

**SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
HOUSTON CITY COLLEGE**

**April 23, 2026**

**Minutes**

The Board of Trustees of Houston City College held a Special Meeting on April 23, 2026, at the HCC Administration Building, HCC Administration Building, 3100 Main Street, 9th Floor, Pacific Ocean Room, Houston, TX 77002.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Eva Loredo, Chair  
Sean Cheben, Vice Chair  
Laolu Davies  
Renee Patterson  
Adriana Tamez (via Video Conference)  
Pretta VanDible Stallworth (via Video Conference)  
Dave Wilson

**CHANCELLOR COUNCIL**

Margaret Ford Fisher, Chancellor  
Christopher Burnett for Andrea Burrige, Strategy, Planning and Institution Effectiveness  
Robert McCracken, Vice Chancellor, Operations and Administration  
Nicole Montgomery, General Counsel

**CALL TO ORDER**

Trustee Eva Loredo, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. and declared the Board convened to consider matters of Houston City College as listed on the duly posted Meeting Notice.

*(The following Trustees were present: Loredo, Tamez, and Wilson)*

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No citizens signed up to speak before the Committee.

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION**

**ASPEN PRESIDENTS AND TRUSTEES COLLABORATIVE - SESSION 3**

Dr. Ford Fisher noted that the Aspen Presidents & Trustees Collaborative: Session 3 will convene to collaborate on the previous session held on January 28, 2026, as well as the in-person session attended by the Executive Committee and Chancellor on December 5, 2025.

Josh Wyner, Executive Director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, introduced the meeting session goals and workshop tracks for Presidents & Trustees Collaborative: Session 3. Mr. Wyner provided a summary of the January Session 2:

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- Defined the Board's Role in institutionalizing and sustaining priority student success reforms
- Identify ways to increase focus of Board meetings and student success metrics
- Aspen Trustee Framework
  - Why and What of Reform - Ensure every Board member understands why reform is needed and what reform strategies the college is prioritizing
  - Goals and Metrics -Set student success goals and regularly monitor a limited number of aligned leading and lagging indicators
  - Policies and Budgets - Advanced policies and budgets to support the prioritized reform strategies
  - Advance Policies and Budgets
  - Policies - Adopt policies to understand policies that affect student success

*(Trustee Cheben joined the meeting at 11:18 a.m.)*

- Transformational Student Success Policies
- Budget- Reallocate resources to visibly support progress on what matters most
- Reflections and Group Discussion
  - Making changes to Board time
- Texas Presidents and Trustees discussed action and next steps that have been taken based on the discussions held during the previous sessions relating to the student success model.

*(Trustee Davies joined the meeting at 11:25 a.m.)*

- CEO-Board Relationship
- Sustaining Reforms Through Leadership Cycles

Dr. Ford Fisher noted that the playbook has been helpful and reported that data on student success outcomes have been provided and remain a high-priority. She also apprised that EAB Navigate 360 will be implemented as a student touchpoint initiative. She noted that the alignment of all programs is being reviewed to ensure coordination among faculty and student advising services.

Mr. Wyner provided an overview of the Southwest Wisconsin Technical College - 2025 Winner Aspen Prize as a model.

### **Texas Presidents and Trustees Collaborative Workshop 1 - Track A: Sustaining Reforms**

*(The following Trustees were present: Cheben, Loreda, Davies, VanDible Stallworth, and Wilson)*

A discussion was held on the following:

- Possible changes to reflect the relationship between Board and CEO
- What want to do to move forward

Trustee Cheben reflected on institutional scale and noted that aligning with reform efforts will be challenging. He added that the budget may differ from that of Pascal and that making such

decisions within the budget process will be difficult. He asked how the process can be made productive, given the size of the institution.

Mr. Wyner noted that the college has more opportunities than smaller colleges. He apprised that budget cover sheets showing trend lines could help identify the most prioritized items or potentially allow for grouping related items together.

*(Dr. Tamez joined the meeting at 12:08 p.m.)*

Mr. Wyner noted that functional reasons for budget changes should be considered rather than focusing solely on itemized line items. He also recommended reviewing multi-year budgets to evaluate potential investments over a three-year timeframe or longer. Additionally, he suggested considering the use of ratios in relation to the budget rather than approving a budget with itemized line items.

