



**Minutes of the September 15, 2026 Regular Meeting of the
Board of Trustees of Community College District 535**

The 824th meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 was conducted on September 15, 2026 at the Des Plaines campus of Oakton College, 1600 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, Illinois.

Closed Session – Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Bashiri-Remetio called the meeting to order at 5:24 p.m. in room 1502. 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

Chair Bashiri-Remetio 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 August 18, 2026; and consider the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees; collective negotiation matters; security procedures; and pending litigation.

Trustee Salzberg made the motion, seconded by Trustee Stafford. Trustee Yanow 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

Also present in room 1502 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.

Chair Bashiri-Remetio asked for a motion to adjourn the closed session. Trustee Eimer made the motion which was seconded by Trustee Yanow. A voice vote was called and the closed session was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Open Session – Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Bashiri-Remetio called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 6:10 p.m. in room 1506.

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

Also present in room 1506: Dr. Joianne Smith, President; Dr. Kelly Iwanaga Becker, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness; 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; and Katherine Sawyer, Chief Advancement Officer.

Attendance

Administrators: May Alimboyoguen, Dean of Health Careers; Marc Battista, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Matthew Boutilier, Director of Online Curriculum and Instruction; Sebastian Contreras Jr., Associate Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Leana Cuellar, Dean of Access, Equity and Diversity; Dr. Rick Daniels, Senior Director of Culture and Engagement; Kathleen Dunne Balducci, Assistant Vice President for Operations; Thomas Hicks Jr., Director of Student Success and Academic Interventions; Dr. Mary Hope Griffin, Dean of Liberal Arts; Dr. Matt Huber, Dean of Enrollment Management; Jacob Jeremiah, Dean of Library; Dr. Andrea Lehmacher, Chief Marketing Officer; Dr. Alauna McGee, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and College Transitions; Dr. Kanchana Mendes, Dean of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Jessi Moon, Foundation Associate Executive Director; Janet Nester Olszewski, Director of Grant Development and Strategy; Nathan Norman, Senior Director of Workforce and Career Development; Christine Paciero, Director of Oakton Athletics; Dr. James Rabchuk, Dean of STEM; Nini Tella, Director of Advising, Transitions and Strategic Initiatives; John Wade, Chief Information Officer; Dan Weber, Registrar/Director of Registrar Services; Aaron Wernick, Chief of Police and Emergency Management; Ella Whitehead, Director of Admission and Equity Outreach; and Andy Williams, Controller.

Union Leaders: John Donoghue, Classified Staff Association; Philip Prale, Adjunct Faculty Association; and Patrick O'Donnell, Full-Time Faculty Association.

Faculty: James Coates, Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Technology; Kursheed Ichhaporia, Biology; Mary Johannesen Schmidt, Psychology; Michael Mauritzen, English; and Joana Soupos, Medical Laboratory Technology

Staff: Erin Doerr, Marketing and Communications; Leslie Dzike, Institutional Research; Maurae Gilbert McCants, SBDC; Andy Jelagin, Information Technology; Ewa Lyczewska, Marketing and Communications; Gabrielle O'Connor, Student Life and Campus Inclusion; Kushal Patel, Information Technology; and Beatriz Sparks, Office of the President.

Students: Mulla Juma and Min Kim.

Guests: Dayani Pieri and Cindy Veremis.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Bashiri-Remetio made a motion for the approval of the minutes of the August 18, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees, which was seconded by Trustee Stafford. A voice vote was called and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Statement by the President

Condolences

- To assistant baseball coach, Dan Dellaria on the passing of his father (Charles) on Aug. 19.
- Jenica Doma, Senior Department Assistant in STEM on the loss of her partner, Michael Underwood, an Oakton Alum who passed away following a car accident. Mike was an active student leader when he was at Oakton.
- Terrance Stevenson, Coordinator of the EWA on the loss of his mother-in-law last week.

Congratulations & Recognitions

- To Mel Battistoni, Counselor in the Wellness Center and her partner Nicole on the birth of their daughter, Luca last week.
- Student Mulla Juma has been named a 2026 Chime Workforce Scholar, joining 200 students nationwide recognized for their academic achievement and pursuit of career-focused education. Funded by the Chime Scholars Foundation and administered by the Phi Theta Kappa Foundation, the Chime Workforce Scholarship supports students pursuing career and technical education at two-year colleges.

- To our 2026 Distinguished Alumni who were recognized last week: ThuyVu Do, Kimberly Jones, Gina Roxas and Lynette Sugatan.
- To the 3rd cohort of Northwestern-Oakton Prison Education Program students who celebrated their completion of their Associate degrees at a commencement ceremony at Sheridan Correctional Facility on Friday Sept. 11.

