



**Minutes of the December 16, 2025 Regular Meeting of the
Board of Trustees of Community College District 535**

The 816th meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 was conducted on December 16, 2025 at the Des Plaines campus of Oakton College, 1600 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, Illinois.

Closed Session – Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Burns called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. in room 1502. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Martha Burns	Chair	Present
Trustee Theresa Bashiri-Remetio	Vice Chair	Present
Trustee William Stafford	Secretary	Present
Trustee Micah Eimer		Present
Trustee Benjamin Salzberg		Present
Trustee Marie Lynn Toussaint		Present
Trustee Wendy Yanow		Present
Trustee Chris AbiNader	Student Trustee	Present

Also present in room 1502 were Dr. Joianne Smith, President; Johanna Fine, Chief Human Resources Officer; Dr. Bernard Little, Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Ileo Lott, Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Michele Roberts, Vice President for Administrative Affairs.

Chair Burns asked for a motion to go into closed session under the exceptions to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, with the purpose of reviewing closed session minutes of November 18, 2025; and considering the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees, collective negotiating matters, and pending litigation.

Trustee Salzberg made the motion, seconded by Trustee Yanow. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye
Trustee AbiNader	Aye

At 6:01 p.m., Trustee Salzberg made a motion to adjourn the closed session meeting which was seconded by Trustee Stafford. A voice vote was called and the closed session was adjourned.

Open Session – Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Burns called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 6:11 p.m. in room 1506.

Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Martha Burns	Chair	Present
Trustee Theresa Bashiri-Remetio	Vice Chair	Present
Trustee William Stafford	Secretary	Present
Trustee Micah Eimer		Present
Trustee Benjamin Salzberg		Present
Trustee Marie Lynn Toussaint		Present
Trustee Wendy Yanow		Present
Trustee Chris AbiNader	Student Trustee	Present

Also present in room 1506:

Leadership: Dr. Joianne Smith, President; Dr. Kelly Becker, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning; Johanna Fine, Chief Human Resources Officer; Dr. Bernard Little, Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Ileo Lott, Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Michele Roberts, Vice President for Administrative Affairs.

Administrators: Marc Battista, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Matthew Boutilier, Director of Online Instruction and Curriculum; Steve Butera, Director of Communications and External Relations; Dr. Sebastian Contreras Jr., Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Leana Cuellar, Dean of Access, Equity and Diversity; Julia Gray, Interim Director of Campus Technology; Thomas Hicks Jr., Director of Student Success and Academic Intervention; Dr. Jesse Ivory, Assistant Vice President for Workforce Innovation and College Partnerships; Jacob Jeremiah, Dean of Library; Dr. Mark Kiel, Dean of Counseling, Health and Wellness Services; Dr. Ashley Knight, Interim Dean of Liberal Arts; Dr. Andrea Lehmacher, Director of Marketing; Dr. Kanchana Mendes, Dean of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Nathan Norman, Sr. Director of Workforce Development; Christine Paciero, Director of Oakton Athletics; Dr. James Rabchuk, Dean of STEM; Dr. Emmanuel Sarris, Interim Dean of Business and Career Technologies; Dan Weber, Registrar/Director of Registrar Services; Aaron Wernick, Chief of Police and Emergency Management; and Andy Williams, Controller.

Union Leaders: John Donoghue, Classified Staff Association; Mary Hope Griffin, Adjunct Faculty Association; and Patrick O'Donnell, Full-Time Faculty Association.

Faculty: Dr. Thomas Bowen, Philosophy; Spencer Kimura, Fire; Michael Peat, Automotive Technology; Terrence Sinabajje, Psychology; Dr. Marian Staats, English; and George Vail, Automotive Technology.

Staff: Alexis Alvarez, Financial Aid; Giacomo Cirrincione, Learning Center; Allison Conner, Learning Center; Chris Dube, Information Technology; Krissie Harris, Student Life and Campus Inclusion; Peter Hurley, Media Services; Janeen Jackson, BLACK Student Success Program; Christian Kim, AAPI Student Program; Amanda Krause, Facilities; Ewa Lyczewska, Marketing and Communications; Gabrielle O'Connor, Student Life and Campus Inclusion; Kushal Patel, Information Technology; Robert Peterson, Access, Equity and Diversity; Esperanza Salgado-Rodriguez, TRIO Student Support Services; Beatriz Sparks, Office of the President; and Tamara Trejo, ANDALE.

