



**Minutes of the October 14, 2025 Regular Meeting of the
Board of Trustees of Community College District 535**

The 814th meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 was conducted on October 14, 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 5:33 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 September 16, 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 Bashiri-Remetio. 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 5:55 p.m., Trustee Salzberg made a motion to adjourn the closed session meeting which was seconded by Trustee Bashiri-Remetio. 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 6:03 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		Absent
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; Johanna Fine, Chief Human Resources Officer; Dr. Bernard Little, Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Ileo Lott, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Michele Roberts, Vice President for Administrative Affairs; and Katherine Sawyer, Chief Advancement Officer.

Administrators: Marc Battista, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Matthew Boutilier, Director of Online Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Leana Cuellar, Dean of Access, Equity and Diversity; Dr. Rick Daniels, Director of Institutional Equity and Inclusion; Thomas Hicks Jr., Director of Student Success and Academic Interventions; Dr. Jesse Ivory, Assistant Vice President for Workforce Innovation and College Partnerships; Jake Jeremiah, Dean of Library; Dr. Ashley Knight, Interim Dean of Liberal Arts; Dr. Andrea Lehmacher, Director of Marketing; Christine Paciero, Director of Oakton Athletics; Dr. James Rabchuk, Dean of STEM; Delia Rodriguez, Dean of Adult and Continuing Education; Dr. Emmanuel Sarris, Interim Dean of Business and Career Technologies; Joseph Scifo, Director of Facilities; Jeff Spidle, Interim Director of IT Infrastructure; John Wade, Chief Information Officer; and Andy Williams, Controller.

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

Faculty: Stacy Cameron, English; Madhuri Deshmukh, English; Margaret Gas, Nursing; Michelle Giese, Nursing; Greg Hamill, Sociology; Winnie Sitt, Nursing; and Louis Walker, Athletics Coach.

Staff: Giacomo Cirrincione, Learning Center; Alison Conner, Learning Center; Ernest Gest, Facilities; Julia Gray, Information Technology; Joseph Hanafee, Advising and Transitions; Lea Hartono, Curriculum and Instruction; Ewa Lyczewska, Marketing and Communications; Kushal Patel, Information Technology; James Sbarboro, Testing Center; Grantly Scott, Testing Center; Beatriz Sparks, President's Office; and John Widera, Information Technology.

Students: Ana Adamaze, Nicolas De Leon, Matthew Halupka, Guadalupe Montesinos, Veronica Orochena, Gianni Spallone, and Jiro Yamat.

Guests: Hollis Hanson-Pollock, Toni Mammana, and Christine Torres.

Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Burns led the pledge.

Land Acknowledgment – Student Trustee AbiNader read the Land Acknowledgment.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Burns asked a motion for the approval of the minutes of the September 16, 2025 regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, and the September 16, 2025 joint meeting of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors. Trustee Bashiri-Remetio made the motion. Trustee Yanow seconded the motion. A voice vote was called and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Statement by the President

Condolences

- To the family and friends of Fitness Center Supervisor, Richard Varyu who passed away on Sept. 25. He will be missed, especially by our student athletes, coaches and the athletic department team with whom he worked closely.

Congratulations

- To Senior Manager of Corporate and Foundation Relations, Lindsay Igyarto and her family who welcomed baby Ronan on Sept. 29.
- To Controller, Andy Williams and his team. Oakton received the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for Fiscal Year 2025.
- Oakton proudly celebrated the recognition of the Evanston Healthcare Response Collaborative as the recipient of the prestigious Evanston Chamber of Commerce Catalyst Award, presented by Northwestern University leadership and the Mayor of Evanston. The award honors efforts that strengthen partnerships and improve the community. Collaborative initiatives include the BNAT program with ETHS, a medical

assistant apprenticeship with Northwestern Medicine, and the Health Career Education Center with Endeavor Health. Together, these partnerships help build a stronger, healthier community.

