

BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Board of Trustees

Board Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 27, 2025

1. Call to Order

The four hundred and nineteenth meeting of the Bristol Community College Board of Trustees was held on Monday, January 27, 2025. The meeting was held in person on the college's Fall River campus located at 777 Elsbree Street, Fall River, MA, in the Board of Trustees Conference Room (D-209).

Chair Medeiros called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

Board Members present: Joan Medeiros, Chair of the Board; Jeffrey Karam, Vice-Chair; Lynn Motta, Secretary; Renee Clark; Pamela Gauvin; Maria Gonzalez (virtual); Silvia Jones (virtual); Todd McGhee (virtual); and John Morris

Board Members absent: Joseph Ferreira

Others present: Steve Kenyon, Interim President; Sedgwick Harris, President (virtual); Lucinda Poudrier-Aaronson, Board Liaison; Joyce Brennan; Emmanuel Echevarria; Andrew Fisher; April Lynch; Kate O'Hara; Jo Ann Pelletier; Judi Urquhart; Ren Deysher Fernandez; Joe DiMaria; Christine Hubbard; Liz McCarthy; Vivien Ojadi; and Helen Quinn Pasin

<Trustee Clark stepped out before the board meeting was called to order>

2. Chair's Remarks

Chair Medeiros announced we have several Trustees participating remotely; therefore, she asked Board Liaison Poudrier-Aaronson to begin with roll call attendance.

Renee Clark	Present (stepped out)
Joseph Ferreira	Absent
Pamela Gauvin	Present
Maria Gonzalez	Present (virtual)
Silvia Jones (Student Trustee)	Present (virtual)
Jeffrey Karam	Present
Todd McGhee	Present (virtual)
John Morris (Alumni Trustee)	Present
Lynn Motta	Present
Chair Joan Medeiros	Present

Chair Medeiros proceeded by sharing we also have a special guest joining us for the board meeting today virtually. She welcomed Bristol’s newly appointed President, Dr. Sedgwick Harris, and invited him to say a few words. Dr. Harris thanked the Board of Trustees for the opportunity to serve as Bristol’s next president and shared he was excited to formally begin in the role in early March. He also shared the next board meeting was scheduled on the best day ever (February 24th) as it was his birthday, and also thanked Steve Kenyon for stepping up to serve as the Interim President until his arrival.

Chair Medeiros thanked Dr. Harris and shared she would also like to welcome our newest Trustee, Maria Gonzalez. Trustee Gonzalez was recently appointed and sworn in as a member of the Bristol Community College Board of Trustees. She joins us today for her first board meeting. Maria is the Founder and Managing Principal at M&A Supplier Diversity Consultants. She earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from the University of Massachusetts Boston and her master's degree in criminal justice from Boston University. Chair Medeiros also shared that Trustee Gonzalez is a trailblazer in the field of supplier diversity with more than 20 years of public sector experience, and serves her community as a Certified SCORE Business Counselor, Vice Chair of the Taunton Area Chamber of Commerce and is an active contributor to the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School Advisory Committee. Trustee Gonzalez resides in Taunton, Massachusetts.

Chair Medeiros asked Trustee Gonzalez if there was anything she would like to add or share with the board. Trustee Gonzalez thanked Chair Medeiros for the warm welcome and stated she was excited to be appointed and looking forward to serving on Bristol’s Board of Trustees.

Chair Medeiros stated that we hope to have the final word on the appointment and swearing in of our other vacant Trustee position in the next few days, and would let the Trustees know as soon as we know. She shared with all that a current Trustee directory was in their materials today including preferred contact information and appointment terms. She asked Trustees to let Lucinda know if anything needs to be updated.

3. **Consent Agenda**

- Consideration of Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting for December 2, 2024
- Consideration Minutes of Joint Board Meeting for December 2, 2024
- Consideration of Minutes of Board of Trustees Special Meeting for December 13, 2024
- Report of Personnel Actions December 2024 & January 2025
- Report of Workforce and Community Education/Contracts December 2024 & January 2025

Chair Medeiros stated she hoped that Trustees have had the opportunity to our review consent agenda items posted electronically and also within your materials, today. She listed the Consent Agenda items, and asked Trustees if there were any questions or items that need to be moved for discussion.

