(APPROVED)

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES MEETING
April 28, 2026

CONVENING

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Berkshire Community College was held on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, via Zoom. Chair Bowen called the meeting to order at 4:31PM and noted that meeting will be cablecast on Pittsfield Community Television. These meetings are allowed to be recorded under the MA Open Meeting Law and are not subject to editing. H. Seely conducted a roll call and noted that a quorum was present.

PRESENT:	Chair Bowen; Trustees: Culyer, Gonzalez, Hughes, Myers, Rivers Murphy, Vrabel
ABSENT:	Chacon, Kiely, Zaffanella
ALSO PRESENT:	BCC President, Ellen Kennedy; Vice President for Students Affairs & Enrollment Management, Adam Klepetar; Vice President for Administration & Finance, Christina Wynn; Vice President of Academic Affairs, Laurie Gordy; Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement, Jim Mancall; Jane Singer, Executive Director of Human Resources; Assistant to the President, Heather Seely Additionally: L. Broderick Bean, K. Breault, N. Mooney, R. Bucknell, B. Booker. G. Foley, K. Hines Media: PCTV

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon a motion made by M. Myers and seconded by J. Vrabel it was VOTED via roll to approve the minutes of the special meetings on February 25, 2026, March 9, 2026, March 11, 2026, and March 12, 2026.

Upon a motion made by J. Huges and seconded by M. Myers it was VOTED via roll call to approve the minutes of the special meeting on March 16, 2026, with J. Vrabel abstaining.

Upon a motion made by M. Myers and seconded by J. Hughes it was VOTED via roll call to approve the minutes of the meeting on March 24, 2026, with J. Vrabel and J. Cuyler abstaining.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Board received sabbatical presentations from Karen Hines and Gina Foley highlighting how their sabbatical projects enhanced teaching, student engagement, and applied learning.

Karen Hines, Associate Professor of Business, presented her sabbatical research focused on storytelling as a core business strategy. Her work examined the research of Seth Godin and Matthew Dicks, along with brand storytelling, customer experience, and retail design. As part of her sabbatical, Professor Hines launched a retail business in Lenox, *LYKEE Living*, which served as a real-world application of her research. She described how storytelling informed all aspects of the business, including branding, store design, product selection, and customer engagement. Professor Hines shared evidence-based research demonstrating that storytelling increases trust, retention, and customer loyalty, and explained how these insights directly inform her classroom teaching.

Gina Foley, Associate Professor in Natural and Physical Sciences, presented her sabbatical project focused on storytelling as a pedagogical tool in science education. Her work resulted in the creation of an open educational resource (OER) designed to help biology faculty integrate storytelling into science curricula. The OER is published and accessible through multiple state and national repositories, expanding its reach beyond the College. Professor Foley explained how storytelling improves student engagement, supports comprehension of complex scientific concepts, and promotes equity by providing no-cost instructional materials. She shared classroom examples illustrating how narrative approaches are used to teach scientific methods, ethics, and biological principles. Professor Foley also noted the personal and professional benefits of the sabbatical, including research on historical medical injustices and renewed perspective on teaching.

Jane Singer, Executive Director of Human Resources, presented an update on Human Resources' professional development efforts, noting that approximately 60% of employees have joined BCC within the past five years, creating increased onboarding and supervisory development needs. She highlighted research underscoring the critical role of managers in employee engagement and retention. The Supervisor Training Series, launched in 2024, initially focused on core operational and compliance-related supervisory skills and has since expanded to emphasize leadership competencies such as emotional intelligence, resilience, communication, and adaptability, particularly amid leadership transition and broader changes in higher education.

Singer also reported on the college's investment in LinkedIn Learning as a professional development platform for employees, faculty, and students. HR has adopted a curated, layered engagement approach, integrating LinkedIn Learning with live trainings, learning challenges, and initiatives such as "Popcorn Learning," while partnering with campus subject-matter experts. As of April 17, 2026, 65% of staff have activated their accounts, with 53% actively engaged, Presentation emphasized embedding well-being into professional development, expanding role-based learning paths, strengthening centralized onboarding, and aligning training efforts with institutional priorities.

