

BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 26, 2024

1. Call to Order

The four hundred and tenth regular meeting of the Bristol Community College Board of Trustees was held on Monday, February 26, 2024, in person on the Fall River campus in conference room 209 in Building D located at 777 Elsbree Street, Fall River, Massachusetts. The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

Trustees Present: Joan Medeiros, Chair (virtual); Jeffrey Karam, Vice Chair; Renee Clark (virtual); Pamela Gauvin; James Mathes; and Todd McGhee.

Trustees Absent: Valentina Videva Dufresne, Secretary; Frank Baptista; Joe Ferreira and Lynn Motta.

Others present: Laura Douglas, President; Lucinda Poudrier-Aaronson, Board Liaison; John Morris (former Student Trustee); Silvia Jones (newly elected interim Student Trustee); Joyce Brennan; Emmanuel Echevarria; Steve Kenyon; April Lynch; Jen Menard; Jo-Ann Pelletier; Judi Urquhart; Police Chief Mark Nataly; Deputy Chief Baxter Smith; Vinnie Rege; Nicole Heaney, Patricia Sherblom; Alaina Marcotte; Andrew Hinote; and Michael Geary.

2. Chair's Remarks

Vice Chair, Jeffrey Karam, shared he was facilitating the in-person meeting on behalf of Chair Medeiros as she was not feeling well. He stated Chair Medeiros was attending virtually as was Trustee Renee Clark.

Vice Chair Karam began by sharing that Richard (Dick) Wolfson whom many know for his service to Bristol, has had a fall and will be in rehab hospital a couple more weeks and is accepting visitors.

Vice Chair Karam shared our new interim Student Trustee elected on Friday and had joined us today. He asked Trustees to extend a warm welcome to Silvia Jones. VC Karam shared we will work with Silvia to be sworn in within the next few days, and then invited Silvia to introduce herself. He also asked the Trustees present to introduce themselves to Silvia.

Vice Chair Karam thanked Kate and her team for facilitating a timely interim Student Trustee election process.

3. Consent Agenda

Vice Chair Karam asked the Trustees if they had the opportunity to review the consent agenda items and then also asked if there were any questions or items that need to be moved for discussion.

- Consideration of Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting for January 29, 2024
- Report of Personnel Actions January-February 2024
- Report of Workforce and Community Education Contracts January-February 2024

Hearing none, VC Karam asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. A motion was made by Trustee Mathes to approve the Consent Agenda items and was seconded by Trustee Clark. The motion was approved.

Next, VC Karam shared with Trustees the need to move agenda item #8 at this time in the agenda to allow for quorum as Trustee Clark needed leave the board meeting to handle an emergent situation at SouthCoast Health. Trustee Karam invited Trustee Clark to provide the Awards Committee Report.

8. Awards Committee Report – Trustee Renee Clark

Trustee Clark reported the Awards Committee met on Monday, January 29, 2024. This committee meeting was held to review the submitted nominations for the two awards to be presented by the Board of Trustees at Bristol Community College's Commencement on May 18, 2024. The two awards to be presented include the Honorary Degree Award and the Distinguished Citizen Award.

Trustee Clark shared the Committee first reviewed eight nominees for consideration for the Distinguished Citizen Award. Unfortunately, two of the eight nominees were submitted with no supporting documents. The Committee felt that the remaining six nominees were strong candidates for the Award. After some discussion and question regarding history or possibility of naming two awardees, it was determined and unanimously recommended that two nominees would be recommended for the award to the full board (John Bullard and Richard Wolfson).

After some general discussion and outline of the two nominees' qualifications and service, Trustee Clark called for a motion to approve the recommendations of John Bullard and Richard Wolfson for consideration of the Distinguished Service Award. A motion was made by Trustee Karam to approve both nominees for the Distinguished Service Award, and was seconded by Trustee Mathes. The motion was approved.