Hearing none, Chair Medeiros stated she was seeking a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. A motion to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented was made by Trustee Motta and seconded by Trustee McGhee.

Chair Medeiros asked Board Liaison Poudrier-Aaronson to proceed with a roll call vote on the motion. All those in favor of approving the Consent Agenda please respond YES. Anyone opposed, please respond NO.

Renee Clark	(stepped out)
Joseph Ferreira	Absent
Pamela Gauvin	YES

Maria Gonzalez	YES
Silvia Jones (Student Trustee)	YES
Jeffrey Karam	YES
Todd McGhee	YES
John Morris (Alumni Trustee)	YES
Lynn Motta	YES
Chair Joan Medeiros	YES

Chair Medeiros stated the motion to approve Consent Agenda items as presented was approved.

Next, I invite Interim President, Steve Kenyon, to provide the President’s report.

4. **President’s Report**

- Review President’s Key Goals 2024-2025
- Introduction of Interim Deans, *Andrew Fisher*, Vice President Academic Affairs
 - Ray Franke, Interim Dean New Bedford Location
 - Vivien Ojadi, Interim Dean Arts & Humanities
- Community Partnership Highlight: **Dignity Matters**, *Ren Deysber Fernandez*, Special Programs Coordinator for Wrap Around Services and *Helen Quinn Pasin*, Special Programs Coordinator for Women, Gender & Sexuality
- Trustee Talking Points
 - Spring 2025 Enrollment – *Kate O’Hara*, Vice President Student Services & Enrollment Management
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI) degree approval – *Andrew Fisher*, Vice President Academic Affairs
 - Clothing Closet – *Elizabeth McCarthy*, Coordinator Career Planning & Placement
- Financial Update – *Steve Kenyon*, Vice President, Administration and Finance

Interim President Kenyon shared the President’s Leadership Team (PLT) would review and provide updates to the President’s 2024-2025 Key Goals in a slightly different format. He referred Trustees to the Key Goals document in their materials and shared he would ask individual PLT to provide the January 2025 updates in the order presented within the document so Trustees could easily follow along.

Interim President Kenyon began by calling upon Chief Information Officer, Jo-Ann Pelletier to begin:

Strategy 1, Goal 1.1 (Jo-Ann Pelletier)

As part of the Data Governance Team’s work on advancing data literacy at Bristol, the Strategic Analytics team has developed three online workshops focused on helping academic leaders with their program review activities. The training program is available within the college’s LinkedIn Learning platform. Additional data content within the college’s secure portal has also been updated to reflect the most recent data available.

Strategy 1, Goal 2.1 (Kate O’Hara)

The early college and dual credit applications were launched in Slate to allow for better data collection and service to students. This will also streamline the enrollment process for dual credit students who choose to matriculate to Bristol after high school.

Strategy 1, Goal 3.3 (April Lynch)

An Assessment Plan has been developed and is being implemented starting in January 2025 to measure the impact of our PD initiatives.

Strategy 2, Goal 1.1 (Kate O'Hara)

A new advising model and mandatory new student orientation were put into place in advance of the Fall 2024 semester. A new early alert system is being rolled out in January 2025 for the spring semester using Navigate. Staff and faculty can submit early alerts and progress reports that will go directly to a student's advisor for support.

Strategy 2, Goal 2.1 (Jo-Ann Pelletier)

The CCSSE survey, which provides students with the opportunity to provide feedback on their level of engagement and satisfaction with Bristol, will be administered beginning on March 25. We are in the throes of developing 15 custom questions that will nicely complement the standard questions.

Strategy 2, Goal 2.3 (Judi Urquhart)

We hosted our first Diversity and Inclusion Alumni Event on January 23, 2025, at the home of Bristol Alumni Bruce and Cynthia Rose

Strategy 3, Goal 1.1 (Emmanuel Echevarria)

After the close of 2024, employee exit data as well as satisfaction surveys for newly onboarded employees will be analyzed as part of developing a framework for our EVP statement that consists of answers to the following questions:

- What attracts new employees to work at Bristol?
- What keeps employees working at Bristol?
- What drives Bristol employees?
- How has working at Bristol contributed to the success of employees?

