

BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 6, 2023

1. Call to Order

The four hundred and seventh regular meeting of the Bristol Community College Board of Trustees was held on Monday, November 6, 2023, in person at Bristol Community College, Attleboro Campus, located at 11 Field Road, Attleboro, Massachusetts, in Classroom 211. The meeting was called to order at 4:14 p.m.

Trustees present: Joan Medeiros, Chair; Jeffrey Karam, Vice Chair; Valentina Videva Dufresne, Secretary; Frank Baptista; Renee Clark; Joseph Ferreira; Pamela Gauvin; James Mathes; John Morris; Lynn Motta; and Todd McGhee.

Trustees absent: None.

Invited guests: Commissioner Noe Ortega and Senior Deputy Commissioner José Luis Santos, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; and Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges, Nate Mackinnon.

Others present: Laura Douglas, President; Lucinda Poudrier-Aaronson, Board Liaison; Joyce Brennan; Emmanuel Echevarria; Andrew Fisher; Steve Kenyon; April Lynch; Jen Menard; Kate O'Hara; Jo-Ann Pelletier; Judi Urquhart; Stacie Charbonneau Hess; Robyn Worthington; Vidyanidhi Rege; Denny Cosmos; and Michael Geary.

2. Chair's Remarks

- Chair Medeiros invited Dr. Janet Ray, Dean of the Attleboro Campus, to provide a brief welcome to Bristol's Attleboro Campus. After Dean Ray's welcome, Chair Medeiros thanked her and the Attleboro team for hosting the board meeting.
- Recognizing a large number of attendees and for the benefit of our invited guests, Chair Medeiros asked for introductions around the room.
- Next, Chair Medeiros provided a special welcome to Commissioner Noe Ortega and Senior Deputy Commissioner José Luis Santos with Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. She provided extensive biographical introductions for both Dr. Ortega and Dr. Santos, as follows:

"Join me in welcoming Dr. Noe Ortega, Massachusetts' Commissioner of Higher Education to our board meeting today. Dr. Ortega is celebrating one year in this role. Congratulations!

Before beginning this role, Dr. Ortega served as Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Prior to accepting his appointment as secretary, Dr. Ortega held the role of Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education at the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Prior to joining the Pennsylvania Department of Higher Education, Dr. Ortega spent eight years at the University of Michigan, where he held several academic and administrative roles. Additionally, Dr. Ortega spent nearly a decade working in the areas of financial aid and enrollment management at both public and private universities in Texas.

Dr. Ortega received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from St. Edwards University, a Master of Science in School Counseling from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, and his Ph.D. in Higher Education Policy from the University of Michigan. Fun to note: this is the same Ph.D. program President Douglas holds her doctorate from.... Go Blue!

I would also like to introduce Dr. José Luis Santos. He serves as the Department of Higher Education's Senior Deputy Commissioner and Special Advisor, providing strategic and tactical management across internal and external teams of the Department. As Senior Deputy and Special Advisor, Dr. Santos provides leadership and expertise on efforts that promote systemness, enhance the Department's research and publication capacity efforts to make it a national leader, and advance

stewardship, coalition building, and advocacy at the regional, state, and national levels.

Dr. Santos is an accomplished higher education equity-centered professional with extensive experience leading innovative projects and teams across the education technology, public policy, nonprofit, and academic sectors. He has held positions at several prestigious higher education institutions, including the University of Texas, Austin, Pepperdine University, UCLA, and the University of Arizona.

Dr. Santos is a first-generation post-traditional college student who is the son of migrant farmworkers who immigrated to the United States from México. He is also a Veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Corporal and Naval Midshipman 1st Class (Marine Corps Option) while in college.

Dr. Santos earned his B.A. in Mexican-American Studies, M.A. in Educational Psychology: Measurement & Research Methodology, and Ph.D. in Higher Education Economics and Finance Policy: Econometrics and Measurement & Research Methodology at the University of Arizona.

Bristol Community College is very grateful to Commissioner Ortega and his team for their leadership and support of the Massachusetts community college. In his first year, he has assisted the community colleges with MassReconnect, tuition equity for undocumented students, and the Nursing Scholarship program which provides free tuition to our nursing students.