Trustee Cheben noted that he is intrigued by the concept of a multi-year budget and finds it difficult to identify examples. Mr. Wyner apprised that he would review entities that may be using a multi-year budgeting model.

Dr. VanDible Stallworth noted that she was interested in the explanation between the direction given to the CEO and what the Board understood would be done regarding student outcomes. She inquired how the two perspectives could be reconciled.

Mr. Wyner noted that this relates to the relationship between the Board and the CEO. He apprised that there may need to be a greater focus on identifying the priorities that the Board wants to see advanced. He noted that the college leadership should determine how to implement changes and keep the Board informed.

Mr. Wyner provided the example of expanding nursing programs, noting that while the CEO is responsible for determining the approach, the Board should be informed even though they are not directly involved in operational decisions. He further noted that items may need to be considered individually, emphasizing that the CEO is responsible for executing the work, while the Board is responsible for setting goals.

Trustee Loredó noted the importance of collaboration among the Board and the CEO and noted that one challenge is the reliance on one-on-one relationships. She expressed concern that Trustees may not be receiving all relevant information. She reiterated her focus on student success and reminded the Board that they function as a team of 10 that includes the nine Trustees and Chancellor.

The Board entered a discussion on identifying priorities of focus that require monitoring by the Board.

Mr. Wyner noted that the key question is whether initiatives support student success and whether they align with institutional priorities or represent higher priorities. He apprised that one-on-one

meetings should be structured to preserve daily operations and focus on broader strategic topics or programs. He further noted that the Chancellor cannot meet with each Trustee on every agenda item and that there should be clarity on which topics warrant focused discussion.

Dr. Ford Fisher expressed encouragement, noting that significant positive strides have been made in student success due to the resources provided. She apprised that some initiatives are driven by HB8, which focuses on student outcomes. She noted that efforts have been scaled in several areas based on an environmental scan to improve access to programs across geographic districts. Additionally, she noted that workforce alignment and guided pathways to four-year institutions have been identified and developed.

Dr. Ford Fisher apprised that the college has hired a Chief AI Officer and that she is reviewing tools for training faculty and staff in artificial intelligence. She added that a SWOT analysis is currently being conducted in collaboration with the Chief AI Officer and Chief Information Officer to align software systems and support future expansion.

Dr. Ford Fisher noted that the Board-approved goals indicated a review of alignment between workforce and academic courses. She apprised that the college is currently aligning online academic courses to better support workforce programs, with the intent to streamline pathways so students can easily identify programs and complete certificates.

Dr. Ford Fisher acknowledged Dr. Chris Burnett, Associate Vice Chancellor, Research Analytics and Dual Enrollment and Credit Support who was available to provide supporting data. Mr. Wyner requested that the data be sent.

Mr. Wyner noted that the unique challenge is that the college is a large system with many moving parts, which can make it difficult for the Board to track and meaningfully contribute across all areas. He stated that the Board can only focus on a limited number of priorities and should identify those that are most significant and require Board attention. He mentioned that the Board should identify those three to four high priorities items to focus on.

Trustee Davies noted that a structural problem had been identified earlier and that simply requiring the Chancellor to meet individually with each Trustee may miss the underlying issue. He recommended that the Chancellor may need to designate supporting staff, such as a Chief of Staff or Board Liaison, to assist in ensuring coordination and communication with the Board.

Trustee Davies further noted the opportunity to establish a role focused on maintaining institutional priorities, such as serving hard-to-reach student populations, including those with no prior higher education experience or workforce connection. He apprised the importance of focusing on long-term goals, particularly a five-year outlook. He noted that the structural issue must be addressed first, noting that it is not feasible to rely solely on the Chancellor as a single point of contact for all Board-related needs.

Mr. Wyner recommended entering into a discussion on the issues raised by Trustee Davies. He noted that the completion of credentials aligned to regional economic needs, as well as tracking those credentials would be more important than focusing solely on enrollment numbers. He added

that this could serve as a priority the Board may wish to monitor.

Trustee Dave Wilson noted that healthcare is a major priority area, along with workforce trades, which he identified as key focus areas for his priorities.

