BROOKDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Board of Trustees
Public Business Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2025

Brookdale Community College
Student Life Center, Navesink Rooms
765 Newman Springs Rd.
Lincroft, NJ 07738

Vice-Chair Horl called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. and roll call was taken.

Present	**Trustees**	**Administration:**
	Ms. Tracey Abby-White, Trustee	Dr. Katie Lynch
	Ms. Mary Pat Angelini, Trustee	Ms. Bonnie Passarella, Esq.
	Mr. Paul Crupi, Trustee	Ms. Nancy Kaari
	Dr. Stephanie D'Alessio, Trustee	Dr. Yesenia Madas
	Ms. Dyese Davis, Trustee	Dr. Nancy Kegelman
	Ms. Barbara Horl, Vice-Chair	Mr. Kornpipob Kanthajan
	Mr. James McCracken, Trustee	Ms. Teresa Manfreda-Foley
	Dr. Les Richens, Trustee	
	Dr. David Stout, Secretary	
	Mr. Montez Swartz, Graduate Trustee	
	Ms. Cyndie Williams, Trustee	Ms. Cynthia Gruskos
Absent	**Ms. Latonya Brennan, Chair**	
	Mr. Steve Clayton, Trustee	
College Counsel	**Mr. Mitch Jacobs, Esq., General Counsel**	

Ms. Gruskos read the following statement: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S. 10:4-6 et seq., advance written notice of this meeting of the Board of Trustees was provided in the following manner:

On August 20, 2025 at 10 AM advance written notice of this meeting was posted on the Brookdale Community College website; emailed to *The Asbury Park Press and the Star Ledger* and filed with the Clerk of the County of Monmouth.

Mr. Jacobs read the statement on procedures and requirements for making public comment during the public meeting.

Vice-Chair Horl led the pledge of allegiance followed by a welcome to those in attendance.

Dr. Stout reported with sadness the passing of Lew Wright, Automotive Technologies Lab Assistant and Adjunct Instructor; Barbara Schmidt, Learning Assistant in Chemistry and Adjunct Instructor of Environmental Science; Avry Timol, former student, S-STEM scholar, Math Lab Tutor, and student club leader; and John Blackburn, ESL Instructor. On behalf of the College, condolences were extended to their families, friends, and colleagues. A moment of silence was observed in their memory.

Vice-Chair Horl read our mission statement:

Brookdale Community College empowers a diverse community by providing open access to high quality and cost-effective educational and lifelong learning options with clear paths to personal, educational, and economic success.

<table>
<tr><th>Topic and Discussion</th><th>Votes Taken</th><th>Action and Follow-up Actions</th></tr>
<tr><td>Adoption of Agenda</td><td>A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Trustee Crupi.

Motion passed.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Swearing in of Graduate Trustee Montez Swartz
Vice-Chair Horl announced a special occasion to welcome the new Graduate Trustee, Mr. Montez Swartz. The Board recognized and warmly welcomed Trustee Swartz’s family—his mother, father, and brother—who were present to share in the event and support him as he begins his service to Brookdale and the community.

Mr. Mitch Jacobs, Esq. administered the oath of office

Upon completion of the oath, Trustee Swartz was congratulated and officially seated as the new Graduate Trustee.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Approval of Stockton University MOU

The Board considered a resolution to approve the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Stockton University.

Key Highlights of the MOU:
The MOU continues the long-standing transfer partnership between Brookdale and Stockton University, ensuring seamless credit transfer for Brookdale students.
Adds the Summer Live, Work, Learn Initiative, providing Brookdale students the opportunity to:
Live on Stockton’s campus during the summer,
Participate in paid work experiences and internships, and</td></tr>
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<li style="list-style-type:circle">Gain professional skills and career readiness training.
<li style="list-style-type:circle">Expands access to all Brookdale students who have completed at least two semesters, not only those intending to transfer to Stockton.
Incorporates a reverse transfer provision, allowing students who transfer to Stockton before completing their Brookdale associate degree to be awarded the Brookdale degree retroactively upon earning 60 credits.
Remarks:
President David Stout emphasized Stockton’s long history as a flexible and supportive transfer partner and highlighted the innovative nature of this agreement.
Dr. Katie Lynch, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Nicole Ross, Associate Director of Transfer Pathways, outlined the details of the new initiative and its benefits to students.
Dr. Joseph Bertolino, President of Stockton University, shared his personal and professional commitment to expanding educational access, underscoring the value of this collaboration in supporting both traditional and non-traditional students. He expressed enthusiasm for the five-year extension of the agreement and praised the reverse transfer feature as a “win-win” for both institutions and their students.
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</td></tr>
<tr><td>Approval of Stockton University MOU</td><td>A motion to approve by resolution the MOU with Stockton University was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Trustee Crupi.

