

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Minutes of Tuesday, April 7, 2026
PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Public Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Bergen Community College was held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, in the Technology Building Conference Rooms B and C at Bergen Community College, 400 Paramus Road, Paramus, New Jersey. Chairperson Dorothy Blakeslee called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m., and the following announcement was made:

The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey has been satisfied by an annual notice, including the date, time, and place of this meeting posted in the first-floor main lobby of the Pitkin Education Center of Bergen Community College, e-mailed and published in The Record and The Herald News on December 19, 2025 and filed with the Clerk of the County of Bergen on January 2, 2026.

ROLL CALL

Present

Ms. Dorothy Blakeslee
Ms. Ritzy Morales-Diaz
Mr. Louis DeLisio – participated by phone.
Ms. Michele Dilorgi – participated by phone.
Mr. Howard Haughton
Ms. Ana Marti
Dr. Sheetal Ranjan
Mr. Damon Englese – participated by phone.

Absent

Mr. Mark Longo
Mr. Patrick Fletcher
Mr. Adam Silverstein
Ms. Ourania Rahman, Alumni Trustee

Also Present

Dr. Eric M. Friedman
Ms. Arlene Q. Perez, Esq., DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole, and Giblin, L.L.P.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Blakeslee led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

No report from Secretary Morales-Diaz.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Friedman thanked Dean Vandalovsky and STEM Director Chris Tully for joining him on the Global Workforce Coalition webinar. This is a new series on EV workforce technology and education hosted by the ACCT. They presented internationally to a variety of educational staff in India.

State Budget Hearing

President Friedman attended the State Senate Budget Committee hearing at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He informed the committee that BCC is a life-changing institution for the entire region, providing talent to our healthcare partners, the cyber and tech industries, businesses, schools, and so much more. We have over 3200 students in high school dual enrollment, saving Bergen County families many thousands of dollars. He also stated that while we are doing great things for our community, we are disproportionately and inordinately affected by a tremendous increase in healthcare costs, to the tune of \$4.2 Million, and we need help. While we are grateful for the flat operational aid, the historic healthcare cost increase actually means disinvestment.

This will be a challenging budget cycle for the College. While everyone remains grateful for the public support received from the State of New Jersey, community colleges are simply not treated equitably compared to other in-state four-year institutions. Specifically, while the state provides full reimbursement to New Jersey universities for faculty and staff health insurance, community colleges receive no state support for this expense. This inequity makes this year especially difficult as premiums increase by truly historic and incomprehensible margins.

As always, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges will facilitate this advocacy work, drawing on data from a recent Lightcast study that shows that community colleges add \$12.8 billion annually to the state economy and support nearly 136,000 jobs. For every dollar invested in a community college, students gain \$4.30 in lifetime earnings.

President Friedman thanks you all for your support as the College navigates the budgetary impacts and challenges posed by these exorbitant health care costs.

Community College Month

April is Community College Month! Sponsored by Association of Community College Trustees, the information and awareness campaign highlights the incredible work of colleges like Bergen and the accomplishments of the students, faculty, and staff.

Celebration of Awards

- The EDU Ledger and "Diverse" Magazine have named Bergen one of the "most promising places to work in community colleges" once again this year. Since Dr. Friedman's presidency began, the College has become a fixture on this exclusive list thanks to ongoing efforts to foster a deep sense of belongingness at BCC for community members, to expand professional development support for faculty and staff, and to maintain a clear strategic focus. Dr. Friedman is proud to lead an institution that is recognized for being so deeply committed to these values.

- Our Phi Theta Kappa chapter is celebrating many amazing awards and honors received at the recent Catalyst Convention. Assistant Director of PTK and Honors Anna Gergen earned the distinguished advisor award. Student Endri Dobrovoda was elected Division I international vice president - one of the highest positions a student can hold. Additionally, student Beixi Chen was named the executive vice president of the Middle States Region. Vice President of External Affairs, Suzanne Wetzel, received the distinguished college administrator award.
- The Cerullo Learning Assistance Center also earned accolades this month with the Association for the Coaching and Tutoring Profession Coaching Program of Excellence Award.
- The business publication ROI-NJ has named President Friedman to the 2026 ROI Influencers Power List.

Enrollment/Registration

With the final spring session underway in late March, Dr. Friedman officially reported an incremental increase in enrollment for the spring, year-over-year. Looking forward, the focus turns to the summer and fall semesters. Prospective students and their families had an opportunity to explore the main campus at the open house April 16.

