

FULL BOARD MEETING – Administration Building, Room 107A**June 11, 2025 – 5:00pm****SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Linda Maykel, Eric Goodwine, Jorgo Gushi, Lori Jones, Lynn Keeley, Satya Mitra (Zoom), Raj Rajeshkumar
TRUSTEES ABSENT: Mariyam Bhatti, Christian Bowlin
CABINET PRESENT: President Luis Pedraja, VP Steve Marini, VP Kathy Rentsch, CAO/ED Deb Spotts, ED Sara Simms, VP Michelle Tufau Afriyie (Zoom), ED Karen Hutner (Zoom), ED John Holloway (Zoom), Jess Ahrens and Lu Costa – Board Secretaries

Meeting commenced at 5:05pm by Chair Linda Maykel and roll call attendance noted.

The Board of Trustees of Quinsigamond Community College, at its regular meeting held at Quinsigamond Community College on Wednesday, June 11, 2025 took the following actions:

Consent Agenda: *The purpose of the Consent Agenda is to expedite business by grouping routine agenda items together to be dealt with by one Board motion without discussion. Any member of the Board or staff may ask that any item on the Consent Agenda be removed and placed later on the agenda for full discussion. Such requests will be automatically respected.*

If any item is not removed from the Consent Agenda, the action on the agenda is approved/accepted by single Board action adopting the Consent Agenda.

1. Minutes from the April 16, 2025 Regular Board Meeting (approve)
2. Trustee Budget Report – FY25 (accept)
3. Informational Personnel Items (accept)
4. President's Out-of-State Travel (accept)
5. President's Leave Time (accept)

Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the Consent Agenda was approved/accepted by the Board.

CHAIR REPORT:

Chair Maykel discussed the following:

- The QCC Foundation is establishing a fund in memory of Liz Pape. Trustees who wish to contribute may reach out to Shirley Dempsey, Assistant Director of Operations, for more information or to make a donation.
- The Public Education Nominating Council (PENC) has approved Charran Fisher to join the Board. Chair Maykel is currently attempting to connect with her to discuss next steps.
- Additional recommendations for new Board members are needed, with a particular focus on increasing Hispanic representation on the Board. Trustees are encouraged to share suggestions with Chair Maykel or President Pedraja.
- The President's Evaluation is due by September 30, 2025. To ensure the Board has time to review and vote on it at the September retreat, the evaluation process should be completed by the end of August.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Executive (4/30/25) Trustees: Maykel, Goodwine, Mitra, and Rajeshkumar

1. **Chair Report:** Chair Maykel provided an update from the Executive Committee meeting held on April 30, 2025. During that meeting, the committee developed an outline for the upcoming committee meetings and the full Board meeting. The committee discussed budget planning for FY26. Executive Director John Holloway presented a report at the SPSS meeting on May 21, 2025, detailing his findings from the recent inquiry into involuntary QCC employee separations by race.

B. Strategic Planning, Education, and Student Success (5/21/25) Trustees: Rajeshkumar (Chair), Bhatti, Bowlin, Keeley, and Maykel

1. **Sabbatical Leave Approvals:** The Board of Trustees considered the Spring 2026 sabbatical leave applications from the following employees: James Brennan, José Castillo, Kristy Glover, Ulises Poyser, and Gilmarie Vongphakdy. **Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the sabbatical leave applications were approved/accepted by the Board.**
2. **Policies for Review/Approval:** The Board of Trustees considered the following policies submitted by College Governance: Interview Reimbursement Policy (Updated), Technology Master Plan Policy (New), and Change to College Registration Policy. **Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the policies were approved/accepted by the Board.**
3. **Presentations from President's Cabinet:** In response to formal request made by the Board at the February 26, 2025 Board meeting, each Vice President presented 10 bullet points stating FY25 accomplishments with metrics and FY26 goals:
 - **Academic Affairs:** Kathy Rentsch, Vice President of Academic Affairs, shared updates on Academic Affairs' FY25 accomplishments. The division identified several key priorities using the NECHE areas of focus and the College's strategic plan. Under the priority of Student Success, Retention & Completion, online course success rates have started to improve due to initiatives including outreach to students who had not logged into Blackboard by the end of the first week of classes and the implementation of peer technology coaches. In support of Quality and Innovation in Academic and Workforce Training, Academic Affairs is expanding assessment efforts to include non-academic support offices. To Engage Corporate and Community Partners to Address Workforce Needs, the College is developing and implementing apprenticeship degree pathways and increasing engagement with corporate and community partners, including the President's Workforce Advisory Council.
 - **Access, Opportunity and Institutional Compliance:** John Holloway, Executive Director of Access, Opportunity and Institutional Compliance, presented his initial ten goals for the Office of Access, Opportunity and Institutional Compliance (AIOC). His initial focus has been on his investigation into involuntary separation rates of QCC employees by race. Based on his findings, he has developed 14 recommendations aimed at fostering a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture. Further details regarding the implementation of these recommendations will be shared shortly.
 - **Administrative Services:** Steve Marini, COO/CFO and Vice President of Administrative Services, provided an overview of recent initiatives and accomplishments within Administrative Services. Institutional Research and Planning (IRaP) has designed and implemented a new cohort model for non-academic outcomes assessment. In terms of Capital Projects, over thirty critical repairs and infrastructure improvements were completed this year, with construction on the Athletic Center expected to begin by the end of the month. Information Technology initiatives included cost-saving measures in cybersecurity and