Student Recognitions

- I am pleased to recognize the Board of Trustees Scholarship Recipients for 2025-2026. These recipients were selected for their academic excellence and demonstrated leadership.
 - Sandeep Boppana - Associate in Arts
 - Veronica Orochena - Associate in Arts (Behavioral Science)
 - Chamara Jayasinghe - Associate in Science (Computer Technology)
 - Yasvi Patel - Associate in Arts (Business Services)
 - Ayesha Abdul Salam - Associate in Science (Biology Pre-Major)

Athletics Recognitions

- Men's Golf: 2025 Illinois Skyway Collegiate Conference Co-Champions (with Elgin Community College)
2025 ISCC Co-Coach of the Year - Louis Walker
2025 ISCC All-Conference (Top 10 Golfers)
- 3. Matthew Christopolus Freshman - New Trier HS
- 4. Jiro Yamat Freshman - Maine East HS
- 5. Matthew Halupka Freshman - Notre Dame Prep
- 7. Gianni Spallone Freshman - Maine South HS
- The Men's Soccer team were out this afternoon competing for the Skyway Conference championship against Elgin Community College, and they won 5-1.

Happenings

- Next Wednesday is the 6th annual all College Learning Day. The theme is "*Elevating Indigenous Voices: Action, Education, and Collaboration*," and invites us to learn from Indigenous perspectives, strengthen partnerships with Native communities, and advance equity in our work and classrooms.
- October is Filipino American History Month. In partnership with Everybody's Market Chicago, we are once again hosting Para Sa Kultura Filipino Night Market on Oct. 24 from 5-9 p.m.
- October is LGBTQIA2+ History Month at Oakton. Enjoy free, creative events like Pride in Color, drop an encouraging message during Notes of Pride, and mark days of observance from *National Coming Out Day* to *Asexual Awareness Week*!
- The City of Des Plaines will be hosting their annual Harvest Hoot at the Des Plaines Campus this Saturday Oct. 18 from 12 – 4 p.m. There will be live entertainment on two stages, an inflatable corn maze and bounce house, a live pumpkin carving demonstration, a variety of family activities (including a new Touch a Truck area), a harvest artisan market with over two dozen vendors, food trucks, and more. Everyone in the community is invited to attend and costumes are encouraged.
- We are excited to welcome Kpassi Seme, a professor of Agronomy at the University of Lomé in Togo, as part of an international faculty exchange. Professor Seme is the exchange partner of Tracy Fulce and will be visiting Oakton from Oct. 20 - Nov. 2.
- This year's Employee Recognition Dinner will be held at Manzo's Banquets on Nov. 6th. We look forward to celebrating this year's honorees and sharing the evening with you!

Educational Foundation Liaison Report

The foundation's fundraising progress stands at 25% to goal 3 months into the fiscal year. Recent contributions of note include:

- A \$12,000 pledge from new board member Shane Carlin and his wife Annie Sit to endow a new scholarship.
- A \$12,000 gift from the Anne and Mead Montgomery Family Foundation to add resources to their annual scholarship fund.
- A \$10,000 gift from New Trier Township to provide resources for award this academic year while their new endowment matures.

The Foundation successfully completed their annual independent audit with an unmodified opinion. Audit results will be presented to the Foundation Board at their December meeting along with a draft of their annual IRS 990 Filing.

Following the close of a fiscal year and the completion of the audit, the Foundation is compiling 258 customized stewardship reports to send to donors who have launched named scholarships or funds that remain resourced and active. The reports provide financial details related to each scholarship or program fund and insight on its impact over the last year. These reports will be mailed this week.

Trustees are invited to attend the annual Donor Appreciation Brunch on November 8th from 10-12pm at the DoubleTree in Skokie along with other invited guests and student recipients. Please RSVP your attendance to the Foundation Office.

The Foundation Board held their annual retreat on Friday, September 19 on the Skokie campus. The board spent time gaining a better understanding of Oakton's case for support in our workforce development and health career programs as well as a primer on the foundation's financial status. The second half of the retreat focused on building confidence in talking about Oakton as a philanthropic destination through storytelling and ambassadorship.