Alumni Reception

The momentum of the reenergized Bergen Community College Foundation continues as new alumni outreach efforts have officially been launched. The College is developing a comprehensive alumni outreach plan, and has already begun a soft launch of initiatives, activities, and events. Among them, Bergen hosted the inaugural "Back to Bergen" alumni concert on April 16.

UK Visit

Our STEM student cohort has returned from their visit to the United Kingdom and Southport College as part of the U.S.-U.K. Community College and Technical Education Exchange program organized by the Association of Community College Trustees and U.K. Association of Colleges. The international learning exchange focused on sustainability with financial support from the Cyril Taylor Charitable Foundation.

President Friedman offered his condolences on the passing of Joanne Graham from Southport College. She was an exceptional educator and a wonderful human being. She embraced our students during the England exchange program. Dr. Friedman requested a moment of silence in her honor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT, FINANCE, AND LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

On behalf of Trustee Fletcher, Chairperson of the Audit, Finance, and Legal Affairs Committee, Trustee Englese informed the board members that the Audit, Finance, and Legal Affairs Committee met on March 25, 2026, and submitted resolutions A/F1 through A/F5 for board approval.

EDUCATION AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

Trustee DeLisio informed the board that the Education and Student Affairs Committee met on March 24, 2026, and submitted resolutions ESA1-ESA5 for board approval.

PERSONNEL

Trustee Morales-Diaz informed the board that the Personnel Committee met on March 26, 2026 and submitted resolutions P1 to P14 for board approval.

SITE AND FACILITIES

On behalf of Trustee Longo, Chairperson of the Site and Facilities Committee, Trustee Haughton reported that the Site and Facilities Committee met on March 27, 2026 but did not submit any resolutions at this board meeting.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Trustee Ranjan informed the board that the Strategic Planning Committee met on March 26 and submitted SP1 for board approval.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Chairwoman Blakeslee attended an Autism Awareness month event with speaker Eric Garcia: author of *We Are Not Broken*. Chairwoman Blakeslee enjoyed the history and background the book provided, as well as how engaged the students were at this event.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/BOARD MEMBERS

Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to open the Unfinished Business portion of the meeting.

No board members came forward.

Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to close the Unfinished Business portion of the meeting.

A motion was made by Trustee Haughton and seconded by Trustee Ranjan. All were in favor.

NEW BUSINESS/BOARD MEMBERS

Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to open the New Business portion of the meeting.

Trustee Ranjan congratulated Dr. Friedman on his five years as President and thanked him for his dedicated leadership.

Trustee Dilorgi updated the board on some projects the Foundation has been working on from Scholarship events to Alumni networking.

Trustee Ranjan extended her condolences for Dr. Steve Rose, President of Passaic County Community College, who passed away.

President Friedman reflected on Dr. Steve Rose as a mentor and leader. Dr. Friedman passes his deepest condolences to his family and the Passaic County Community College community.

Chairwoman Blakeslee commented on how wonderful and kind Dr. Rose was to colleagues, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to close the New Business portion of the meeting. A motion was made by Trustee Haughton and seconded by Trustee Ranjan. All were in favor.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to open to the Public. A motion was made by Trustee Moralez-Diaz and seconded by Trustee Haughton. All were in favor.

PTK discussed their success at the Catalyst Convention held in Baltimore. The following students and faculty spoke:

Endri Dobrovoda, Chapter President and International Vice President of Division I
Beixi Chen, Director of Service and Middle States Region Executive Vice President
Jasmin Kojeh, Vice President of Service
Joey Ribaud, Vice President of Scholarships
Dilan Sahin, Director of Scholarships
Tianamarie Allen, Director of Recruitment
Dedan Choezom, Director of Communications

Anna Gergen, Assistant Director of Phi Theta Kappa and Honors
Lisa Mayer, Esq., Faculty Co-Advisor

They had a successful conference where many awards were received. They thanked Suzanne Wetzel, Dr. Tomko, Dr. Alex Chan, President Friedman, and other Bergen Community staff for their support throughout this process. The following awards were won:

- Catalyst Convention recognitions
 - International Vice President - Division I
 - Endri Dobrovoda
 - Top 100 chapter internationally
 - Distinguished College Administrator Award
 - Vice President Suzanne Wetzel