The EVP framework will be developed by March 2025, and it will be used as part of the Employee Success initiative promotion to recruit, retain, and promote the work of Bristol Employees.

Strategy 3, Goal 1.2 (Emmanuel Echevarria)

Calls for nominations for the college's employee appreciation and recognition went out in January. The college is hosting its first employee appreciation event in March, and award winners will be featured, highlighting their contributions to student success and in furthering Bristol's mission and vision.

Strategy 3, Goal 1.4 (April Lynch)

A series of trainings are planned for the Spring semester and February PD Day that include Trauma Informed Practices, LGTBQ Workshops, DEI Training and Accessibility Academy. Trauma Informed Practices was launched in late Fall with 26 participants with more planned in the spring. An assessment measuring Pre and Post perceptions and attitudes is being implemented to measure the impact.

Strategy 3, Goal 1.5 (Emmanuel Echevarria)

Several process improvements in our talent sourcing, recruitment, and acquisition processes are showing an upward increase in applicant diversity (15% increase over 2023), and a trending increase in the diversity of new hires over the last 4 years. The college has hired a new Title IX/Affirmative Action Officer, who will be working with Human Resources on updating the college Affirmative Action Strategy, so it is more inclusive of student outcomes.

Strategy 3, Goal 2.2 (April Lynch)

Starting in January, "Be Curious. Stay Curious, Be Part of Bristol Curiosity." Content will be incorporated into Bristol Weekly with recommendations from Discovery Day evaluation question "How can we promote continuous improvement practices?" Content will include short articles, videos, and drop-in sessions with CTL on specific continuous improvement principles.

Strategy 3, Goal 3.2 (Kate O'Hara)

The SAP Policy was approved by the President's Leadership Team in December. Members of the SSEM Leadership Team are actively working on the operational changes that must take place in our student information system to support moving SAP to a Title IV policy that is separate from academic standing. Beginning with the end of the fall semester, students are evaluated for academic standing separately from financial aid eligibility.

Strategy 4, Goal 2.1 (Judi Urquhart)

Several funding opportunities specific to Adult Ed and specifically English for Speakers of Other Language have been identified, and we will be submitting several grant applications over the next few weeks.

<Trustee Clark returned to the board meeting at 4:20 p.m.>

Interim President Kenyon thanked members of the PLT for providing key goal updates. He then invited Chief Academic Officer, Andrew Fisher, to introduce our two new Interim Deans.

CAO Fisher introduced Vivien Ojadi as the Interim Dean for Arts & Humanities, and also said while he was unable to be here today (sick child) he also wanted to announce that Ray Franke as the Interim Dean in the college's New Bedford location.

Interim President Kenyon thanked CAO Fisher for making those introductions and then invited Ren Deysher Fernandez, our Special Programs Coordinator for Wrap Around Services and Helen Quinn Pasin, our Special Programs Coordinator for Women, Gender & Sexuality to highlight two important Community Partnerships. Ren highlighted "Dignity Matters" as a college partnership that began in Fall 2020 dedicated to addressing period poverty. Helen highlighted "Massachusetts Menstrual Equity Coalition" which is a new partnership which provide free menstrual cups, discs, period underwear, pads, tampons, and educational programs on menstrual equity to the college beginning at the end of the month.

Interim President Kenyon thanked Ren and Helen. He then shared with the Trustees that we would share three Trustee talking points beginning with Kate O'Hara and the Spring 2025 enrollment.

Vice President O'Hara shared she was happy to report that as of this morning, our enrollment for spring is up 29% in both headcount and registered credits compared to one year ago. We have seen double-digit increases in enrollment across all four campuses and online. She was also excited to report that our total headcount has surpassed 7000 students, a level we have not seen since 2018. She reminded Trustees that our official census enrollment for the fall semester was 6950, which means our spring enrollment is now higher than the fall.

VP O'Hara noted free community college has certainly played an important role in these numbers. To-date, she shared we have awarded over \$3.5M in MassReconnect funding, over \$6M in MassEducate, and more than \$550K in MassGrant Plus funding, for a grand total of \$10.29M directly into the hands of students as a part of free community college.