Happenings

- Latine Heritage Month
 - *Unidos Somo Más* kick-off event tomorrow (Sept. 16) at 2 p.m. in the CCID at the Skokie Campus. There will be food, a raffle and games for all to enjoy!
 - On Sept. 22 at noon, Reyna Grande, author of *The Distance Between Us: A Memoir*, will be joining us to share more about her book and her story with the Oakton community. The event will take place in the Des Plaines Student Center.
 - On Sept. 29, come enjoy some sweet treats and cheer on the Men's Soccer team as they face Moraine Valley Community College. The game will start at 3:30 p.m.
- Oakton Open House on Saturday, Sept. 19—a one-stop opportunity to explore programs, meet with the Admission team, learn about paying for college and apply. Discover how Oakton College can help you achieve your goals. Tour campus, learn about resources, and connect with current Oakton students, faculty and staff.
- Access, Equity and Diversity Team will host an Open House on Sept. 28 at noon in the Des Plaines Student Center. It is an opportunity to learn about all the Office of Access, Equity and Diversity has to offer: AAPI Student Development Program, ¡ANDALE!, Athletics, B.L.A.C.K. Student Success Program, Student Life and Campus Inclusion, TRIO Support Services, and Undocumented Student Support Group.

Educational Foundation Liaison Report

Two and a half months into the new fiscal year, the Foundation has raised nearly \$350,000 to date, reaching 24% of their goal.

Notable contributions received since our last Board meeting include:

- A \$125,000 pledge from Board Chair Jeff Coney and his wife Liz to support a fundraising initiative related to Health Careers Excellence.
- A \$50,000 grant from the Footlik Foundation to support the Workforce Skills Development Scholarship and our Health Careers Excellence Fund.
- A \$8,200 gift from the Automotive Transportation Supervisors Association of Chicago to start a scholarship to benefit students with financial need in Oakton's automotive program.
- A \$7,000 gift from Dr. Tom TenHoeve, Oakton's 2nd president to grow the endowment of the scholarship in his name.

The Foundation held its quarterly meeting on September 2 and the annual Joint Board Meeting between Trustees and Foundation Directors earlier this evening. The Board's next quarterly meeting is scheduled for December 2.

Pathways to Opportunity Liaison Report

The Pathways to Opportunity Taskforce met on August 21 and reviewed progress on health care pathways. The Northwestern Medicine medical assistant apprenticeship has 5 participants this academic year. Following discussions with our healthcare partners, we are also exploring expansion of our imaging program to include CT – identified as a critical vacancy gap. Recognizing the critical need for nurses, we are also exploring an ADN to BSN nursing pathway. The taskforce continues to explore new models of expanding clinical sites that will allow us to increase the cohort size for some of our programs.

The taskforce also discussed manufacturing pathways – with a focus on the FORGE grant which is a consortium of 8 of the institutions who are part of the Northern Illinois Workforce Coalition. Program goals include providing OSHA 10 certification and pathways for forklift training and introductory manufacturing. We are also collaborating with the Trade Collective and the Technology & Manufacturing Association (TMA) to renew existing articulation agreements.

Finally, the team discussed early outreach including a 'Pathways to Opportunity' tour where 50 students in grades 3 through 5 were engaged in early career exploration at the Des Plaines campus.

The taskforce will meet again on Oct. 16.

HLC Accreditation Liaison Report

The Criteria Teams continue to be hard at work to collect evidence to support our Assurance Argument. Many thanks to the members of those working groups who are leading this work. Last week, the Criterion 1 team led activities to help our college community reflect on how they contribute to the mission of the College. Look for more events to come including opportunities to contribute to the evidence and Assurance Argument on Learning Day - October 21.

ICCTA/ACCT Liaison Report

Trustees Burns, Stafford and Toussaint will attend an ICCTA meeting in Springfield on Sept. 17-19.

Student Spotlight

Min Kim, an accounting student at Oakton College, is leveraging the community college environment and leadership roles in Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) to prepare for a career as a CPA and owner of an accounting firm. She serves as the Vice President of PTK, and shared that through her time at Oakton she has gained networking opportunities, personal growth, and a supportive community of student leaders. Min built and maintains a strong connection with Gabby O'Connor, her PTK advisor.

Min's plan is to obtain an Associate of Arts degree, transfer to a four-year college, and earn a Master's degree in Business Administration. She indicated that Oakton could improve the connection between students and academic advisors by implementing continuous workshops to help students create effective academic plans.

