000, from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) for the AI Skills for All Community of Practice, supported by a grant from Microsoft, for the period of July 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026, and

**WHEREAS**, this initiative is intended to support a community of practice of 30 AACC member institutions for an 18-month engagement, including technical assistance and documentation of successful strategies and opportunities related to AI skilling, college and student AI policies, and other related topics, and

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

**RESOLVED**, that a grant in the amount of \$10,000, from AACC for the AI Skills for All Community of Practice, supported by a grant from Microsoft, for the period of July 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026, is hereby accepted, and that the College President, or his designee, is authorized and empowered to execute any necessary documentation, including a contract with the awarding and/or administering entity, in such form as shall be approved by the College General Counsel, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the 2025–2026 College operating budget be amended as necessary to reflect the applicable portion of the grant award.

Project Director: Dr. Carol Hernandez, Assistant Dean, Center for Teaching and Learning

Note: No full-time personnel

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### **RESOLUTION NO. 2025.51 – Creating Employee Titles**

**WHEREAS**, the College is committed to providing the level of administrative and supervisory support necessary to support effective operations, continuous improvement, and service to students, faculty, and staff, and

**WHEREAS**, the President has recommended the creation of new titles to support institutional assessment and institutional effectiveness, as well as administration of financial aid, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, that the College hereby creates the following new employee titles:

| <b>Title</b>                                                             | <b>Bargaining Unit</b>           | <b>Category</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| College Associate Director of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness | Guild of Administrative Officers | III             |
| College Associate Director of Financial Aid                              | Guild of Administrative Officers | III             |

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### **RESOLUTION NO. 2025.52 – Determination for Disposition/Sale of Real Property**

**WHEREAS**, Suffolk County Community College owns certain real property located at Browns River Road #3, Bayport, Towns of Islip and Brookhaven, New York, consisting of an approximately 1.4-acre parcel of land (Tax Map Number 0500-432.00-02.00-004.001) and approximately 1.7 acres of adjacent underwater land (Tax Map Number 0200-990.82-03.00-007.000) (“Bayport Property”), and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Suffolk and Suffolk County Community College, dated April 16, 2009, the College Board of Trustees serves as Lead Agency for determinations issued pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQRA”) (NYS Environmental Conservation Law, Article 8) and its implementing regulations at Title 6 NYCRR Part 617, and

**WHEREAS**, the Bayport property has not been utilized for academic or extracurricular purposes since approximately the 1980s, and following diligent consideration of past uses and potential future uses of the Bayport Property for College purposes in conjunction with the College’s short-term and long-term academic and strategic priorities, and financial and capital resources, the President has recommended the

Board of Trustees consider disposal of the Bayport Property in accordance with applicable law and regulation, be it therefore

**RESOLVED**, the Board of Trustees hereby finds and determines that adoption of this resolution constitutes a Type II action pursuant to SEQRA and its implementing regulations, requiring no further review or action under SEQRA, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that after due consideration, the Board of Trustees hereby determines that the Bayport Property is no longer useful or required for College purposes, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution will be transmitted to the State University of New York (SUNY) for any necessary approvals, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the College President (or his designee) is authorized to pursue disposition and/or sale of the Bayport Property in accordance with applicable law and regulation and incur reasonable expenses associated therewith, including but not limited to an appraisal and/or engagement of the services of qualified real estate professionals as necessary to effectuate disposition and/or sale.

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Chair Coverdale asked Carol Wickliffe-Campbell, Chief of Staff and Interim Associate Vice President for Workforce Development, for the recognition of guests. Ms. Wickliffe-Campbell recognized and thanked Tim Freeman representing Legislator Stephanie Bontempi.

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Chair Coverdale called for the Committee reports.

Trustee Pagdanganan reported for the Student Success Committee. The Student Success Committee met on September 16th. Ms. Christina Vargas, Associate Vice President for Opportunity and Belonging, gave a presentation to the committee, outlining the office's strategic goals and expectations, emphasizing its commitment to fostering student success through inclusive and equitable practices. The central mission of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights is to ensure that all students feel seen, respected, and valued across every area of the college. The office addresses a wide range of concerns, including sexual harassment, discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, and other protected categories. Its work is guided by federal, state, and SUNY regulations, and staff undergo rigorous annual training to remain current with evolving standards. In response to emerging challenges, the office has expanded its focus to include issues related to digital conduct, such as cyberbullying, social media harassment, and the spread of misinformation. Collaborating closely with the CARE Team and the Equity and Inclusion Council, the office aligns its efforts with the college's Strategic Plan for equity and social justice. This includes conducting internal assessments, facilitating ongoing professional development

for faculty and staff, administering SUNY-wide campus climate surveys, and maintaining a strong emphasis on student retention.

