

# BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 29, 2024

### 1. Call to Order

The four hundred and ninth regular meeting of the Bristol Community College Board of Trustees was held on Monday, January 29 2024, in person on the Fall River campus in conference room 206 in Building D located at 777 Elsbree Street, Fall River, Massachusetts. The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m.

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

**Trustees Absent:** Joe Ferreira and Student Trustee (vacant)

**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; Chrystal Puniello; Dariel (DT) Henry; Scott Paquette; Natalie Beach; Denny Cosmo; Kevin Spirlet; and Michael Geary.

### 2. Chair's Remarks

Chair Medeiros welcomed everyone and shared this was her first meeting back in this board room space in a while with the exception of her virtual attendance in October. Chair Medeiros said it was great to be back in the space, in person.

### 3. Consent Agenda

Chair Medeiros asked the Trustees if they had the opportunity to 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 December 4, 2023
- Consideration of Minutes of Joint Board Meeting for December 4, 2023
- Report of Personnel Actions December 2023-January 2024
- Report of Workforce and Community Education Contracts December 2023-January 2024

Hearing none, Chair Medeiros 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 Karam. The motion was approved.

Next, Chair Medeiros invited Vice President, Kate O'Hara to walk Trustees through NECHE Standard 5 as we continue our journey to prepare for the NECHE site visit at the end of March. Please reference your black NECHE notebook we've been building each meeting.

### 4. New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) Discussion on **Standard 5** (Students) – *Kate O'Hara*, Vice President, Student and Enrollment Services

In continued preparation of the Trustees for the site visit in March, VP O'Hara provided guided discussion related to Standard 5 – Students. She explained this standard was lengthy but reminded all that students were the heart of all our work. VP O'Hara 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 5 included:*

- Holding meetings at all four Bristol site location to understand campus life
- Report and updates from Student Trustee
- Open admissions process – more equitable access; adopted more wholistic approach
- Enrollment updates weekly to Trustees
- Continued review of Bristol's price point as compared to other community colleges in MA
- Bristol was ready and prepared to launch MassReconnect even after the late announcement this summer
- Programs and centers supporting access
  - MAICEI presentation
  - High School Equivalency
  - Early College
- Wraparound services
- Safe, inclusive environment aligns with President's goals
- Various student centers offer supportive services for individual student populations
- We know some of our student are having trouble with technology
- College committed to access through financial resources - step by step process; FAFSA; 1:1 tutorial
- Financial access to grants
- Advocacy and emergency aid for students
- Mobile Market to support food security
- Financial aid mindset shift from processing center to counselling model
- Marketing perspective; branding efforts seen; school spirit evident
- Visualization of data – DID (tableau)

Chair Medeiros thanked VP O'Hara, 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, Chair Medeiros invited Chrystal Puniello, Academic Coordinator, to provide information and insight related to the work of Bristol's Lash Center for Teaching and Learning.

#### 5. Lash Center for Teaching & Learning – *Chrystal Puniello*, Academic Coordinator

Chrystal began her presentation aimed to provide an overview of professional development at Bristol. She shared Academic Innovation and Professional Development's (AIPD) mission was to provide intentional professional development to further the knowledge of Bristol's faculty and staff in support of the college's strategic plan.

AIPD foci include advancing the college's strategic plan through current training related to four pillars: Academic Innovation, Equity, Organizational Excellence, and Partnerships. In addition to the current training and offerings, Chrystal shared AIPD has several trainings under development in support of these four pillars including:

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| • Adult Learning Series                                     | • Achieving Racial Equity Model ( <i>HEIF Grant</i> ) |
| • Canvas ( <i>new Learning Management System Training</i> ) | • Bristol Tech Day                                    |
| • Safe Zone   | • Mid-Level Management Training                       |
| • Trauma Informed Practices                                 | • Early College Faculty Training                      |

Chrystal also shared that AIPD works actively with Human Resources to identify upcoming training needs to address potential gaps:

- Active Learning
- Identity-Conscious Practices
- Mental Health Informed Practices
- Lightcast and Database (*Data Informed Decision Tableau Portal*)
- Technology and skills development for Professional Staff
- Adult Learner Tech Support
- Artificial Intelligence
- LinkedIn Training for Bristol-specific needs

Chair Medeiros thanked Chrystal and shared that next up we have Laura Douglas with the President's Report.

