



## Full Board Meeting Minutes

QCC Board of Trustees

Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Administration Building Room 107A, 670 West Boylston Street, Worcester, MA 01606

**Trustees Present:** Linda Maykel, Eric Goodwine (remote), Max German, Mari Gonzalez, Jorgo Gushi (remote), Noah MacDonald, Jessica Mandes (remote), Satya Mitra, Raj Rajeshkumar

**Trustees Absent:** Lynn Keeley

**Others Present:** President Luis Pedraja, Michelle Tufau Afriyie, Kathy Rentsch, Sean Nelson, John Holloway, Sara Simms, Deb Spotts, Deb LaFlash, Allison Vickstrom, Flo LeClair, Karen Hurner (remote), Jen Arner Welsh (remote), Jess Ahrens Montecalvo – Board Secretary

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### Meeting called to order at 5:08 PM by Chair 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, December 17, 2025, took the following actions:

**I. 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.*

- A. Minutes from the October 15, 2025 Regular Board Meeting (approve)
- B. Trust Fund Report – FY26 (accept)
- C. Informational Personnel Items (accept)
- D. President's Out-of-State Travel (accept)
- E. President's Leave Time (accept)

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the Consent Agenda (A-E) was approved/accepted by the Board.***

**II. Chair Updates**

*Dr. Linda Maykel, Board Chair*

- Chair Maykel welcomed the three new trustees. Trustees Max German, Mari Gonzalez, and Jessica Mandes introduced themselves and spoke about their backgrounds:
  - Max German spoke about his roots in Worcester and Shrewsbury, his educational journey from QCC to Boston College, and his current enrollment in law school. He emphasized his passion for community colleges and his desire to advocate for their importance.

- Mari Gonzalez described her work as the executive director of El Buen Samaritano, a nonprofit organization in Worcester that provides food, clothing, and essential services to families in need. She highlighted her personal connection to QCC through her daughter, who is currently a student, and expressed her commitment to addressing food insecurity and supporting educational opportunities.
- Jessica Mandes shared her experience as a QCC alum who transferred to Fitchburg State University, became a teacher, and later advanced to her current role as Director of Multilingual Education for Worcester Public Schools. She also serves as Vice President of Worcester Latino Dollars for Scholars and is passionate about supporting students' access to higher education.
- Chair Maykel expressed excitement about having nearly a full board and noted that the elected alumni trustee appointment is expected by the next meeting.
- Chair Maykel provided an overview of recent events and activities. She highlighted the Donor Reception, held at the JMAC Worcester on October 30, 2025. She spoke about the MA Governance Leadership Institute meeting at Holy Cross on November 7, 2025, where trustees and presidents discussed state and federal updates. She mentioned her video interview with President Pedraja for the November 2025 edition of [Campus Connections](#), featuring the QCC Board of Trustees. Lastly, she spoke about the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Auxilium Center for Entrepreneurship on November 13, 2025.

### **III. Standing Committee Reports**

#### **A. Audit and Oversight Committee (November 12, 2025)**

*Trustees: Mitra (Chair), Goodwine, and Gushi*

##### **1. Office of the State Auditor's Audit Report Update**

- Interim Vice President Sean Nelson presented an overview of the College's response to the state audit, conducted by the Office of the State Auditor (SAO). He outlined the scope and purpose of the audit, which focused largely on the use of federal COVID relief funds, cybersecurity training, internal controls, and employee settlement processes. Trustees were informed that the audit covered activities from March 2020 through June 2023 and resulted in three primary findings: Cybersecurity training compliance for employees, internal controls over financial and HR systems, and documentation of processes for employee settlement agreements.
- Interim VP Nelson reported that all recommendations have either been implemented or are in progress. The College submitted its official post-audit review response to the SAO on November 20, 2025.
- Trustees discussed follow-up questions and agreed that any remaining items would be reviewed through the Audit and Oversight Committee.

##### **2. FY26 Budget Update**

- Interim Vice President Sean Nelson provided a budget update, reporting strong financial performance for FY26. Revenue exceeded projections while expenses remained below budget, resulting in an operating surplus of approximately \$2 million at this point in the fiscal year.

- He outlined strategic investments made possible by this surplus, including funding for a campus lab, initiating the facilities master plan, upgrading audiovisual systems in the auditorium, and enhancing the QCC Center.
- Looking ahead to FY27, Interim VP Nelson cautioned that state funding may decrease by 5–10 percent due to budget constraints, but strong enrollment trends suggest the College will remain financially stable. He emphasized the importance of considering long-term financial planning.

**B. Strategic Planning, Education, and Student Success Committee (November 12, 2025)**

*Trustees: Rajeshkumar (Chair), MacDonald, Mandes, Maykel, and Keeley*

**1. Fall 2026 Sabbatical Leave Application**

- The Board considered Professor Mark Bates' request for sabbatical leave for Fall 2026 (half year leave at full salary), as presented at the SPESS Committee meeting on November 12, 2025.

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the Fall 2026 Sabbatical Leave Application was approved/accepted by the Board.***

**2. 2026-2027 College Calendar**

- The Board considered the 2026-2027 College Calendar, as presented at the SPESS Committee meeting on November 12, 2025.

