

The 283rd Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Mount Wachusett Community College
Thursday, August 21, 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, Patti Bergstrom, Rick Walton, Denise Gosselin, Sharmese Gunn, Tricia Pistone, Rozanna Penney and Beckett Caisse.

Present via Zoom: Doug Petersen and Lawrence NFOR.

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

Many others joined via live stream on Vimeo.

C. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the minutes of June 5, 2025. Ms. Gosselin made a motion to approve, and Ms. Pistone seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

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

- a. Chairperson Freda welcomed Rozanna Penney to the board after a long approval process. Rozanna expressed gratitude and excitement to serve.
- b. Ms. Freda recognized Ann Reynolds for a USA today article highlighting the college and TRIO program. She also recognized Stephanie England for developing the children’s book *Monty on the Mountain* featuring the new mascot.
- c. The first joint meeting of the Board of Trustees and Foundation board will take place on October 1, aimed at improving collaboration.

E. **PRESIDENT’S REPORT** – President Vander Hooven

- a. President Vander Hooven also welcomed Rozanna Penney and acknowledged her leadership at Heywood Healthcare and partnership with the college’s nursing program.
- b. Federal funding remains uncertain, with limited communication. MWCC did secure a 5-year renewal of our TRIO grants.
- c. Federal delays threaten the continuation of our CCAMPIS grant. Ann Reynolds was proactive in approaching the Foundation Board that unanimously pledged to cover the cost of services for 2nd year students if funding is interrupted.
- d. The joint meeting of the boards will be a great opportunity to discuss collaboration and discuss our shared vision
- e. The president did mention that he believes Medicaid funding is the greatest threat to state higher education initiatives like MassReconnect and MassEducate.
- f. The Strategic Bridge Plan is complete and will be presented by Heather Layton at our next meeting.
- g. Enrollment continues to be strong (+23% headcount and +34% credits). Leominster campus enrollment is up 61%.

- h. Jim mentioned the new career program specific guidebooks to help students understand career pathways and workforce outlook. These books are now available in the Admissions office.
- i. Trustee Walton asked what our current student population is compared to 6 years ago. Jim stated it is very close to where we were in 2019. Trustee Freda asked for this information to be reported at a future meeting.

F. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM – Dan Horlander – Presentation/GLBA Update (see attached presentation)

- a. Dan Horlander provided an update on IT security compliance, confirming the college is meeting federal requirements and earned a perfect PCI compliance score. He highlighted staffing growth and improved system backups, ensuring more reliability across IT services. He shared the new IT strategic plan's priorities including expanding training, strengthening reporting and data access, enhancing security policies, and advancing cloud migration. The Banner system migration to the cloud is a major initiative, expected to reduce complexity, eliminate outdated processes, and allow faster more seamless integrations through Ellucian's new marketplace tools.

G. MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE –

- a. Heather Layton will report on the Strategic Bridge plan and operating planning update at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

H. ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS OF THE DAY

- a. **AD 1337 – Approval of Sabbatical Leave** –Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the sabbatical leave for Professor Colleen Thaxton. Ms. Gosselin made a motion to approve and seconded by Mr. Walton. All approved. Motion carried.
- b. **AD 1338– Approval of FY26 Final Budget** – Trustee Pistone reported the budget was balanced despite uncertainties in federal funding. She did note the budget was developed with caution, accounting for possible funding gaps. She also noted the provisional budget was previously approved and the finance and audit committee met earlier in the week and voted to move the final budget for a vote. Chairperson Freda asked for a motion to approve the FY26 final budget. Mr. Walton made a motion to approve and seconded by Ms. Gosselin. All approved. Motion carried.

I. NEW BUSINESS – Updates on Sub-Committees

- a. Trustee Gosselin continues to work on the bylaws with the committee.
- b. Trustee Hernandez is currently leading the development of a survey instrument to support the next evaluation of the President. The goal is to establish a more uniform and consistent approach to gathering feedback by including perspectives from both staff and the broader community.

J. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Freda asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Pistone and seconded by Mr. NFOR. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:07 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Snoonian