The Foundation Board's next quarterly meeting will take place on December 3.

Pathways to Opportunity Liaison Report

The Pathways to Opportunity Task Force had its first meeting on October 3 to review Oakton's Pathway to Opportunity Framework, and discuss the role of the task force in helping to advance Oakton's vision to build an ecosystem-wide structure that:

- Aligns pathways beginning in elementary school through transfer.
- Integrates technical education, general education, and wraparound support.
- Relies on shared ownership with K–12, employers, and community organizations.
- Drives mobility by reducing economic barriers, embedding stackable credentials, and aligning education with industry practice.
- Promotes jobs 1, 2, 3, positioning Oakton as a premier source for uptraining and upward mobility.

The Task Force will engage K–12 partners to explore early career exploration and early college opportunities as well as engage sector-specific employers to identify workforce demand, wage ladders, and pipeline engagement opportunities. Students and/or prospective students will also be engaged for their feedback and insight on their needs.

The Task Force will also engage Oakton faculty, staff, and leadership to gather feedback. This will include college-wide discussions, departmental conversations, and targeted sessions that surface opportunities and challenges.

The Task Force will meet every two months to share to debrief recent internal and external engagement activities and surface lessons learned; (2) to review upcoming engagement opportunities; (3) to receive updates on micro-pilot activities. The next meeting of the task force is Dec. 5.

ICCTA Liaison Report

Chair Burns shared that the Board of Trustees hosted a regional meeting at Oakton College on October 7. Four colleges participated, and they set the foundation to start discussing the 2027 election process. The objective is helping constituents to become aware of the role of community college trustees, and increase the number of people who want to engage in this type of service.

Student Trustee Report

- The SGA has installed 2 new senators. Both of these senators immediately began helping at the same event they were recruited at, displaying determination and willingness to participate in the wellbeing of the students and the organization that directly advocates for their needs.
- Charging Stations – SGA members are still carefully combing over our options and being intentional about what option might best serve fellow students.

- ASGA Summit - President Ana Adamaze, Vice-President Joseph Park, and Student Trustee Chris AbiNader, together with advisors Krissie Harris and Princess Escudero, attended the National Student Government Summit and will begin to review notes and findings.
- Mr. AbiNader's favorite part of the conference was led by ASGA's Advocacy Expert, Dr. Andrew Ortiz who spoke about how to create student government advocacy that effects change – dropping unattainable goals for realistic ones.

Student Spotlight

Guadalupe Montesinos shared that she was planning to attend a four-year college to participate in Division III athletics. Early last year, she decided to enroll at Oakton to obtain her general education credits. She is currently on the soccer team, which has challenged her physically and mentally, and helped her develop resilience and discipline. Guadalupe is grateful for the support she has received from individuals in the Athletics department including her coaches, and she has developed a good relationship with Athletics Director, Christine Paciero who has encouraged her to take opportunities with confidence. Guadalupe plans to transfer to UIC or North Park University to continue her academic career in Physical Therapy.

Chair/Trustee Comments

Chair Burns shared a message of resilience and hope for the current challenging times.

Public Participation – None

Board Report: Oakton's Brand in Action and Strategic Enrollment Management

Katherine Sawyer, Chief Advancement Officer

Dr. Andrea Lehmacher, Director of Marketing

Matt Huber, Dean of Enrollment Management

The primary goal of the branding initiative is to bring the Oakton brand to life on campus, including a new Welcome Center.

- **Brand Pillars:** The college's brand is centered on four key action words: **Educate, Transform, Empower, and Connect.**
- **Core Concept: Connections That Count:** The final concept emphasizes that while education is the foundation, the **connections** with faculty, staff, and fellow students are what transform learning and shape a student's future. This fosters a vibrant, inclusive community connected by purpose and passion.
- **Implementation Timeline:** The project is being executed with the partner Greenlight in a phased approach:
 - **Phase 1 (Jan-Jun 2026):** Includes Feature Walls, Campus Maps, the Des Plaines Welcome Center environmental branding, and multiple installations at the Skokie Campus.
 - **Phase 2 (Jul 2026-Jun 2027):** Includes the Des Plaines Enrollment Center Entrance and the Welcome Mural at the Skokie Mulford Entrance.