Motion Passed

YES: Trustees, Abby-White, Angelini, Crupi, D’Alessio, Davis, McCracken, Richens, Swartz, Williams and Vice-Chair Horl

NO: None

ABSTENTIONS: None</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
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Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions

President's Report –

Review of Revised Mission, Vision and Values

Dr. Stout provided context on the college-wide review of Brookdale's mission, vision, and values, a process initiated by the Board of Trustees in January 2024. He noted that such a review is important to undertake on a regular basis, particularly in preparation for a new strategic plan or during the cycle of a Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) self-study review, which occurs every eight years.

Dr. Stout reminded the Board that Brookdale's vision statement was last revised in 2011 and has since become "virtually indistinguishable" from the mission, which he interpreted as evidence that the college successfully accomplished the vision established at that time. He added that the mission statement was last updated in 2018, just prior to the last MSCHE self-study review. With the next review approximately one year away, the MSCHE self-study team will expect evidence of a comprehensive college-wide review of the mission, vision, values, and the institution's strategic priorities, which are set by the Board.

Over the past year, the College engaged in a series of town hall meetings to gather community input on the mission, vision, and values. Despite extensive dialogue, Dr. Stout reported that the process did not yield a college-wide consensus. To move the work forward, he issued a call for volunteers to serve on a dedicated task force. Nineteen members of the college community responded, representing a wide cross-section of the institution.

Dr. Stout concluded his remarks by formally turning the discussion over to the co-chairs of the President's Task Force on the Review of Mission, Vision, and Values to present the task force's work and recommendations.

Dr. Lynch, Provost and VP Academic Affairs and Angela Kariotis , Director of the Center for Transformative Learning, presented on behalf of the President's Task Force on the Review of Mission, Vision, and Values. The Task Force, comprised of 19 members from across the College, met throughout the summer to develop revised versions of the College's mission, vision, and values, and to introduce a new set of commitments to guide Brookdale's daily practices.

The presenters highlighted that the revised framework is rooted in Brookdale's participation in Achieving the Dream and the adoption of a lens of poverty-informed practices. This approach centers on designing systems for students facing the greatest barriers, with three key components: belonging, meeting basic needs, and providing just-in-time supports. They emphasized that when Brookdale builds systems for its most vulnerable students, all students benefit.

Data from local, state, and national surveys—including Brookdale's 2025 Basic Needs Survey—were shared, underscoring the prevalence of food and housing insecurity among students. Presenters noted that roughly one in three students face food insecurity and one in two face broader basic needs insecurity, aligning with national averages.

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<tr><td colspan="3">The new values were introduced as four guiding pillars: Compassion, Collaboration, Creativity, and Courage. A story was shared demonstrating how these values shaped the College’s response to frozen Title II funding in July, which threatened GED and ESL programs. Through collaboration and advocacy, the College secured a grant to continue services and later saw funding restored.

The new mission statement was presented:
Brookdale Community College opens doors with courage and care, guiding diverse learners toward lifelong growth and success.

The accompanying commitment statement, a first for the College, outlines how Brookdale will live its values: “We are Brookdale. Be brave and bold. Remove barriers. Open doors. Offer just-in-time supports. Keep compassion at the center. Design systems for those most in need. Lead with love. Empower. We will, so you can.”

Finally, the new vision statement was shared:
Brookdale transforms lives. We envision a future of educational opportunity for all.

The presenters explained that these statements align with Brookdale’s North Star goal of 60% credential completion by 2030 and support the development of the College’s forthcoming 2030 Strategic Plan. They also noted alignment with national best practices, citing examples from Aspen Prize-winning colleges Amarillo College and Southwest Technical College.