Chair and Trustee Comments

Chair Bashiri-Remetio invited the Oakton community to join the Para Sa Kultura (Filipino Night Market), scheduled for Friday, October 16, from 5 to 9 p.m.

Trustee Stafford shared that he attended the prison program commencement ceremony held at the medium-security Sheridan Correctional Facility. He was joined by President Smith, Dr. Lott, Dr. Little, and faculty. The prison graduation honored 16 graduates who were deeply respectful and appreciative for the support they received from Oakton.

Public Participation – None

Board Report: Vision 2030: Building Just & Thriving Communities

Dr. Kelly Iwanaga Becker, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness

Dr. Leana Cuellar, Dean of Access, Equity and Diversity

Nini Tella, Director of Advising, Transitions and Strategic Initiatives

Maurae Gilbert McCants, SBDC Grant Program Director

The presenters an overview of Oakton's Strategic Plan which centers on justice and equity as its core foundation while pursuing three major strategic priorities.

Strategic Priorities & Key Initiatives

- **Strengthen Students' Oakton Experience:** Focuses on reducing barriers and creating clear educational pathways, particularly for adult students. Initiatives like *Destination: Oakton New Student Orientation* served 762 degree-seeking students across 20 programs and 8 areas of interest.
- **Enhance Workforce Readiness & Community Engagement:** Promotes social mobility and local economic development through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The SBDC served 557 clients over 36 months, with over 54% being minority-owned businesses. Programs include *Empowering the Trades (AI for Small Business Success)* and the *Evanston Kickstarter Cohort*.

- **Advance Racial Equity:** Focuses on dismantling systemic racism via specialized equity programs including ¡ÁNDALE!, AAPI Student Development, B.L.A.C.K. Student Success, TRIO, and resources for undocumented and DACA students.
- **Optimize Operational Foundation:** Modernizes technology and efficiency through projects such as TeamDynamix (enterprise service management system), Procurement Credit Card Workflow improvements, and Payroll SIG Business Process Analysis.

Key Performance Metrics

Metric	Historical Performance	Current Status / Highlights
Fall-to-Fall Persistence	49.7% (Fall 19-20) to 51.5% (Fall 24-25)	Reached 53.4% for Fall 25 - Fall 26. Significant persistence gains seen in Black students (36.6% to 53.8%) and AAPI students (58.6% to 59.5%).
Credentials Awarded	2,061 (AY 22-23) to 2,141 (AY 24-25)	Increased to 2,323 in AY 25-26, representing an +8.5% year-over-year growth .

Next Steps for 2026–2027

Planned actions include integrating TargetX, D2L, and financial data; executing the Academic and Facilities Master Plans; implementing Coursedog; creating parent and family onboarding; and establishing a Justice-Impacted Working Group.

NEW BUSINESS

9/26-1a Approval of Consent Agenda

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

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

9/26-1b Approval of Consent Agenda Items 9/26-2 through 9/26-5

Trustee Stafford offered: “Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the following items 9/26-2 through 9/26-5 as listed in the Consent Agenda.”

9/26-2 Ratification of Payment of Bills for July 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 \$13,687,713.55 for all check amounts as listed and for all purposes as appearing on a report dated July 2026.”

9/26-3 Acceptance of Treasurer’s Report for July 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 July 2026.”

9/26-4 Ratification of Payment of Professional Personnel – Fall 2026

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 ratifies the payment of salaries for teaching on a part-time basis during the fall 2026 semester; the total payment amount is \$2,883,323.74.”

"Be it further resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 ratifies the payment of salaries for teaching on an overload basis during the fall 2026 semester; the total payment amount is \$651,793.70."

9/26-5 Approval of Clinical Practice Agreements

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

Basic Nursing Assistant (1)
Health Information Technology (1)
Pharmacy Technician (6)
Phlebotomy (1)
Physical Therapy Assistant (1)."

Trustee Salzberg seconded the motion. Trustee Yanow 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 carried.

9/26-6 Reaffirmation of Mission, Vision and Values

Trustee Toussaint offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 hereby reaffirms the Mission, Vision, and Values Statement attached hereto."

Trustee Stafford seconded the motion. Trustee Yanow 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 carried.