Thank you both for being with us today for Bristol's monthly Board of Trustees meeting! I invite either, or both, of you to make remarks."

3. Commissioner's Remark

Commissioner Ortega chuckled and thanked Chair Medeiros for the introduction and jokingly apologized to everyone else stating that between those introductions and the traffic, we have delayed the meeting twice. He referred to a phenomenon he called "Michigan Time" noting that President Douglas might be aware of as fellow alum. He shared everyone was always 10-15 minutes late to classes at University of Michigan because there was no time between scheduled class times.

Commissioner Ortega shared he was intrigued by Dean Ray's welcoming remarks about enrollment. He stated he was happy with the Commonwealth's investment in public higher education, particularly the importance of the community college experience.

Senior Deputy Commissioner Santos noted community colleges are entrenched in the communities they serve and shared while none of his college degrees were earned from a community college, he did spend every summer taking classes at the community college in his own community in an effort to transfer credits and earn his degree in a timely and economically reasonable manner.

Commissioner Ortega thanked Chair Medeiros and the Trustees for providing the opportunity for he and Dr. Santos to join them at this board meeting.

4. Consent Agenda

Chair Medeiros asked the Trustees if they had the opportunity to the review consent agenda items and then also asked if any questions or items that need to be moved for discussion?

- Consideration of Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting for October 2, 2023
- Report of Personnel Actions October 2023
- Report of Workforce and Community Education Contracts October 2023

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

5. Native American Awareness – *Stacie Charbonneau Hess*, Adjunct Faculty, Arts and Humanities and *Dr. Robyn Worthington*, Associate Professor of History

Chair Medeiros introduced two Bristol faculty members, Stacie Charbonneau Hess and Robyn Worthington, and she asked them to provide a presentation to the Trustees on the topic of Native American Awareness.

Professor Charbonneau Hess began by acknowledging the land this meeting was being held on today was situated on the ancestral territory of the Wampanoag Tribal Nation. She shared that she and Professor Worthington would be following up on “next steps” after presentations to the Trustees last spring by Dr. Cedric Wood, and the approval of Bristol’s Land Acknowledgment Statement.

Professor Charbonneau Hess continued by sharing it was her intention to speak beyond the Land Acknowledgment Statement and present what Bristol has done so far to honor Indigenous Peoples on campus, while Professor Worthington would be sharing actionable items the college could undertake in the future to further support that effort to honor.

She presented several examples of educational programming and activities provided to students, faculty and staff at Bristol over the past year sharing that some of these program opportunities were co-hosted with Bristol’s Holocaust and Genocide Center. Professor Charbonneau Hess also invited Trustees and guests to join the Bristol’s Holocaust and Genocide Center on Thursday, November 16th for a special screening of an Emmy award-winning film called *Dawnland*, in honor of Native American Heritage Month. She shared this was a documentary about cultural survival and stolen children, and would be followed by an engaging panel discussion featuring the film’s Director, Adam Mazo, and Wampanoag Educator, Linda Coombs.

Chair Medeiros thanked Stacie and Robyn for providing on-going leadership and opportunities for educational awareness.

6. Enrollment Overview – *Kate O’Hara*, Vice President Student Services and Enrollment Management and *April Lynch*, Chief Staff and Strategy Development

Chair Medeiros introduced Kate O’Hara and asked her to provide a Strategic Enrollment Plan Update.

VP O’Hara shared her presentation would cover an enrollment overview, an update on the strategic enrollment plan, a review of MassReconnect, and then finally, next steps.

VP O’Hara provided an overview of the current enrollment landscape including many facets of Fall 2023 Enrollment. She reminded Trustees of the four pillars of the college’s strategic enrollment plan including Recruitment, Retention, Technology, and Data.

Recruitment – Fall 2023 and Spring 2024: VP O’Hara shared that there was an overall increase in Fall 2023 enrollment (4.5%), as well as a significant increase in applications. VP O’Hara described a slight dip in admit to registered conversion likely due to influx of late applications with the timing of the MassReconnect announcement. VP O’Hara shared the Spring 2024 enrollment numbers were looking strong and that the team would focus more intentional on K-12 and community partnerships, as well as enhanced enrollment support and counseling for adult learners.

