

The 280th meeting of the Board of Trustees
Mount Wachusett Community College
Thursday, April 10, 2025
Murphy Room
Meeting Minutes

A. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairperson Freda called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM.

B. **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Claire Freda, Irene Hernandez, Tricia Pistone, Lawrence NFOR, Patti Bergstrom, Denise Gosselin, and Oren Cohen

Present via Zoom: Doug Petersen and Sharmese Gunn

Unable to attend: Rick Walton

Also, present from the College: President Vander Hooven, many members of the Leadership Team, several faculty, and Executive Assistant Laurie Snoonian

Many others joined via live stream on Vimeo.

C. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – February 20, 2025

- Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the minutes of February 20, 2025. Before the motion to approve, Trustee Hernandez raised a question regarding information on affirmative action discussed in the last meeting. President Vander Hooven responded that a full presentation with updates, demographic data, and policy implementation will be prepared for the June board meeting. Ms. Bergstrom made a motion to approve, and Mr. Cohen seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

D. **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT** – Claire Freda

- a. Chairperson Freda mentioned the creation of a formal evaluation committee, as the prior evaluation for the president lacked structure due to timing. Claire named Trustee Hernandez to chair the committee, Trustee Nfor (former employee) and Trustee Bergstrom (business community representative) to also serve. The goal is to use higher education templates from other colleges to create a smooth and effective process. Trustee Pistone asked whether other trustees could join, but Claire stated she is limiting it to the selected individuals.
- b. A bylaws committee is also being formed. Trustee Gosselin was appointed the chair and Trustee Petersen was also asked to join. Trustee Walton will also be asked later. The purpose of forming this committee is to review and update bylaws that have not been updated since 2013.
- c. The previous plan to hold a joint meeting with the Foundation had to be revised due to the busy next couple of months. The new proposal is to have a joint meeting at the Leominster campus in June. An agenda and details need to be confirmed.
- d. The question was raised about the fair share funding and whether the deadline of June 25 could be affected by administrative cuts. The president assured that the funding is currently secure.
- e. Claire congratulated Kim Shea on being appointed to the board at Heywood Hospital.
- f. Claire congratulated Dr. Judy Fredette on all her accomplishments.

E. PRESIDENT’S REPORT – President Vander Hooven

- a. Jim mentioned that Professor Nick Cochrane recently had a team of 3 students that competed in the Micheal Smith Business Ethnicity Case Competition. They advanced to the final round that beat out 16 other colleges and universities and finished 4th overall. They were the only community college selected to complete. The topic was social media addiction, and they conducted their own research, presented their findings and even gave recommendations. The president stated this was incredibly awesome and something to be very proud of. Claire mentioned it would be nice to have these 3 students at the next BOT meeting to be recognized.
- b. Jim congratulated our new chemistry faculty member, Dr. Anitha Alanthadka who was recently published in a scientific journal.
- c. The college had an open house with 260 guests. We also had a successful career fair with at least 26 employers. Jim thanked Kiel Szivos and the rest of the staff that helped make it a success.
- d. Credits are up 56% from the summer term last year.
- e. The college is in full planning mode for all the end of year activities. PTK has 80 inductees (student honor society).
- f. Jim thanked the staff for always having a positive attitude.

F. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM – Tiffany Paker – MWCC BOT Dashboard and DHE Performance Measurement Reporting System (see attached documents)

- a. Tiffany provided the board with an update on the DHE Performance Measurement Reporting System (PMRS) and the internal dashboard tools. These tools serve as internal resources to help trustees and leadership better understand the college’s performance.
- b. The PMRS is specifically designed to support constructive collaboration among the Department of Higher Education, Board of Higher Education, campus leadership, trustees and legislators. It provides a foundation for conversations around accountability and assessment within our community college.
- c. The PMRS also plays a vital role in both presidential evaluations and strategic planning.

G. MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE –

- a. The college is currently finalizing its bridge strategic plan and beginning initial work on the next full five-year strategic plan.
- b. The college remains firmly committed to its mission: supporting student success, especially for students of color and underserved groups.
- c. Despite challenges, the college continues to prioritize communication, student support, and equity.
- d. Recent meetings with state and federal leaders, including Senator Warren, highlighted national concerns around funding, endowment taxes, and Pell Grant administration. It does appear that community colleges are not the central focus.
- e. Internally, faculty and staff have consistently stayed focused on students, regardless of broader social or political disruptions. This focus is reflected in enrollment growth, increased engagement at events and the college’s strong reputation in the community.

H. ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS OF THE DAY

- a. **AD 1325 – Second Quarter Trust Report FY25** – Finance and Audit committee earlier in the week decided to postpone this vote. This will be moved to a future meeting.
 - b. **AD 1326 – Approval of Incentive Program Guidelines and AD 1327 – Approval of Endowment Match**– Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the incentive program guidelines and the endowment match. Mr. Cohen made a motion to approve and seconded by Ms. Hernandez. All approved. Motion carried.
 - c. **AD 1328 – Approval of Tenure Recommendations** – Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the tenure recommendations. Ms. Gosselin made a motion to approve and seconded by Ms. Hernandez. All approved. Motion carried.
 - d. **AD 1329 – Approval of Rank Change Recommendations** – Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the rank change recommendations. Ms. Gosselin made a motion to approve and seconded by Mr. Cohen. All approved. Motion carried.
 - e. **AD 1330 – Approval of Emerita Award** – Dean Shea spoke a few words about Ms. Fredette and mentioned how fortunate we have been to have her on our staff. Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the emerita award. Ms. Hernandez made a motion to approve the emerita award and seconded by Ms. Gosselin. All approved. Motion carried.
 - f. **AD 1331 – Approval of Single Audit** – VP Bry mentioned there were 2 program findings, but we are now on track with our goals. Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the single audit. Ms. Hernandez made a motion to approve the single audit and seconded by Mr. Cohen. All approved. Motion carried.
 - g. **AD 1332 – Approval of Proposed Fees** – On average it is a 1.9% increase in fees. These fees were previously discussed at the Finance and Audit meeting earlier in the week. Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the proposed fees. Ms. Hernandez made a motion to approve the proposed fees and seconded by Mr. NFOR. All approved. Motion carried.
 - h. **AD 1333 – Board Vote to Identify Vice Chair** – This is necessary to protect the board and keep business moving if the board chair was unable to participate. Chairperson Freda opened the nominations. Trustee Hernandez nominated Trustee Gosselin. After hearing no other nominations, the chair made a motion to close the nominations. Denise agreed to take on the role and chairperson Freda made a motion to accept Ms. Gosselin as the Vice Chair. All approved. Motion Carried.
- I. NEW BUSINESS** - 5 Year Reviews – Each of the below faculty gave a short presentation (attached)
- a. Business (BUS) – Nick Cochrane
 - b. Computer Information Systems (CIS) – Tina Wilson
 - c. Graphic & Interactive Design (GID) – Leslie Cullen
- J. ADJOURNMENT** – Chair Freda asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Bergstrom and seconded by Mr. Cohen. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:38 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Snoonian