



**Ratified at May 20, 2020 meeting**

**Board of Trustees Meeting  
April 15, 2020**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College held on Wednesday, April 15, 2020, at 3 PM via zoom video conference.

**Trustees Present:**

Hon. John Nonna, Chairperson, Dr. LeRoy Mitchell, Vice-Chairperson, Andrew Spano, Vice Chairperson, Robin Bikkal, Esq., Toni Cox-Burns, Sue Gerry, Charles Greco, Dr. Norman Jacknis, Deborah Raizes, Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith, and Yolanda Howell, Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

**Cabinet Members Present:**

Dr. Belinda S. Miles, President, Dr. Vanessa Morest, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs, Dr. Shawn Brown, Chief of Staff and Vice President of Strategic Operations, Brian Murphy, Vice President and Dean of Administrative Services, Eve Lerner, Vice President and Dean, External Affairs, Executive Director, WCC Foundation, Anthony Scordino, Vice President, Information Technology, Tere Wisell, Vice President and Dean, Continuing Education and Workforce Development, Dr. Sara Thompson Tweedy, Vice President and Dean of Student Access, Involvement, & Success.

**Call to Order**

Chairperson John Nonna called the meeting to order.

**Ratification of Minutes**

Trustee Mitchell made a motion seconded by Trustee Robeson Smith to ratify the minutes of the March 18, 2020 Board meeting. The motion passed.

**INFORMATION AND DECISION**

**A. President's Report**

Dr. Belinda S. Miles reported:

President Miles gave updates on the following:

- We are quickly increasing our competency and confidence using technology to fulfill our mission. In these circumstances, sometimes you hear “thank you for your patience as we work through technical difficulties.” But at Westchester Community College, we have charged ahead with no patience for leaving students behind. So my message is “thank you for being bold, taking risks, making changes, fixing mistakes, continuing to work hard, and facing these serious challenges with such care and concern for our students and for each other.”
- Our circumstances are still changing daily, and more and more people in our community are being impacted by the horrible, ravaging effects of sickness and death compounded with continuing uncertainty about COVID-19 and its long-term effects on our daily lives.
- At this time, we want to emphasize the message that WCC is here for you and with you. We are using that hashtag as we share the good works of our faculty and staff who are recruiting and advising students, distributing laptops, establishing a Feeding Westchester distribution location as we did last month.
- There are substantial updates coming from committees today on student academic policy adjustments during the pandemic and other student contributions as well as budget scenarios.
- The Pandemic Response Team, which I chair, convenes often to share updates across the leadership team and quickly respond to new information as we receive it. Janice Gilroy has kept us apprised of updates from the state and county health departments, and Scott Sullivan has been our liaison with the county’s emergency operations center and other agencies coordinating public safety and security.
- Our IT systems continue to support our remote teaching, learning, and operations, with an impressive array of initiatives and services continuing at 100% capacity right now. In a minute, we will hear from our Student Involvement office about how the college has been able to continue a wide array of student engagement even without access to campus.
- We are monitoring our enrollment very closely. So far this spring, our student withdrawal rate from courses is actually lower than the prior two spring terms. This is encouraging, but we know that there may be students who have “disappeared” from classes without making their intentions known to us. Provost Morest and her team are monitoring such activity as Blackboard usage and are intervening with Deans and faculty to support students during this time.

- We have other data sources that help us understand student experiences, and we have a small team working on a survey to students to get a broad view of their experiences.
- Enrollment is key for us as we see the drastic effects that the pandemic is having on federal and state budgets. Few things are certain right now, except that NYS will face incredible budget pressures going forward.
- Consequently, at this time, we need to do everything possible to retain the students in our pipeline and recruit new ones to the college, and we've already proven our ability to adapt quickly to new student needs.
- So there will be more to report at future meetings about online learning, our expansion of the Yonkers location, and updates from our first-ever virtual admission open houses.

To conclude my report, I yield to Mr. Tiago Machado, Director of Student Involvement, to present about the innovative ways we are continuing most of our student activities during remote operations.

Tiago Machado, Director of Student Involvement gave a brief report regarding student activities during remote operations.

## **B. Board Chair's Report**

Trustee Nonna reported:

It has been a very challenging time for us in Westchester County. It is great to hear about the work that has been done by Dr. Miles, the Cabinet and everybody to keep the students engaged and connected. Although we have to keep physical distance we really don't have to keep social distance in the sense of being connected with each other.

There is a lot of talk about older persons contracting this disease. Our students may not be vulnerable in the sense of getting the disease but they are vulnerable in what this disease is going to do to the economy to their prospects for success to their ability to complete their education. It is so gratifying to hear the efforts that are being made by our administration, faculty and staff at the college to keep their education moving along. We have to learn to adapt and adjust to new situations.