Students: Ana Adamaze, Andrew Atto, and Dominika Sass.

Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Burns led the pledge.

Land Acknowledgment –Trustee Eimer read the Land Acknowledgment.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Burns asked a motion for the approval of the minutes of the November 18, 2025 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, and the November 18, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting. Trustee Salzberg made the motion. Trustee Bashiri-Remetio seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Statement by the President

Condolences

- To Director of Admissions and Equity Outreach, Ella Whitehead whose mother Sarah passed away on Dec. 9.
- To Director of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, Rick Daniels whose mother-in-law Susan passed away last week.

Employee Recognitions

- Retirements: Chris Dubé and Peter Hurley

Student Recognitions

- Oakton's Lunabotics Team just launched itself into a top national ranking. The team earned a ticket to the 2026 NASA Lunabotics Challenge. Oakton ranked No. 1 in the nation for its project management plan,

surpassing 73 schools that applied to participate in this year's competition. Only 50 teams were selected to advance, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech).

- Dominika Sass has been selected as a 2025 Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholar and will receive a \$1,500 scholarship. This scholarship is designed to assist Phi Theta Kappa members in overcoming unanticipated financial barriers preventing the completion of the college credential, an associate degree, or certificate while enrolled in college.
- The Oakton Jazz Band received recognitions at the Skyway Jazz Festival on Nov. 22:
 - Outstanding Soloist: David Clarke, Drums; Brad Kolar, Flugelhorn; Paul Velez, Trumpet
 - Honorable Mention: Tom Bartlett, Trombone

Happenings

- The Empty Bowls event took place on Dec. 6. They raised about \$25,000 for local food pantries in our community. 100% of the proceeds went directly toward feeding those in need. Since Empty Bowls began at Oakton in 2004, the event has raised nearly \$480,000 to fight hunger in our community. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and continued support.
- The current "Letterio Calapai: Cosmos, Spheres and Divinity" exhibition at the Koehnline Museum of Art focuses on a recurring motif in Calapai's prints: his spiritual inquiry, expressed through symbolic, abstract, and narrative forms. These works reflect both personal introspection and a broader collective consciousness, revealing Calapai's deep engagement with existential and metaphysical themes. The exhibition is available through January 23, 2026.
- President Smith wished everyone a joyous holiday season.

Educational Foundation Liaison Report

The foundation's fundraising progress stands at 48% to goal 5 months into the fiscal year. Recent contributions of note include:

- A \$100,000 contribution from Northfield Township to continue support of the Northfield Township Government Scholarship.
- \$50,000 from David and Karen Hilquist to the Hilquist Family Nursing Scholarship Endowment.
- An anonymous \$10,000 gift to the Oakton Annual Fund.
- \$8,000 from Dr. Martin and Robyn Zidron to the Robyn Zidron Scholarship.

On December 6, the College hosted its annual Empty Bowls event. This year marked the first partnership with the Oakton College Educational Foundation, enabling all donations to be processed through the Foundation's CRM system. The 2025 event raised \$25,000 in support of area food pantries, including Oakton's Caring Closet. Since Empty Bowls began at Oakton in 2004, the event has generated nearly \$480,000 to combat food insecurity in our community. We are deeply grateful for the generosity and continued support that make this impact possible.

The Educational Foundation welcomed a new member to the Board of Directors this month. K. Sujata is a prominent nonprofit leader, strategist, and consultant with over 20 years of experience, known for her work in advancing women's rights and social impact, notably as the former President & CEO of the Chicago Foundation for Women. She is deeply passionate about the transformative power of education and enthusiastic about Oakton. I look forward to working alongside her.

The Foundation Board's next quarterly meeting will take place on March 4.

Pathways to Opportunity Liaison Report

The Pathways to Opportunity Task Force met on December 5 and reviewed the themes from the stakeholder conversations with health care partners, and received updates on a few micro-pilots, including a manufacturing day for high school students from Districts 202 and 219 and the BNAT to Medical Assistant Apprenticeship.