- Distinguished Advisor Award
 - Anna Gergen
- Middle States Region Convention recognitions
- Middle States Region (MSR) Executive Vice President
 - Beixi Chen
 - 4th Most Distinguished Chapter
 - Excellence in Membership Recruitment Award
 - MSR Distinguished College Project
 - MSR Distinguished Honors in Action Project
 - MSR Honors in Action Theme Award - Theme Four
 - MSR Distinguished Chapter Officer Team
 - 3rd Most Distinguished Chapter Member
 - Dilan Sahin
 - MSR Hall of Honor- Distinguished Chapter Member
 - Dilan Sahin
 - MSR Hall of Honor - Distinguished Chapter Officer
 - Endri Dobrovoda
 - Caroline Wu

Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to close the public portion of this meeting.
A motion was made by Trustee Ranjan and seconded by Trustee Haughton. All were in favor.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2026, board meeting. A motion was made by Trustee Haughton and seconded by Trustee Morales-Diaz.

Roll Call Vote for approval of the board meeting minutes dated March 3, 2026.

Ms. Dorothy Blakeslee - Yes
Mr. Louis DeLisio – Yes
Ms. Michele Dilorgi - Yes
Mr. Damon Englese – Abstain
Mr. Patrick Fletcher - Absent
Mr. Howard Haughton - Yes
Mr. Mark Longo – Absent
Ms. Ana Marti - Yes
Ms. Ritzy Morales-Diaz – Abstain
Dr. Sheetal Ranjan – Abstain
Mr. Adam Silverstein – Absent
Ms. Ourania Rahman – Absent

5 Yes, 4 Absences, and 3 Abstentions

The motion to approve the board meeting minutes for March 3, 2026, was passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for Tuesday, April 7, 2026. A motion was made by Trustee Ranjan and seconded by Trustee Haughton. Motion passed for the Consent Agenda.

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2026

A/F1 to A/F5
ESA1 to ESA5
P1 to P14
SP1

No Resolutions were submitted for Site and Facilities.

Roll Call Vote for approval of the Consent Agenda dated April 7, 2026

Ms. Dorothy Blakeslee - Yes
Mr. Louis DeLisio – Yes
Ms. Michele Dilorgi - Yes
Mr. Damon Englese – Yes
Mr. Patrick Fletcher - Absent
Mr. Howard Haughton - Yes
Mr. Mark Longo – Absent
Ms. Ana Marti - Yes
Ms. Ritzy Moralez-Diaz – Yes
Dr. Sheetal Ranjan – Yes
Mr. Adam Silverstein – Absent
Ms. Ourania Rahman - Absent

8 Yes and 4 Absent

A/F1 to A/F5
ESA1 to ESA5
P1 to P14
SP1

An executive session meeting was not held.

Approved resolutions:

A/F1 - Approval of Legal Vouchers – DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Giblin, LLP.

Approval is hereby granted for payment of the following legal vouchers:

DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Giblin. LLP.

February 1, 2026, to February 28, 2026,

\$ 11,215.47

A/F2 - To purchase one 2026 Ford Explorer (PIU) Police Interceptor Utility vehicle from Winner Ford.

Approval is hereby granted to purchase one 2026 Ford Explorer PIU from Winner Ford through New Jersey State Contract #20-Fleet-01189, in the amount of \$54,105.20.

A/F3 - To authorize a \$50,000 increase (from \$250,000 to \$300,000) in the total contracted amount for VisionPoint Marketing LLC RFP #R-106 Advertising Agency Services to include AI student engagement enhancements to the College's website redesign project.

Approval is hereby granted to a \$50,000 increase to the contracted (or 20% as allowed by law) for advertising agency services contracted through VisionPoint Marketing LLC.

A/F4 - To authorize renewal of Bergen Community College's (Bergen) property insurance policy for the Meadowlands campus through Otterstedt Insurance Agency, Inc.

Approval is hereby granted to renew the College's property insurance policy for the Bergen at the Meadowlands property located at 1280 Wall Street, Lyndhurst, NJ, from March 31, 2026, through March 31, 2027, at a cost of \$43,161.11.

A/F5 - Authorize payment for the required itemized services to Devils Arena Entertainment LLC at a cost not to exceed \$97,500 for the College's 2026 commencement ceremony.

Approval is hereby granted to add required itemized costs (not to exceed \$97,500) to the previously approved Devils Arena Entertainment LLC blanket purchase order (\$87,500) for the College's 2026 Commencement Ceremony on May 15, 2026.

A/F6 - To authorize the College's Fiscal Year 2027 funding request to the County of Bergen for operating expenses.