However, she also noted there are many other factors that have contributed to Bristol's strong enrollment numbers including:

- Updates to the admissions application to shorten time to completion and a revamped Open House program contributed to a 36.5% increase in applications.
- Adding staff within the admissions operations team contributed to a 41% increase in admitted students, even with the enhanced scrutiny and review for fraudulent applications.
- 56% of admitted students and 100% of registered new students have completed new student orientation, ensuring they are set up for a successful first advising appointment and prepared for the start of the semester.
- Academic advisors have held over 12,000 appointments this fall with over 6600 distinct students. In the spring registration period alone, they held over 4800 appointments with 4400 students. This contributed to earlier registrations versus the last-minute rush we are accustomed to seeing in the spring.
- The % of students who were dismissed for academic reasons after having a warning semester decreased from 77% to 56% and 247 students returned to good standing after working with their advisors to create comprehensive academic plans.
- And the % of students who were dropped for nonpayment decreased from 6.7% to 4.4% thanks to the good work and outreach from Student Accounts and Financial Aid.

VP O'Hara stated she shared this data so Trustees can see that the foundation we have built over the last three years is having a tremendous impact on our ability to enroll our students and, more importantly, to set them up for success. She noted with summer and fall registration quickly approaching, the college is looking forward to continued success!

Interim President Kenyon thanked VP O'Hara for this great news, and invited Chief Academic Officer, Andrew Fisher to provide an update to his previous presentation related to offering a degree in Artificial Intelligence (AI).

VP Fisher shared that the AI degree proposal that was presented to the Trustees in the fall was approved by the Department of Higher Education; Bristol Community College will be the first community college in Massachusetts to offer a degree in Artificial Intelligence as soon as Fall 2025.

Interim President Kenyon thanked VP Fisher and asked Elizabeth McCarthy, Coordinator Career Planning & Placement, to provide the Trustees with the third talking point.

Coordinator McCarthy shared that the Career Planning & Placement had recently launch new Clothing Closet. Located in the Women's Center located in the E-Building on the Fall River campus the Clothing Closet was intended to provide students interviewing for jobs and internships with professional clothing to build their confidence and preparedness as they approach the employment search process. The Clothing Closet has been created with donations of gently used professional clothing and accessories from faculty, staff and community members including recent donations from President Douglas and Representative Carole Fiola to name just a few. Coordinator McCarthy shared the response for donations has been amazing and they would continue to facilitate this initiative with student's participation.

Interim President Kenyon thanked Coordinator McCarthy for her leadership in making the Clothing Closet a reality. He shared he was up next to provide the college's financial update.

He provided the following details:

- The College is doing very well compared to our budget for FY25. With enrollment expected to be 30% over what we budgeted. There are obviously costs associated with that revenue. Mostly instruction costs but also support services. We are still estimating a surplus of approximately \$2M this year and a positive cash flow.
- The Community College system implemented raises for the MCCC and AFSCME unions along with administrators that will be in their pay advice this week. We just received partial funding from the state last week for just over \$1M which was to fund the union raises. It was a little over \$800K short of what it cost us. We were informed on Friday that those funds will be coming in the next few weeks.
- We are also owed \$982K and climbing from the Department of Higher Ed for MassReconnect, MassEducate and Mass Grant Plus. We were very strongly encouraged to over award which we did to make sure the Free CC program was a success and to eliminate any bad publicity. I am cautiously optimistic we will be made whole and that is a priority for me working with DHE.
- Our A133 audit of Federal funds is nearing completion. We will share the report with the Finance Committee when it is available.
- The state auditors have finally left campus. We know there were no findings regarding our \$36M of ARPA funds after two full-time auditors spent over a year reviewing the transactions. There were also no issues found in their review of how we handle settlements and judgements. We do know they found that some employees did not complete their online security training on time. Jo-Ann Pelletier is working very hard to get everyone to complete their training and we are at about 85% complete. Once we have a draft report we can share those details with you. I want to keep this on your radar as there have been several negative media articles about how schools have performed that have come out of the Auditors Office.
- We are preparing our FY26 budget and using a 6% enrollment growth figure. That is a number Vice President O'Hara, and I are comfortable with currently. It is very hard to say in this unique environment of free community college what that growth will be. We do know that the 20-30% growth we have seen is not likely to continue. We are also including 10-12 new positions in the FY26 budget. Most of those positions will be in instruction and student support. We have meetings scheduled this week to work out the details of what those positions will be.
- For Fiscal Year 26 the Board will be limited by statute that was part of the language to create free community college to what you can increase fees. That limit will be \$5 per credit which will very likely be our recommendation to you. That is a 2.06% increase over the current rate. You will receive a lot more on the budget in our next couple of meetings.