- Retention - VP O’Hara shared while persistence rates dipped during COVID, they are starting to trend upward once again citing 65.3% retention from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023. VP O’Hara reminded all that a focus on retention was an opportunity of enrollment growth, and shared the SSEM team was shifting from proactive advising to a holistic case management model using SUCCESS funds.
- Technology – VP O’Hara described the use and on-going integration of several new recruitment and retention platforms including Slate, Navigate, and Coursedog.

- Data – VP O’Hara stated that the college was shifting from the use of data solely for external reporting to the creation of reports for internal decision making citing the expansion of the Data Informed Decision (DID) Portal and Tableau dashboards. She also shared that Student Advising and Success was implementing a tracking system.

VP O’Hara then presented a spotlight on MassReconnect for Fall 2023

- 565 students awarded
- Total amount awarded was \$954,503
- Average student award was \$1,689

Compared to the overall Fall 2023 student population, MassReconnect students are

- More likely to be female
- As likely to identify as BIPOC
- More likely to study on a part-time basis
- More likely to be new to Bristol or returning after some time away

And 37% of the MassReconnect students enrolled have previously attended college.

VP O’Hara shared other MassReconnect data including students’ average age (35) along with the most common age (25). She also shared distribution of MassReconnect students’ academic program enrollment.

In addition, VP O’Hara shared some MassReconnect projections for Spring 2024 as well as some enrollment strategies moving forward including:

- Use of labor market data to inform academic program offerings
- Analyze student success measures by academic program
- Develop a more robust enrollment forecasting model
- On-going assessment of dual enrollment and early college programming to support college’s strategic plan and mission
- Invest in infrastructure and intentional supports for adult learners

VP O’Hara concluded her presentation with examples of organizational effectiveness within SSEM including repurposing and realignment of key positions within the organization’s structure to best meet student needs.

7. New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) Discussion on **Standard 4, The Academic Program** – *Dr. Andrew Fisher*, Vice President, Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer

Chair Medeiros introduced Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, Andrew Fisher. She reminded all that Bristol will host our NECHE site visit in March 2024. She reminded all that last month, President Douglas walked Trustees through NECHE accreditation Standards 1-3, and shared Trustees’ own notes as well as the summary of the board’s discussion can be found in your black NECHE folder. Chair Medeiros shared that today, Dr. Fisher will focus on Standard Four, The Academic Program.

VP Fisher then provided a guided discussion for Trustees to explore the ways they will see evidence of the academic quality and meaningful educational programming that is tied to the strategic plan.

Chair Medeiros thanked VP Fisher 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.

8. President's Report

- Update President's Approved Goals 2023-2024

President Douglas began by reminding Trustees (and guests) about the layout of the Proposed Key Goals document for 2023-2024. She shared this is much like a progress report leading to the final report card. Progress on the four strategies (listed below) with updates on the objectives provided with each strategy highlight the college's key goals for 2023-2024. She 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.

President Douglas presented these four Strategies, as well as the progress of outcomes of these Objectives and Key Goals to date. Once the update of the proposed goals was complete, the President invited any additional questions or discussion.

- Community Partnership Highlight: Martha's Vineyard Partnership – *Vidyanidhi Rege*, Dean of Business and Experiential Education

Dean Rege highlighted a Department of Education grant in collaboration with Martha's Vineyard Center for Education and Training (MVCET). He shared this partnership is designed to initiate cohorts in Entrepreneurship and Computer Programming. Dean Rege stated a survey was conducted on the island and respondents preferred these two academic areas of interest.

Dean Rege stated this is a three-year grant and the Entrepreneurship program will be offered starting Spring 2024 and Computer Programming will be offered starting Fall 2025. He also shared the first info session was last week and 35 people attended. Dean Rege also stated, to date, we have received 7 applications.