<u>FOUNDATION BOARD REPORT</u> No Report

<u>STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT</u>
Bri Booker, President of the Student Government Association (SGA) provided a report noting SGA activities wrapping up as the semester concludes. She reported that approximately eight students will be returning or newly enrolled will be engaged next fall SGA members. The incoming Student Trustee will be Corey Walker, noting strong enthusiasm and a commitment to strengthening connections among students, faculty, and staff. She reported increased student interest in working with Facilities related to campus maintenance and ADA accessibility, which may be explored further by SGA, potentially through a subcommittee. She noted that students expressed appreciation for SGA as a forum for student voice and engagement and emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between students and college leadership. She concluded by thanking the Board and college leadership for their support.

<u>ALUMNI TRUSTEE REPORT</u>
M. Myers began thanking E. Kennedy for participating in the recent Alumni Association Annual Meeting, noted that current officers have been re-elected and all active members are continuing. June 6 is the Alumni Reunion at Balderdash Cellars, and everyone is welcome

<u>SUBCOMMTTEE REPORTS</u>

Finance and Audit Committee:

C. Wynn presented the 3rd Quarter Trust Fund report.

Upon a motion made by D. Gonzalez and seconded by J. Vrabel it was VOTED to approve the 3rd Quarter Trust Fund, as presented, via roll call vote.

C. Wynn and K. Breault presented on the FY27 budget process and preliminary budget being presented and noting the steps along the way including engagement with budget managers, presentations with SGA and Town Halls. The FY27 preliminary budget projections will continue to be refined based on enrollment, admissions activity, final state appropriations, and management decisions. Reviewed a multi-year budget comparison and several FY27 scenarios reflecting enrollment growth, the proposed 2.76% student fee increase, and potential federal grant uncertainty.

The proposed fee adjustment falls within the statutory cap under the Massachusetts Free Community College legislation and would support a balanced budget while addressing inflationary and operational cost pressures. It was noted the potential risk to federal grant funding and specifically expressed support for TRIO, a foundational student-support program that currently receives approximately $285,000 in federal funding. While the College expects the grant to continue, federal support for the program remains uncertain. Should federal funding be reduced or eliminated, Berkshire Community College is committed to sustaining TRIO for the next academic year and will identify alternative funding sources, including the use of reserve funds if necessary.

Upon a motion made by D. Gonzalez and seconded by J. Vrabel it was VOTED to approve a 2.76 percent fee increase approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Motion made by M. Myers and seconded by J. Hughes was VOTED to approve budget with 2.76% fee increase and reflecting a projected 5% increase in enrollment, and a potential budget deficit of $285,000, approved unanimously via roll call vote.

Student Success Committee: No Report

Governance and Nominating Executive: No Report

Executive Committee:
J. Bowen reported that she has had conversations with H. Charlier and E. Kennedy and they have also been talking on a regular basis to ensure a smooth transition.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS
J. Singer presented personnel actions for the period of March 2026 to April 2026 (attached) noting approval is requested for the following: appointment of Shiley Lui as Administrative Assistant I in One Stop.
Reappointments, as noted in your packet: 29 faculty members, and 26-unit professionals.
Included among these reappointments are the following faculty members receiving tenure:

- Sarah Broughel
- Jennifer Charbonneau
- Jose Colmenares
- Amanda Meier

Approval is also requested for tenure for unit professional Jennifer Larkin.
Changes of Rank: approval is requested for the following changes of rank:

- Mary Dickman – Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
- Julia Gallagher – Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
- Margaret Goss – Assistant Professor to Associate Professor
- Nicole Tucker – Assistant Professor to Assistant Professor
- Lori Wynters – Assistant Professor to Assistant Professor
- Jose Colmenares – Associate Professor to Professor
- Amanda Meier – Associate Professor to Professor

Emeritus Recommendation
Finally, there is a separate recommendation and vote to confer Emeritus Honors on Wayne Klug.

Upon a motion, duly made by M. Myers and seconded by J. Cuyler, it was VOTED unanimously via roll call to approve the personnel actions as presented.

Upon a motion, duly made by M. Rivers Murphy, and seconded by J. Cuyler, it was VOTED unanimously via roll call to approve the emeritus to Wayne Klug.

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm with motion by M. Myers and seconded by *J. Vrabel* and was VOTED unanimously.

DATE: Respectfully submitted,

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Heather Seely
Approved:

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Julia Bowen, Board Chair