Trustee Canary reported for the Governance Committee. The Committee met on September 15th. General Counsel Ashley Pope reviewed the new proposed policy, Delegation of Authority to the College President, which combines and replaces three existing policies approved by the Board of Trustees back in 2003: Delegating Authority for Personnel Action to the President; Delegating Additional Authority to the President; and Authorizing the President to Process Job Specification Numbers. After discussing the new combined policy with the Committee, the committee recommended that it be brought to the full Board for approval at the October 16th meeting. There was no new business brought to the Committee's attention. The next Governance Committee meeting will be Monday, October 13th. Agenda items will include: Continuation of Policy Updates.

Trustee Pagdanganan reported for the Foundation. The Foundation continues to raise funds for the Education Without Limits campaign. A \$5,000 sponsorship for the new automotive building has been received from Smith Haven Chrysler Jeep, Dodge Ram. Last week, there was a ceremonial check presentation with Auto Group owner Brett Saslow, who was joined by President Bonahue and an alumnus employed by the dealership, along with the current Suffolk automotive student completing his internship there. The Theater Arts program also received a \$31,000 in-kind donation of professional equipment from NBC Universal Studios in New York, thanks to efforts made by a 2008 alumna of the College's program. This former student maintains contact with Professor Charles Wittreich, who facilitated the receipt of the most recent donation made to benefit students enrolled in this program. By providing access to industry-grade tools, this gift will enrich the hands-on learning experience of countless students, helping to bridge the gap between the classroom and the professional world of work. The Foundation golf outing will be held on Monday, October 20th, and the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Automotive Technology Training Center on the Michael J. Grant Campus will take place on Wednesday, October 29th.

Trustee Pagdanganan reported for the Association. The Association Board of Directors met on August 26th. Ms. Hurst provided a financial report as of July 31, 2025. Most areas are trending in the negative, but this was anticipated and fund balance will be allocated for the expenses. Both Grant and Ammerman Child Care centers are open and are awaiting their block grant funds. The funds should eliminate the deficit at the Grant campus center and greatly reduce the Ammerman child care center deficit. Peconic Café also continues to operate in the negative. Conversations regarding the Peconic Café are ongoing with college administration as a number of potential solutions are being considered. The Board continues to review and revise the By-Laws. At this time all areas have been reviewed, the role and relationship with campus operating offices have been defined, and final feedback on structure of the relationship is underway.

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Chair Coverdale moved to the Chair's report. Chair Coverdale called to attention the fact that there has been an increased attention to political violence across the country, noting the most recent incident occurred on a college campus setting. She called attention to the fact that the College decries political violence in any form and will not condone such actions at all. While we all have a First Amendment right to freedom of speech, she asked all in the community to remember that not everything legal is prudent, and it's time to tamp down some of the rhetoric from every corner and respectfully and civilly address such rhetoric when we see it, lest there be continued violence and it escalate further. She asked everyone to watch out for each other and for ourselves. There is a great deal of consumption on the internet, managed by algorithms that are creating hostility in everybody and are pushing people to the edge; it is time to take a timeout, take deep breaths in, and think very carefully because we are making our environment very dangerous if we don't.

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Chair Coverdale moved to the President's report.

*Trustee Bost exited the meeting at 4:54 p.m., therefore as of that time, a quorum of the Board of Trustees was no longer present, such that the meeting was a discussion, with no action being taken.*

President Bonahue reported on the following:

*Enrollment Update:*

President Bonahue reminded the Trustees that enrollment for the 2024–2025 academic year was up 6%. That momentum has been continuing into the Fall semester, and the College has been trending up anywhere from 5% to 8%, depending on the day. In August, he had reported there were 640 SUNY ReConnect students. Since then, that number has gone up to 727. The students are fairly evenly split between full-time and part-time, with about 350 students enrolling in healthcare studies, which is a launch pad for students seeking an entry into some kind of healthcare career. As students take seats in late start courses, that number may continue to go up.