improvements to the IT help service. In Auxiliary Services, the Worcester Food Hub continues to provide cafeteria food services for the second year in a row. QCC also finalized a five-year parking agreement with the City of Worcester to support downtown access. In the area of Health and Wellness, a new health function has been implemented, and mandated student vaccination compliance has increased significantly. Community Safety and Support initiatives included the implementation of QCC Police Department's comfort dog, K9 Siggie. The revised budget process now includes Cabinet-level review of all budget requests for strategic prioritization, and the Business Office has launched a regular newsletter and training series to communicate important updates on financial processes and procedures. Lastly, Human Resources has introduced Employee Orientation and Management Training Academy to support employee onboarding and leadership development.

- **Enrollment & Student Services:** Barbara Zawalich, Dean of Enrollment and Registrar, presented on behalf of Michelle Tufau Afriyie, Vice President for Strategic Enrollment & Student Engagement. She shared updates on key areas within Enrollment and Student Services. In Admissions, the College is expanding high school partnerships, including guaranteed admission for all Worcester Public Schools graduating seniors. Campus engagement has also increased significantly, with campus visits up 87% year-to-date. In Enrollment Processing and Registrar Services, healthcare cohort enrollment has improved by removing the financial barrier of deposit and improving communication strategies. Student Accessibility Services has enhanced operations with the implementation of AIM software, which improves the management of student accommodations and communication. In Student Affairs, data was presented on the number of students who received services from Athletics, Conduct, Counseling & Wellness, Home Plate Food Pantry, Parenting Student Assistance, Phi Theta Kappa, Student Life, and Veteran Affairs. Financial Aid is experiencing an increase in learners returning to college through MassReconnect and MassEduate, resulting in an increase in Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeals. Barbara also presented information on Last Dollar Grants such as MassGrant+, MassReconnect, and MassEduate, as well as targeted scholarships like those for nursing students. In 2023-2024, 3317 students were awarded a total of \$5,366,157. In 2024-2025, 4661 students were awarded a total of \$10,300,000 with another \$2 million anticipated. Trustee Rajeshkumar asked whether guaranteed admission could be extended to graduating seniors from West Boylston and requested that this be considered in future planning.
- **Institutional Advancement:** Deb Spotts, Chief Advancement Officer & Executive Director of Development, provided an update on Institutional Advancement. She highlighted several key achievements from FY25, including securing \$8,482,252 in grants and philanthropic gifts in support of QCC students and programs. The QCC Alumni Association database now includes 37,056 alumni. She also recognized Community Engagement Director Sean Harris, who received the NISOD Excellence Award. In addition, two new tools were implemented to strengthen advancement operations: GiveCampus, a peer-to-peer online giving platform, and OnBoard, a board management platform for the QCC Foundation. She also addressed the challenges posed by the growing public narrative around "free" community college. She noted that while programs like MassReconnect have expanded access, they have also created the misconception that QCC no longer requires external support through grants or scholarships. The Advancement team continues to work actively to counter this narrative and communicate the ongoing need for philanthropic investment. Looking ahead to FY26, goals include diversifying and strengthening the Foundation Board by recruiting new members. The Advancement team also plans to build internal capacity through the successful onboarding of two new staff members. To further enhance operations, they will implement Financial Edge software to improve grant and philanthropic accounting. Finally, CAO/ED Spotts announced the upcoming launch of the "Together We Will" fundraising campaign.

