



## Full Board Meeting Minutes

QCC Board of Trustees

Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 5:00 PM

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

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

**Trustees Absent:** Eric Goodwine

**Others Present:** President Luis Pedraja, Michelle Tufau Afriyie, Kathy Rentsch, Sean Nelson, John Holloway, Sara Simms, Deb Spotts, Deb LaFlash, Nicole Heldenbergh, Janine Bradley, Karen Hutner (remote), Jen Arner Welsh (remote), Jess Ahrens Montecalvo – Board Secretary

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### Meeting called to order at 5:03 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, March 11, 2026, 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 December 17, 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*

- Board Chair Linda Maykel reported that Flo LeClair was elected as the Alumna Trustee by the Alumni Association. Her information is currently under review by the Governor’s Office, and the Board is looking forward to her official appointment by the Governor.
- Chair Maykel shared that the QCC Legislative Breakfast was successful this year, with strong attendance, engaged legislators, and powerful student stories. Congressman Jim McGovern and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll both delivered remarks, expressing their support for community colleges while acknowledging the challenges in the current legislative environment.

- President Pedraja attended the ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C. with five trustees, including the Student Trustee. President Pedraja shared that Student Trustee Noah MacDonald did a great job and that the attendees heard from interesting speakers, including the Under Secretary of Education. Trustees shared their reflections on the experience, describing it as impactful and meaningful.

### III. Standing Committee Reports

#### A. Audit and Oversight Committee (February 18, 2026)

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

##### 1. Proposed Fee Increase, Effective Fall 2026

- Interim Vice President Sean Nelson presented the proposed FY27 fee increases, effective Fall 2026. He explained that the Department of Higher Education (DHE) establishes an annual cap on fee increases based on cost-of-living data. For the current year, the allowable increase was capped at 2.76%.
- The proposal applied the 2.76% increase to applicable fees, including the educational service fee, student support fees, and program and lab fees. Lab and program fee increases range from \$2 to \$73, depending on the program.
- Interim VP Nelson noted that approximately 91% of QCC students would be fully covered for the fee increase through financial aid. Trustees discussed the small number of students who may be affected and noted the College's efforts to support these students through scholarships and other resources.

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the proposed FY27 fee increases were approved/accepted by the Board.***

##### 2. FY26 Budget Update

- Interim Vice President Sean Nelson reported that spring and fall enrollment exceeded projections used in the Board-approved budget. Revenue exceeded projections while expenses remained below budget, resulting in an anticipated surplus of approximately \$2 million for this fiscal year. He noted that surplus funds would be used for strategic investments and to strengthen reserves.

#### B. Strategic Planning, Education, and Student Success Committee (February 18, 2026)

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

##### 1. Spring 2026 Enrollment Update

- Vice President Michelle Tufau Afriyie shared the Spring 2026 BOT Enrollment Report. Final head count for Spring 2026 was 7,986 students (7% increase over Spring 2025), taking 65,757 credits (8.4% increase). The enrollment report also included student demographics, enrollment by program, modality, and more.

##### 2. Recap: Enrollment & Student Services Update

- VP Tufau Afriyie shared a summary of her presentation at the SPSS Committee meeting. Her division is focused on improving student persistence and retention and on gathering data to better understand student needs and evaluate the effectiveness of student services such as the food pantry and counseling. She noted key strategic investments, including implementing mandatory online

orientation and hiring an additional staff member in enrollment processing to assist with fraud prevention.

- Trustees also discussed student attrition. VP Tufau Afriyie noted challenges of capturing course demand in current system. Student withdrawals are often driven by life circumstances, financial challenges, health issues, or work obligations, as well as academic performance.

### **3. Recap: Academic Affairs Update**

- Vice President Kathy Rentsch shared a summary of her presentation at the SPESS Committee meeting. The presentation covered four retention initiatives in Academic Affairs relative to curriculum quality and student support. Initiatives included participation in the Gardner Institute's Curriculum Analytics Institute, involving 40 faculty, advisors, and administrators examining curriculum. VP Rentsch also highlighted the First Generation Student Center, which currently serves approximately 449 students through intensive advising, academic support, tutoring, and transfer assistance. Additional initiatives included behavioral nudging strategies through a partnership with Persistence Plus and faculty development through the Pedagogy of Real Talk program, which focuses on relationship-centered teaching practices. Early data suggests positive impacts on student retention and faculty engagement.

## **C. Executive Committee (January 28, 2026)**

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

### **1. Executive Committee Meeting Schedule**

- Chair Maykel reported a change in the Executive Committee meeting schedule. Going forward, the Executive Committee will convene briefly prior to the other committee meetings, unless pressing matters require otherwise.

## **IV. Other Business**

### **A. Updated Board of Trustees Calendar**

- The Board reviewed the proposed updates to the 2025-2026 Board meeting calendar: Executive Committee meetings were moved to occur prior to the other committee meetings, and the Full Board meeting originally scheduled for Wednesday, April 29, 2026 was rescheduled to Tuesday, April 28, 2026.

