



**THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF VALENCIA COLLEGE
REGULAR MEETING**

Minutes

March 12, 2026

Valencia College – Osceola Campus
Building 1, Room 123
and
Zoom Meeting

Members Present

Trustee Michael Sasso, Chair
Trustee John Davis, Vice Chair
Trustee Blair Bradley
Trustee Shawn Hindle
Trustee Belinda Kirkegard
Trustee Sean Milligan (via Zoom)
Trustee Rick Pullum
Trustee Tracey Stockwell

Dr. Kathleen Plinske, Secretary of the Board and President of the College

Call to Order

Chair Sasso called the Regular Meeting of the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College to order at 9:31 a.m. A quorum was present.

Chair Sasso introduced and welcomed Mr. Rick Pullum, newly appointed to serve on the District Board of Trustees.

**Approval of Minutes,
February 5, 2026,
Regular Meeting**

Trustee Stockwell moved to approve the meeting minutes of February 5, 2026, Regular Meeting, as presented. Trustee Hindle seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

President's Report

Dr. Plinske stated that on March 10, 2026, the Senate confirmed the reappointment of Chair Sasso and Vice-Chair Davis, as well as the appointment of new Trustees Pullum and Sean Milligan.

Dr. Plinske reported that the work of the 2026 Legislative Session, originally scheduled to conclude on March 13, will not be completed as scheduled, as the Senate and House have not yet agreed on a final state budget.

Dr. Plinske stated that the College continues to track the progress of bills related to the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) funding, which is the legislation that provides for expansion of allowed uses of funds from state matching of philanthropic contributions from hospital partners, to allow for renovation and remodeling projects.

Dr. Plinske stated that Valencia was selected by Volunteer Florida as one of its designated recipients for Suits for Session charity donation effort. This initiative will allow Valencia students to obtain professional attire free of charge to give them a boost of confidence for their job interviews or their first day of a new career. Dr. Plinske thanked Vice Chair Davis for connecting Valencia with Ms. Josie Tamayo, CEO of Volunteer Florida.

Dr. Plinske announced that the College began its celebration of America 250, with events held at each campus during the week of President's Day, including interactive activities designed to make recognizing the nation's semi quinentennial anniversary engaging and fun. The College will be holding a USA 250 Extravaganza for the community on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at the West Campus, 6:30-9pm.

Dr. Plinske reported that Valencia had three students participating in the Sunshine State Debate hosted by the Florida Department of Education in Tallahassee. The students were coached by Mr. Justin Stone, Professor of Humanities, who also coaches the College's Ethics Bowl team.

Dr. Plinske provided an update about Valencia's work with the Institute for the Future (ITF), which is supported by the Universal Orlando Foundation, to create a forecast about the future of work and workforce development. The College hosted four industry roundtables with leaders from hospitality and tourism, engineering and advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and business services. Leaders were asked about the optimism for their industries over the next ten years and inquired about the skills, characteristics, and credentials that they value most in new hires. A report will be shared with the Board at a later meeting. Dr. Plinske thanked Trustee Stockwell for connecting the College with the Universal Orlando Foundation to enable this work.

Dr. Plinske stated that the College will be hosting a "How to Do Business with Valencia" event at the West Campus Special Events Center, on Friday,

April 17, 2026, 9-11am, and 1-3pm. The event is open to the public, and Valencia will be inviting registered suppliers, and will partner with the College's Community Relations Department to share the event with the local chambers of commerce. The presentation will include an overview of Valencia College and walk vendors through the general procurement process and requirements for doing business with the College. Dr. Plinske thanked the Board for the recommendation to hold this productive event.

Dr. Plinske reminded the Board about the College's Commencement Ceremonies, to be held May 3, 2026, at 9:30am, 2pm, and 6:30pm, at the UCF Financial Arena.

Faculty Association Report

Ms. Nissa Hopkins, President, Faculty Association, Hopkins provided an overview of the College's Learning Day. Valencia's Learning Day provides a variety of learning and camaraderie opportunities. It features a welcome and keynote presentation, and a special lineup of learning sessions focused on personal and professional development workshops.

Student Government Association Report

Ms. Dana-Lee Reid, SGA Vice President, presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. The report included a recap of the SGA's recent events, including the Florida College System Student Government Association (FCSSGA) February Advocacy Trip Recap, Thrift and Thrive and Volunteer Florida event, and upcoming SGA elections and upcoming events.

Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

New Business

- 1. 2026-2027 Board Meeting Schedule:** The proposed schedule of meetings was distributed to the Board. Following discussion, Trustee Stockwell moved to approve the proposed schedule for the 2026-2027 Board meetings, as presented. Trustee Kirkegard seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.
- 2. Welding Technology and Orbital Specialization Program:** Dr. Plinske presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. Dr. Plinske stated that the country is experiencing a historic resurgence in aerospace innovation, and Florida's Space Coast is at the center of that growth. Valencia College is uniquely positioned to support this momentum by preparing the highly skilled workforce required to sustain it. The Welding Technology with Orbital Specialization Program is an 800-hour Accelerated Skills Training program designed to prepare students for employment in industrial and aerospace welding environments. To support implementation, Valencia College recently received a \$1.5 million Governor's Job Growth Grant from the Florida Department of Commerce. These funds will support the acquisition of advanced orbital welding systems, instructional technology, and laboratory enhancements required

to meet employer specifications. By launching this program at a pivotal moment of aerospace expansion, Valencia College reinforces its commitment to responsive, industry-aligned workforce education and strengthens the regional talent pipeline supporting Florida's aerospace and advanced manufacturing economy.

Following a discussion, Trustee Kirkegard moved to authorize the College to offer the Welding Technology with Orbital Specialization Program as a non-credit Accelerated Skills Training program, with student fees set at \$13,000, as presented. Trustee Stockwell seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

- 3. Electronics Manufacturing Assembly Program:** Dr. Plinske presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. Dr. Plinske stated that Electronics Manufacturing Assembly skills form the technical foundation for a wide range of high-value industries—including aerospace and defense, medical devices, semiconductors, autonomous systems, and space technologies. As production technologies advance and supply chains continue to shift, the demand for technicians who can assemble, inspect, test, and maintain complex electronic hardware is increasing at a pace that outstrips current workforce supply. National and regional labor shortages, fueled by an aging workforce and limited public awareness of modern manufacturing career pathways, have created an urgent talent gap. Central Florida is experiencing these shortages acutely, with impacts on manufacturing capacity, schedule reliability, and long-term competitiveness. The talent gap also poses a strategic risk, given the region's growing role in aerospace, defense, and space-related manufacturing. To address these needs, and in direct response to workforce requests from one of the region's largest manufacturers, Lockheed Martin, the College has developed a new Electronics Manufacturing Assembly Technician Program. The program is a 400-hour Accelerated Skills Training program that prepares students to enter the workforce as electronics and wire harness assembly technicians. Students will be prepared to earn nationally recognized credentials for soldering, wire harness fabrication and assembly, and aerospace-level quality and inspection credentials. This program supports Florida's workforce priorities in aerospace, defense, and high-tech manufacturing and strengthens Central Florida's long-term competitiveness.

Following a discussion, Trustee Pullum moved to authorize the College to offer the Electronics Manufacturing Assembly Program as a non-credit Accelerated Skills Training program, with student fees at \$7,000, as presented. Vice Chair Davis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Trustee Stockwell and seconded by Trustee Kirkegard to consider, accept, and approve items 4, 5, and 6 under New Business in the manner of a consent agenda. The Board unanimously approved the following items under New Business in the consent agenda, as recommended:

4. Summary of Changes to 2026-2027 College Catalog

5. Policy Amendments

- *Amend Policy 6Hx28: 8-03 – Student Code of Conduct*
- *Amend Policy 6Hx28: 8-07 – Registered Student Organizations*

6. Property Deletion

Strategic Discussion

The report was distributed to the Board. Dr. William Mallowney, Vice President for Policy and General Counsel, briefed the Board on principles regarding board governance and stewardship roles and responsibilities, and reviewed trustee Powers and Duties as provided by the Florida Constitution and Florida Statutes, including legal fiduciary duties. Dr. Plinske presented an overview of the College's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Goals, Academic Offerings and Students Served, College Budget, Physical Plant, Personnel, and President's Goals and Previous Year's Evaluation.

The Board engaged in a full discussion.

Reports

Dr. Plinske stated that the following report item is detailed in the written materials, which have been distributed to the Board:

A. Financial Report

B. Valencia College Foundation Report: Trustee Hindle presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. Trustee Hindle stated that as the Valencia College Foundation nears the end of FY 2025-26, a total of \$5,525,538 has been raised toward its annual \$4,250,000 annual goal. Trustee Hindle reported that the Valencia College Foundation has supported the College's mission by investing over \$1.7 million in scholarships and program support between April and December 2025. Trustee Hindle stated that as reported in the last Valencia College Foundation Board of Director's Meeting, the fiscal year end net assets as of 12/31/2025 (end of Quarter 3) totaled \$131.4 million. During that meeting, the Foundation Board of Directors reviewed and unanimously approved the Foundation's Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27.

Board Comments

The Board commended Valencia's leadership, faculty, and staff for their good work.

Adjourn

Chair Sasso adjourned the Regular Meeting at 11:29 a.m.

Secretary

Chair