- The Governor released her FY26 Budget last week. The largest item impacting Bristol is our state appropriation. She has recommended a 6% increase over this year which would put us at \$33M for next year. The entirety of the \$2M increase is to support the contractual increases for FY25 and FY26. There were continued reductions to several line items including the elimination of the funding formula. This trend of reductions is a way to offset the cost of Free Community College. There was also no increase to the Free CC line item and as I noted earlier, we and the other schools are already underfunded for this program. I am optimistic that some of those reductions will be restored when the House releases their budget.

Chair Medeiros thanked Interim President Kenyon, all the members of the Leadership Team, and the faculty and staff present for their presentations and insights.

Next, Chair Medeiros invited Dean Christine Hubbard to provide an update related to the college's partnership with the Massachusetts Virtual High School.

5. **Massachusetts Virtual High School Partnership** – *Christine Hubbard*, Executive Dean, Academic Affairs

Dean Hubbard began her presentation sharing that Bristol Community College has been invited to partner with the Resiliency Foundation to offer a Commonwealth-wide online, wall-to-wall Early College High School. She shared how this partnership would advance the strategies in Bristol's strategic plan including Academic Innovation and Partnerships. The partnership would leverage the college's strengths including building on proven success of the Bristol/Argosy wall-to-wall early college model, and expands an already robust online program at Bristol.

Dean Hubbard described how this partnership supports educational initiative in Massachusetts and simultaneously meets community needs because the existing Commonwealth Virtual Charter School demand exceeds capacity and there is no statewide online early college program. She shared Bristol Community College has been invited to lead and the college has the capacity to serve.

She shared that the Resiliency Foundation is a trusted partner with proven success with the New Heights Charter School. The the development of quality curricula and wrap-around services have contributed to that success. Dean Hubbard also noted that the Resiliency Foundation's founder has a connection to Bristol County.

She shared this partnership would significantly impact Bristol's enrollment. Dean Hubbard asked if there were any questions she could answer about this important partnership. There were no questions.

Chair Medeiros thanked Dean Hubbard for the presentation.

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

Chair Medeiros shared that each year the board is asked to review and assess its collective work. She stated that after tonight's meeting, Board Liaison Poudrier-Aaronson will send a request to Trustees asking you to complete the Annual Board Self-Assessment. A hardcopy of the tool is in your board material today for your review.

Chair Medeiros asked Trustees to complete the self-assessment tool before the next board meeting on February 24, 2025. She shared that Trustees may complete the assessment electronically or using the hardcopy; please send to Board Liaison Poudrier-Aaronson and she will compile collective responses for our Spring half day retreat scheduled for March 19th.

Chair Medeiros asked if there were any questions or thoughts related to the Annual Board Self-Assessment process. Hearing none, she invited Trustee Motta to provide a report of the Finance/Budget Committee.

