

**MINUTES OF THE ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026
GILMAN CENTER, LIBRARY
MIDDLETOWN CAMPUS
5:00 pm**

Present: Chair Weddell, Kris Young, Peter Bambino, Maria Bruni, Eli Hart, Tom Hunter, Ralph Martucci, Karen Mejia, Charissa Gonzalez

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Weddell called the meeting to order at 5:11 pm.
- A. Invocation
 - B. Pledge of Allegiance

II. CONSENT AGENDA (Items A through D)

Note: Consent Agenda items held for discussion will be moved to Item E

- A. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2025
- B. Approval of Financial Statements for November and December
- C. Approval of Appointments

Motion to approve, Tom Hunter, seconded by Eli Hart. Passed unanimously.

II. PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Dr. Kristine Young

- President Young shared that yesterday was the first day of the spring semester and offered Dr. Hackman the opportunity to report on enrollment updates.
 - Dr. Hackman noted a 9.37% increase in head count and a 10.97% increase in credit hours and FTEs.
 - We have seen a strong increase in full-time and part-time credit hours, as well as an uptick in first-time students.
 - Retention efforts through Guided Pathways and Title V have been positive with significant gains in Hispanic, Black, and adult learner enrollments.
 - Dr. Young and Dr. Hackman expressed their gratitude for the enrollment gains and the efforts of the Enrollment Management and Student Services teams.
- President Young offered a briefing of the 2026-2027 Executive Budget, highlighting:
 - The Governor's proposal to maintain the community college 100% funding floor.
 - The governor's proposal to invest \$8.5 million in expanding SUNY Reconnect to include new programs like logistics, air traffic control, and transportation is mentioned.
 - The Governor's proposal includes a reduction of the EOP program by \$2.6 million. Dr. Young noted the need to track this impact.
 - The Governor's proposal also includes a reform of certificates of residency to make it easier for out-of-county students. We will also need to monitor this change.
 - Additional Executive Budget highlights noted:
 - **Expanded “free community college” support in high-demand fields:**
The state proposes \$12.5M new funding to expand the Opportunity Promise Scholarship, including eligibility for additional high-demand programs and for students who already hold a degree but are returning for nursing. That directly aligns with workforce and adult-learner demand at colleges like ours.
 - **Targeted support for adult learners with foster care backgrounds:**
A small but meaningful expansion of Reconnect for Foster Scholars is included. It's not huge money, but it reflects continued state attention to adult learners with complex support needs.
 - **Significant capital funding for community colleges statewide:**
The budget includes \$128 million specifically for SUNY community colleges for critical maintenance and infrastructure. The impact will depend on how funds are allocated, but this reinforces the state's recognition that community college facilities need attention.
 - **Potential SUNY student-success dollars we're tracking carefully:**
The budget includes funding for internships, emergency aid, and student-success models like ACE/ASAP at SUNY. We are monitoring whether SUNY community colleges are eligible, because these programs could support retention and completion if they flow to our sector.

Respectfully submitted by Charissa Gonzalez

- **Large child care investments that may help student parents indirectly:**
While not campus-specific, the state is significantly expanding child care subsidies and early childhood funding. Over time, that can reduce a major barrier for our students and staff, especially working parents.