Approval is hereby granted by the Board of Trustees for the College's Fiscal Year 2027 (2026/2027) County of Bergen operating aid request in the following amount:

- County Operating Appropriation \$25,455,079

E/SA1- To authorize submission of a Fiscal Year 2026 budget amendment request for the College's Perkins grant to the state of New Jersey Department of Education, and to authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents.

Approval is hereby granted to submit a budget amendment request for the College's Perkins grant for fiscal year 2026 (July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026) to the New Jersey Department of Education, and to authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute required documents.

E/SA2- To authorize submission of a grant application to the United States Department of Labor (DOL) Strengthening Community College Training Round 6 (SCCT 6) program, and to authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents.

Approval is hereby granted to submit a SCCT6 grant application to US Department of Labor for a 48-month performance period with an anticipated start date 09/01/2026, and to authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents.

E/SA3- To authorize submission of a grant application to the NASPA Emergency Aid Microgrant initiative program in collaboration with TIAA, and authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents.

Approval is hereby granted to submit a grant application for \$10,000 for a 5-months performance period with an anticipated start date 06/01/2026 to the NASPA Emergency Aid Microgrant Initiative program, and to authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents.

E/SA4- To authorize submission of a grant application to the Allstate Foundation College Service Grant, under the Center for Expanding Leadership & Opportunity (CELO) program, and authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents.

Approval is hereby granted for the submission of a grant application for \$10,000, to **Allstate Foundation College Service Grant program** and authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents. The period of performance for this project is 12 months with an anticipated start date 06/01/2026.

E/SA5- To authorize execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Bergen Community College (College) and the Bergen Community College Foundation (Foundation) to jointly pursue and administer corporate and other foundation grant opportunities requiring a 501(c)(3) status, and to authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents.

Approval is hereby granted to execute a MOU between the College and the Foundation to jointly pursue and administer corporate and foundation grant opportunities that require 501(c)(3) status for the benefit of students, and to authorize Dr. Eric M. Friedman, President, or his designee, to execute the required documents.

P1 - To approve the specified personnel separations.

Approval is hereby granted to accept the separation of the following individuals:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Position/Department/Division/Unit</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
1.	Nelida Capellan	Resignation	Assistant Director of Financial Aid/ Student Affairs/Professional	03/20/2026 (retroactive)
2.	Ahmed Ragab Gad Aly	Resignation	Custodian/Facilities/Support	03/20/2026 (retroactive)
3.	Matthew King	Retirement	Professor/Science, Mathematics and Technology/Academic Affairs/ Faculty	07/01/2026

P2 - To approve the appointment of the specified Professional personnel.

Approval is hereby granted for the appointment of the following individual to the vacant position and annual salary indicated below:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Division</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Salary (pro-rated)</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
1.	Vanessa Pusey	Financial Aid Generalist/ Student Affairs	Professional	\$55,000.00	04/16/2026

P3 - To approve the appointment of the specified Support personnel.

Approval is hereby granted for the appointment of the following individual to the vacant position and annual salary indicated below:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Division</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Salary (pro-rated)</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
1.	Tamar Celik	Secretary/Science, Math and Technology	Support	\$44,000.00	04/16/2026

P4 - Reappointment Faculty-First and Second Reappointment

Approval is hereby granted to reappoint the following individuals for their first and second reappointment to the indicated division and rank for the period September 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027:

First Reappointment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Discipline/Department/Division</u>
Erin Andersen	Associate Professor	English/Humanities
Alexander Chan	Assistant Professor	Communication/Humanities
Maria Chano	Assistant Professor	Cyber Security/Information Technology Mathematics, Science and Technology
Polikseni Hysi	Assistant Professor	Dental Hygiene/Health Professions
Tara Snyder	Assistant Professor	Biology/Math, Science and Technology
Bernadett Szasz	Assistant Professor	Biology/Math, Science and Technology

Second Reappointment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Discipline/Department/Division</u>
Lisa Duddy	Associate Professor	Dental Hygiene/Health Professions
Ariana Lopez	Assistant Professor	Criminal Justice/Criminal Justice and Legal Studies/Business and Social Sciences
Jiyoun Park	Associate Instructor	Diagnostic Medical Sonography/ Health Professions

P5 - To approve adding a vacant position and job description to the organizational chart

Approval is hereby granted to approve the following vacant position be added to the College's organizational chart:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Department/Division</u>	<u>Unit</u>
1. Associate Director, Center for Student Success	Student Support Services/ Student Affairs	Confidential

P6 - To approve the job descriptions for the specified positions.