Everyone stay safe and healthy. We will get through this and we will come through stronger because we realize that we faced a crisis and we dealt with it head on.

## C. Committees

### Governance

Trustee Spano reported:

The Governance committee had discussion on the following topics.

- The Imaginarium
  - Thank you to the people who volunteered to present. It turns out that a lot of what they were going to talk about has been instituted because of the virus.
- Center for the Arts
  - We had a letter requesting that we have some continuity regarding putting the center in our budget for next year.
- Board Self-Evaluation & Evaluation of the President
  - The evaluations will progress as scheduled
- The Election of Board Officers
  - A committee has been appointed to make recommendations to the Board
    - Committee members are Toni Cox-Burns, Robin Bikkal, Deborah Raizes and Gregory Robeson Smith.

### Program Committee Report

Trustee Jacknis reported:

The Program committee had discussion on the following topics.

- Instructional Continuity Plan
  - The plan is on the college website and serves as a guide for members of the faculty to transition to a fully online learning environment.
    - *The PowerPoint slides will be sent to board members who were not present at the Program meeting.*

### Student Trustee Report

Trustee Greco reported:

The SGA passed a resolution approximately two weeks ago named the Academic Protection Act. The purpose of the resolution was to advocate for the implementation for an optional pass/fail grading format for students at the college. I drafted the resolution but after consulting with Dr. Miles and Dr. Morest I am no longer in support of the resolution but there still is a significant portion of the student government who are in support of it. We were informed for reasons that we do understand that the resolution did not make it through the Faculty Senate.

Currently the main focus of the Student Government is updating students regarding the on-going Covid-19 situation. On behalf of the student government I would like to thank everyone for everything that they have done.

I would like to introduce everyone to the incoming student trustee Estefany Palencia who will be joining the Board in June.

*Estefany Palencia introduced herself to the Board Members.*

#### Finance/Facilities

Trustee Mitchell reported:

The Finance committee had discussion on the following topics.

- The new budget for 2021 and the implications thereof.

#### Trustee Mitchell

#### Resolution: Approval of the 2020-21 College Operating Budget

***WHEREAS***, Westchester Community College seeks to provide accessible, high quality and affordable education and related services to meet the needs of its diverse community; and

***WHEREAS***, Westchester Community College must balance financial stability with affordability to ensure the continued success of its mission; therefore, be it

***RESOLVED***, that the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College herewith approves the College's 2020/21 Unrestricted Operating Budget Request in the amount of \$99,246,000; and be it further

***RESOLVED***, that the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College authorizes a tuition increase of Seventy-Five Dollars (\$75.00) per semester from Two Thousand Two Hundred Ninety Dollars (\$2,290.00) to Two Thousand Three Hundred Sixty-Five Dollars (\$2,365.00) for full-time credit courses, an equivalent increase of 3.3% for part-time credit courses, a change to the equipment utilization fee from Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) for Full-Time Students and Twenty-Five Dollars (\$25.00) for Part-Time Students to Twelve Dollars (\$12.00) Per Credit up to a Maximum of Twelve (12) Credits.

**\*\*Motion: Robeson Smith/Bikkal - Greco against – all in favor**

***The motion passed with Board Members expressing that they have passed this resolution reluctantly and with heavy hearts.***

Trustee Mitchell asked Vice President Brian Murphy to go over the forecast for the month ending March 31, 2020 and the contracts.

Vice President Murphy presented the contracts to the Board.

Resolution: Contract Ratification

**WHEREAS**, Westchester Community College is required to enter into agreements for the continued operation of the College; and

**WHEREAS**, the attached schedule represents those agreements approved by the College since the last meeting of the Board of Trustees; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Westchester Community College hereby ratifies the aforementioned agreements.

<u>CONTRACT #</u>	<u>CONTRACTOR NAME</u>	<u>CONTRACT DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>TERM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
To follow	MONTEFIORE-NEW ROCHELLE	Equipment Usage Agreement. In response to HOSPITAL "COVID-19", WCC to loan at no cost, certain materials and medical equipment to Montefiore- New Rochelle Hospital (vital sign meters and donate disposable temperature probs).	4/10/20-4/9/21	No cost

**\*\*Motion: Mitchell/Robeson Smith – all in favor**

Public Comment

Trustee Nonna invited members of the community for public comment

Professor Sheldon Malev

Addressed the Board regarding the pass/fail grading option for students.

Mayel Levin (student)

Addressed the Board regarding the pass/fail grading option for students.

Peter Singh (student)

Addressed the Board regarding the pass/fail grading option for students.

Adjournment

**\*\*Motion: Mitchell/Jacknis – all in favor.**

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for May 20, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

*Yolanda Howell*

Yolanda Howell  
Secretary, Board of Trustees