The Board was advised that the next step in the process will be to bring the revised mission, vision, values, and commitments to the College community at Convocation next Tuesday. For most faculty and staff, this will be the first opportunity to hear the presentation. Following Convocation, the framework will be presented through the College-wide governance system, where members will be asked to vote on whether this is the direction in which the College should move. The results, along with any comments or recommendations, will then return to the Board of Trustees for formal action. It was noted that adjustments may be made along the way based on community feedback, and the Board will be kept informed throughout the process.

Board members expressed their deep appreciation for the work of the Task Force and the quality of the presentation. Trustees commended the dedication of faculty, staff, and students who volunteered their time over the summer, noting the tremendous outcome of their efforts. Special recognition was given to student representative Christina Weber for her influential voice on the committee, and to former Trustee Susie Wyman for her longstanding contributions to the College.

Trustees described the presentation as inspiring, energetic, and a true reflection of Brookdale’s mission of service to students. Several members remarked on the significant effort and hours that went into creating such a thoughtful product, applauding the clarity and passion evident in the work. They noted that the new mission, vision, and values framework captures the spirit of Brookdale and the community it serves, with one Trustee emphasizing the transformative impact of education on students’ lives.</td></tr>
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Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
The Board concluded with a strong statement of support for the ongoing process, affirming that members stand behind the work and look forward to the College community's feedback and the opportunity for formal Board action.		

Reports from the Board Committees and Liaisons

A. Finance & Facilities Committee

Trustee McCracken reported that the Finance & Facilities Committee met virtually on August 19. Mr. Naparlo provided a facilities update, highlighting completion on the elevator modernization project, transformer upgrades, and a $2.2 million theater lighting project moving to bid. He also noted ongoing projects at the Freehold and Wall campuses, and a tree grant that will support the removal and replanting of trees to enhance campus beauty.

VP Manfreda then presented the financial report, noting a June 30, 2025 cash balance of $33.2 million, down $3.7 million from the prior year, but with a strong $800,000 increase in earned interest. Also discussed were salary and benefit comparisons to FY24, enrollment management, and faculty staffing adjustments, with Dr. Lynch providing details on real-time faculty reassignments based on enrollment.

The committee considered 21 purchase recommendations and reviewed accounts payable for June 2025.

VP Kari presented the grants and gifts report, sharing that the college has been successful in securing significant external funding. VP Kari also delivered the Foundation report, which closed FY25 with $6.1 million in total revenue—an impressive 129% increase over the prior year's $2.6 million—largely due to a major gift. With expenses holding flat at about $900,000, the Foundation's net position grew to $5.2 million, up $1.7 million from the previous year.

B. Governance Committee

Trustee Davis reported that the Governance Committee met via Zoom on July 22, 2025, with Trustees Angelini, Crupi, Swartz, Williams and herself in attendance, along with college leadership. The committee reviewed several policies recommended for lodging, including revisions to Policy 3.0003, *Employees with Disabilities*, updated to ensure compliance with current executive orders and affirm the college's commitment to equal opportunity; Policy 3.9002, *Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination*, revised for alignment with legal standards; Policy 5.0003, *Accreditation*, updated to clarify objectives, strengthen accountability, and include new reporting requirements ensuring all accreditation-related correspondence is directed to the President and that the Board monitors accreditation activities at least twice annually through the Student Success and Educational Excellence Committee; and Policy 6.1000, *Admissions*, revised for compliance with laws and executive orders. Additional discussion was held on clarifying the definition of "admitted student" versus students auditing classes or enrolled in CPS programs, with further review to follow on *Policy 6.1000 Admission*s.

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions

The Committee discussed the President's evaluation timeline. Dr. Stout has circulated his self-evaluation, and an ad hoc committee with Trustee Davis as a member, will oversee the process. She will distribute a survey to the Trustees for feedback. The Committee also reaffirmed its plan for the Board's self-evaluation to be conducted twice annually, in December and May, to allow for year-to-year comparison and to ensure the student trustee can participate at both the beginning and end of their term. Additional topics included trustee professional development opportunities, noting that Montez Swartz completed his orientation on July 16, upcoming ACCT conferences (October 22–25 in New Orleans and February 8–11 in Washington, D.C.), and the need to schedule the Board retreat in 2026. Lastly, there was discussion of MSCHE accreditation requirements, with the next self-evaluation, scheduled for Fall 2026.