Trustee Clark then shared that the Committee reviewed three nominations for Honorary Degree Award. After some discussion, including specific ties and presence in the SouthCoast communities, it was determined that nominee Maria Lawton would unanimously be recommended for the Honorary Degree Award. Trustee Clark shared that Ms. Lawton is very well known in the SouthCoast, and has dedicated herself to the preservation of Azorean culture through the intersections of cooking, travel, and storytelling. Trustee Clark stated she was widely recognized for her accomplishments and extensive efforts to elevate Portuguese pride.

Trustee Clark called for a motion to approve the recommendation of Maria Lawton for consideration of the Honorary Degree Award. A motion was made by Trustee Mathes to approve Ms. Lawton's nomination for the Honorary Degree Award, and was seconded by Trustee McGhee. The motion was approved.

Trustee Clark shared the next step would be for President Douglas, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to contact nominees as follows:

Distinguished Citizen Award

Mr. John Bullard
Mr. Richard Wolfson

Honorary Degree Award

Ms. Maria Lawton

At the conclusion of Trustee Clark's report, Vice Chair Karam thanked Committee Chair Clark and the other members of the Awards Committee for their work.

Next, Vice Chair Karam invited Chief of Staff and Strategy Development, April Lynch, to walk Trustees through NECHE Standard 6 as we continue our journey to prepare for the NECHE site visit at the end of March. VC Karam referenced the black NECHE notebook.

<NOTE: Trustee Clark logged off the meeting at 4:30 p.m.>

4. New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) Discussion on Standard 6 (Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship) – April Lynch, Chief of Staff and Strategy Development

In continued preparation of the Trustees for the site visit in March, Chief of Staff Lynch provided guided discussion related to Standard 6 – Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship. She shared her intention was to explore the ways Trustees see evidence of this standard and how this work is tied to the college's strategic plan.

Key points for Trustees related to Standard 6 included:

- Establishment of goals for equity hiring through Affirmative Action strategy
- Maintaining an environment of belonging for all students
- Development and use of our Land Acknowledgement Statement
- Continuous review of staffing and organizational structure
- Providing professional development and training for faculty/staff aligned with the college's strategic plan
- Faculty are content specialists and are hired with those credentials needed
- Faculty and staff are evaluated with a system for advancement and/or tenure
- With academic freedom faculty build the content they teach
- Academic advising is accessible and provided conveniently in all college locations and online, and includes wrap-around services for students

Vice Chair Karam thanked Chief of Staff Lynch, and reminded Trustees to leave their black NECHE folder when leaving today. Lucinda will collect as we continue to build an individualized NECHE resource for each Trustee as we move closer to our site visit date in March.

Next, VC Karam invited Steve Kenyon, Chief Mark Nataly, and Deputy Chief Smith, to provide information and insight regarding Bristol's recent Campus Police Accreditation

5. College Safety and Campus Police Accreditation – *Steve Kenyon*, Vice President, Administration and Finance, *Chief Mark Nataly*, Director Campus Police/Preparedness, and *Baxter Smith*, Deputy Chief of Police and Preparedness

<NOTE: *technology challenges were evident with both sound and video at this point in the meeting*>

Chief Nataly shared that three weeks ago, the college's police department underwent an accreditation assessment by Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC). The assessment was a voluntary external, peer review by Commission-appointed assessors.

The vast majority of the standards require agencies to commit policies and procedures to writing. The remaining standards are equipment or facility related generally found in communication centers, holding facilities, and property/evidence rooms.

The framework for MPAC's standards is derived from the national standards established by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

The MPAC Program benefits include:

- Promotes accountability among agency personnel and transparency of the department.
- Enhances the reputation of the agency and promotes public confidence (*vital for effective public service*)

At the conclusion of presentation, Vice Chair Karam, thanked Chief Nataly, Deputy Chief Smith, and all members of the Bristol Police staff.

Next, VC Karam invited Andrew Hinote, the colleges Director of Online Learning, to provide us some information and insight regarding online learning at Bristol.

