



Minutes of the April 21, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535

The 820th meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 was conducted on April 21, 2026 at the Skokie campus of Oakton College, 7701 Lincoln Avenue, Skokie, Illinois.

Closed Session – Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Burns called the meeting to order at 5:23 p.m. in room A167. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Martha Burns	Chair	Present
Trustee Theresa Bashiri-Remetio	Vice Chair	Present
Trustee William Stafford	Secretary	Present
Trustee Micah Eimer		Present
Trustee Benjamin Salzberg		Present
Trustee Marie Lynn Toussaint		Present
Trustee Wendy Yanow		Present
Trustee Chris AbiNader	Student Trustee	Present

Chair Burns asked for a motion to go into closed session under the exceptions to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, with the purpose of reviewing closed session minutes of March 16, 2026; and considering the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees, collective negotiating matters, and pending litigation.

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio made the motion, seconded by Trustee Salzberg. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye
Trustee AbiNader	Aye

Also present in room A167 were Dr. Joianne Smith, President; Johanna Fine, Chief Human Resources Officer; Dr. Bernard Little, Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Ileo Lott, Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Michele Roberts, Vice President for Administrative Affairs.

At 5:58 p.m., Trustee Salzberg made a motion to adjourn the closed session meeting which was seconded by Trustee Bashiri-Remetio. A voice vote was called and the closed session was adjourned.

Open Session – Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Burns called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 6:09 p.m. in room P103.

Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Martha Burns	Chair	Present
Trustee Theresa Bashiri-Remetio	Vice Chair	Present
Trustee William Stafford	Secretary	Present
Trustee Micah Eimer		Present
Trustee Benjamin Salzberg		Present
Trustee Marie Lynn Toussaint		Absent for Roll Call
Trustee Wendy Yanow		Present
Trustee Chris AbiNader	Student Trustee	Present

Trustee Burns led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Student Trustee AbiNader read the Land Acknowledgment.

Also present in room P103:

Leadership: Dr. Joianne Smith, President; Johanna Fine, Chief Human Resources Officer; Dr. Bernard Little, Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Ileo Lott, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Michele Roberts, Vice President for Administrative Affairs; Katherine Sawyer, Chief Advancement Officer.

Administrators: Robyn Bailey, Dean of Skokie Campus; Dr. Matthew Boutilier, Director of Online Curriculum and Instruction; Stephen Butera, Director of Communications and External Relations; Dr. Sebastian Contreras Jr., Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Leana Cuellar, Dean of Access, Equity and Diversity; Dr. Rick Daniels, Director of Institutional Equity and Inclusion; Kathleen Dunne Balducci, Assistant Vice President for Operations; Thomas Hicks Jr., Director of Student Success and Academic Interventions; Matt Huber, Dean of Enrollment Management; Jake Jeremiah, Dean of Library; Dr. Ashley Knight, Interim Dean of Liberal Arts; Dr. Kanchana Mendes, Dean of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Nathan Norman, Senior Director of Workforce Development; Delia Rodriguez, Dean of Adult and Continuing Education; Jeff Spidle, Director of IT Infrastructure; John Wade, Chief Information Officer; and Aaron Wernick, Chief of Police and Emergency Management.

Union Leaders: Jennifer Crowley, Classified Staff Association; Mary Hope Griffin, Adjunct Faculty Association; and Patrick O'Donnell, Full-Time Faculty Association.

Faculty: Brittany Coleman, Library; Donna Dickson, BNAT/Sterile Processing; Margaret Gas, Nursing; Camille Harrison, Modern Languages; Chris Hirsch, HVAC; David Jakalski, English; and Kate Magnuson, English.

Staff: Princess Escudero, Student Life and Campus Inclusion; Krissie Harris, Student Life and Campus Inclusion; Marcus Hayes, Auxiliary Services; Janeen Jackson, Black Student Success Program; Ewa Lyczewska, Marketing and Communications; Gabby O'Connor, Student Life and Campus Inclusion; Brooke Roche, Advising and Transitions; Vinita Shah, Information Technology; Beatriz Sparks, Office of the President; and Aleda Thompson, Institutional Research.

Students: Kaira Hernandez, Rayyan Muhammad, Joseph Park and Jose San Martin.

Guests: Roger AbiNader and Winnie Lewis.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Burns asked for a motion for the approval of the minutes of the March 16, 2026 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Bashiri-Remetio made the motion which was seconded by Trustee Salzberg. A voice vote was called and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Statement by the President

Condolences

- To Chair and Distinguished Professor of English, Donovan Braud on the passing of his stepfather Gerald "Uncle Jerry" Forstater who served 25 years in the United States Navy and worked as a New York Fire Department EMT .