Trustee Davis reported that the Governance Committee discussed recommended changes to the Board Chair election and nomination process, following guidance from the recent board retreat. The proposed process emphasizes transparency, fairness, and efficiency, including a one-term service for Chair with a maximum of two consecutive terms, nominations beginning in October, and the use of a ranked-choice straw poll administered confidentially by the assistant to the board. In the event of a tie, candidates would present during the October Executive Session, with a paper ballot used to determine the winner. The formal election in November would be ceremonial if the outcome has already been determined. Robert's Rules would not be applied for this process, and nominations from the floor would be eliminated.

The committee also recommended eliminating the Vice Chair position. Responsibilities traditionally assigned to the Vice Chair—such as presiding in the Chair's absence—would instead be delegated at the Chair's discretion, with a potential rotation among committee chairs to prevent concentration of power. These changes aim to create a clear, consistent, and equitable process, and would require amending the bylaws.

The Trustees engaged in a discussion regarding the recommendation to eliminate the Vice Chair position. It was noted that the Vice Chair position is traditionally viewed in organizations as a succession plan with the expectation of serving as Chair-elect, though this is not practiced by the Brookdale Board. Under current bylaws, the Vice Chair acts on behalf in the Chair's absence or at the request of the Chair, discharges delegated functions, and serves as an alternate ex-officio member on standing committees. Some trustees supported eliminating the position, noting that the Chair could designate another trustee to fulfill these responsibilities as needed, with the potential for rotating committee chairs to prevent concentration of power. Trustees who supported keeping the Vice Chair position emphasized that the role provides structure, continuity, and a clear delegation of leadership role, particularly in cases where the Chair is unavailable. The discussion highlighted the need to balance transparency, fairness, and flexibility while ensuring Board functions continue smoothly. No consensus was reached, and it was acknowledged that any change would require a bylaw amendment and further consideration by the full Board.

In addition, there was a recommendation made to create a Board policy to outline the nomination and election process as discussed in the Board retreat, and there was some debate about the use of the ranked choice straw poll recommendation, versus traditional voting. If the Vice Chair position is

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B. Graduate Trustee Report - Trustee Swartz reported attending the recent Governance Committee meeting and participating in three new student orientations for the Class of 2027. He noted that the orientations emphasized safety, conduct, mental health resources, academic success strategies, and technology tools, and concluded with a “Get the Scoop” event connecting students to key campus resources and services.

C. NJCCC Update - Vice-Chair Horl reported that the NJCCC did not meet over the summer. She noted that litigation has vacated the U.S. Department of Education’s “Dear Colleague” letter threatening to withhold federal funding from institutions over diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. Further legal proceedings are expected, and she will share updates as they become available

Dr. Stout reported on matters being addressed through the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC). He highlighted ongoing coordination in response to executive orders, revisions to the state funding formula for community colleges, and the inclusion of dual enrollment credits in the college funding formula. He noted concerns about recent funding reductions and the need for greater stability in allocations. Dr. Stout also shared that discussions are underway with the YMCA on a potential statewide partnership with community colleges

D. Foundation Update – Trustee Abby-White reported that the Foundation wanted to thank the generous giving that allowed the Foundation to award scholarships to 736 students last year, with a total award of $847,000. She also encouraged all to participate in the golf outing on September 18.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Public Comment on Agenda Items –

Jack Ryan - full-time English faculty, expressed appreciation for the discussion by the Board and committee presentation on mission, vision and values, noting the importance of recognizing the courage of students who persevere despite significant challenges. He also offered reflections on the value of experienced faculty and staff, highlighting the contributions of retiring colleagues Kathleen Kennedy and Howard Finkelstein, and emphasized the energy and perspective that newer faculty and staff bring to the College community

Ms. Gruskos confirmed there was no written public comment submitted.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Review of Consent Agenda

• Any item may be removed from the consent agenda for discussion by any voting member of the Board of Trustees.

A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda</td><td>A motion to adopt the consent agenda was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Trustee Abby-White.