6. Online Learning – *Andrew Hinote*, Director of Online Learning

Director Hinote introduced himself and provided a brief summary of recent work related to online learning:

- Bristol has been using Blackboard as its Learning Management System (LMS) platform since 2014.
- During the Spring 2022 semester, the Data & Technology Council conducted a SWOT analysis and determined it was in Bristol's best interest to explore a new LMS.
- During the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters, Bristol's Data & Technology Council compiled a set of criteria that defined Bristol's needs from an LMS.
- During the Summer and Fall 2023 semesters, an RFP was drafted and launched. The result of the RFP was choosing Canvas as our new LMS. Canvas will replace Blackboard beginning in June 2024 for the Summer semester.
- In 2024, we established our Canvas server and are in the process of migrating content for faculty teaching in Summer 2024. Faculty will gain access to Canvas after Spring Break and training will begin shortly thereafter.
- Canvas brings a more modern user interface, robust mobile apps, and new technologies that will make Bristol's online learning experience more consistent, accessible, and secure.

Upon Trustee question, Director Hinote, informed the board that students would also be provided ample notification, time, and training to migrate their work from LMS Blackboard to LMS Canvas.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Vice Chair Karam thanked Director Hinote, and stated next on the agenda was President Laura Douglas with the President's Report.

7. President's Report

- Update President's Approved Goals 2023-2024

President Douglas began by reminding Trustees about the layout of the Proposed Key Goals document for 2023-2024. She shared the most recent updates were in **bold** format. Progress on the four strategies (listed below) with updates on the objectives provided with each strategy were highlighted. President Douglas shared outcomes would continue to be updated until completion is reached throughout the academic year.

- ✓ **Strategy #1: Academic Innovation:** Advance an engaging holistic teaching and learning environment resulting in a seamless student experience that prepares them to embrace life's opportunities.
- ✓ **Strategy #2: Equity and Student Success:** Shared responsibility for the success of our students and employees by improving equity-mindedness and ensuring institutional support that lessens equity gaps.
- ✓ **Strategy #3: Organizational Excellence:** Create a culture of innovation through improved processes and collaboration, modern technology and ongoing professional development to support student and employee success.
- ✓ **Strategy #4: Partnerships:** Collaborate with educational institutions, alumni, industry and community partners to increase educational attainment and support the talent pipeline to enhance opportunities in the region.

Upon conclusion of her review of goals, President Douglas introduced *Pat Sherblom*, Dean of Behavioral & Social Sciences and Education and *Nicole Heaney*, Department Chair of Human Services & Associate Professor of Human Services. She asked them to provide a brief overview of Bristol's partnership with Human Services and Deaconess of Fall River.

- Community Partnership Highlight: Human Services and Deaconess of Fall River - *Pat Sherblom*, Dean of Behavioral & Social Sciences and Education and *Nicole Heaney*, Department Chair of Human Services & Associate Professor of Human Services

Dean Sherblom shared that in 2022 we collaborated with New Bedford MassHire on a grant to provide Substance Abuse Counseling coursework to employees of two social service agencies: STARR and Steppingstone. The goal was to prepare employees to sit for the licensure exam to be a Certified Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor and get a salary increase at their place of employment.

She shared the model was successful, so in 2023 Nicole Heaney, Chair of our Human Services Department, and I met with Maureen Philbin and her staff at the Deaconess Home in Fall River to discuss replicating the model by having their agency partner with one to two other agencies and the college to purchase courses for their employees to earn their AA in Human Services.

Dean Sherblom stated when MassReconnect began in Fall 2023, the need for the model diminished. However, she shared that Nicole Heaney and Cori Lopes from Bristol's Financial Aid office met with seven employees of the Deaconess Home to explain the program and financial aid. She noted the meeting was well-received. Nicole is planning to meet with Cori (or someone else from the Financial Aid Office) and the employees from Child and Family Services in New Bedford and Family Services in Fall River. This meeting will explain the opportunity presented by MassReconnect and help employees with FASFA and the college application.

At this time, Professor Heaney shared the following:

- There is a major shortage of Human Service providers.
- Area social service agencies want to develop ways to retain their existing staff.
- Executive Directors want to work with Bristol to encourage existing staff to earn a Certificate or Degree in Human Services in an effort to develop the existing workforce and to retain staff.
- Bristol's Human Services Department is creating specific opportunities to do this - the model has been piloted with Fall River Deaconess Home, SSTAR and Steppingstone.
- The Department is looking to expand this to other agencies now that community college is free for people over 25 through MassReconnect.
- Agencies need to support this though providing time for classes and possible pay raises upon completion.

