



(APPROVED)

**BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF TRUSTEES MEETING
March 25, 2025**

CONVENING

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Berkshire Community College was held on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 via Zoom. Chair Bowen called the meeting to order at 4:32PM. Heather Seely took a roll call and noted that a quorum was present.

PRESENT: Chair Bowen; Trustees: Gonzales, Myers, Mirante, and Student Trustee Lindemann, Rivers Murphy, Vrabel, Zaffanella
ABSENT: Cuyler, Kiely, Chacon
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, and Assistant to the President, Heather Seely
Additionally, B. Dolan, L. Dister, A. Powers, M. Lussier, D. Kosaw, J. Meisel
Media: PCTV

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Upon a motion duly made by D. Gonzalez and seconded by J. Vrabel, it was VOTED via roll call to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2024, meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

P. Mirante noted the colleagues from the auditing firm Withum are here to present the BCC Single Audit Report overview for fiscal year 2024. D. Kosow Witham provided an overview, highlighting a clean audit opinion with three findings, all being actively addressed. The findings include one student not receiving exit counseling for loans, and issues related to initial balance discrepancies and voucher date misalignments. C. Wynn explained that these issues arose due to staff turnover, implementation of a new ERP system, and loss of institutional knowledge. The finance team is implementing new procedures, documenting processes, and creating backups to prevent future occurrences.

P. Mirante made a motion to accept the fiscal year 2024 single audit report, it was seconded by D. Gonzalez was VOTED via roll to accept and file Single Audit for FY2024.

Additionally, P. Mirante reported on the financial performance, with revenues and expenses tracking as expected. The focus remained on maintaining reserves and managing long-term sustainability. The investment strategy was conservative and aligned with the reserve building goal. Internal Controls Plan have been revised and submitted to Finance Committee, emphasizing financial accountability, cyber risk, and procedural safeguards. The next step was to look into investment performance and long-term financial planning.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

L. Gordy introduced Nell McCabe, Associate Professor of English who shared her experience recent sabbatical, during which she worked on a speculative fiction novel about commercialized time travel. N. McCabe noted that although she didn't complete her initial goal of writing a full draft, she made significant progress and reaffirmed her commitment to creative writing. Nell read an excerpt from her work-in-progress, which explores themes of uncertainty, truth, and personal impact in a world where time travel is possible. She also discusses how this creative process has enhanced her teaching of creative writing, helping her

guide students in finding their own writing processes and understanding the challenges of invention, drafting, and revision.

Klepetar introduced a presentation on enrollment and student success strategies, focusing on an approach to enrolling and retaining students. M. Lussier discussed the impact of the free community college programs on application numbers, which have seen an increase. L. Dister presented enrollment data showing at 28% increase in headcount and 29% increase in credits for spring 2025 compared to the previous year. College has introduced Burke Bot, an AI ChatBot that provides 24/7 support to students and helps with retention efforts by addressing academic, financial, wellness and engagement concerns.

Powers discussed the effectiveness of using the Burke Bot to gather student feedback and support. They are finding it has allowed students to share experiences more openly than with human staff members. The tool provides a convenient and non-judgmental platform for students to seek and express thoughts. It was noted that AI tool is more engaging than traditional surveys and show a higher response rate. The tool has been valuable to their support systems, providing immediate resources and as needed connections to real people for students.

FOUNDATION BOARD REPORT

No Report

STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT

Lindemann noted that the Student Government Association (SGA) recent activities, such as Pizza with the President, and Fresh Check Day. Additionally, seeing new members join and shared feedback on how the board can potentially assist SGA.

ALUMNI TRUSTEE REPORT

M. Myers reported this week Mary Budnz joined the staff as Alumni Relations & Philanthropy Manager and look forward to working with her. The association will have an informational table at 40 Under Forty.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Student Success Committee: M. Myers reported a successful Scholar’s Day and at the last meeting received updates on Achieving the Dream (ATD), the upcoming Child Watch Program and early college application.

Governance and Nominating Executive: D. Gonzalez noted that M. Rivers Murphy has been reappointed for a full five-year term. No further information from PENC currently.

Executive Committee: J. Bowen noted that Chairs await communication from Commissioner on review process.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

B. Dolan presented personnel actions for the period of December 3, 2024, to March 24, 2025 (attached).

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

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57pm with motion by M. Myers and seconded by C. Zaffanella, via a roll call it VOTED unanimously. The next regular scheduled meeting will be held on April 29, 2025.

DATE:

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Seely

Approved:

Julie Bowen, Board Chair