Motion passed.</td><td></td></tr>
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Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
Approval of Public Business Meeting Minutes - June 24, 2025	A motion to approve the minutes from the Public Business Meeting on June 24, 2025, was made by Trustee Angelini and seconded by Trustee McCarcken. Motion Passed. Abstentions: Trustee Crupi	
Approval of Executive Session Meeting Minutes - June 24, 2025	A motion to approve the minutes from the Executive Session Meeting on June 24, 2025, was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice-Chair Horl. Motion Passed. Abstentions: Trustees Crupi and D'Alessio	
Approval of Consent Agenda **A. Approval of Human Resources** **B. Ratification - Approval of Human Resources - July 2025** **C. Submission of Grants** **D. Ratification - Submission of Grants - July 2025** **E. Acceptance of Grants** **F. Approval Displaced Homemakers Resolution** **G. Ratification - Acceptance of Purchasing Threshold - July 2025** **H. Purchases in Excess of $44,900 and New Jersey "Pay-to-Play" bids, and Pursuant to the New Jersey "Pay to Play" Process, in Excess of $17,500** **I. Ratification - Purchases in Excess of $44,900 and New Jersey "Pay-to-Play" bids, and Pursuant to the New Jersey**	A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Trustee Crupi and seconded by Trustee Abby-White. **YES:** Trustees Abby-White, Angelini, Crupi, D'Alessio, Davis, McCracken, Richens, Swartz, Williams and Vice-Chair Horl **NO:** None **ABSTENTIONS:** None	

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
"Pay to Play" Process, in Excess of $17,500 - July 2025 **J. Open Invoice Payment Requests for Vendor, Student and Employee Payments** **K. Ratification - Open Invoice Payment Requests for Vendor, Student and Employee Payments - July 2025** **L. Monthly Financial Reports** **M. Ratification - Monthly Financial Reports - July 2025** **N. Capital Project Update**		
Lodging of Revised Policies **A. Revised Policy - 3.0003 Employees with Disabilities** **B. Revised Policy - 3.9002 Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination** **C. Revised Policy - 5.0003 Institutional and Specialized Program Accreditation, Approval, or Certification**	A motion to lodge the revised policies listed below was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Trustee Crupi. A. Revised Policy - 3.0003 Employees with Disabilities B. Revised Policy - 3.9002 Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination C. Revised Policy - 5.0003 Institutional and Specialized Program Accreditation, Approval, or Certification **Motion passed.** **YES:** Trustees Abby-White, Angelini, Crupi, D'Alessio, Davis, McCracken, Richens, Swartz, Williams and Vice-Chair Horl **NO:** None	

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<tr><td></td><td>ABSTENTIONS: None</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Public Comment -
Christopher Pflaum - an adjunct faculty member and nursing student, addressed the Board of Trustees to discuss ongoing contract negotiations between Brookdale Community College management and the adjunct faculty union, represented by the American Federation of Teachers Local 2222. Mr. Pflaum highlighted the union’s efforts to secure fair compensation, noting that negotiations have reached an impasse due to a Board policy that ties adjunct pay to the full-time faculty overload rate. He shared the specifics of the financial compensation the adjunct faculty union is advocating for. Mr. Pflaum urged the Board to revise the policy which ties adjunct pay to another union contact and consider an inflationary adjustment to facilitate a fair and ratifiable contract, warning that the union is prepared to pursue state-facilitated mediation if necessary.

Jack Ryan - full-time English faculty, expressed concern that raises following the recent reorganization were limited to administrators while staff who assumed additional responsibilities did not benefit. He supported the adjunct faculty union’s request for a unique bargaining system. Mr. Ryan also commended the administration, Board, and nursing faculty for strengthening the nursing program, noting its importance in addressing workforce needs and protecting the college’s mission in light of encroachment by Union County College. He emphasized the essential role nurses play in patient care and applauded efforts to expand the program.

Ms. Gruskos confirmed that no written public comment was submitted.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Old/New Business –
The possible need for a Special Public Business meeting was announced to allow for a timely submission for a grant through the New Jersey Office of Secretary of Higher education to support capital improvement projects focused on deferred maintenance. If we have a viable grant project the meeting will be held on September 16 at 5:30 PM via Zoom and will be announced and noticed.

A previously raised question regarding the funding source of the tree grant was addressed. The grant, totaling $243,000, was funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection</td></tr>
<tr><td>Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM</td><td>A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Trustee Abby-White.</td><td></td></tr>
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