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) 2.0

The SEM Plan 2.0 focuses on key strategic goals and includes an in-depth review of the admissions process.

The Fall Credit Headcount (unduplicated, excluding Dual Credit and Adult Ed/Cont. Ed) shows a recent trend:

Term	Unduplicated Headcount
Fall 2023	6282
Fall 2024	6211
Fall 2025	6172

SEM Plan 2.0 Progress Areas

The plan targets progress in four main areas:

- **Streamline Admission and Enrollment:** Work includes implementing the Common App, conducting a process mapping and EAB audit, and reviewing student service hours and brand awareness.
- **Eliminate Financial Barriers:** Initiatives focus on debt forgiveness and the Drop for Non-Payment policy.
- **Adult Learner Recruitment & Retention:** This involves workforce development and expanding Credit for Prior Learning opportunities.
- **Improving Student Success:** Strategies include student-centered scheduling, accelerated academic programs, Project Open Gate, and utilizing High Impact Practices.

Admission and Enrollment Process

The presentation outlined the enrollment journey, detailing current activities, upcoming enhancements, and challenges at each stage:

Stage	Goal/Focus	Upcoming Enhancements	Key Challenge
Student Recruitment & Application	Encourage application completion.	Personalized responses, streamlined application process, and implementing CRM text messages ("nudges").	Heavily reliant on prospective student action; navigating fraudulent applications.
Enrollment Onboarding (Orientation, Placement, Advising)	Ensure students are prepared for success.	Project Open Gate, personalized "Paying for College" outreach, and automated nudges.	Heavily reliant on student-initiated action.
Enrollment Completion (Registered, Paid, Enrolled)	Complete the process so students can focus on coursework.	Increased variety of payment plan options and enhanced financial aid information regarding eligibility.	Accommodating late student action and students' life circumstances impacting ability to enroll.

NEW BUSINESS

10/25-1a Approval of Consent Agenda

Trustee Burns 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.

10/25-1b Approval of Consent Agenda Items 10/25-2 through 10/25-5

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves the following items 10/25-2 through 10/25-5 as listed in the Consent Agenda."

10/25-2 Ratification of Payment of Bills for August 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 \$9,474,545.04 for all check amounts as listed and for all purposes as appearing on a report dated August 2025."

10/25-3 Acceptance of Treasurer's Report for August 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 August 2025."

10/25-4 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 \$1,086,795.93 to the total amount of part-time teaching salaries paid during the fall 2025 semester; the revised total payment amount is \$3,637,325.22.”

“Be it further resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 approves an adjustment of \$128,272.41 to the total amount of faculty overload salaries paid during the fall 2025 semester; the revised total payment amount is \$686,969.51.”

10/25-5 Approval of Clinical Practice Agreements

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

BNAT/CDS/HIT/MLT/MAP/NUR/PTA/SPT/SUR/XRY (1)

Medical Laboratory Technology/Phlebotomy (1)

Physical Therapy Assistant (2).”

Trustee Stafford seconded the motion and called the roll:

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio	Aye
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Trustee Burns	Aye
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Trustee Eimer	Aye
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Trustee Stafford	Aye
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Trustee Toussaint	Aye
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Trustee Yanow	Aye
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The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

10/25-6 Acceptance of Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (with Auditor’s Opinion)

Trustee Toussaint offered: “Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 accepts the Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025.”