Approval is hereby granted to approve the following actions:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Unit</u>
1. Dean of Continuing Education	Revised Job Description	Confidential
2. Lead Payroll Specialist	New Job Description	Confidential

P7 - To approve the promotions of specified confidential personnel.

Approval is hereby granted to approve the promotion of the following individuals to the positions and annual salaries indicated below:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Division</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Salary (prorated)</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
1.	David Borzotta	Vice President of Public Safety and Security/Special Assistant to the President	Confidential	\$145,000.00	04/16/2026
2.	Linda Caruso	Dean of Continuing Education/Continuing Education and Workforce Development	Confidential	\$117,500.00	04/16/2026
3.	Reginald Grant	Lead Payroll Specialist/ Human Resources	Confidential	\$76,368.47	03/01/2026 (retroactive)

P8 - To approve the salary adjustment of the specified Professional personnel.

Approval is hereby granted to approve the salary adjustment of the following individual to the position and annual salary indicated below:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Division</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Salary (prorated)</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
1.	Juan Rodriguez	Public Safety Sergeant/ Safety and Security	Professional	\$65,000	04/16/2026

P9 - To approve a Grant extension.

Approval is hereby granted to approve the extension of the term of employment of the following individual:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Division</u>	<u>Effective Dates (retroactive)</u>
1.	Brittany Weiner Kealty	Student Support Specialist/ Student Affairs	03/16/2026 - 06/30/2026

P10- To authorize stipends to college personnel providing services for Bergensounds productions in April 2026.

Approval is hereby granted for stipends to the following individuals for their work on Bergensounds productions in April 2026:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
Rod Shepard	Audio Supervisor	\$1,000.00
Nicholas Gonzalez	Video Supervisor	\$ 500.00
Peter Furlan	Musician	\$ 250.00

P11- To discontinue a monthly stipend.

Approval is hereby granted to discontinue the monthly stipend for the following individual, as indicated:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Division</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Monthly Amount</u>	<u>Effective Date (retroactive)</u>
Reginald Grant	Senior Payroll Generalist/ Human Resources	Confidential	\$750.00	02/28/2026

P12- To approve stipends for Nursing Clinical Faculty for the Spring 2026 semester

Approval is hereby granted to approve payment of stipends for the following individual in the Nursing Clinical Faculty in the amount indicated for the Spring 2026 semester.

Spring 2026 (Flex 2, 3/16/26 – 5/6/26)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Semester stipend amount</u>
<u>Adjunct</u> Camile Richards **(N) Adjunct)	\$1,718.93 (replacement for previously scheduled

** for ½ semester clinical only
(N) New adjunct clinical faculty

P13- To rescind stipends of the specified Nursing Clinical Faculty for the Spring 2026 semester.

Approval is hereby granted to rescind the stipend for the following individuals in the Nursing Clinical Faculty for the Spring 2026 semester (from board resolution P6, January 6, 2026):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Semester Stipend Amount</u>
<u>Adjuncts</u> Tenzin Lama-Tamang	\$3,008.12
Mandelia Williamson	\$1,718.93

P14- To approve Leave of Absence

Approval is hereby granted to approve the Leave of Absence, without pay, for the following individuals from the position listed below, effective dates as indicated:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Division/Bargaining Unit</u>	<u>Effective Dates (retroactive)</u>
1. Diana Jankuloski	Associate Director of Payroll/Human Resources/Confidential	02/10/2026 – 03/01/2026
2. Karina Marchena	Public Safety Officer/Safety and Security/Support	03/11/2026 – 04/30/2026
3. Margaret McCarthy	Office Assistant/Meadowlands/Academic Affairs/Support	03/25/2026 – 04/15/2026
4. Janet Pagan	Executive Secretary/Meadowlands/Academic Affairs/Support	04/01/2026 – 05/29/2026

SP1- To approve revisions to “Theme 2” of the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, Focusing on the Future.

Approval is hereby granted to adopt the revision of the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

As no further business was brought before the Board of Trustees, Chairwoman Blakeslee requested a motion to adjourn the board meeting.

A motion was made by Trustee Moralez-Diaz and seconded by Trustee Haughton. All trustees were in favor.

The board meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Thank you,

Trustee Dorothy Blakeslee, Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Bergen Community College