

Bristol Community College Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 6, 2024

1. Call to Order

The four hundred and thirteenth regular meeting of the Bristol Community College Board of Trustees was held on Monday, May 6, 2024, in person on the Fall River campus in the Commonwealth College Center (Building G) Atrium located at 777 Elsbree Street, Fall River, MA. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

Trustees Present: Joan Medeiros, Chair; Jeffrey Karam, Vice Chair; Frank Baptista; Renee Clark; Pamela Gauvin; Silvia Jones; Lynn Motta; and Todd McGhee.

Trustees Absent: Valentina Videva Dufresne, Secretary; and James Mathes.

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; Michael Geary; Brian McGuire; Adrienne Foster Scharf; Christine Scafidi; Christine Hubbard; and Denny Cosmos.

2. Chair's Remarks

Chair Medeiros congratulated Silvia Jones, sharing that today she was elected as our 2024-2025 Student Trustee.

Chair Medeiros also congratulated Trustee Ferreira on his recent 5-year reappointment to the Board of Trustees. She shared that we are awaiting word from PENC and the Department of Higher Education on our other appointment/reappointment.

Chair Medeiros reminded all that a Joint Trustee/Foundation Board Meeting will be held after this meeting. Chair Medeiros encouraged all to stay for a little social time with treats from students in our Culinary Program.

3. Consent Agenda

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

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 Karam. The motion was approved.

Next, Chair Medeiros invited Vice President of Academic Affairs and the college's Chief Academic Officer, Andrew Fisher, to review proposals for two new college degree programs.

4. Academic Affairs – *Andrew Fisher*, Vice President, Academic Affairs & Chief Academic Officer

VP Fisher shared several faculty members would be proposing two new college degree programs. VP Fisher introduced faculty members, Michael Geary and Brian McGuire, who were present to propose and seek board approval for the addition of an AA degree in English. They presented their proposal noting the degree versatility and the need for no additional resources (classroom space or faculty). Professor Geary also noted that this would be the first English degree program at any Massachusetts community college.

VP Fisher invited any questions or discussion, and then thanked Professors Geary and McGuire for their presentation.

4:12 p.m. *Trustee Joe Ferreira arrived*

VP Fisher then introduced Dr. Adrienne Foster Scharf, Dean of STEM, to present the proposal for a new AAS degree in Artificial Intelligence.

Dean Foster Scharf presented the proposal for a new AAS degree in Artificial Intelligence and cited emerging needs in the business community including changing workforce needs and workplace demands. She shared that an estimated 11 million jobs will be lost to automation while AI is poised to transform the modern workforce.

Dean Foster Scharf shared that Bristol would be ready to deliver the AI program (degree and certificate) 100% online, hybrid, and face to face by Fall 2025. She shared that this will be the first community college in the state system to offer an AAS degree in Artificial Intelligence while there are several programs that would offer bachelor level for transfer (UMass Dartmouth and Bridgewater).

Dean Foster Scharf concluded the proposal presentation and asked if there were questions. Trustee Motta asked if there was already an AI policy at the school. VP Fisher confirmed there was already a stand-alone AI policy at Bristol related to code of conduct and academic dishonesty. Chair Medeiros then asked about costs for this new program including space and faculty hiring. Dean Foster Scharf responded stating there would be minimal costs incurred.

Chair Medeiros asked if there were any other questions or additional discussion needed for either proposal. Hearing none, Chair Medeiros asked for a motion to approve both academic programs (AA in English and AAS in Artificial Intelligence) as presented. A motion was made by Trustee Karam to approve both proposed academic degree/certificate programs; the motion was seconded by Trustee Motta. The motion was approved.

At this time, Chair Medeiros invited President Douglas to provide the President's Report.

5. President's Report

- Update President's Approved Goals 2023-2024

President Douglas provided an update regarding status of the President's approved goals sharing updates only on the few items remaining incomplete. She highlighted, as planned, many of these approved goals for the current year have now been accomplished as we come close to the conclusion of another academic year.

President Douglas asked if there were any questions or discussion. Trustee Motta commented this was a heavy load for one President and asked if there were long range goals and in addition to the annual goals. President Douglas responded stating the annual presidential goals intentionally correlate with the college's strategic plan to provide the long-range perspective.