6. 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 most recent updates were in **bold** format. 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.

At 4:45 p.m., Representative Alan Silvia arrived and President Douglas paused her presentation and asked to jump ahead on the agenda to her second talking point. President Douglas asked Denny Cosmo to join her and shared that he had recently been recognized at a national conference of the Student Veterans of America (SVA) with Chapter Advisor of the Year Award. She shared there are over 1600 SVA chapters nationwide with over 750,000 student Veterans, and shared Bristol is lucky to have Denny Cosmo on the Bristol team.

President Douglas introduced Representative Silvia, and thanked him for his long-standing support of Bristol. He shared he was present today to bestow a formal citation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Representative Silvia read the citation and presented it to Denny Cosmo.

President Douglas invited Chair Medeiros and VP O'Hara to present two additional citations to Denny Cosmo. Chair Medeiros presented a citation to Denny on behalf of Fall River's Mayor Coogan, and then VP O'Hara presented a citation to him on behalf of Secretary Jon Santiago from the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Veteran Services (EOVS).

In addition to the three citations, the Marketing and Communications team created a video of Bristol student Veterans thanking Denny as well. Based on technical issues, the video link will be sent to Denny and Trustees after the meeting. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DQDsSB187U>

At 6:00 p.m., President Douglas resumed her presentation of the goals and four strategies (noted above); she shared the progress of outcomes of the respective Objectives and Key Goals to date. Once the update of the goals was complete, the President invited any additional questions or discussion.

President Douglas then introduced *Daniel (DT) Henry*, Director of Trio and *Scott Paquette*, Assistant Director of ETS & UB, asked them to provide a brief overview of Upward Bound and Talent Search partnership.

- Community Partnership Highlight: Upward Bound & Talent Search – *Daniel (DT) Henry*, Director of Trio and *Scott Paquette*, Assistant Director of ETS & UB

DT began by asking, with show of hands, how many may people in the room today were first generation college students? He shared that TRIO was an investment in our future. He shared Bristol is fully embedded in Fall River schools including both middle school and high school.

He and Scott shared the Upward Bound (9-12 grade) and the Talent Search (middle school age) worked actively to create a college going culture early and often. These programs work to remove roadblocks to make college accessible. College tours, attending events on college campus, dual enrollment are some of the resources made available at no cost to prospective students and families.

The program provides biweekly services to 500+ Fall River middle school students, and shared Bristol's presence at Durfee High School provides an extension of the guidance office. In collaboration with UMass Dartmouth, Upward Bounds provides 77 students, 9-12 grade, a summer residential simulation of the college going experience.

DT shared that 35% of students involved in these programs attend Bristol CC each year.

DT thanked the Trustees for their support and interest, and then asked if there were any questions.

There was a comment and brief discussion about the importance of starting with middle school age as a way to promote access and attainable college goals to meet local students' needs.

President Douglas thanked DT and Scott for highlighting these important partnerships with the schools. She then invited VP Kenyon and VP Pelletier to provide a follow-up to the college's cyberattack.

- Trustee Talking Points
  - Cyberattack Follow-up - *Steve Kenyon*, Vice President, Finance and Administration and *Jo-Ann Pelletier*, Chief Information & Data Officer

VP Kenyon and VP Pelletier provided a brief update and follow-up related to the college's December 2022 cyberattack.

VP Kenyon shared he previously reported in November that the College is receiving full reimbursement from our insurance company.