Most of our meeting was spent reviewing models of pathways, in particular an earn while you learn model for healthcare workers at UVA Health in Virginia. The Task Force is hoping to plan summits in the spring – one for

the health career sector and one for manufacturing as we continue to understand industry needs, seek partners who share our vision for pathways to opportunity and expose youth in our community to career opportunities.

The task force's next meeting is Feb. 6.

Student Trustee Report

The SGA team is currently in recess. Our general meetings will begin in the new year. The team will be holding a couple executive meetings over Winterim to prepare for next semester.

The Leadership Summit event will bring together nearby colleges to connect and collaborate. President Ana Adamaze and SGA Advisors have been hard at work planning the finer event details and corresponding with other colleges on attendance.

SGA & CAB's Winterfest x Stress Reliever Day's was extremely successful. 300+ students, staff, and faculty attended. The SGA's Club Roundtable ran a Secret Santa event. Many events will take place in the upcoming Spring semester for SGA, including the Annual Student Leadership Banquet and Election of the new team.

Student Spotlight

Ana Adamaze is a second-year political science student at Oakton, currently serving as the Student Government Association president. She moved from Georgia to the United States in 2020, and graduated from New Trier High School in 2024. Ana said that immigration was not an easy challenge to overcome, and she finally discovered her passion for public service and human rights during her senior year. Enrolling at Oakton gave her the opportunity to explore these interests; she has participated in essay competitions, presented during International Education Week, joined multiple organizations like SGA and DECA, and became co-president of the Politics Club.

Ana said that this year has been transformative. She was elected SGA president, and she engaged in training with the SGA leadership over the summer. In the fall, they attended the American Student Government Association Summit in Washington, DC where they learned from student leaders from across the nation. The SGA has hosted several events on campus and is actively working to engage with students. The leadership team is preparing a leadership summit that will bring together student leaders from nearby colleges, and they have identified Dr. Rick Daniels as their keynote speaker.

Alongside her leadership work, Ana has been completing her Research, Innovation, Creative and Engagement fellowship project with her mentor, Dr. Olabisi Adenekan. This work has deepened her understanding of politics and events that affect her country of origin. With the support of the Student Life and Campus Inclusion staff, she had a successful fall semester, built lasting connections, and gained valuable experiences.

Public Participation – None

Board Report: Student Engagement at Oakton

Dr. Leana Cuellar, Dean of Access, Equity and Diversity
Christine Paciero, Director of Oakton Athletics

Oakton Athletics

The Athletic Department promotes Oakton's mission of providing students with an education and training for their lifetime. Our mission is to have students experience the hard work and satisfaction of learning that leads to intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

- 12 sports: Volleyball, M/W Soccer, M/W Basketball, Softball, Men's Tennis, M/W Cross Country, M/W Golf, Baseball
- 140-160 Athletes
- Oakton-Owls.com and @Oaktonowls
- 2 Associations: Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference and National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), Region 4
- Free Fitness Center use for all students, staff and faculty.
- 90 athletic scholarships awarded 25-26
- 100 home athletic competitions hosted annually

- Staffing: 5 full time staff, 1 part time staff, 1 contracted staff, 22 adjunct faculty sport and academic coaches, casual and student employee

Intrusive Academic Support Program

- 2.91 Department Student Athlete GPA, 24-25
- 27.5 # of credits attempted p/student Fall and Spring
- 54% Student athletes of color, 24-25
- 62/38% Ratio male and female athletes, 24-25
- 96% Fall to spring persistence, 24-25
- 65% 3-year transfer rate
- 50% 3-year graduation rate

Cadre of health services in collaboration with community providers and the Oakton Wellness Center Injury Insurance, Athletic Trainers, Doctors, Physical Therapists and Wellness Center services.

TRIO Student Support Services

- Federal grant program
- Grant re-awarded 2025-2030
- 215 students served
- Holistic Support
 - Persistence
 - Academic Standing
 - Degree and Transfer
- First Generation Week
- Student engagement opportunities
- Clubs and Organizations
 - Student Government Association
 - Phi Theta Kappa
 - Campus Activities Board
- Signature events and programs
- Student resources
- Center for Campus
- Inclusion and Diversity

iANDALE!