Once the review of the annual goals was complete, President Douglas invited Christine Scafidi, Director of College Access, to provide an update of the community partnership with Fairhaven High School.

- Community Partnership Highlight: Fairhaven High School Innovation Pathway Designation – *Christine Scafidi*, Director, College Access

Director Scafidi thanked the Trustees for the opportunity to share information and highlights about an important initiative with Fairhaven High School. The Fairhaven High School Innovation Pathway is designed to provide 16 FHS students in a business and finance cluster, ready access to dual enrollment and internships. Director Scafidi shared that both sophomores and juniors can apply for this pathway program. In addition to dual enrollment access, the Innovation Pathway provides 100 hours in internships, a special cord at their high school graduation, and up to 32 credit hours of college credit before graduating from high school. This pathway program is grant funded and

promotes a college going culture for the students with a focus on experiential learning to complement students' dual enrollment coursework. Director Scafidi asked if there were any questions.

Trustee Baptista asked how one applies and gets chosen. Director Scafidi provided Trustees with information on the grant application process.

President Douglas invited Steve Kenyon to provide a financial update.

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

VP Kenyon shared that the college audit season is over for now except for the state auditors. He said he had no idea when the state auditors would be done, but everything was going fine, and they have not found any issues.

He shared that college investments continue to do very well this fiscal year. He reminded Trustees that there is volatility, as usual, but fiscal year to date we are up \$1.3M in unrealized gains. He shared that we budgeted \$500K this year so we are well ahead of budget.

VP Kenyon shared the college has received the FY25 state appropriation from the House since his last report. He stated the good news was the appropriation was exactly what the Governor's budget detailed at just over \$30M. He reported some of the outside section language was good such as the STEM Starter Academy being restored. He also stated there was some challenging news such as the College SUCCESS grant was only approved for \$14M not the \$18M we requested. VP Kenyon shared that the House budget did not include the Non-Unit Professional raises from FY24 in the FY25 budget, and the college did not budget for that in our assumptions. He also shared the House budget did restore the Formula Funding funds which are important to us and were previously reduced by the Governor. That figure is about \$780K.

VP Kenyon then shared we have no real sense yet of how things will play out with MassReconnect or Free Community College, and we did not expect to see Free CC in the House budget. He stated we are now waiting for the Senate which we expect will support Free CC.

VP Kenyon shared the summer enrollment report looks very strong, stating we are already well ahead of budget with several weeks remaining.

VP Kenyon stated he would like to update the Board on our planning for commencement and other events on campus. He shared that this was in regard to the recent events across the country at college campuses. He shared that while we feel the risk is minimal, there has been some social media activity by non-students that we are tracking.

VP Kenyon stated campus police have been working with the college Communications and the Student Services areas to develop an operational plan for such events. He noted the college already had a plan for special events as part of the campus police department policies, but we developed an operational plan in more depth for an event as politically charged as what we have been seeing across the country and several institutions close to us in MA and RI.

VP Kenyon shared that our plan was vetted with the Fall River Police Department and State Police Fusion Center. He noted that The Fusion Center is a great repository of data that will help us identify any planned activity before it happens. He also shared the plan is careful to take into consideration all our students and staff first and fourteenth amendment rights.

VP Kenyon stated that the college should exercise our legal right to regulate any protest activity by time, place, and manner so that all persons (protesters or bystanders) enjoy their First Amendment Rights equally.

VP Kenyon shared the plan identifies places where students will be allowed to protest so that they will not be disruptive to campus events. He noted the plan includes messaging to the protesters to explain what will happen.

He also shared this plan has been choreographed with FRPD as to what the responsibilities are for them and those for the college. VP Kenyon also noted the college is prepared for any disruptions that might occur during the commencement ceremony, and that we have developed messages for multiple scenarios that will be available on stage during the ceremony. He stated while we hope this plan will not be used, we wanted the Board to know that an operational plan is in place should the need arise. In conclusion, VP Kenyon shared the college is also working on a plan for each location that will be ready this week. He thanked the Trustees and invited any questions.

