

BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Board of Trustees

MINI RETREAT MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

The Bristol Community College Board of Trustees Mini Retreat was held on Wednesday, March, 18, 2026, in person at Bristol Community College's Fall River campus located at 777 Elsbree Street, Fall River, Massachusetts, in the John J. Sbrega Health & Science Building (J-211, Conference Room).

The Mini Retreat began with lunch and gathering time from Noon until 12:45 p.m.

Trustees present: Joan Medeiros, Chair; Todd McGhee, Vice Chair; Lynn Motta, Secretary; Renee Clark; Pam Gauvin; Maria Gonzalez; Jeffrey Karam; Tony Lima; Steve Martins; and Jamie Wasilowski

Trustees absent: John Morris

Other Attendees: Sedgwick Harris, President; Lucinda Poudrier-Aaronson, Board Liaison; April Lynch, Chief Strategy Officer and primary mini-retreat facilitator; Andrew Fisher; Brianne McDonough; and Judi Urquhart

After lunch (12:45 p.m.), CSO Lynch began with a group warm-up designed for to prepare to immerse in afternoon discussions related to the Board's strategic planning alignment. Trustees were asked to reflect on college initiatives that have positioned Bristol Community College as a center of excellence in the region.

April Lynch thanked the Trustees for participating in the warm-up and shared they would spend the next 30 minutes on three quick, but timely, updates:

1. College Report Card Wrap-Up (April Lynch)
2. NECHE Letter & College Response (Andrew Fisher)
3. Congressionally Directed Spending (Judi Urquhart and Brianne McDonough)

Trustees were provided with a printed copy of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Report Card. CSO Lynch reviewed some of the highlights and key takeaways that would likely impact the new 2025-2030 strategic plan.

Vice President Fisher then provided an update related to the NECHE letter and the college's response. The group discussed the need for accreditation bodies such as NECHE to continue to be responsive to rapidly changing federal guidelines (Department of Education).

CAO Urquhart and Interim VP McDonough provided details related to six submissions related to Congressionally Directed Spending for:

1. Workforce Training Center (\$2M)
2. Marine Robotics and Autonomous Systems (\$2.2M)
3. AI Innovation Lab (\$1M)
4. Childcare Support for Students (\$250K)
5. Occupational Safety (\$2M)
6. Fall River Campus Security (\$750K)

CAO Urquhart noted that "Congressionally Directed Spending" was the updated language being used which formerly may have been known as federal earmarks.

It was noted that these six submissions total over \$8M in requests. The board will be kept informed about which, if any, might be awarded. Trustees were told that Congressman Auchincloss, Senator Rodrigues, Rep. Fiola, Rep. Siliva, and Rep. Ouellette have provided letters of support for these initiatives so as they were out in the community, please thank them for their supportive efforts for related to

VP Fisher, Interim VP McDonough, and CSO Lynch presented and facilitated discussion related to regional economic insights and strategic alignment. Trustees were provided pre-readings and a podcast before the retreat.

Through the triangulation of various data sources including Hanover's Economic Impact Study, Professor Michael Goodman's Regional Economy Report, and Bristol's Strategic Plan the team facilitated discussion related to alignment of the college's academic programs.

Four themes were presented and discussed:

1. Education and Workforce Development as Primary Economic Driver
2. Persistent Economic & Income Gaps Reinforce Bristol's Equity Agenda
3. Regional (Multi-State) Labor Market Requires Broader Alignment
4. Demographic Change – Adult Learners central to growth
5. Housing & Infrastructure Constraints Increase the value of Place-Based Learning

The key take-aways outlined included:

- The region's economic challenges: low attainment, workforce shortages, demographic shifts, and infrastructure pressure, increase rather than diminish Bristol's strategic importance.
- The data alignment strongly supports a strategy focused on:
 - Workforce-aligned growth
 - Equity and economic mobility
 - Regional (not just local) labor market relevance
 - Expanded non-credit and applied learning pathways

Based on the information provided together with Trustees' knowledge of Bristol and the region, they discussed the following questions:

1. What needs Bristol is well positioned to meet?
2. What needs Bristol is underserving?
3. Which needs Bristol is not addressing at all?

Answers to these questions and the discussion focused on alignment with the college's strategic plan, and the current and future academic program needs.

Before wrapping up the mini-retreat, Chair Medeiros directed Trustees to the summative results of the 2026 Board Self-Assessment. She asked everyone to take a few moments to review.

Chair Medeiros facilitated this discussion including the most important board education topics identified by Trustees.

Suggested board activity and board education topics included:

- review of the college's educational programs
- on-going community relationships and partnerships
- continued data provided related to institutional performance
- increase student participation and presentations in board meeting
- provide an annual year in review
- possibility of changes in free community college and the impacts of any changes
- more Trustee interaction with national insight (ACCT)

Chair Medeiros thanked Trustees for completing the annual board self-assessment and reminded them this assessment provides an opportunity to develop and present material to the board that provide informed and on-going board education topics.

Chair Medeiros stated that President Harris had a few closing thoughts.

President Harris thanked the Trustees for their time and participation today. He also shared it has been a phenomenal year and thanked the Trustees for their support throughout the year. He also noted appreciation for the board's focus on the college's sole purpose of supporting students.

President Harris noted that it would be important to continue to find new and innovative ways to orient and on-board new Trustees. He will encourage the Board's commitment to best practice and insights garnered from Trustees' involvement in ACCT. He discussed his hope for 1-2 Trustees' participation in the National Legislative Summit (NLS) in February 2027.

President Harris thanked Trustees for the opportunity to serve as Bristol's fifth president. He also thanked Trustees for being college advocates and influencers in our communities.

Chair Medeiros also thanked the Trustees for their time today as well as their commitment throughout the academic year.

The Mini-Retreat ended at approximately 3:45 p.m.