Congratulations & Recognitions

- Thank you to Chair Burns for her year of service as the Board Chair, and Chris AbiNader who has served as this year's student trustee.
- The Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce presented Oakton College with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of contributions made in the Des Plaines community, in particular for the development of the new Learning Commons. Oakton was presented with the award at the Mayor's Address to the Community, hosted on our campus on March 19.
- Oakton has once again been recognized for its commitment to supporting military-connected students, earning a 2026–2027 Silver Military Friendly School designation. This marks the 11th consecutive year the College has received Military Friendly recognition, reinforcing its role as a trusted resource for veterans, active-duty service members, reservists and their families.
- Ella Whitehead, Director of Admissions and Equity Outreach, and Janeen Jackson, Equity Coordinator for the B.L.A.C.K. Student Success Program (BSSP), have been named Lifetime Honorees by Leo High

School. This prestigious distinction arrived during Women's History Month as Leo High School commemorated its Centennial Anniversary (1926-2026). Ella and Janeen are among 100 extraordinary women recognized for embodying the school's motto: *Facta Non Verba* (Deeds, Not Words).

- Matthew Boutilier, Ph.D., director of online curriculum and instruction, and Wendy Adele-Marie, Ph.D., distinguished professor of History and coordinator of Jewish Studies, were recognized March 14 at the 2026 Instructional Technology Council (ITC) eLearning Conference. Their awards highlight their leadership in creating more engaging and supportive online learning environments.
- Congratulations to the following students who received the Board of Trustees' Student Leadership Awards and were recognized at the Student Leadership Banquet last week: Anne Marie Gotthelf; Domenika Sass, Dumni Dayo-Kayode, Fadi Mufarreh, and Ana Adamadze.

Happenings

- April is Community College Month. Along with all of the community colleges within the state, we have been highlighting the important role that community colleges play in our communities.
- April is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Events include a meet and greet with Asian-American authors Jane Hseu and David Cho, sushi making lessons, an end of the year celebration for AAPI students, concluding with the Asian Night Market on May 8.
- Oakton's sustainability team has a list of events to celebrate Earth Month including pop-up thrift stores, community garden workdays, fishing lessons, and a native plant walk with Professor Paul Gulezian.
- April is also Autism Awareness Month and the Neurodiversity Working Group is excited to welcome Maureen Dunne, Ph.D., a noted scholar and author, for two inspiring events focused on supporting neurodiverse students and inclusive career pathways on April 23, at 9:30 a.m., Rooms P103-104, Ray Hartstein campus.

Educational Foundation Liaison Report

Fundraising continues to be strong this spring with a number of notable contributions that have been received since our last Board meeting, including:

- An \$80,000 gift from Foundation Board Director and Oakton retiree Linda Korbel.
- A \$10,000 gift from Michael and Christie Suppan to provide additional support to their endowed scholarship.
- A \$22,500 gift from Jan Footlik to add support to the Footlik family scholarships.
- A \$10,000 gift from retiree Bonnie Lucas and her husband Stuart Sondheimer.

The Educational Foundation recently hosted its annual Employee Giving Celebration, marking the end of a one-month campaign. During this time, faculty, staff, and administrators contributed nearly \$8,000 in support of student success and college programs, with participation increasing by an impressive 32% over the previous year. As part of the campaign, employee donors were invited to share what inspires their giving.

The Foundation Board continues to work on their next strategic plan and expects to have a draft for review at their quarterly meeting on June 3.

Pathways to Opportunity Report

The Pathways to Opportunity Team has met twice since the last Board Meeting. The team is exploring intentional pathways, such as a Pre-Med pathway for Early College students. Early College Pathways is on the agenda for the High School Partners meeting next month. The Team reviewed internal visuals to explain pathways; has established a subcommittee to explore credit for prior learning; and is identifying additional opportunities for early career exploration for elementary and middle school students.

On April 10, the Pathways to Opportunity Team also hosted a Health Care Workforce Shortage Webinar presented by UVA Health and attended by leaders from three of the major healthcare employers in our region – Endeavor Health, Northwestern Medicine and Advocate Health Care. The Team is currently scheduling follow-up meetings with each of the health care systems to explore the possibilities of expanding our current partnerships with each of them to address health care shortages through intentional pathways that lead to jobs and/or upward mobility for incumbent workers.