- Trustee Talking Points

- MassINC Innovation Award – *Jen Menard*, Vice President Economic and Business Development

On Tuesday, November 14th, Bristol Community College National Offshore Wind Institute (NOWI) will be presented an Innovation Award at the 11th Annual Gateway Cities Innovation Institute Awards & Summit. Several members of the Bristol team will be in attendance in Fitchburg to receive this award.

- Community Cooking Videos – *Vidyanidhi Rege*, Dean of Business and Experiential Education

Dean Rege shared in an on-going collaboration, Bristol's Culinary Arts Program, Marketing & Communication, FRC Media, and Viva Fall River, the college has started our own cooking show called "[Bristol Community Cooking](#)"

Each 30-minute show will feature a different ethnic restaurant in Fall River. At this time, two episodes have been filmed. Dean Rege shared the show was designed to educate people,

allow students to network, provide a marketing tool for the Culinary Art Program and highlight local businesses.

Several Trustees and guests jokingly asked if they needed any volunteer tasters!

➤ Veterans Fundraiser – *John Morris*, Student Trustee and *Denny Cosmos*, Director of Veterans Center

Director of the Veterans Center, Denny Cosmos, shared that the Student Veteran's Association (SVA) was very active on campus and fundraising was an integral aspect including sending a sizable delegation to Washington, DC this fall for a national conference. He stated the SVA is a student led organization that serves as a platform for student veteran success and development. He shared student Veteran, John Morris, was an outstanding student leader helping other students find community and purpose.

Trustee Morris encouraged others to celebrate Veterans Day Weekend with live music, food, and raffles for a great cause at the St. James Irish Pub in Fall River on Sunday. He shared that all proceeds would benefit the SVA chapter at Bristol.

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

Vice President Kenyon provided the following financial update:

"I will start off with some good news, our cyber insurance company paid us \$917,000 last week as part of our claim for the cyber-attack earlier in the year.

We still have the class action suit that will eat up the balance of the \$1M policy limit. There is a motion to dismiss that will be heard in the next few weeks and settlement conversations are taking place.

We are still awaiting funding for collective bargaining increases but are prepared to implement those immediately after funding is received. The CBA increases are being built into our FY25 appropriations along with our performance funds and the AFSCME CBA payments.

I expect our state appropriation to exceed \$30M for FY25. That amount does not include outside sections like the SUCCESS grant, the MassReconnect funding, or anything that might come of free community college. Much of that funding flows through Financial Aid.

The Federal Shutdown is still looming but there seems to be some optimism that a Continuing Resolution will be passed again to kick the can another couple of months, or at least until the new year. It could have a big impact on the college so we have developed a contingency plan that was approved by the state. The current Continuing Resolution is good through November 17.

Lastly, the State Auditor's Office reached out to us recently and will be moving in the next week or so. We will host two auditors for four to six months. The scope is mostly to examine our federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds and state ARPA funds which totaled about \$35M over the course of the pandemic. They will be examining our policies and procedures, and reviewing the expenditures and supporting documentation. They will be looking to see if we updated our internal control plan. They will also be examining our cyber security training information. Essentially making sure all our employees have received appropriate and regular training. Both Emmanuel Echevarria's and Jo-Ann Pelletier's departments deploy annual cyber training along with periodic training throughout the year. Jo-Ann and I have read all the available audit reports on other institutions as all of us are being audited. We have a good idea of what they are looking for based on the findings at other colleges and feel we are in good shape."

At the conclusion of the President's Report, Chair Medeiros thanked President Douglas and all the members of Bristol's team.

9. Report of Finance Budget Committee – *Trustee Lynn Motta*

Chair Medeiros asked Trustee Motta to provide a brief report of the Finance Budget Committee.

Trustee Motta shared that the Finance/Budget Committee met on October 2nd for a regular meeting and October 6, 2023, for a special meeting to discuss the Fiscal Year 2023 audited financial statements. She stated we conducted our regular business including a review of the fourth quarter Trust Fund report. She shared Management reviewed several highlights and noted some unique expenditures including those associated with the cyber-attack.

Trustee Motta explained the Committee reviewed the report on reserves for the period ended August 31, 2023, and the significant increase in CD rates was noted across the portfolio. She shared the Fidelity balance has been somewhat volatile over the last few months but are managing regular gains.