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the 2026-2027 College Calendar was approved/accepted by the Board.***

**3. Spring 2026 Enrollment Update**

- Vice President Michelle Tufau Afriyie shared updates about Spring 2026 enrollment. With 41 days remaining before classes begin, the College has achieved 74 percent of its credit enrollment goal and is seeing an increase in full-time students. Compared to the same time last year, headcount is up 27 percent and credit hours have increased by 21 percent.
- VP Tufau Afriyie noted that these gains reflect coordinated, college-wide efforts, including improved onboarding processes, advising, and orientation programs for students. She invited trustees to participate in an upcoming registration event on Saturday, January 10, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM to engage with incoming students.

**C. Executive Committee (October 29, 2025)**

*Trustees: Maykel, Goodwine, Mitra, and Rajeshkumar*

- Chair Maykel emphasized the importance of 100 percent participation from trustees in annual giving, encouraging contributions before year-end for tax benefits and noting that gifts can be spread out over time. She stressed that even modest contributions matter and help demonstrate board commitment.
- The Board discussed the growing demand for QCC's HomePlate Food Pantry, which has served over 780 families so far this year compared to 320 last year. The food pantry is located in the Student Outreach and Resource (SOAR) Wing, which includes multiple student support services, including counseling,

parenting student resources, and IT assistance. The pantry offers an app-based ordering system, refrigerated lockers for pickup, and a refrigerated truck for downtown campus deliveries. Beyond food, the pantry provides assistance with SNAP enrollment, housing support, and other social services. Recent initiatives include a successful Giving Day for the pantry and a toy drive that benefited approximately 100 families.

#### **IV. QCC Foundation Report**

*Jorgo Gushi, QCC Foundation President*

- Trustee Gushi reported strong progress in fundraising efforts. Faculty and staff giving has increased to 5.2 percent, and alumni donor participation is increasing, with 37 donors so far compared to 60 total in FY25. The Foundation has acquired 66 new donors year-to-date, surpassing last year's total.
- Digital campaigns through the Give Campus platform have been successful. Giving Tuesday raised \$3,500 against the \$1,000 goal, and combined efforts from Giving Day and Giving Tuesday generated \$12,000 from 118 donors.
- Scholarship demand remains high, with 222 applications received for the fall semester. The Foundation awarded 52 scholarships totaling \$36,700, supporting 36 students.
- Trustee Gushi also announced the addition of Dr. Cherise Hamblin, an OBGYN at UMass Memorial, to the Foundation Board.

#### **V. Student Trustee Report**

*Noah MacDonald, Student Trustee*

- Student Trustee Noah MacDonald outlined initiatives to revitalize student engagement, including partnering with the Student Government Association (SGA) to establish a coalition of student club leaders to allocate funds for campus activities and exploring a recurring fund from the QCC Foundation to support student events. Other updates included efforts to make first aid kits more visible in classrooms and preparations for student government elections next semester.

#### **VI. President's Report**

*Dr. Luis Pedraja, QCC President*

##### **A. Ongoing Initiatives & Campus Updates**

- President Pedraja addressed recent incidents of violence, reaffirming the College's commitment to safety. He described measures in place on campus, such as active shooter training, upgraded communication systems, centralized door locking, and counseling resources.
- He celebrated the recognition of Shanan Stratis, Assistant Dean of the School of Healthcare, as Healthcare Educator of the Year by the Worcester Business Journal.
- President Pedraja attended the NECHE Commission Meeting in November as well as the NECHE Annual Meeting in December and provided an update on the new NECHE standards, which will take effect in 2026.
- He announced the formation of a committee to review and update the College's mission, vision, and values. This process will involve broad campus input and

culminate in board approval, ideally in Fall 2026. He also discussed plans to begin work on a new strategic plan, which will align with the updated mission and vision.

- He provided an overview of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC) legislative priorities, including funding for free community college, increased support for the SUCCESS program, and equitable compensation for faculty and staff. He reported that QCC submitted an earmark request for \$22.5 million under the BRIGHT Act to address parking lot resurfacing and drainage needs. Trustees are encouraged to attend the Annual Legialtive Breakfast on Friday, February 6, 2026 at 8:00 AM in HLC109 to discuss these key priorities with legislators.
- President Pedraja shared updates on campus projects, including library renovations that should be finished by the end of Summer 2026 and carpeting replacement in the SOAR Wing during the winter break.
- He concluded by noting his upcoming participation in a meeting with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to discuss partnerships between community colleges and research institutions.

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.***

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- **Executive Committee** – Wednesday, January 28, 2025, at 4:00 PM, Zoom
- **Strategic Planning, Education & Student Success Committee** – Wednesday, February 18, 2025, at 4:00 PM, Zoom
- **Audit & Oversight Committee** – Wednesday, February 18, 2025, at 5:00 PM, Zoom
- **Regular Board Meeting** – Wednesday, March 11, 2025, at 5:00 PM, Room 107A

Respectfully submitted,

Jess Ahrens Montecalvo, Executive Assistant to the President & Secretary to the Board