- Dr. Young shared that SUNY Orange and SUNY Empire have won a \$100,000 grant to create a collaborative Nursing Pathway Innovation Hub using monies provided via the state's High Needs Nursing Fund. The initiative is a joint effort between SUNY Orange's Health Professions division, SUNY Orange Plus' workforce development branch and SUNY Empire, designed to strengthen academic mobility and student progress across the nursing education continuum. While many nursing programs are addressing enrollment challenges, this proposal focuses on a different and pressing statewide need--optimizing nursing program capacity and ensuring that qualified learners move efficiently from entry-level healthcare training through RN licensure and BSN (bachelor of science in nursing) completion.
- **SUNY Orange Announces DSP-III Microcredential:**
Following the success of its initial Direct Support Professionals (DSP) microcredential offerings 18 months ago, SUNY Orange announces the availability of its newly approved two-course DSP-III curriculum for the Spring 2026 semester. The DSP-III microcredential is designed to improve students' understanding of key aspects of counseling, the helping process, setting person-centered goals and supports, cultural competence, recognizing bias and its impact on the therapeutic relationship, making informed choices, and demonstrating the ability to seek and use feedback to acquire and improve counseling skills.
- **SUNY Orange Plus and FoodTEC Offer Culinary Cannabis Courses:**
Orange County FoodTEC, in collaboration with SUNY Orange Plus, will be offering five culinary cannabis courses during the Spring semester designed to open doors to exciting opportunities for chefs, aspiring professionals, entrepreneurs and hospitality professionals in one of today's fastest growing industries. The courses will provide students with hands-on training and experiential opportunities so they can work safely, legally, and effectively with cannabis in culinary, beverage, and wellness environments. The first two courses kick off in late February with the remaining three courses lined up to begin in late March or April.
- Athletics Updates:
 - Micah Brand was named assistant athletic director. He started in that role on Jan. 12. Micah has served as our head women's basketball coach since 2021. Previously, Brand had served as an assistant coach on the men's basketball staff under current head coach Thomas Rickard.
 - Men's Basketball: 16-2. The men's team is ranked 20th in this week's national Division II rankings and has won its last three games.
 - Women's Basketball: 1-12
 - Both teams visit Lackawanna College on Thursday and host Mercer County on Saturday. (Women tip off at Noon, the men begin at 2 p.m.)

III. **STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT** - Student Trustee, Peter Bambino

- Peter reported that there are three student Senators who will be attending SUNY's Advocacy Day in Albany.
- Chair Weddell thanked Peter and his fellow Senate students for the letters written to the Governor which had an impact on the Bronson Bill that Governor Hochul vetoed.

V. **BOARD DISCUSSION I**

- A. Responses to Submitted Reports from Administration, Shared Governance, & Foundation
 - Chair Weddell asked Dr. Hackman to elaborate on the dental hygiene students taking first place at the conference that they competed in.
- B. Updates from ACCT and/or NYCCT - Chair Weddell and/or Trustees at large

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>
Academic and Student Services	Karen Mejia
Audit and Finance	Ralph Martucci
Enrollment and Retention	Maria Bruni
Governance and Nominating	Tom Hunter
Policy	Flo Hannes
Presidents Performance Review and Compensation	Ralph Martucci

Academic & Student Services Committee – Karen Mejia, Chair: The committee met in December and discussed their charges and responsibilities. The committee will continue their discussions regarding leverage points and resources within the Academic & Student Services area. The group continues to discuss expansions of programs. Karen reported that we have completed the five years of the Title V grant.

Audit & Finance Committee – Ralph Martucci, Chair: The committee is currently working with the auditors to finalize our audit report from the last academic year. The auditors are scheduled to report the final document at the February board meeting.

Enrollment & Retention Committee – Maria Bruni, Chair: Maria thanked Dr. Harewood and the entire Enrollment Management and Student Services team for all of their hard work towards increasing enrollment & retention.

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Board Effectiveness

- a. 2025-26
- b. 2026-27

- Dr. Young revisited the discussion on board effectiveness, focusing on the need for the board to spend more time on future-oriented work.
- Trustees share their thoughts on the importance of advocacy, ambassadorship, financial stewardship, and strategic direction.
- The need for the board to be more involved in financial planning, risk management, and expanding nursing and dental hygiene programs were highlighted.
- The Trustees express a desire to spend more time on strategic direction, advocacy, and understanding the financials of the college.
- The Trustees express a willingness to collaborate and brainstorm on ways to enhance the college's future prospects.

IX. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS - None

X. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC - None

- A. A sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting. Each member of the public wishing to address the Board will be granted 2 minutes to speak, at which time, the Board will ask you to have a seat to allow others to speak.

XI. BOARD DISCUSSION II - Open Discussion - None

XII. PROPOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

XIII. BOARD ADJOURNMENT - Motion to adjourn at 7:01, Ralph Martucci, seconded by Eli Hart. Passed unanimously.

Next Meeting
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Great Room, Kaplan Hall
Newburgh Campus

Respectfully submitted by Charissa Gonzalez