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the updated Board meeting calendar was approved/accepted by the Board.***

### **B. Academic Standing Policy**

- Janine Bradley, Associate Director of Advising, presented a summary of the proposed revised Academic Standing Policy. She explained that the current policy is punitive and contains gaps that negatively impact students, including dismissals without adequate notice and loopholes that allow students to continue enrolling without meaningful support. The revised policy replaces punitive language with supportive terminology, introducing "Academic Notice" in place of probation and "Academic Pause" in place of dismissal. The new policy provides students with up to three semesters of academic

notice before an academic pause is imposed, emphasizes proactive advising and intervention, and applies academic standing review to summer terms.

- The Academic Standing Policy was updated by the Academic Policies and Standards Council, and the revised policy was approved by the College at the All College Forum on March 3, 2026.

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the revised Academic Standing Policy was approved/accepted by the Board.***

### **C. Emeritus Approval**

- The Board considered recommendations for emeritus status. Four retiring faculty members were considered for Professor Emeritus status, having met all eligibility criteria and been recommended by the Emeritus Selection Committee:
  - **Patricia Creelman** - Professor of Nurse Education PNP/AND Program
  - **Robert Desilets** - Professor of Computer Information Systems
  - **Ken Wong** - Professor of History
- One retiring staff member was considered for Administrative Emeritus status, having met the eligibility criteria and been recommended by the Area Vice President and the President:
  - **Kevin Ritacco** - Executive Director of Police Academy Programs & Clery Compliance; Former Chief of Campus Police

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded and a vote by roll call, the recommended emeritus appointments were approved/accepted by the Board.***

### **D. Commencement 2026 – Trustees’ Citizen’s Award Nominations**

- Commencement 2026 will take place on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 1:00 PM at the DCU Center, located at 50 Foster Street, Worcester. Trustees are invited to participate as members of the platform party. Please notify Jess Ahrens Montecalvo by March 26, 2026 if you plan to attend and if you will need rental regalia.
- **Trustees’ Citizen’s Award Nominations:** Each year, the Board of Trustees presents the Trustees’ Citizen’s Award at the Commencement ceremony to recognize an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to advancing the mission of QCC. Please note that sitting trustees and individuals employed by the College in a paid capacity are not eligible. Please contact Chair Maykel if you would like to submit a nomination.

## **V. QCC Foundation Report**

*Jorgo Gushi, QCC Foundation President*

### **A. QCC Foundation YTD Fundraising Report**

- Chief Advancement Officer Deb Spotts presented the QCC Foundation Fundraising Report on behalf of Trustee and QCC Foundation President Jorgo Gushi. As of the end of February, the Foundation had raised nearly \$300,000 with 240 individual donors, exceeding donor participation from the prior year. New fundraising platform, Give Campus, has increased donor engagement, particularly among younger alumni. Trustees discussed the importance of achieving 100% giving participation among both the QCC Foundation Board and the Board of Trustees.

## **VI. Student Trustee Report**

*Noah MacDonald, Student Trustee*

- Student Trustee Noah MacDonald shared that he is working with the QCC Foundation to establish scholarships for the Student Government Association (SGA). He noted upcoming student government elections, increased participation in Phi Theta Kappa, and the approval of two new student clubs. He shared that the Coalition of Rising Entrepreneurs (CORE) student group received \$5,000 from the QCC Foundation, and he's working with Rocky Knight, Director of the Center of Entrepreneurship, to ensure a smooth transition as he prepares to transfer after the semester.

## **VII. President's Report**

*Dr. Luis Pedraja, QCC President*

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

- President Pedraja shared several positive updates, including a compliment from the parent of a dental student and strong relationship with the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). Laura Gambino, Vice President of the Commission, will be coming to present later this week, and President Pedraja was recently asked to chair the NECHE Student Success Committee.
- President Pedraja reviewed key legislative priorities, including continued funding for Free Community College, SUCCESS program investments, equitable compensation for community college faculty and staff, infrastructure funding through the BRIGHT Act, Pell Grant sustainability, and workforce Pell implementation. He reported that Representative Jim O'Day submitted an earmark for \$22.5M to support the Drainage, Resurfacing, and Soil Mitigation of Parking Lots and Surface Roads and that Senator Robyn Kennedy submitted an earmark for \$14.75M for Accessibility and Life Safety Upgrades to the Administration Building and Child Study Center, and HVAC Repairs. He announced that DCAMM has awarded the College \$1 million to be expended within the next 120 days for upgrades to the QCC Center; expected improvements include the gym flooring, basketball hoops, audiovisual equipment, scoreboard, and bleachers.
- President Pedraja informed the Board that he will be on brief vacation during spring break, from March 23-27, and that Sean Nelson will be serving as Acting President during that period.

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:27 PM.***

### **Upcoming Meetings:**

- **Executive Committee** – Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 3:00 PM, Zoom
- **Strategic Planning, Education & Student Success Committee** – Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 4:00 PM, Zoom
- **Audit & Oversight Committee** – Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 5:00 PM, Zoom
- **Regular Board Meeting** – Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at 5:00 PM, Room 107A

Respectfully submitted,

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