Dr. VanDible Stallworth noted the size of the college's reach and emphasized the need to better ascertain how to effectively offer available programs and services. She apprised that there is a need to properly identify demographic needs across the geographic areas served.

*(Trustee Wilson stepped out at 12:52 p.m.)*

Dr. VanDible Stallworth noted that the institution must review how it meets the needs of the community in terms of location and how to minimize access barriers for certain workforce and degree programs.

*(Trustee Davies stepped out at 12:55)*

*(Trustee Wilson returned at 12:59 p.m.)*

Mr. Wyner apprised that there is a need to measure the demographics of students enrolled and/or review pathways that lead to improved wage outcomes. He noted the importance of determining whether the focus should be on students in seats or on program completions.

*(Trustees Davies returned at 1:00 p.m.)*

Trustee Davies noted that programs should align with future workforce needs for the region, while also emphasizing the importance of identifying areas in which the institution can be known as first in its class. He apprised that healthcare, as mentioned by Trustee Wilson, as well as artificial intelligence and robotics/engineering programs as potential areas of distinction. He recommended that these three program areas could serve as signature strengths for the institution and may represent an additional focus for Board consideration.

Mr. Wyner noted that the college must review unmet demand in the fields mentioned by Trustee Davies, including identifying where targets exist and where growth is occurring. He apprised that the first step would be to assess labor market demand in those areas. He also noted the importance of ensuring that access remains part of the discussion.

Mr. Wyner noted the need to review the focus of the meeting and suggested that the Chancellor may wish to return with additional information to address the issues raised. He also expressed concerns regarding discussions occurring outside of Board meetings and noted the importance of considering alternative structures to ensure Board members feel adequately informed.

Trustee Loreda noted that Board members have been given the opportunity to contact the Board Chair and the Chancellor between meetings. She apprised that consideration could be given to longer-range engagement, such as meetings with Trustees on a six-month basis.

Trustee Wilson expressed concern with the Chancellor meeting individually with Trustees, noting that the Board should function as a collective body rather than through individual engagements.

Mr. Wyner noted that the Board may need to clarify expectations for such meetings. He expressed concern that discussions between a Trustee and the Chancellor could potentially lead to requests that are not aligned with the Board's collective position or could create perceptions of undue influence or coercion, which should be avoided. He apprised that meetings could instead focus on broad priorities, identifying areas where Board time may be better used based on agenda alignment, and exploring whether community stakeholders could assist in advancing initiatives. He emphasized the importance of Trustee Wilson's point regarding establishing a shared understanding of the purpose of these meetings and what topics are appropriate for discussion.

Mr. Wyner further noted that the Board should collectively set the tone for these engagements and may need to clearly document the goals of such conversations, including any prohibited topics. He apprised that it should be clearly understood that no decisions will be made and no commitments should be implied or discussed during these meetings.

Dr. Ford Fisher noted a question regarding the data source used to identify students below the poverty level and how other institutions are scaling efforts to make pathways more accessible for their constituents. She inquired whether there is any evidence or best practices demonstrating how this approach could be effectively implemented.

*(Trustee Davies stepped out at 1:14 p.m.)*

Mr. Wyner concurred and apprised that a playbook is currently being developed using two models: one from Lorraine Community College and another from Valencia College's accelerated skills training program.

*(Trustee Davies returned at 1:15 p.m.)*

Trustee Wilson noted that the Attorney General has issued a ruling regarding credentialing and that there may be a need to work more closely with the legislature in areas that could affect licensing agencies. He added that these actions have not impacted community colleges at this time.

Mr. Wyner noted that employers need skilled labor and apprised that most successful workforce initiatives originate with employers. HE emphasized that while the college can help organize and facilitate efforts, the employers will ultimately need to take the lead.

Dr. Ford Fisher expressed appreciation to Mr. Wyner for facilitating the session and presentation. She introduced Dr. Burnett to provide data on the key performance indicators scheduled to be presented at the COTW meeting on May 6.

Dr. Burnett provided an overview of data that will be presented as part of the strategic plan update on key performance indicators (KPIs).