HLC Accreditation Report

Progress has been made in all eight of the federal compliance components, and the criteria teams have started gathering the evidence for the Assurance Argument. In addition, nine administrators and faculty attended the HLC conference at the end of March, attending sessions on federal compliance the criteria for accreditation assessment of learning, and strategic planning.

In January, during opening day, we learned that the first criterion for accreditation is related to the college's mission. This month, we learned more about criterion 2, integrity, ethical and responsible conduct. HLC requires that we demonstrate that in fulfilling its mission, Oakton's conduct is ethical and responsible, and the sub criteria are integrity, transparency, board governance, academic freedom and freedom of expression and knowledge, acquisition, discovery and application. The criteria has specific applications also to our board of trustees, and requires us to demonstrate the ways in which the board follows established policies and procedures as well as acting in the best interest of the institution.

The board will likely be engaged as they collect evidence to support the sub criteria, and will be a critical part of site visit when we meet with peer reviewers. The criterion 2 team is led by Dan Weber, registrar and director of registrar services, John Wade, Chief Information Officer and Martinique Haller, faculty associate Dean of the library.

ICCTA Liaison Report

The Illinois Community College Trustees Association Annual Lobby Day and meeting will be on May 6 and 7 in Springfield, and then on June 5 and 6, the annual ICCTA Convention will take place in Lombard.

Student Trustee Report

- The Campus Activity Board is hosting stress-reliever days.
- 2025-2026 SGA Team's last General Body Meeting is tomorrow.
- Tribute pavers for the courtyard have been purchased by SGA to commemorate both the 2023-2024 and 2025-2026 teams by organization and year.
- Congratulations to the SGA Team who were sworn into office last week, our team wishes them a successful year!

Student Trustee AbiNader expressed his gratitude for the support received from the Board and the College during his year of service.

Student Spotlight

Jose San Martin is the incoming Student Trustee. He holds a student employee position as a Community Service Officer for the campus police department. He identified the Oakton Leadership Summit as his most memorable experience, noting it was a historic collaboration with other local colleges. He credited his advisor, Krissie Harris, as well as Dr. Bernard Little, Beatriz Sparks, and Barb Vazquez, for their support during his transition.

During his term, Jose identified lunch affordability as a major issue, reporting that high prices forced students to leave campus and miss class time. He expressed a commitment to public service and aims to complete his bachelor's degree by 2029.

BOARD REORGANIZATION

4/26-1 Recommendation for Seating of Student Member of the Board of Trustees

Trustee Stafford offered:

SECTION 1: An election for the Student Member of the Board of Trustees was held March 23 through April 3, 2026. The election was conducted in all respects as provided by law and according to Policy 1005. The election was conducted online, using the Simply Voting software purchased by the Student Government Association. Currently enrolled students were provided a ballot via email, and Simply Voting provided a secure method to permit students to vote from their computer or mobile device; 225 students cast ballots in the election.

The returns of the election have been duly canvassed by the Judges of Election. The student meets all qualifications for Trustees as specified in Policy 1004.

SECTION 2: The Board of Trustees declares that Jose San Martin received 147 votes (77.4%) for the office of Student Member of the Board of Trustees. His opponent Akash Patel receiving 43 (22.6%) with 35 (15.6%) abstaining votes cast, thereby declaring Jose San Martin the successful candidate to serve as the Student Trustee with a term commencing on April 21, 2026 and concluding at the Board of Trustees meeting in April 2027.

SECTION 3: This resolution shall be effective from and after its passage as provided by law.

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the resolution passed unanimously.

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio made a motion for a brief adjournment *sine die* with the purpose of seating the new student trustee at the Board table. Trustee Salzberg seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Call to Order and Roll Call with New Student Member

Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Martha Burns	Chair	Present
Trustee Theresa Bashiri-Remetio	Vice Chair	Present
Trustee William Stafford	Secretary	Present
Trustee Micah Eimer		Present
Trustee Benjamin Salzberg		Present
Trustee Marie Lynn Toussaint		Present
Trustee Wendy Yanow		Present
Trustee Jose San Martin	Student Trustee	Present

4/26-2 Resolution Organizing the Board of Trustees for the Term Commencing April 16, 2024

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio offered:

“WHEREAS, pursuant to college policy and in accordance with the Illinois Public Community College Act, as amended (110 ILCS 805/3-8), the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 elects its officers comprised of a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, from its membership, and appoints a Treasurer, not a member of the Board, at its annual organizational meeting held in April.”