Hearing none, President Douglas concluded the President's Report by thanking the Trustees for their time and then turned the meeting back to Chair Medeiros.

Chair Medeiros invited Trustee Jeff Karam to provide the Facilities Committee report.

6. Facilities Committee Report – Trustee Jeff Karam

Trustee Karam shared that the Facilities Committee met on April 11, 2024, for its quarterly meeting. He stated the meeting consisted mostly of facility project updates with Management reviewing the list of Adaptation & Renewal projects already completed and will complete this fiscal year. Trustee Karam shared the college is required to spend 5% of its locally retained revenue on projects to help modify space for new purposes or programs and this required allocation is not intended for deferred maintenance.

Trustee Karam shared that the President has asked the leadership team to provide a list of possible projects for fiscal year 2025, and that the list will be discussed by the leadership team soon and final decisions will be made so the projects can begin this summer. He shared that some potential A&R projects discussed were modifying space to accommodate recently hired SUCCESS coaches and Navigators. Trustee Karam also stated there was discussion related to adapting the former medical offices into mental health counseling offices, and noted there is some additional state funding to help with this project.

Trustee Karam reported the college has a major project happening in B Building where we are replacing the HVAC system. This is funded by Federal grant funds with a budget just over \$1M.

He shared the college is also replacing the windows in the library building which also houses the Information Technology department. He reported that the project is about \$700,000 and is funded by state deferred maintenance funding and is part of our 5-year allocation.

Trustee Karam also shared there are some smaller window projects happening around campus as part of the state's Fair Share funding to be used to reduce our carbon footprint. He reported the college received \$791,694 in Fair Share funding to be spent in FY24 on energy efficient projects. He shared that most of these projects included solar lighting in parking lots, upgrading some indoor lighting to more efficient products, and a few solar powered security cameras.

Trustee Karam stated the college is finalizing a lease extension for another year that allows UMass Dartmouth to use the lower level of our New Bedford campus for their Adult Education program. He shared the Committee also discussed another initiative with UMass Dartmouth that would provide Bristol students with housing at UMass Dartmouth, and we are hoping to pilot it with athletes, Phi Theta Kappa, and engineering students.

Trustee Karam also shared the Bristol Foundation has provided funding from the Margaret Jackson Theater fund for upgrades to the theater including a new sound system.

Trustee Karam concluded his report and asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Medeiros invited Trustee Silvia Jones to provide the Student Trustee Report.

7. Student Trustee Report – Trustee Silvia Jones

Trustee Jones shared the end of the spring term and academic year was upon us and shared students have been actively participating in related events including:

- The Honors Showcase
- Springfest – good success and students were happy to have a “mind break”
- PTK induction on May 7th
- Student Award Night on May 10th
- Health Science and Nursing Pinning on May 17th
- Commencement Ceremony on May 18th

Trustee Jones shared we are still seeking ways to foster further engagement from students.

Trustee Jones stated the only other update was related to maintaining student services with staff vacancies including (Emma Montague and Elizett Pires) Trustee Jones reported the Mobile Market schedule will be maintained and will continue the second Thursday of each month. She shared the Mobile Market is available to both Bristol students and members of the community and continues to mitigate food insecurity in our area.

8. Old Business

Chair Medeiros thanked Trustee Jones for her report, and stated she will take this opportunity to remind Trustees of a few old business details. Chair Medeiros reminded all that list of Board of Trustee meeting dates for 2024-2025 is in your material today. She shared there was also a calendar list of several upcoming events of interest that Trustees may wish to attend. She stated the Board Liaison, Lucinda, will continue to send Outlook calendar invites as well.

Chair Medeiros also reminded Trustees to hold the date for Wednesday, August 21, 2024, for our Annual Board Retreat at the NOWI.

Chair Medeiros invited any items for new business to be brought before the Board.

9. New Business

Hearing no one, Chair Medeiros reminded Trustees that the joint meeting with the Foundation would begin at 5:00 p.m. and asked for a motion to adjourn this meeting.

10. Adjournment

Trustee Karam made a motion to adjourn, and Trustee Clark seconded that motion. Chair Medeiros adjourned the Board of Trustees Meeting at 4:53 p.m.