The last outstanding item that is being paid by our policy is the defense of the class action suit. This case started as four different suits that were combined into one case.

Our counsel, McDonald Hopkins, was provided to us through our insurer. They have attempted to settle and have agreement from the plaintiffs. However, our Attorney General's office has declined to settle. The amount was about \$50K or close to the balance remaining on our policy. The AG's office has declined to settle so a motion to dismiss was filed and is awaiting decision.

The defense of the case is going to switch from private counsel to the AGs office at some point soon. Obviously, this hinges on if the case is dismissed or not.

The college's consultant, Berry Dunn, has finalized the report and presented to PLT with recommendations. The report and recommendations will be shared with stakeholders including Trustees, students, faculty and staff.

- Student Veterans of America National Conference on January 5, 2024 awards Denny Cosmo with Chapter Advisor of the Year Award - *Kate O'Hara*, Vice President, Student and Enrollment Services

See minutes above at 4:47 p.m. upon Representative Silvia's arrival.

- Introduce our New Dean of the Library, Natalie Beach – *Andrew Fisher*, Vice President, Academic Affairs & Chief Academic Officer

Natalie Beach was introduced to the Trustees. Natalie shared it was wonderful to meet the Trustees. She shared she is a librarian by training with a focus on collection development; she also shared she has worked 17 years in library management and is thrilled to be a Bristol.

Next, President Douglas invited VP Kenyon to provide a financial update.

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

VP Kenyon provided a financial update as follows:

As you may recall, our fall semester was a few percentages over the prior year, a first in a long time. Equally as important, enrollment was well over budget in the fall. This spring semester, while we have not settled in to a final enrollment figure yet, it is safe to say we will be about 10% over budget and up year over year. This trend is so good and will impact future semesters if we can build on these increases.

The increases in the fall and spring amount to about \$2M more in revenue than we budgeted. With enrollment up there are obviously increased cost especially in the area of adjunct faculty costs. As you may recall we budgeted for an over \$4M deficit in FY24 but should be able to cut that in half. We should also be cash flow positive this year despite the loss which we were not able to do last year.

We are now building the FY25 budget and including a 3% increase in enrollment for that budget. We will be asking for a \$10 per credit increase in the college fee for FY25 based on preliminary budget work. That will not likely balance the budget but will help get us closer.

Some of the logic with the fee increase is that if they continue or expand MassReconnect or approve Free Community College the students will not be hurt by the increase. We need to position ourselves closer to the mean charge per credit.

A full presentation will be done to the Finance/Budget Committee next month and then to the full board.

You may have read that the Government passed a temporary spending bill to avoid a Federal Shutdown until at least March. This avoids the College from having to take any action on our Federal grants.

The Governor made some budget reductions to address a statewide revenue shortfall of about \$1B. While we have still not received details of the cuts, our SUCCESS grant was targeted and could amount to over \$400K. We are awaiting further guidance and information about the reductions.

Lastly, the State Audit I informed you about is two months in on what is scheduled to be about 9 months. So far so good. They are still trying to get a full understanding of how we spent our \$35M in HEERF funds and all the policies and procedures in place to safeguard those funds. We do not expect to have any issues. They are also testing to be sure our employees have had adequate cybersecurity training which is also going well

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

7. Annual Board Assessment (*complete tool*) – Joan Medeiros, Board Chair

Chair Medeiros reminded Trustees to complete the Annual Board Assessment Tool. She said Lucinda has sent requests to complete the Assessment Tool prior to this meeting. While she received some, there are several more we still need. A clean copy of the tool is in your board material. Please complete the self-assessment tool before you leave tonight and pass on to Lucinda.

Chair Medeiros asked Trustee Lynn Motta to provide a Report of the Finance Budget Committee.

8. Finance/Budget Committee Report – Trustee Lynn Motta

The Finance/Budget Committee met on December 4, 2023.