C. **Audit and Oversight** (5/21/25) *Trustees: Mitra (Chair), Goodwine, Gushi, and Jones*

1. **FY26 Budget:** Trustee Mitra provided an overview of the FY26 budget that was presented by Vice President Steve Marini and Associate Vice President Deb LaFlash at the Audit and Oversight meeting on May 21, 2025. The FY26 budget is based on 3% increase to FY25 estimates and reflects increased program fees that were approved by the Board. FY26 budget also includes \$1 million “operational carry forward” from FY25 as well as \$500,000 to be returned to college reserves and \$500,000 for contingencies. **Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the FY26 budget was approved/accepted by the Board.**

OTHER BUSINESS:

- A. **2025-26 Board Meeting Calendar:** The Board discussed the 2025-26 Board Meeting Calendar. **Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the 2025-26 Board Meeting Calendar was approved/accepted by the Board.**

QCC Foundation Report – *Jorgo Gushi, QCC Foundation President*

Foundation President Gushi discussed the following:

- Foundation President Gushi noted that the Foundation set a fundraising goal of \$800,000 for the year and has already surpassed that target, reaching 240% of the goal with \$1.9 million raised to date.
- He kindly encouraged all Trustees and Foundation Board members to contribute by June 30, with the goal of achieving 100% participation in giving.
- Over the past six months, the Foundation has also invested in three new software platforms to strengthen operations and enhance efficiency.

Student Trustee Report – *Christian Bowlin*

Trustee Bowlin was not able to attend the meeting, so no Student Trustee Report was presented at this time.

President's Report – *Dr. Luis Pedraja*

A. Ongoing Initiatives/Campus Updates

- President Pedraja shared that the House has proposed changing Pell Grant eligibility for part-time students to a minimum of 7.5 credits. In preparation, the College is working on contingency plans, including offering different types of course formats. If passed, this change would not go into effect until Fall 2026. In contrast, the Senate's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee has proposed a more favorable budget, which maintains current credit-hour eligibility requirements and does not include risk sharing. It also includes Workforce Pell and an additional \$10.5 billion in funding for the Pell program.
- The College recently received notice that the TRIO grant will be discontinued, and all remaining TRIO funds must be drawn down by August 31, 2025. Although a renewal application was submitted, no response has been received, and all proposals must be resubmitted. The grant currently supports services for approximately 150 students, and funds two full-time staff members along with several part-time positions. The College is actively exploring opportunities to leverage other funding sources to continue offering some of the program's key services and minimize disruption for students. *Additional information added after the meeting:* The current TRIO award totals \$1,330,392 over five years (\$272,364 per year) and is set to end on August 31, 2025. Three proposals were submitted with a start date of September 1, 2025 totaling \$4 million (\$1.3 million each for renewal, new TRIO ESL program, and new TRIO STEM-Healthcare program).
- Monday, June 9, 2025 was President Pedraja's last day as Chair of MACC, although he will remain on the Executive Committee next year.

B. Presidential Report & 2025-26 Goals:

- President Pedraja presented his goals for the FY26 academic year, which align with the five-year strategic goals approved by the Board of Trustees in 2022. These include strengthening student support systems by increasing the number of academic advisors and expanding wraparound services. The President emphasized continued efforts to close achievement gaps, with a particular focus on student demographics that require additional support to ensure equitable success.
- He also highlighted the importance of maintaining adequate faculty resources to support enrollment growth and announced an additional \$20,000 investment in faculty development in FY26. The College will also continue advocating for increased faculty compensation at the state level. In response to recommendations from the AI Task Force, funding will be allocated for programming and professional development for faculty related to artificial intelligence.
- Key academic initiatives include the implementation of apprenticeship degree pathways and collaboration with Worcester State University on the Cybersecurity Range, supported by a \$5 million state earmark. The College will also prioritize the successful launch of the Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship and continue its commitment to sound fiscal management, including adding \$500,000 to the capital reserve.
- Fundraising efforts will remain a priority, with a targeted strategy to raise \$1–2 million in FY26 for the QCC Center and other capital improvements. The College also aims to complete the Alden Library renovation and continue the implementation of the J1 Student Information System (SIS).
- An additional goal for the year is to mitigate the impact of governmental and higher education policy changes on QCC. This includes developing strategies to sustain federally funded programs, increasing advocacy at both the state and federal levels to protect key initiatives such as Pell Grant access, free community college, and the SUCCESS program. The President also aims to implement communication and action strategies to ensure timely response to emerging situations and changes that may affect the College.
- **Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the President's Goals for 2025-26 were approved/accepted by the Board.**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:40pm

Upcoming Meetings:

Executive Committee – Wednesday, August 20, 2025 – 4:00pm

Retreat & Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, September 11, 2025 – 12:00–4:00pm

Executive Committee – Wednesday, September 17, 2025 – 4:00pm

Strategic Planning, Education & Student Success Committee – Wednesday, October 8, 2025 – 4:00pm

Audit & Oversight Committee – Wednesday, October 8, 2025 – 5:00pm

Regular Board Meeting – Wednesday, October 15, 2025 – 5:00pm

**Respectfully submitted,
Jess Ahrens, Special Assistant to the President**