Trustee Cheben referenced the discussion raised by Trustees Wilson and Trustee Davies earlier during the session and expressed interest in reviewing the top five pathways and associated outcome variables, with a focus on trades and apprenticeships. He apprised that this review could help clarify the role of HCC in addressing these areas. He noted that this information does not necessarily need to be included in the upcoming data update.

Dr. Burnett noted that the data aligns to some extent with labor market needs and could potentially be incorporated into Board priorities. He noted that benchmark data will be reviewed for alignment. He apprised that there is currently no data on specific occupational alignment, and that existing data relates to HCC graduates who have achieved increased livable wages. He also presented data on occupational skills.

Trustee Loredó mentioned staff salary levels and noted that the Board must consider improving salary ranges. She stated that no salary should be below \$25,000.

Dr. Ford Fisher noted that academic and workforce pathways could incorporate stackable credentials as part of student progression.

Trustee Cheben inquired about student pathways that may lead to lower-wage outcomes and expressed concern that some students could end up in occupations that do not provide livable wages. He noted the need to better understand these outcomes in order to inform the approach to resource allocation.

Trustee Loredó inquired whether it is preferable to prioritize offering stackable credentials for employees or to focus on pathways that lead to increased livable wages.

Dr. Ford Fisher apprised of a conversation with Mr. Rodney Nathan, Chief Human Resource Officer for Talent Engagement, regarding salary structure concerns, including individuals who earn credentials but may not receive corresponding compensation, as well as the alignment between compensation and educational attainment levels.

Mr. Burnett provided an overview of persistence rates and transfer rates, including the percentage of students who successfully transfer into bachelor's degree programs.

The Board rejoined the group session of the Presidents and Trustees Collaborative: Session 3. The Aspen Presidents & Trustees Collaborative: Session 3 concluded with a closing discussion on next steps.

Mr. Wyner apprised the Board of the next steps regarding the Change Artifacts due October 1, 2026.

Mr. Wyner provided closing remarks on the importance of community colleges. He recommended that Trustees and CEOs remain mindful of the "why" and focus on how to align their work together. He noted that the work is ongoing and not a one-time effort, and apprised that continued conversations will be necessary to advance and sustain progress. He apprised of the

need for organization and structure in order to effectively achieve institutional goals.

*Trustee Loredo recessed the meeting at 1:55 p.m. and reconvened at 2:02 p.m.*

*(The following Trustees were present: Cheben, Loredo, Davies, Tamez via video conference, and Wilson)*

**RIC CONSTRUCTION ROBOT R-0 WITH EDUCATIONAL PACKAGE (3DCP) (SOLE SOURCE AWARD)**

Motion – Trustee Sean Cheben motioned, and Trustee Laolu Davies seconded.

Dr. Ford Fisher noted that the item was to authorize the Chancellor to execute a sole source contract with RIC Technology to provide the RIC-0 3D Printer with Education Package, in support of Northwest College - West Houston Institute. She apprised that Mr. Robert McCracken, Vice Chancellor, Operations and Administration, will provide an overview and entertain questions.

Mr. McCracken noted that the item will print up to 2.7 centimeters in height. He stated that it is funded through a Perkins Grant and must be purchased before April 30, 2026, in order to utilize Perkins funds. He apprised that the institution was awaiting the vendor confirmation on the delivery and apprised that delivery was not confirmed until after the April 15<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

*(Trustee Patterson joined the meeting at 2:06 p.m. via video conference)*

Trustee Davies inquired whether a printer of such capacity would also be at other college locations. He noted that it may be appropriate to consider acquiring one for Central College since that is where the construction trades program is located.

*(Dr. Pretta Stallworth joined the meeting at 2:09 p.m.)*

Trustee Davies recommended reviewing the option of purchasing a printer for Central College. Mr. McCracken confirmed that he would review the request with Dr. Norma Perez, Senior Vice Chancellor for Instructional Services/Chief Academic Officer and Dr. Butch Herod, President, Central College.

Vote – The motion passed with a vote of 7-0, with Trustees Loredo, Cheben, Davies, Patterson, Tamez, VanDible Stallworth and Wilson in favor.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business coming before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Sharon Wright, Director, Board Services

Minutes Approved as Submitted: May 20, 2026