President Douglas thanked Dean Sherblom and Professor Heaney for highlighting these important partnerships. She then invited Alaina Marcotte, Director of Financial Aid Counseling, to provide an enrollment update.

- Trustee Talking Points
 - Enrollment Update - *Alaina Marcotte*, Director of Financial Aid Counseling

Director Marcotte stated that this spring semester the college experienced significant enrollment growth, for the second semester in a row. She shared the college's overall headcount as of our census date was just under 5,700 students, which is a 7.4% increase compared to last year.

Director Marcotte explained the college is continuing to experience growth in several key areas, including:

- 74% increase in the number of students who are brand-new to Bristol or returning after some time away
- 31% increase in the number of students aged 25 or older
- 16% increase in the number of students who identify as BIPOC

She shared this growth is attributed largely to the success of the MassReconnect program. In the fall semester, the college was able to award these funds to 565 students. This spring, 760 students received MassReconnect funding, for a total of over \$1.3 million dollars. She shared that year to date, we have awarded over \$2 million and impacted over 1000 unique students directly through this the MassReconnect program.

Once we disburse financial aid to students in March, Director Marcotte stated we will be able to provide more details about these students. She shared we know many students came to Bristol because of MassReconnect, but

then benefitted from other federal and state aid programs. She encouraged Trustees to stay tuned for another report in the coming months.

- Financial Aid Outreach - *Alaina Marcotte*, Director of Financial Aid Counseling and *Bob Rezendes*, Dean of Taunton Center

Director Marcotte continued her presentation to include community outreach and involvement related to FAFSA. She invited Dean Rezendes to join her to share some FAFSA updates and events.

- New FAFSA simplification landing page for students and families
- Heavy marketing outreach with the rollout of dates (including events, emails, texts)
- Strengthening partnerships with the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) who has been present at all events and taking FAFSA appointments in Fall River and New Bedford.
- Presentations at Durfee HS to Trio and Upward Bound students/ families about FAFSA simplification.
- FAFSA Bowl event (Super Bowl week) - hugely successful (over 50 FAFSAs completed)
- Appointments in every modality 5 days a week
- Various campus location events and programs

Dean Rezendes shared one recent FAFSA event coincided with BayHawk Night basketball game at the Taunton Center where students and families were invited to join the festivities and watch the game.

In conclusion, Director Marcotte shared we currently have 9,408 FAFSA filers for AY2023-2024. This is an increase of 22% from last year, and we have until 06.29.2024 to get the final numbers.

Trustee Gauvin shared from a personal perspective there were still challenges with FAFSA and having multiple dependents in college. Director Marcotte invited her to an event, and shared institutions were still awaiting files from FAFSA – Bristol and other schools had not yet received 2024-2205 data to make awards for Fall 2024.

Upon conclusion of the FAFSA discussion, President Douglas thanked Director Marcotte and Dean Rezendes for their work with current and prospective students and their FAFSA completion. She then introduced *Mike Fox*, Coordinator Career Plan & Placement. She asked him to provide a brief overview of Bristol's Supply Chain internships.

- Supply Chain Internships – *Mike Fox*, Coordinator Career Plan & Placement

Coordinator Fox began by sharing through alignment of the off-shore wind industry and supply chain functions, exciting internships (paid internships) have emerged which significantly complement the student cohorts' course work.

He shared by working closely with locally based business and entities such as RoboSys, Vineyard Wind, NOWI, New Bedford Ocean Cluster, and Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, this Bristol student cohort is developing a supply chain road map for robotics platforms and autonomous vessels. He stated the road map aims to pinpoint challenges and propose solutions for establishing locally and regionally oriented supply chain platforms in offshore wind energy, with the goal of being closely aligned to the national supply chain environment.

Coordinator Fox concluded his presentation by sharing details about the Experiential Education Center (EEC) staff, programs, and services.