Association to Nurture and Develop the Advancement of Latinx/e/o Students in Education

- Campus connection, awareness of resources, and exploration of intersectional identities
- Collaborations
- Signature events and programming
 - Latinx Heritage Month
 - USHLI Leadership Conference

B.L.A.C.K. Student Success Program

- Building Lasting African Culture and Knowledge
- Campus connection, awareness of resources, and exploration of intersectional identities
- Collaborations
- Signature events and programming
 - Our Voices Series
 - Black History Month

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Student Development Program

- Result of AANAPISI federal designation and grant
- Campus connection, awareness of resources, and exploration of intersectional identities
- Collaborations
- Signature events and programming

- Lunar New Year celebration
- AANAPISI Heritage Month

Undocumented and DACA Student Resources

- State mandate
- Awareness of resources and provide direct student support
 - [Undocumented and DACA Student Resource Guide](#)
 - Liaisons
 - Legal Aid Clinics
 - Know Your Rights Workshop
 - Immigration Workshop Series

Collaborations: First Generation Week, RICE Center, Campus Book Reads, Learning Assistant Program, Athletic theme nights, student excursions.

NEW BUSINESS

12/25-1a Approval of Consent Agenda

Trustee Salzberg offered: “Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves adoption of the Consent Agenda.”

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

12/25-1b Approval of Consent Agenda Items 12/25-2 through 12/25-7

Trustee Yanow offered: “Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the following items 12/25-2 through 12/25-7 as listed in the Consent Agenda.”

12/25-2 Ratification of Payment of Bills for October 2025

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 hereby ratifies expenditures and release of checks by the Treasurer of Community College District 535 in the amount of \$11,217,530.92 for all check amounts as listed and for all purposes as appearing on a report dated October 2025.”

12/25-3 Acceptance of Treasurer’s Report for October 2025

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 receives for filing as a part of the College’s official records, the report of the Treasurer for the month of October 2025.”

12/25-4 Ratification of Payment of Bills for November 2025

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 hereby ratifies expenditures and release of checks by the Treasurer of Community College District 535 in the amount of \$7,143,798.81 for all check amounts as listed and for all purposes as appearing on a report dated November 2025.”

12/25-5 Acceptance of Treasurer’s Report for November 2025

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 receives for filing as a part of the College’s official records, the report of the Treasurer for the month of November 2025.”

12/25-6 Ratification of Payment of Professional Personnel – Fall 2025

“Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves an adjustment of \$51,649.98 to the total amount of part-time teaching salaries paid during the fall 2025 semester; the revised total payment amount is \$4,310,986.69.”

"Be it further resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves an adjustment of \$204,775.91 to the total amount of faculty overload salaries paid during the fall 2025 semester; the revised total payment amount is \$983,778.21."

12/25-7 Approval of Clinical Practice Agreements

"Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the following cooperative agreements:

Basic Nursing Assistant (1)
Cancer Registry Management (1)
Early Childhood Education (1)
Human Services (1)
Phlebotomy (1)
Physical Therapist Assistant (1)."

Trustee Stafford seconded the motion and called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

12/25-8 Approval of Board Meetings Schedule for Calendar Year 2026

Trustee Toussaint offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 hereby approves the established calendar of meetings of the Board for the 2026 calendar year for public notice as follows: January 20, February 17, March 17, April 21, May 26, June 30, August 18, September 15, October 13, November 17, and December 15. Time and location of all meetings will be posted 48 hours before as required by law."

