

BROOKDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Board of Trustees Public Business Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2026

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

Chair Horl called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M. and roll call was taken.

Present	Trustees	Administration:
	Ms. Barbara Horl, Chair	Dr. Katie Lynch
	Ms. Tracey Abby-White, Trustee, Vice-Chair	Ms. Nancy Kaari
	Mr. Steve Clayton, Trustee	Mr. Kornipibob Kanthanjan
	Mr. Paul Crupi, Trustee	Dr. Laura Longo
	Dr. Stephanie D'Alessio	
	Ms. Dyese Davis, Trustee	Dr. Teresa Manfreda-Foley
	Ms. Stephanie L. Hoitt, Trustee	
	Dr. Les Richens, Trustee	Ms. Cynthia Gruskos
	Dr. David Stout, Secretary	
	Ms. Jocelyn Fajardo, Trustee	
	Ms. Cyndie Williams, Trustee	
Absent	Ms. Mary Pat Angelini, Trustee	
	Mr. James McCracken, Trustee	
College Counsel	Mr. Mitchell B. 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 September 17, 2026 at 4:30 pm advance written notice of this meeting was posted on the Brookdale Community College website; posted on the BAC Bulletin Board 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.

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

Chair Horl read our mission statement:

Brookdale Community College opens doors to education with courage and care, guiding diverse learners toward a lifetime of growth and success.

Dr. Stout led the Board and attendees in a moment of silence in memory of Jerry Friedman, who passed away on September 2 at age 79. Dr. Stout recognized Mr. Friedman's 30 years of service to Brookdale as an adjunct history instructor and noted his commitment to students, learning, and the Brookdale community. He extended condolences to Mr. Friedman's family, friends, former students, and colleague

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
Adoption of Agenda	A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Trustee Clayton and seconded by Trustee Richens. Motion passed.	
Resolution to Hold a Closed Meeting	A motion to approve by resolution (Attachment A) to hold an Executive Session was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White. Motion passed.	
Motion to Re-Open the Meeting to the Public	A motion to reopen the meeting to the public was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White.	

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
	Motion passed.	
President's Report <p>Dr. Stout thanked the campus community for attending the meeting and expressing support for fellow employees during a difficult period. He acknowledged the impact of the reduction-in-force process on employees and stated that, should the Board approve the reduction in force, the College would proceed with the process as compassionately as possible. He also recognized the leadership team for its work over the preceding months to address the College's structural deficit. He also provided an update on preparations for the upcoming Middle States accreditation visit, noting that the College is conducting professional development related to the self-study and accreditation process and that additional preparation will continue for the Board. He reported that the Middle States site visit is scheduled for November 8 through 11, 2026</p>		
Reports from the Board Committees and Liaisons <p>The Chair noted that the Finance and Facilities Committee's scheduled meeting was replaced by a special public business meeting; therefore, no Finance and Facilities Committee report was presented.</p> <p>A. Governance Committee - Trustee Davis reported that the Governance Committee met on September 16, 2026 and reviewed policies as part of the regular policy review cycle. The Committee reviewed proposed Policy 2.9005 Artificial Intelligence Governance and Responsible Use, which was developed in preparation for the upcoming Middle States accreditation visit and through collaboration among College leadership, information technology staff, accreditation representatives, and other stakeholders. The discussion addressed responsible use of artificial intelligence, governance, flexibility as the technology evolves, and the application of existing student, employee, and conduct policies to misuse of artificial intelligence. The Committee also reviewed revisions to Policy 4.6000, Auxiliary Services, which were intended primarily to clarify existing language, and Policy 6.1006, Service Animals and the ADA, including revisions addressing definitions, responsibilities, emotional support animals, liability, and activities occurring at third-party or off-campus locations. The Committee supported advancing all three policies for lodging.</p> <p>Trustee Davis also reported on the President's evaluation process, noting that President Stout submitted his self-evaluation on August 3 and that an ad hoc evaluation committee consisting of Chair Horl and Trustees Davis and Angelini had been appointed. The Committee will obtain feedback from Trustees, prepare a written appraisal, and meet with President Stout on</p>		