President Douglas thanked Coordinator Fox and introduced Steve Kenyon, Vice President for Administration and Finance, to provide the college's financial update.

- Financial Update – *Steve Kenyon*, Vice President, Administration and Finance

VP Kenyon shared the state audit is going well. They have mostly been auditing HEERF funding but have met with ITS and requested a lot of information from them as well. They have told him it is going well but the scope of work continually evolves. Apparently, they have a new supervisor and he wants things done a certain way and neither the auditors or the supervisor has any experience working with federal grants. They are very pleasant and easy to work with so hopefully that will continue.

Our investments are doing very well this fiscal year. As typical there is volatility but fiscal year to date, we are up \$1.2M in unrealized gain.

VP Kenyon reported we are in a holding pattern on next year's state budget. We have the Governor's budget and should have a budget from the House in late March or early April but we have a long way to go in the process. We currently have no real sense of how things will go with MassReconnect or Free Community College.

As you have been hearing, enrollment is up this semester. We are a month into the semester and there will always be some attrition, but we are about 20% over our budgeted figure for enrollment revenue. You have seen reports we are 10% over last year but we budgeted an 8% decline before we knew about MassReconnect. That 20% over budget provides an additional \$2M in revenue for the spring semester.

VP Kenyon stated this additional revenue has had an obvious favorable impact on our overall budget for FY24. The Finance/Budget committee met prior to this meeting reviewed the quarterly budget update. We have turned the corner on cash flow, and we expect to have a positive cash flow this year and have a relatively small operating loss of about \$2M, down from the almost \$5M we originally budgeted.

Based on all this information and conversations with colleagues we are using a 3% increase in enrollment for our FY25 budget. VP Kenyon reported this is the first positive budget projection in years. We are all pulling for Free Community College and at least a continuation of MassReconnect.

At conclusion of the president's report, Vice Chair Karam thanked President Douglas and all members of the Bristol Team who provided updates.

With the Awards Committee report presented earlier in the meeting, Vice Chair Karam invited the final student report from John Morris.

8. Awards Committee Report – Trustee Renee Clark (*see above*)

9. Student Report – John Morris

Former Student Trustee, John Morris, stated he didn't have much to report as he had started his new job with Student Veterans of America national organization and has hit the ground running. He thanked the Trustees for the time he had invested with the board and also shared he thought the board is in good shape with Silvia Jones as the newly elected Student Trustee.

President Douglas thanked John for his service and on behalf of the college and the board presented John with some Bristol swag as a token of our collective appreciation.

<NOTE: *Trustee Clark logged in to the meeting once again at 5:15 p.m.*>

10. Old Business

- Board of Trustees' meeting dates 2024-2025
 - March 20, 2024 (HOLD Noon-5pm) – Spring Board Mini-Retreat (*J-Building*)
 - August 21, 2024 (HOLD 8am-3pm) – Annual Board Retreat (*NOWI*)

Vice Chair Karam reminded Trustees that provided both electronically and, in your materials today is a calendar of upcoming critical events and activities we think Trustees should plan to attend. Immediate dates include:

- ✓ **Wednesday, March 20th mini-retreat**
- ✓ **Sunday, March 24th NECHE Welcome Dinner**
- ✓ **Monday, March 25th NECHE site team's meeting with the Board.**

VC Karam requested Trustees get these important dates on calendars if not already there.

Next, VC Karam invited any items for new business.

11. New Business

- Presidential Search process ("Guidelines and Procedures..." document from DHE)

Hearing no additional items, Vice Chair Karam shared that provided both electronically and in Trustee material today is the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's "*Guidelines and Procedures for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents.*" He asked Trustees to review this document as we prepare to initiate the process to search and select Bristol's next President in the coming months.

He asked the Trustees if there were any immediate questions at this time related to the Presidential Search process.

12. Adjournment

Hearing none, Vice Chair Karam reminded Trustees to leave their black NECHE notebook for Lucinda and then asked for a motion to adjourn at 5:23 p.m. A motion was made by Trustee Mathes to adjourn the meeting and this was seconded by Trustee McGhee. The motion was approved.