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio seconded the motion. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

12/25-9 Authorization to Approve December Purchases

Trustee Eimer offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 authorizes the approval of the attached resolutions, as stipulated in the following agenda items, for the purchase of the following:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Vendor / Location</u>	<u>Amount</u>
12/25-9a	1	High-Speed Internet Hotspot Data Plan – One-Year Renewal	T-Mobile USA, Inc Bellevue, WA	\$51,660.00

<u>Item</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Vendor / Location</u>	<u>Amount</u>
12/25-9b	1	Auditing Services – Two-Year Contract Renewal	Crowe LLP Oakbrook Terrace, IL	\$205,900.00
12/25-9c	2	Travel for the Men's Baseball Team	Academy Bus, LLC Winter Garden, FL	\$7,000.00
			Southwest Airlines Dallas, TX	\$20,000.00
			Enterprise Rent-A-Car Orlando, FL	\$1,500.00
			Encore Resort Kissimmee, FL	\$12,500.00
			Springhill Suites Marriott Kissimmee, FL	\$1,000.00
			Russ Matt Baseball Stratham, NH	\$4,000.00
			Meals Per Diem	\$11,000.00
12/25-9d	1	Consulting Services for Environmental Branding Initiative	Greenlight Team, LLC Chicago, IL	\$68,000.00
12/25-9e	1	Portable Electric Vehicle Training Aid	Automotive Video Innovations, Inc Fort Myers, FL	\$40,145.00
12/25-9f	1	2026 Ford F650 Flatbed Truck	Olathe Ford Sales Inc Olathe, KS	\$96,113.00
12/25-9g	1	Fabrication and Installation of Environmental Design Elements	Xibitz, Inc Grand Rapids, MI	\$168,000.00
12/25-9h	1	Printing of the Oakton Non-Credit Class Schedule – One-Year Renewal	KK Stevens Publishing Company Astoria, IL	\$180,727.17
GRAND TOTAL				\$867,545.17."

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio seconded the motion. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

12/25-10 Preview and Initial Discussion of Upcoming Purchases

The following purchases will be presented for approval at an upcoming Board of Trustees meeting:

- a. IP Telephony Annual Maintenance and Software Assurance
- b. Des Plaines Enrollment Center and Enrollment Suite Workspace Renovations
- c. Executive Leadership Team Coaching Services
- d. Honorlock Proctoring Software Renewal
- e. Replacement Laptop Computers for Full-Time Staff and Administrators

12/25-11 Authorization to Hire a Full-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Member

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the attached resolution for Mr. Nicholas Larkin for the full-time, tenure-track faculty hire for the 2025-2026 academic year, beginning in January 2026. Mr. Larkin will receive the salary associated with the lane and step described as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Academic Rank and Assignment</u>	<u>Lane-Step</u>	<u>Base Salary</u>
Nicholas Larkin	Assistant Professor	D-7	\$84,879."

Trustee Yanow seconded the motion. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

12/25-12 Ratification of Amended Contract Agreement between the Oakton College Board of Trustees and the Oakton Metropolitan Alliance of Police

Trustee Toussaint offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 ratifies the amended agreement with the Metropolitan Alliance of Police (MAP) effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028."

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio seconded the motion. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

12/25-13 Preview of New Unit of Instruction

The following new unit of instruction will be presented for Board approval in January 2026:

Data Analytics Certificate – provides an introduction to a rapidly growing field of data analytics. It is intended for students and professionals who want to work confidently with data without diving into coding. Through interactive hands-on projects utilizing tools like Microsoft Excel, AI-powered analytics platforms and leading data visualization software, students will learn how to clean, visualize and interpret data to uncover patterns, enabling them to tackle real-world business challenges and drive data-informed decisions. Unlike data science programs that emphasize

coding, algorithms and statistical modeling, this certificate focuses on the practical application of no-code tools and technologies to translate data into business intelligence and communicate results effectively across any industry.

12/25-14 Approval of Policy Revisions

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the proposed revisions to policy 3011, attached hereto."

Trustee Eimer seconded the motion. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
Trustee Burns	Aye
Trustee Eimer	Aye
Trustee Salzberg	Aye
Trustee Stafford	Aye
Trustee Toussaint	Aye
Trustee Yanow	Aye

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

12/25-15 Notification of Award of Grants

Funding has been made available to Oakton College:

a. ICCB Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA) Federal Basic FY26	\$607,378.00
b. ICCB Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) FY26	\$86,793.00
TOTAL:	\$697,171.00

Adjournment

Chair Burns announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees of Oakton Community College, District 535, will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at the Des Plaines Campus.

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Trustee Salzberg. A voice vote was called and the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.


Martha Burns, Chair


William Stafford, Secretary

Minutes recorded by:
Beatriz Sparks
12/2025