Nomination of Officers:

Chair Burns asked for nominations.

Trustee Burns nominated Trustee Bashiri-Remetio; Trustee Stafford seconded the nomination. Hearing no further nominations, a voice vote was called which passed unanimously.

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio nominated Trustee Stafford; Trustee Yanow seconded the nomination. Hearing no further nominations, a voice vote was called which passed unanimously.

Trustee name nominated Trustee Yanow; Trustee name seconded the nomination. Hearing no further nominations, a voice vote was called which passed unanimously.

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio offered:

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT 535, COUNTY OF COOK AND STATE OF ILLINOIS THAT:

- The Board is hereby organized for the term commencing April 21, 2026.
- Dates for the regular meetings of the Board for the calendar year 2027 shall be fixed as follows:

January 19, February 16, March 16, April 27, May 25, June 29, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16, December 14

Beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Boardroom, 1506, at Oakton Community College, 1600 E. Golf Road, Des Plaines, Illinois unless otherwise indicated. Time and location of all meetings, as well as meeting agendas, will be posted 48 hours in advance as required by law.

- All Board rules, policies, and procedures in effect during the previous year shall remain in effect.
- Michele Roberts is hereby appointed Treasurer to serve at the pleasure of the Board for no additional compensation, provided that before entering upon her duties, the Treasurer shall execute and deliver to the Board a bond, as required by the Illinois Public Community College Act."

Trustee Stafford seconded the motion, and called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye

The motion passed. Student Trustee San Martin favored the resolution

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio made a motion for a brief adjournment *sine die* with the purpose of organizing the new officers at the Board table. Trustee Salzberg seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Newly seated Chair Bashiri-Remetio asked for a roll call with the newly organized members of the Board now seated.

Trustee Yanow called the roll:

Trustee Theresa Bashiri-Remetio	Chair	Present
Trustee William Stafford	Vice Chair	Present
Trustee Wendy Yanow	Secretary	Present
Trustee Martha Burns		Present
Trustee Micah Eimer		Present
Trustee Benjamin Salzberg		Present
Trustee Marie Lynn Toussaint		Present
Trustee Jose San Martin		Present

Comments by the Chair

Chair Bashiri-Remetio shared her appreciation for the Board’s executive team’s growth over the past year. She highlighted that the Board has learned to work together more effectively and expressed gratitude for the support received from outgoing Chair Burns and Trustee Stafford.

Trustee Comments

Trustee Eimer addressed a recent request from the Classified Staff Association to designate May 1st as a day of civic action. The proposal suggested closing the college to honor concepts such as labor and civil justice.

After board discussion, the request was unanimously denied for the following reasons:

- Timing: The board felt there was insufficient time to organize the event by May 1.
- Existing Curriculum: Trustees noted that the concepts of civic action and civil justice are already well-covered within Oakton’s current curriculum and campus culture.

- **Educational Duty:** The board emphasized its primary responsibility as an educational institution, stating it would be inappropriate to halt classes for the day.

Trustee Burns shared that she attended Rev. Jesse Jackson's funeral, and reflected on the significant influence Jackson had on her life.

Public Participation

Newly elected President of the Student Government Association, Rayyan Muhammad thanked outgoing Student Trustee Chris AbiNader for his service to Oakton students during his tenure.

Board Report: Operations

Michele Roberts (Vice President for Administrative Affairs) and Kathleen Dunne Balducci (Assistant Vice President for Operations) presented an overview of Oakton's operational foundation, talked about the Administrative Affairs area reorganization, and shared operational process improvement plans including technology and process mapping. They also touched on procurement, and provided an FY27 Master Plan update, and a Preliminary Timeline for the FY28-FY32 Master Plan.

NEW BUSINESS

4/26-3a Approval of Consent Agenda

Trustee Stafford offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves adoption of the Consent Agenda."

Trustee Salzberg seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

4/26-3b Approval of Consent Agenda Items 4/26-4 through 4/26-8

Trustee Stafford offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the following items 4/26-4 through 4/26-8 as listed in the Consent Agenda."

4/26-4 Ratification of Payment of Bills for March 2026

"Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 hereby ratifies expenditures and release of checks by the Treasurer of Community College District 535 in the amount of \$8,028,866.49 for all check amounts as listed and for all purposes as appearing on a report dated March 2026."

4/26-5 Acceptance of Treasurer's Report for March 2026

"Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 receives for filing as a part of the College's official records, the report of the Treasurer for the month of March 2026."