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

10/25-7 Approval of Estimate Levy for 2025 and Announcement Thereof

Trustee Stafford offered: “Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 estimates the amount of the tax levy needed for 2025 to be collected in calendar year 2026 as follows:

the sum of \$60,214,381 to be levied as a tax for educational purposes; and
the sum of \$8,000,000 to be levied as a tax for operations and maintenance purposes; and
the sum of \$100 to be levied for tort liability, protection and settlement purposes to include liability insurance, workers’ compensation, unemployment insurance, property insurance, and occupational diseases insurance; and
the sum of \$100 to be levied as a special tax for Social Security and Medicare insurance purposes; and
the sum of \$100,000 to be levied as a special tax for financial audit purposes.”

“Be it further resolved that the Board of Trustees of Oakton Community College District 535 as part of its regularly scheduled November 18, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting, will have on its agenda the adoption of a resolution setting forth its tax levy for 2025. The above estimated amounts for the 2025 tax levy may be changed by the Board in adopting the final 2025 levy, subject to statutory notice and publication requirements.”

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

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

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

10/25-8 Authorization to Approve September Purchases

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio 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>
10/25-8a	1	Vendor Management Services – Three-Year Contract	PaymentWorks, Inc Boston, MA	\$146,640.00
10/25-8b	1	Microsoft A3 Subscription Services and Windows Server Subscription Licenses	CDW-G, LLC Vernon Hills, IL	\$152,824.82
10/25-8c	1	SimMan Essential High-Fidelity Training Mannequin	Laerdal Medical Corporation Wappingers Falls, NY	\$73,679.88
10/25-8d	1	Parking Lot Security Cameras	Howard Technology Solutions Ellisville, MS	\$47,096.30
10/25-8e	1	Cisco Industrial Ethernet Switches for the Exterior Lighting Project	JensenIT, Inc. Des Plaines, IL	\$58,017.54
10/25-8f	1	Pyxis MedStation	Medical Shipment, LLC Skokie, IL	\$57,497.00
10/25-8g	1	Engineering and Design Services for Partnership Hall/TenHoeve Wing	Perkins & Will, Inc Chicago, IL	\$437,500.00
10/25-8h	1	Engineering and Designing Services for the Interior Lighting System - Lee Center	Kluber Architects + Engineering Aurora, IL	\$29,750.00
GRAND TOTAL				\$1,003,005.54."

Trustee Stafford seconded the motion and called the roll:

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

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

10/25-9 Preview and Initial Discussion of Upcoming Purchases

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

- a. Universal Collaborative Robot
- b. Digital Accessibility Software Solution
- c. Continuation of Employee Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance
- d. Travel Services for Summer 2026 Study Abroad Program in Ghana
- e. Travel Services for Summer 2026 Study Abroad Program in India

10/25-10 Acceptance of Administrator Retirement

Trustee Burns offered: "Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Community College District 535 accepts the retirement of Director of Facilities, Joseph Scifo effective December 31, 2025."

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

10/25-11 Chair Burns asked for a motion to postpone consideration of **Agenda Item 10/25-11 (Approval of Settlement Agreement with Former Teacher)** until the next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Stafford made the motion, seconded by Trustee Bashiri-Remetio. Trustee Stafford called the roll:

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

The motion carried. Student Trustee AbiNader favored the resolution.

10/25-12 Notification of Award of Grants

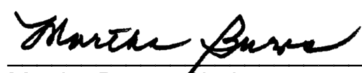
Funding has been made available to Oakton College:

- a. ICCB Pipeline for the Advancement of the Healthcare Workforce (PATH)\$489,021.79
- b. Secretary of State Adult Volunteer Literacy FY26\$104,000
- c. Secretary of State Workplace Skills Enhancement FY26 (6 awards)..... \$64, 801
- d. IGEN Lead Membership FY26..... \$15,000
- TOTAL:\$672,822.79**

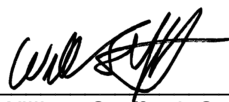
Adjournment

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, November 18, 2025 at the Des Plaines Campus.

Trustee Bashiri-Remetio made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Trustee Yanow. A voice vote was called and the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.



Martha Burns, Chair



William Stafford, Secretary

Minutes recorded by:
Beatriz Sparks
10/2025