She stated the Committee reviewed the Annual Trust Fund report with Management going through the report highlighting any items of significance. She shared the report showed an overall decrease in spending on trust funds year over year, and some of this decrease is because of influx of federal HEERF funds and an increase in state appropriation. Trustee Motta stated overall cash balances in the trust funds are down significantly, which reconciles with the audited statements. This decrease was explained to the Committee as using the cash necessary to construct the NOWI while awaiting financing.

Trustee Motta shared the Committee then reviewed and approved the President's quarterly expenditures.

Next, Trustee Motta reported the special meeting on October 6 was convened to review the draft audited financial statements. She explained those statements would be presented to the full board by our independent auditors at the December meeting. She shared that Management walked the Committee through the clean opinion, the financial statements, and key highlights of the footnotes. She noted that the Committee discussed some of the unique items this year including the receivable from the Foundation for the NOWI construction, and once financing is complete that receivable will be significantly reduced. She shared the Committee discussed the significant impact the pension accruals have on the statements while there is no impact on cash for the pension transactions. Trustee Motta also shared the Committee discussed the decline in tuition and fee revenue from FY22 to FY23.

She also stated the Committee discussed the impact of the new GASB 96, which covers lease accounting, on this year's statements and footnotes. Trustee Motta noted the Committee spent some time talking about fixed assets as it is the college's largest asset.

Trustee Motta noted the audit was a clean opinion and there were no audit adjustments or Management comments for the Committee to review.

After the presentation by Management the Committee voted to approve the statements so they can be submitted to the Department of Higher Education, State Comptroller, Office of State Financial Aid and to the full board at the December 4th meeting.

Chair Medeiros thanked Trustee Motta for the report and invited Trustee John Morris to provide the Student Trustee report.

10. Student Trustee Report – *Trustee John Morris*

Trustee Morris shared that students are seeking additional student social space on campus stating G-Building has been receiving complaints that students are too loud and disruptive when socializing in lobby area. He suggested a space to socialize could be staffed by student and family engagement work study students to

monitor equipment, attendance, and provide insight to college administrators related to real-time hot topics. He shared his belief that this space could provide computer access and thereby, utilize fellow students to assist with on-going IT issues.

Next, Trustee Morris shared students' requests to be able to purchase a meal plan through the college where students allocated Financial Aid could be used to assist with that cost. He noted the food service provider's sales system has the capability to interface with the college's student ID cards. Trustee Morris stated that it was his understanding the college's Cost of Attendance (COA) would need to be recalculated to include food costs, to ensure students receive the proper financial aid disbursement.

Trustee Morris reported that students are looking for more in-person courses especially Computer Information Systems (CIS), and Computer Information Technology (CIT). He noted that CIS/CIT courses are the third highest enrollment program with MassReconnect students, but current course offerings were driving away Veteran and Military connected students due to the housing allowance.

Finally, Trustee Morris wanted others to know that Bristol students have "punched way above our weight class" and highlighted several ways students are making a difference including:

- 6 Students attending SVA Leadership Institute in Washington DC
- 3 Students attending CCSLA in Springfield, MA
- 5 Students are currently enrolled with Leadership SouthCoast
- 88 Students nominated for Bristol Leadership Academy
- Bristol hosted the First Warrior Scholar College Success Workshop in the Commonwealth
- Denny Cosmo, Director of Veterans Center, was also recently recognized nationally as a Veteran Champion in Higher Education

11. Old Business

Chair Medeiros reminded Trustees that upcoming events & activities for their consideration were captured in the 2023-2024 Calendar provided both electronically and within your printed materials today. She reminded Trustees to RSVP for the Tableside Dinner fundraiser to support the Culinary Arts Program sharing the event is scheduled for Friday, November 17th.

Chair Medeiros asked if there was any additional business to discuss. Hearing none, she asked if there was any new business to bring before the board.

12. New Business

13. Adjournment

Hearing no additional or new business, Chair Medeiros adjourned the meeting at 6:14 p.m.