The first item on the agenda was a review of the Trust Fund report for the first quarter. We discussed how the \$9.3 million adjunct faculty budget was reported and then allocated out to the different academic areas. We then reviewed the expenditures over \$3,000 and nothing was out of the ordinary. We then spent some time reviewing the report on reserves. We have seen some positive unrealized gains through the date of the report which was November 15. We are a balance of just over \$16M, which is about a \$500K increase this fiscal year. We reviewed the CDs which now almost all have rates in the mid 4 to mid-5% range.

We then reviewed the quarterly budget update through November 15, 2023. The report showed an increase in enrollment for the fall semester which resulted in increased revenue for the year to date. We discussed the increase in compensation resulting from the accruals of new contracts that would not be paid until December.

The last half hour of the meeting was dedicated to reviewing the audited financial statements with the partner in charge of our audit from Withum.

The auditor went through some highlights at a more thorough level than he did at the Board meeting on 12/4. We discussed the impact of the new GASBs on the presentation of the statements. This included GASB 96, subscription leases for IT.

The auditor then went through the required communications. He explained the amount of testing performed, sample transaction reviewed, and internal control reports tested. The important information conveyed included that there were no disagreements with management, there were no findings, and no adjustments.

The auditor stated that they are also performing the audit of federal funds that is due in March and the state financial aid audit also scheduled to be complete by March.

The last piece of business was to approve the President's expenditures which were reviewed and approved.

At the conclusion of Finance/Budget Committee Report, Chair Medeiros thanked Trustee Motta. Chair Medeiros then shared that Student Trustee John Morris was unable to attend today as his child was sick, so therefore, Chair Medeiros invited Vice President O'Hara to provide a Student Trustee update.

#### 9. Student Trustee Report

VP O'Hara shared that it was with a heavy heart that Student Trustee Morris would no longer be able to serve as the Student Trustee as he no longer meets the student qualification criteria after accepting a full-time job with the Student Veterans of America (SVA) organization. This is great news for John and his family as he will be a Student Outreach Coordinator in a 100% remote position, but unfortunately, leaves a mid-year vacancy for the Student Trustee position.

VP O'Hara shared her team will work on student election process to select a new Student Trustee. At the conclusion of Student Trustee update, Chair Medeiros thanked VP O'Hara and stated we will work with the Bristol Leadership Team to fill the Student Trustee vacancy and keep Trustees posted.

Next, Chair Medeiros invited any additional items from our previous or old business.

#### 10. Old Business

- Highlight upcoming priority & optional events for Trustees – Calendar (Spring 2024)

Chair Medeiros shared that provided both electronically and in Trustee board materials today is a calendar of upcoming events and activities we think Trustees might be interested in attending and supporting.

Next, Chair Medeiros invited any additional items for new business

#### 11. New 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*)
- Board of Trustees' Committees 2024-2025

Chair Medeiros invited President Douglas to make an announcement.

President Douglas announced her plan to retire in January 2025, stating she wanted to let Trustees and others know before larger community and media announcement tomorrow.

President Douglas shared when she started in 2017 there was much work to be done, but we have had so many successes including the launch of a brand-new industry to the United States (offshore wind) as well as thriving through an international pandemic. She shared her one goal throughout COVID was no one would die within the Bristol community. She also stated she has never been prouder than when Bristol Community College stepped up and served as a community leader in public health.

President Douglas reminded all that it will be a busy year ahead but she was confident in the college's leadership and fiscal outlook. A January 2025 retirement allows a new president to place their own stamp on a new strategic plan.

President Douglas shared that it has been an honor to serve with this board and leadership.

Chair Medeiros thanked President Douglas for her service and this bittersweet announcement. She shared that there will be conversation at the February board meeting related to a search plan including a bid process for securing a search firm, and beginning a presidential search.

12. Adjournment

Hearing no additional new business Chair Medeiros called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

A motion was made to adjourn by Trustee Clark and was seconded by Trustee Mathes. The motion to adjourn was approved.