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<p>October 27, with completion of the evaluation anticipated by November 1. The Board will consider the President’s employment extension in February based on the annual evaluation and a mid-year assessment.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the process and timeline for nomination and election of Board officers and supported continuing the established process with adjusted dates. Nominations will be solicited beginning October 26, confirmed November 2, and accepted candidates will provide written statements for distribution to the Board prior to the November 24 reorganization meeting.</p> <p>Trustee Davis also discussed upcoming professional development and conferences, noting that Trustees would continue to cover certain travel-related expenses while the College covers registration during this fiscal year, and that the Committee supported continued assistance for the Graduate Trustee to attend at least one conference. The Committee also began planning for the next Board retreat, including potential topics related to leadership, strategic partnerships, artificial intelligence, and topics raised through the Board self-evaluation.</p> <p>Finally, Trustee Davis reported on Middle States Standard VII, Governance, Leadership and Administration, and the planned use of a Canvas training shell and a workshop at the October 27 Board meeting to assist Trustees in preparing for the accreditation visit.</p> <p>B. Student Success & Educational Excellence Committee –Trustee D’Alessio reported that the Committee met on September 17, 2026 and received updates concerning enrollment, academic programming, student support, and preparation for the Middle States visit. The Committee welcomed Dr. Staci Drewson, the newly appointed Dean of Health Sciences. Preliminary enrollment information showed an overall 3.1 percent decline in FTE compared with the prior year, while shorter terms showed increases. The Committee also received updates on student support efforts, including work by enrollment services advisors and text campaigns,</p> <p>Trustee D’Alessio reported that the Dental Hygiene Applied Sciences Program received approval from the State Academic Issues Committee and is proceeding toward accreditation, with an anticipated Fall 2028 start. The Committee also requested an update concerning the dental radiology program. The Committee reviewed preparations for the Middle States site visit, including the College’s self-study and resources being developed to assist employees and Board members. Discussion of Standards III, IV, and V highlighted institutional strengths and areas for continued improvement, including math pathways, analytics and early intervention, professional development, career communities, and the use of artificial intelligence and learning management system analytics. The Committee noted that this work is connected to the College’s Strategic Plan 2030 and 60 by 30 goals.</p>		

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<p>C. Ad-Hoc Credential Expansion Committee - Trustee Williams reported that the Committee met on September 16, 2026 and received updates regarding expansion of workforce and credential offerings. The Committee reviewed Brookdale’s participation as a full implementation partner in the Education Design Lab Community College Engine initiative, coordinated statewide through the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. Brookdale will receive \$50,000 to support its participation, with an initial focus on micro-pathways in health services and technology and innovation. The pathways are intended to include stackable and portable credentials connected to degree pathways and aligned with employer needs, regional labor market demand, and employment and wage opportunities.</p> <p>The Committee also reviewed expanded non-credit workforce programs, with new offerings in business, leadership, accounting, marketing, technology, and information technology support showing positive early results, including an 85 percent increase in enrollment in business-related training. The planned welding program, targeted for fall 2027, was also discussed, as were opportunities to expand healthcare workforce programming in response to regional workforce needs. The Committee emphasized employer outreach, strategic partnerships, internships, experiential learning, and employment placement and will continue to provide updates to the Board</p> <p>D. Graduate Trustee Report - Trustee Fajardo reported on plans for the Graduate Trustee Advisory Committee, which will consist of current Brookdale students and seek participation from both highly engaged students and students who are less involved in campus activities. She stated that she intends for the Committee to engage students through classroom conversations and participate in hands-on campus activities. Trustee Fajardo also reported on recent student engagement activities, including an involvement fair attended by more than 550 students, with 49 clubs and 11 departments participating. She noted that several clubs reported significant increases in membership. Additional activities included an annual barbecue attended by approximately 400 students and an outdoor movie attended by approximately 100 students.</p> <p>E. NJCCC Update – Chair Horl reported on the September 14, 2026 meeting of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges at Middlesex County College. She summarized remarks from Secretary of Education Margo Chaly concerning the role of county colleges in talent development and lifelong learning and the importance of trustees providing information regarding conditions on their campuses. Chair Horl reported that a consultant has been retained to study the number of New Jersey high school graduates who leave the state for education or employment and noted the importance of understanding student mobility and retention. Chair Horl also reported that the Council discussed collaboration among the state’s 18 community colleges, including efforts related to health insurance, academic issues, student success, best practices, data sharing, and opportunities to expand educational and economic opportunity. The Council adopted priorities for 2026–27, including strengthening</p>		

