

BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, July 10, 2024

1. **Joan Medeiros** - Chair, Presidential Search Committee; Chair, Board of Trustees

Chair Medeiros called the Presidential Search Committee to order at 1:04 p.m.

Members Present: Joan Medeiros, Chair; Lucinda Poudrier-Aaronson, Board/Committee Liaison; Debra Anderson; Paul Burke; Stefanie Deprey; William Duffy; Michael Geary; Melanie Johnson; Silvia Jones; Jeff Karam (1:08 p.m.); Todd McGhee; Richard Riccardi; Frank Sousa; and Judi Urquhart

Members Absent: Emmanuel Echevarria

Others Present: Steve Kenyon; Donna Cramer (Issacson, Miller); Tatianna Oberkoetter (Issacson, Miller); Gina Yarbrough (MA Community College General Counsel); and Alex Demou (Department of Higher Education)

Chair Medeiros welcomed everyone and thanked all for their service. She asked for search committee members and guests to introduce themselves including both name and affiliation with college.

Chair Medeiros then shared she would like to clarify the charge to the presidential search committee. She stated the search committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Trustees. She reminded all that the Board of Trustees has statutory authority to appoint the president of the college. She asked the search committee to interview candidates for the presidency and recommend to the Board of Trustees an unranked list of no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) qualified candidates later this fall. Chair Medeiros also asked the search committee to provide a summary of perceived strengths and challenges of each candidate, but advised under no circumstances should the committee rank order those candidates.

Chair Medeiros then shared the importance of and need for confidentiality during this process. She told the search committee they would hear more about the need for confidentiality from both General Counsel and the search firm, Issacson, Miller, but as the search chair, she wanted to remind the committee that we are all subject to the requirements of the State's Open Meeting and Public Record Laws. She asked that members of the search committee protect the confidentiality of the search process, sharing that the protection is paramount to the process as many candidates for a presidential position may agree to be considered only if they can be assured that their candidacy will remain confidential until they reach the final stages of the search process. Chair Medeiros stated there is a strong public interest in ensuring that the Commonwealth can attract the best possible pool of qualified candidates for Bristol's next president and the search committee's confidential consideration of candidates is essential.

Chair Medeiros invited Gina Yarbrough, General Counsel for the Massachusetts Community College system, to provide some additional insight and training related to Open Meeting and Public Records Laws.

2. **Gina Yarbrough** - General Counsel, Massachusetts Community Colleges

Gina Yarbrough began her presentation stating there were three documents she would reference. The first document, [Guidelines and Procedures for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State](#)

[University and Community College Presidents](#), is photocopied and available in search committee members' material today.

The second and third documents are much larger and are available electronically in the search committee members' shared files managed by Lucinda. This includes both [Open Meeting](#) and [Public Records](#) Law documents, as well as the certificate of receipt of materials which must be signed and returned to Lucinda.

Ms. Yarbrough shared that the presidential search committee is considered a public body, and as such, is bound by open meeting and public records laws in the Commonwealth. Thus, all meetings shall be conducted in open session. There are exceptions to open meeting law and times public bodies may require executive session. Search Committees may need to meet in executive session when discussing candidates in the early stages of the process in order to maintain the confidentiality of their candidacy. Ms. Yarbrough shared that all search committee meeting should begin and end in open session, and only moved to executive session as needed. Meeting minutes are kept for both open and executive session meetings.

Emails, texts, Teams chat, and meetings between all or some search committee members are all considered open and discoverable under Public Records Law whenever and wherever a quorum of the public body may exist. A quorum is a simple majority of the public body, in this case the search committee of fifteen members with two non-voting, would be seven. Ms. Yarbrough suggested individuals avoid group chats, sidebar meetings, and/or electronic chat functions, and to never reply to all.

A search committee member asked about the use of personal notes, handwritten or on the computer. Ms. Yarbrough shared that the use of personal memory aides is permitted, and maintained for personal use only. She suggested at the conclusion of the search, members of the committee reconvene to participate in a shred or deletion activity.

Chair Medeiros thanked Gina Yarbrough for the presentation and stated at this time, she would ask our search firm partner, Issacson, Miller, represented by Donna Cramer and Tatiana Oberkoetter, to guide us through the presidential search process.

3. **Donna Cramer, Partner, and Tatiana Oberkoetter, Managing Associate, Issacson, Miller**

Donna Cramer re-introduced herself, and Tatiana Oberkoetter, and thanked members for serving. She also thanked anyone who participated in the listening session conducted earlier this spring. Ms. Cramer invited search committee members to review the firm's overview and other material shared in the folder today. She shared the firm has a track record of excellence, noting the success of placing women and people of color in leadership positions in a variety of industry sectors including community colleges in the Commonwealth.

Ms. Cramer reiterated the need for confidentiality as expressed by both Chair Medeiros and Gina Yarbrough, as many candidates wish for their candidacy to remain private until the finalist stage. She asked search committee members to review and sign the confidentially agreement available in their meeting material.

She shared the search timeline will be tight, and noted a smaller group will meet to discuss congruence between college's timeline and the realities of the search process. A draft of the position profile is located in your material, and after your review, we will need to share with the Board of Higher Education for their review as well. She invited any discussion or feedback. Alex Demou, asked about the need to change

language around the MassEducate references in the position profile as the budget for this program has not been approved and there is some on-going concern this budget item will not pass. Chair Medeiros noted that is not the communication she has been hearing from credible sources, but understands the profile must reflect the most accurate outlook.

Ms. Cramer shared once the position profile is approved and posted she will be providing biweekly updates to Chair Medeiros. She shared once the profile is complete, salary range is confirmed, and the position is posted, then the next meeting with the search committee would be for the first presentation of candidates. After some discussion, the committee agreed upon Monday, September 9th (a.m.) for the first presentation of candidates to the search committee (Zoom). The committee also agreed upon Wednesday, October 9th (p.m.) for the second presentation of candidates (Zoom). The tentative dates for 8-10 semi-finalist candidate interviews finalists were also established for Wednesday, October 23 – Friday, October 25, so the search committee could make their recommendation to the Board of Trustees for 3-5 finalists to interview in person in mid-November.

Ms. Cramer asked if Lucinda would work with Ryan Smillie to get these dates on search committee members calendars along with the associated Zoom links for each meeting.

Chair Medeiros thanked Donna and Tatiana. At this time, let's take care of any remaining housekeeping items.

4. Logistics and Other Details

Chair Medeiros reminded the search committee that there are two documents in your materials today which will require your signature after review, and then submission for search records. See the yellow and orange tabbed documents. Please review, sign, and return to Lucinda Poudrier-Aaronson.

Chair Medeiros invited the search committee to visit the [Presidential Search website](#) located on the college's website.

Chair Medeiros shared the committee would need to meet one more time before Issacson, Miller's first presentation of candidates to provide the committee's mandated HR/EEO/Bias related training. Lucinda asked if polling the group electronically for best meeting dates and times would work for scheduling this second meeting. The second meeting/training will be held virtually at the end of July or early August.

5. Next meeting: to be scheduled after email polling committee members

Chair Medeiros asked if there were any remaining questions or thoughts.

Hearing none, the first presidential search committee meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.