As of this week, the enrollment numbers only include a very few of the high school Beacon students, as they are still enrolling for the college classes in partnership with the high schools. He thanked Trustee Dolan for his continued advocacy for the Beacon program. County Executive Romaine began the school year by sending a letter of support to all Suffolk County school superintendents recommending the Beacon program. He discussed the value of academic acceleration for students and the money that families can save on college through this program. President Bonahue also thanked Vice President for Academic Affairs Irene Rios and Assistant Dean for K–12 Programs Lisa Calla in the Beacon office for working with the high schools to improve both capacity and academic oversight. Last year at this time, the College had set a multi-year goal of growing Beacon enrollment by 20%, and with the endorsement from the County

Executive, he believes it is possible. VP Rios reports that the College has experienced a huge increase in requests from high schools.

#### *Academic Affairs:*

In Academic Affairs, the College received good news that the New York Department of Health is awarding the College a \$5M grant to support the continued growth and success of nursing and healthcare certificate programs. He thanked College Associate Dean of Nursing, Dr. Cheryl Shaffer; College Assistant Dean for Continuing Education, Arlene Jackson; and College Associate Dean for Sponsored Programs, Dr. Troy Tucker. This will be the largest grant that has ever come to the College. The grant will support expansion and improved retention within our RN and LPN programs, and will cover tuition and instructional costs for entire cohorts of CNA and CMA students, allowing the College to bring more students into healthcare careers faster. The grant will also allow the College to hire a small number of full-time staff to coordinate and manage the grant, supervise clinicals, and conduct student success coaching. It will begin in January, with the first student-facing programming beginning a year from now.

#### *Student Affairs:*

In Student Affairs, the College continues to keep an eye on student basic needs. The College has a food pantry for hungry students on all three campuses, and is able to respond quickly when there is a student mental health crisis. The Foundation continues to offer emergency hardship grants, and the program for loaning laptop computers remains active. That program was started during COVID; however, it is still serving a need. Last year 254 laptops were distributed. If a student comes with a need for a laptop, the College works to incorporate the cost for the device into their financial aid award when possible. The College continues to maintain open computer labs on campus as well.

#### *Advocacy:*

In news from advocacy, the College continues to work on multiple fronts. Last weekend, he attended the Association of Municipal Employees annual picnic with VP Rivera. They talked to AME's new president, Terry MacCarone, as well as the two Suffolk Community College staff who are on AME's Executive Committee, Bob Leech and Joe Callari. AME will begin a new round of contract negotiations with Suffolk County later this year, after which the College will follow with negotiations with AME as well. President Bonahue is very grateful to Congressman Nick LaLota for meeting with a delegation of SUNY Community College presidents, and his position on the Appropriations Committee, keeping in mind the needs of students. In addition, he and Ben Zwirn met with Assemblywoman Rebecca Kassay and gave her an introduction to the College.

*Looking Ahead:*

The annual Foundation Golf outing is on October 20th, and the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Automotive Technology Building at the Grant Campus is on October 29th.

Lastly, he echoed some of the sentiments Chair Coverdale voiced in her Chair's report. He noted that last week, Charlie Kirk, a nationally prominent student organizer was assassinated. He rarely comments on current events, keeping the College's primary focus on its students; however, he wanted to point out that among the values included in the College's mission statement are academic freedom, which means freedom of expression on campus and freedom of speech in the public sphere, and civil discourse. There is no place for violence on any college campus, and political speech, whether it seems like common sense, or whether it seems designed to outrage, has to be met on college campuses with truth, with informed debate, and with reason, but never with violence. He believes these are the ideals of American higher education, and these should be the ideals of the American society. He noted a headline in the Chronicle of Higher Education that said the solution to this crisis isn't less political speech, or less debate—it's better dialogue and more respectful conversations.

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Chair Coverdale called for Roundtable. Trustee Canary announced that Saturday is International Beach Cleanup Day and invited anyone interested to participate and volunteer.

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There being no quorum present as of 4:54pm, the meeting and public discussion concluded.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is October 16, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in the Media Room of the Culinary Arts Center on the Eastern Campus, Riverhead, New York.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin O'Connor  
Secretary