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<p>the Future Ready Coalition, facilitating collaboration among community colleges, supporting academic and student-success initiatives, and connecting New Jersey community colleges with national philanthropic and funding opportunities. Chair Horl will continue to serve on the Council’s legislative and executive committees.</p> <p>F. Foundation Update – Vice Chair Abby-White provided an update on Foundation activities, including the upcoming Education Open, the Feed the Future campaign scheduled for October 1 through October 31 with a fundraising goal of \$12,500, and Breakfast with Brookdale scheduled for November 17. She encouraged Trustees and members of the community to participate in these activities and thanked the Board for its support</p>		
<p>Public Comment on Agenda Items</p> <p>Chair Horl opened the public comment section on agenda items only requesting commenter(s) to provide public comment in accordance with the instructions given by Mr. Jacobs. She further announced that public comment would be limited to 5 minutes per commenter.</p> <p>Cameron Mount, President, Brookdale Faculty Association. Mr. Mount spoke on behalf of the three local unions, noting the presence of the presidents of the Brookdale Administrative Association and Brookdale Professional Staff Association. He acknowledged the financial challenges facing the College and the efforts of College leadership to communicate with the associations throughout the process. He stated that the unions understood the financial circumstances and that the decisions before the Board were not being made lightly, while emphasizing the impact of the reduction in force on employees, students, and the College community. Mr. Mount described the roles of professional staff, administrators, and faculty in supporting students and maintaining College operations and expressed concern regarding the potential loss of institutional knowledge, services, and capacity. He asked the Board to consider the longer-term impact of eliminating positions in addition to the immediate financial savings and to consider the future needs of students and the community.</p> <p>Jack Ryan, Brookdale Faculty Member. Mr. Ryan addressed the anticipated impact of the reduction in force on affected employees and discussed the emotional and practical challenges associated with leaving the College. He suggested that the College consider simplifying the employee clearance process by coordinating required departmental clearances through Human Resources. He also encouraged the College and unions to maintain contact with affected employees and provide personal assistance and resources related to future employment opportunities. Mr. Ryan acknowledged the importance of resume workshops and similar resources while emphasizing the value of personal attention and continued support for affected employee</p>		

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<p>No written public comments were submitted, and no additional remote speakers requested an opportunity to speak.</p> <p>Vice Chair Abby-White thanked Mr. Mount, Mr. Brennan, Ms. Paci, and Mr. Ryan for attending and speaking on behalf of the affected employees and the broader College community. She acknowledged the difficulty of the decision before the Board and expressed appreciation for the compassion reflected in the comments and in the College's approach to the process.</p> <p>Chair Horl acknowledged the difficulty experienced by employees who would be affected by the reduction in force and expressed hope that the College community could proceed with compassion and care. She referenced the broader financial challenges facing county colleges and the impact of State Health Benefits costs, noting that other county colleges have faced similar circumstances. She thanked those who attended and expressed regret that the Board could not further ease the burden on affected employees.</p> <p>Seeing no additional public comment, Chair Horl closed the public comment portion of the meeting.</p>		
<p>Review of Consent Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Any item may be removed from the consent agenda for discussion by any voting member of the Board of Trustees.</i> <p>A. Acceptance of Consent Agenda</p>	<p>A motion to adopt the consent agenda was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White.</p> <p>Motion approved.</p>	
<p>Approval of Public Business Meeting Minutes - August 25, 2026</p>	<p>A motion to approve the minutes from the Public Business Meeting on August 25, 2026, was made by Trustee Clayton and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White.</p> <p>Minutes approved.</p>	

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
Approval of Executive Session Minutes – August 25, 2026	A motion to approve the Executive Session Minutes on August 25, 2026, was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White. Minutes approved.	
Approval of Special Public Business Meeting Minutes - September 15, 2026	A motion to approve the minutes from the Special Public Business Meeting on September 15, 2026 was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White. Minutes approved.	
Approval of Executive Session Minutes - September 15, 2026	A motion to approve the minutes from the Executive Session on September 15, 2026 was made by Vice Chair Abby-White and seconded by Trustee Hoitt. Minutes approved.	
Approval of Consent Agenda A. Approval of Human Resources B. Acceptance of Gifts C. Submission of Grants D. Acceptance of Grants	A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White.	