7. **Report of the Finance/Budget Committee** – *Trustee Lynn Motta*

Trustee Motta provided the following report:

- The Finance/Budget Committee met on December 2 for our quarterly meeting. We reviewed the Annual Trust Fund report that is required by state statute. It is a detailed report of the College's trust fund activity for the fiscal year. Trust funds are primarily tuition and fees but also include revenue from noncredit instruction, commissions from the bookstore operation along with cafeteria and vending.
- There were no major variances in the year-to-year comparison. There was a notable increase in cash which was reflected in the audited financial statements approved last month.
- Next the Committee reviewed the First Quarter Trust Fund report for fiscal year 2025. Being the first quarter there were no budget to actual variances to discuss.
- We discussed several of the larger transactions including over \$400K for computer replacements.
- We then reviewed a report on the college's investments. CD rates declined a bit with some renewals. For our Fidelity investment account, we budget \$400K each year for unrealized gains and we were up more than \$1M after the first quarter.
- The Committee then spent time reviewing the quarterly income statement. With our strong enrollment we are over budget for tuition and fees for summer fall and expect the same for spring. Increased enrollment created a situation where we are over budget in adjunct salaries by approximately \$3M for the year. That expense was offset by the increase in revenue.
- Some concerns from a cash flow perspective are when will we receive the excess funding for awarding MassEducate and MassReconnect beyond our allocation.
- We are also waiting for a supplemental budget from the state to fund contractual increases in January. That amount is about \$1M.
- The remainder of the Committee meeting was a presentation of the audited financial statements by Withum. The full board subsequently received a shorter version of the report.

Trustee Motta asked if there were any questions or discussion. Hearing none, Chair Medeiros thanked Trustee Motta and invited Trustee Jones to provide the Student Trustee report.

8. **Student Trustee Report** – *Trustee Silvia Jones*

Trustee Jones reported that Bristol's Student Veterans of America chapter was named as a finalist for Chapter of the Year at the 2025 national conference. She shared the Bristol SVA chapter received the 2025 Bronze Presidential Service Award for 194 hours of volunteer service. She also stated the SVA is partnering with the Bristol Gaming Club, the City of Fall River Veterans Service Office and Frost Call to host a gaming event with a mental health focus on February 8 and 9. This event will include a panel of mental health professionals for a Q&A on February 8th to provide an important touch point, a sense of community purpose and provide suicide awareness resources.

Trustee Morris added that the Bristol SVA chapter was a very competitive chapter and while they didn't win the Chapter of the Year he wanted the Trustees to know that the Bristol nomination was extremely competitive even against some much larger and prestigious institutions' chapters including both two- and four-year schools. He noted Bristol Community College should be very proud.

At the conclusion of Trustee Jones' report, Chair Medeiros offered her congratulations to SVA and thanks to Trustee Jones for her report.

9. **Old Business**

Next, as a part of old business Chair Medeiros reminded Trustees of the upcoming meeting dates for 2024-2025 including the half day spring retreat on Wednesday, March 19, 2025. She shared the meeting dates are in your material today as well as available electronically in the Trustees shared files. She also shared these dates have been sent to Trustees as Outlook calendar invites as well.

Chair Medeiros asked if there were any additional old business items to consider. Hearing none, she invited any items for the board’s consideration as new business today.

10. New Business

Together, Chair Medeiros and Board Liaison Poudrier-Aaronson noted that in the Trustee materials today there were several items of Trustee interest to review including:

- Bristol’s “Together We Soar” Report
- The 2024 Bristol Fact Sheet
- Bristol’s “Your Dreams Within Reach” college promotional admissions & enrollment marketing material
- A copy of the final NECHE accreditation letter
- Samples of immigration cards made available for students if detained translated in two different languages (Spanish and Khmer) in addition to English.
- Two board education articles – “The Role of College and University Boards in Turbulent Times” and “What Trump’s Victory Means for Higher Ed”

11. Adjournment

Chair Medeiros invited any final thoughts, comments, or questions for Board consideration.

Hearing none, Chair Medeiros called for a motion to adjourn this board meeting at 4:52 p.m. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Gauvin and seconded by Trustee McGhee.

Chair Medeiros asked Board Liaison Poudrier-Aaronson to proceed with a roll call vote on the motion. She asked all those in favor of adjourning the meeting please respond YES. Anyone opposed, please respond NO.

Renee Clark	YES
Joseph Ferreira	Absent
Pamela Gauvin	YES
Maria Gonzalez	YES
Silvia Jones (Student Trustee)	YES
Jeffrey Karam	YES
Todd McGhee	YES
John Morris (Alumni Trustee)	YES
Lynn Motta	YES
Chair Joan Medeiros	YES

The motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:52 p.m. was approved unanimously.