9/26-7 Authorization to Approve September Purchases

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio 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>Category</u>	<u>Vendor / Location</u>	<u>Amount</u>
9/26-7a	Master Plan Design Consulting Services – Five-Year Contract	Consulting	FGM Architects, Inc. Chicago, IL	\$280,000.00
9/26-7b	Upgraded Internet Services	IT	Astound Business Solutions, LLC Princeton, NJ	\$231,000.00

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Vendor / Location</u>	<u>Amount</u>
			Illinois Dept of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) Des Plaines, IL	\$117,000.00
9/26-7c	Tenable.sc Vulnerability Scanning Software Subscription – Three-Year Contract	IT	SHI International Corporation Somerset, NJ	\$43,118.36
9/26-7d	Construction Services for Adjacencies Phase 3 Bookstore and Welcome Center	Construction	Osman Construction Corporation Arlington Heights, IL	\$1,390,230.60
9/26-7e	Modular and Custom Retail Displays for Adjacencies Phase 3 Bookstore Project	Furniture	Opto International, Inc Wood Dale, IL	\$111,340.00
9/26-7f	Furniture for the Adjacencies Project – Phase 3	Furniture	Forward Space, LLC Wood Dale, IL	\$125,000.00
9/26-7g	CrowdStrike Falcon Software/Services Subscription – One-year Renewal	IT	JensenIT, Inc Des Plaines, IL	\$172,611.00
9/26-7h	Annual Maintenance and Upgrades for Data Warehouse/ Business Intelligence System – Five-Year Contract	IT	Zogo Technologies, LLC Dallas, TX	\$380,917.19
9/26-7i	Advanced Email Threat Protection Cybersecurity Services – One-year Renewal	IT	SHI International Corporation Somerset, NJ	\$26,745.00
9/26-7j	Additional Support for Salesforce Adoption	IT	CRMified Orlando, FL	\$98,000.00
9/26-7k	HLC Re-Accreditation Efforts and Ongoing Leadership Support	Consulting	26 Pines Group, LLC Highland Park, IL	\$80,000.00
9/26-7l	Ratification for Insurance Plans (ICCRMC) – One-Year Renewal	Insurance	Illinois Community College Risk Management Consortium, c/o Nugent Consulting Group Northbrook, IL	\$1,086,906.83
9/26-7m	Ratification for Additional Zoom Licenses	IT	Zoom Communications, Inc. San Jose, CA	\$182,803.84
GRAND TOTAL:				\$4,325,672.82.”

Trustee Salzberg seconded the motion. Trustee Yanow 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 carried.

9/26-8 Preview and Initial Discussion of Upcoming Purchases

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

- a. TouchNet Student Account Advisor Implementation Services
- b. RICOH Printers
- c. Daktronics Scoreboards

9/26-9 Resolution to Transfer Funds for Restricted O&M Construction Costs

Trustee Stafford offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 hereby approves the following transfers effective for Fiscal Year 2026, a total of \$4.5 million; comprised of \$3.3 million from the Education Fund, \$500,000 from the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Fund, and \$700,000 from the Restricted Purpose Fund; to the Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Restricted Fund, for the future payment of approved Master Plan construction projects."

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio seconded the motion. Trustee Yanow 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 carried.

9/26-10 Authorization to Hire a Full-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Member

Trustee Toussaint offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 hereby authorizes the employment of Mr. James Coates for the 2026-2027 academic year, beginning January 2027:

Name	Academic Rank and Assignment	Lane-Step	Base Salary
James Coates	Professor, AHR	D-7	\$85,424."

Trustee Yanow 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 carried.

9/26-11 **Acceptance of a Faculty Retirement**

Trustee Salzberg offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 accepts the retirement of Marian Staats."

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

9/26-12 **Approval of Policy Revisions**

Trustee Eimer offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the proposed revisions to Board Policies 1024, 1026, 1113, 1115, 4307, and policy series 8000, attached hereto."

Trustee Yanow 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 carried.

9/26-13 **First Read of Policy**

Trustee Stafford offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 hereby accepts for review Board Policy Series 1100, 4400 and 5100, and Policies 4117 and 4217 attached hereto, with action to take place at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting."

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

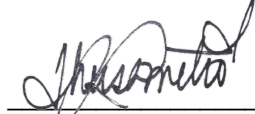
9/26-14 **Notification of Award of Grants**

Funding has been made available to Oakton College:

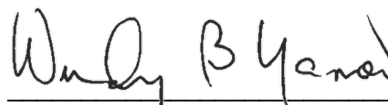
a. FY2027 IBHE Illinois Cooperative Work Study Grant.....	\$50,000.00
b. FY27 Illinois Arts Council General Operating Support (2 grants)	\$15,000.00
c. ICCB Carl D. Perkins CTE FY27 Grant	\$215,834.00
d. ICCB Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Grant	\$99,177.00
TOTAL:	\$380,011.00

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, October 13, 2026 at the Des Plaines Campus. Trustee Yanow made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Trustee Salzberg. A voice vote was called and the meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.



Theresa Bashiri-Remetio, Chair



Wendy B. Yanow, Secretary