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<p>E. 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</p> <p>F. Open Invoice Payment Requests for Vendor, Student and Employee Payments</p> <p>G. Monthly Financial Reports</p> <p>H. Capital Project Update</p>	<p>YES: Trustees Abby-White, Clayton, Crupi, D'Alessio, Davis, Fajardo, Hoitt, Richens, Williams and Chair Horl</p> <p>NO: None</p> <p>ABSTENTIONS: None</p> <p>Motion approved.</p>	
<p>Lodging of New or Revised Policy</p> <p>A. Revised Policy - 4.6000 Auxiliary Services</p> <p>B. Revised Policy - 6.1006 Service Animals and the ADA</p> <p>C. New Policy - 2.9005 Artificial Intelligence Governance And Responsible Use Policy</p>	<p>A motion to the lodging of the new and revised policies listed below was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White.</p> <p>A. Revised Policy - 4.6000 Auxiliary Services</p> <p>B. Revised Policy - 6.1006 Service Animals and the ADA</p> <p>C. New Policy - 2.9005 Artificial Intelligence Governance And Responsible Use Policy</p> <p>YES: Trustees Abby-White, Clayton, Crupi, D'Alessio, Davis, Fajardo, Hoitt, Richens, Williams and Chair Horl</p> <p>NO: None</p> <p>ABSTENTIONS: None</p> <p>Motion approved.</p>	

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
<p>Approval of the Reduction in Force Plan for Strategic Reorganization and Authorization of the Terms of Voluntary Separation Agreements</p>	<p>A motion to approve by resolution the reduction in force plan for strategic reorganization and authorization of the terms of voluntary separation agreements was made by Trustee Clayton and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White.</p> <p>YES: Trustees Abby-White, Clayton, Crupi, D'Alessio, Davis, Fajardo, Hoitt, Richens, Williams and Chair Horl</p> <p>NO: None</p> <p>ABSTENTIONS: None</p> <p>Motion approved.</p>	
<p>Public Comment</p> <p>Chair Horl opened the public comment section requesting commenter(s) to provide public comment in accordance with the instructions given by Mr. Jacobs. She further announced that public comment would be limited to 5 minutes per commenter.</p> <p>No public comment was made and Ms. Gruskos confirmed no written public comments were submitted.</p> <p>Seeing no public comment, Chair Horl closed the public comment portion of the meeting.</p>		
<p>Old/New Business –</p> <p>Under old and new business, Dr. Stout reflected on the differences between the College's previous reduction-in-force process and the current process, noting changes in Board culture and the Board's relationship with the College community. He thanked the Board for its willingness to make difficult decisions while recognizing the impact those decisions have on employees.</p>		

Topic and Discussion	Votes Taken	Action and Follow-up Actions
Under new business, Chair Horl requested that the Board's meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 24, before Thanksgiving be moved to the preceding Monday evening, November 23. She noted that a room was available and that the change would provide additional time for Trustees and others who travel to prepare and make arrangements prior to Thanksgiving. There were no objections, and Ms. Gruskos was instructed to make the change of date to November 23.		
Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm	A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Richens and seconded by Vice Chair Abby-White. Motion approved.	

BROOKDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, while the Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in "Executive Session," i.e. without the public being permitted to attend, and

WHEREAS, the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees has determined that **1** issue is permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) to be discussed without the public in attendance and shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on **September 22, 2026 at approximately 5:35 PM** _____. The nine (9) exceptions to open public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box which will be marked when the issues to be privately discussed fall within that exception, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written.

☐ "(1) Any matter which, by express provision of Federal law, State statute or rule of court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from public discussion." The legal citation to the provision(s) at issue is: _____ and the nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

☐ "(2) Any matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the federal government." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

☐ "(3) Any material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is _____

Approved: September 22, 2026 - RESOLUTION

☐ "(4) Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body:

☐ "(5) Any matter involving the purchase lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality –

"(6) Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public provided that their disclosure could impair such protection. Any investigations of violations or possible violations of the law." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is:

☒ a) "(7) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer." The parties to and docket numbers of each item of litigation and/or the parties to each contract discussed are and the nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is: **Attorney client advice/privilege as to potential declaration of Reduction in Force.**

☐ "(8) Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting." Subject to the balancing of the public's interest and the employee's privacy rights under South Jersey Publishing Co. v. New Jersey Expressway Authority, 124 N.J. 478 (1991), the employee(s) and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality..

☐ "(9) Any deliberation of a public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party as a result of an act of omission for which the responding party bears responsibility." The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is a

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be **30 to 60** minutes after which the public meeting of the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees shall (select ☐ one) reconvene and immediately adjourn or

☒ reconvene and proceed with business where formal action will be taken.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees will go into Executive Session for only the above stated reasons; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Brookdale Community College Board of Trustees hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public's interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary, at the present public meeting, shall read aloud enough of this resolution so that members of the public in attendance can understand, as precisely as possible, the nature of the matters that will privately discussed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary, on the next business day following this meeting, shall post this Resolution on the Board website and furnish a copy of this Resolution to any member of the public who requests one at the fees allowed by N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.