4/26-6 Acceptance of Quarterly Report on Investments

"Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 accepts the Quarterly Report on Investments for filing."

4/26-7 Supplemental Authorization to Pay Professional Personnel – Spring 2026

"Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves an adjustment of \$634,042.19 to the total amount of part-time teaching salaries paid during the spring 2026 semester; the revised total payment amount is \$4,634,539.75."

"Be if further resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves an adjustment of \$119,347.02 to the total amount of faculty overload salaries paid during the spring 2026 semester; the revised total payment amount is \$928,057.11."

4/26-8 Approval of Clinical Practice Agreements

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the following cooperative agreements:

Cardiac Sonography/Radiography/Surgical Technology (1)
 Physical Therapy Assistant (1)
 Sterile Processing Technician (1).”

Trustee Yanow seconded the motion, and called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye

The motion carried. Student Trustee San Martin abstained.

4/26-9 Authorization to Approve April Purchases

Trustee Toussaint offered: “Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 authorizes the approval of the attached resolutions, as stipulated in the following agenda items, for the purchase of the following:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Vendor / Location</u>	<u>Amount</u>
4/26-9a	Maintenance and Restoration Services of Natural Areas – Two-Year Contract	Semper Fi Land, Inc Sugar Grove, IL	\$169,409.00
4/26-9b	Security Guard Services – Two-Year Contract	HLSA, Inc Chicago, IL	\$631,983.00
4/26-9c	Reimbursement Payment for the Blackbaud Awards Management Essentials Software – Three-Year Contract Renewal	Oakton College Educational Foundation Des Plaines, IL	\$47,481.50
4/26-9d	Digital and Traditional Marketing Services – One-Year Contract Renewal	VisionPoint Marketing, LLC Raleigh, NC	\$490,000.00
4/26-9e	Leica Microscopes	North Central Instruments, Inc Brooklyn Park, MN	\$46,090.74
4/26-9f	Multimedia Projectors	JensenIT, Inc Des Plaines, IL	\$119,256.96
4/26-9g	Multifactor Authentication (MFA) Services – One-Year Renewal	Duo Security Ann Arbor, MI	\$54,000.00
4/26-9h	Portable Electric Vehicle Training Aids	NADA Scientific, Ltd Rouses Point, NY	\$35,899.00
4/26-9i	Portable Training Systems	Automotive Vide Innovations, Inc Fort Myers, FL	\$29,100.00
		GRAND TOTAL:	\$1,623,220.20.”

Trustee Salzberg seconded the motion. Trustee Yanow called the roll:

- Trustee Bashiri-Remetio Aye
- Trustee Burns Aye
- Trustee Salzberg Aye
- Trustee Eimer Aye
- Trustee Stafford Aye
- Trustee Toussaint Aye
- Trustee Yanow Aye

The motion carried. Student Trustee San Martin favored the resolution.

4/26-10 Preview and Initial Discussion of Upcoming Purchases

The following purchases will be presented for approval at an upcoming Board of Trustees meeting:

- a. Library Services (CARLI and NILRC)
- b. Athletics Website Hosting Services
- c. Wellness Kiosk
- d. Transportation Services for Athletics Teams
- e. Zoom Video Conferencing Services
- f. Cisco Systems Hardware and Software Support
- g. Replacement Wi-Fi Access Points
- h. Dell Monitor Hubs
- i. Lexmark Printers
- j. Network Access Switches and Hardware Support
- k. Annual VMWare Support and License Renewal
- l. Lightcast Renewal

4/26-11 Notification of Award of Grants

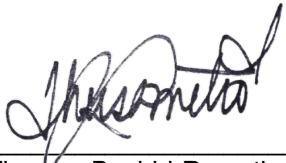
Funding has been made available to Oakton College:

- a. ICCB Advanced Manufacturing Program..... \$66,000.00
- b. DCEO Skokie Learning Commons\$125,000.00
- TOTAL:\$191,000.00**

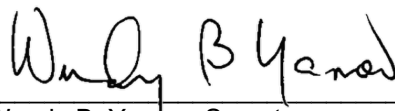
Adjournment

Chair Bashiri-Remetio announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees of Oakton Community College, District 535, will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at the Des Plaines Campus.

Trustee Yanow made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Trustee Toussaint. A voice vote was called and the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.



Theresa Bashiri-Remetio, Chair



Wendy B. Yanow, Secretary

Minutes recorded by:
Beatriz Sparks
4/2026