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PENNSYLVANIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
June 16, 2026 – 4:30 PM
BOARD ROOM and via Zoom
Minutes

The Board of Trustees of Pennsylvania Highlands Community College held a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, via Zoom teleconferencing, with some members present at the Richland campus in the Holzman Boardroom.

CALL TO ORDER
Dr. Janet Grady, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM. Roll call was taken by Mr. Greg Winger, Secretary and Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and a quorum was established.

TRUSTEES PRESENT
Dr. Jennifer Anderson
Mr. John Augustine
Dr. Kristy Chunta
Dr. Janet Grady
Mr. Joseph Hurd
Ms. Jackie Kulback
Ms. Lladel Lichty
Dr. Jennifer Mitchell
Mr. Greg Winger
Rev. Reginal Floyd
Dr. Leah Spangler
Mr. Carl DeYulis
Ms. Linda Thomson

TRUSTEES ABSENT
Mr. Benjamin Estell
Ms. Carissa Westrick
Mr. Brett Smith

ALSO PRESENT
Dr. Steve Nunez, President
Dr. Sara Conroy, Vice President of Academic Affairs & Student Services
Ms. Susan Fisher, Associate Vice President of Administration
Mr. Omar Strohm, Associate Vice President of Finance
Dr. Barb Zaborowski, Dean of Library Services & Special Projects
Mr. Matthew Hoffman, Chief Information Officer
Mr. Matthew Bodenschatz, Executive Director of Recruiting & Admissions
Ms. Katie Markum, Director of Finance & Accounting
Assistant Professor Mr. Greg Paonessa, Professor Sandy Schrum, and Professor Yvette Madison, Faculty

Ms. Sonya Augustine, Executive Assistant to Administrative Operations, Recorder

PUBLIC COMMENT
None.

GUESTS & SPECIAL RECOGNITION
Dr. Grady welcomed everyone in attendance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. John Augustine, seconded by Ms. Linda Thomson, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the Consent Agenda as presented.

- Approval of Minutes from April 21 Board of Trustees Meeting
- Donation of Paid Time Off Policy (Revision) (EXEC 1011-2026)
- Food and Drink Policy (Deletion) (FF 1010-2026)
- Broadcast News and Video Production Certificate (new) (AASS 1005-2026)
- Social Media and Radio Broadcasting Certificate (new) (AASS 1006-2026)
- Pre-Health Professions: Dental Hygiene Diploma (new) (AASS-1007-2026)
- Academic Calendar 2028-2029 (AASS-1008-2026)

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dr. Janet Grady announced a change in the format for Board meetings. The new approach will eliminate full reports from each committee and will instead feature special updates on developments across various College departments. She emphasized that, although detailed reports from every committee will not be presented, updates will be shared at the committee level and recorded in the committee meeting minutes. In addition, she encouraged Board members to review Dr. Nunez's College update emails for the latest information. Lastly, she reminded Board members of upcoming College events and encouraged them to save the date for the Chef Auction on October 7 and future Board meetings.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Nunez stated that, as Dr. Grady has mentioned, there will be a slightly altered format for board meetings moving forward. For tonight's meeting, the College will present two reports in greater depth than usual, allowing additional time for discussion and questions.

Black Bear Dual Enrollment Academy – Mr. Matthew Bodenschatz delivered a presentation on the Black Bear Academy, which represents a new initiative for the upcoming 2026-2027 academic year. He stated that this program is designed for first-generation college students, those with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and students from low-income households. The Academy will allow high school seniors to bypass their senior year and enroll at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College a year early, enabling them to earn up to 30 college credits while still classified as high school students. Through this program, students will have the chance to fulfill any outstanding high school requirements, such as math or history courses.

He explained that the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Dual Credit Innovation Grant covers all tuition and fees for participating high school students, with students responsible only for transportation and meal expenses. This initiative provides students with an excellent opportunity to begin their college education while still in high school. During the fall semester, students will have access to a thoughtfully designed schedule of transferable courses across a variety of academic disciplines with the flexibility to customize course selections based on individual academic goals, prior credits, or program requirements. Most courses will be taken alongside other Penn Highlands students, providing an authentic college experience. The exception is the First-Year Experience course, which is designed specifically for Black Bear Academy students and emphasizes relationship building, student engagement, and the completion of a year-long project. In addition to coursework, students will have opportunities to participate in speaker series programs, community service activities, and leadership development experiences.

The program will launch with 10 students, two students selected from each of five participating high schools: Connellsville Area, Forest Hills, Greater Johnstown, Richland, and Windber. These schools were chosen based on their proximity to the College. Students were nominated by their school guidance counselors, with priority given to those from low-income backgrounds, first-generation college students, and students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Each participant has demonstrated a strong commitment to academic success and active involvement in extracurricular activities. While enrolled in the program, students will maintain their connection to their high schools, enabling them to participate in athletics and other school activities, and they will also graduate with their classmates.

A discussion was held regarding the estimated savings available to participating students. Mr. Bodenschatz explained that annual tuition and fees typically range from $7,000 to $8,000 for in-county students and $9,000 to $10,000 for out-of-county students. In addition, the program covers textbook expenses, which can total $300 to $400 per semester. Mr. Bodenschatz noted that Black Bear Academy provides substantial financial benefits compared to many four-year institutions, where tuition and additional room and board expenses are often considerably higher. Participants also gain a valuable academic advantage by earning college credits early, putting them a year ahead of their peers.

Dr. Nunez stated that he is very proud of this program and the collaborative efforts involved in bringing it to fruition. The goal is for these high school students to spend a year with the program and then return for a second year to complete their associate's degree. He explained that combining the Black Bear Academy with the Smart Start Program allows participants to return for a second year at no cost. The only exception is the residents of Windber. This means these students would have the opportunity to complete their associate's degree at no expense.

A discussion was held on the possible expansion of the program. Dr. Nunez stated that as a grant-funded initiative, the program can currently support only five nearby schools, and expansion of the program would require identifying additional funding sources.

Johnstown, Ebensburg, and Altoona Facilities Updates - Ms. Susan Fisher reported that three College leases are approaching the end of their current terms. The lease for the Downtown Culinary Center is scheduled to expire on July 31. A new lease has been proposed for the relocation of the Culinary Center to the Frank J. Pasquerilla Conference Center, effective August 1. This timeline would allow the College early access to the space for equipment relocation and setup in preparation for the fall semester. The annual lease cost would be $36,500, which includes all utilities and is comparable to current expenses at the Central Park location. The College has also applied for state capital funding, which, if approved, would cover approximately half of the lease cost. The new location offers several advantages, including ample free parking, a larger instructional area, a dedicated classroom, and faculty office space. College administration will work closely with culinary faculty to ensure the new classroom is configured to maximize instructional needs. In addition, the lease includes two complimentary venue rentals each year for both the College and Foundation, resulting in an estimated annual savings of $6,000 to $7,000.

The lease for the Ebensburg location expires on June 30, 2028. As previously reported, the facility is larger than needed for current operations, and the College has been exploring options to downsize. Discussions have taken place with the landlord regarding a move to the former space adjacent to the current location. The proposed space is more appropriately sized and would require only minimal renovations. However, following a recent meeting with the landlord, the project timeline has been delayed. The College hopes to pursue the transition between the fall and spring semesters, contingent upon the landlord's schedule and readiness.

The lease for the Blair location expires on December 31, 2027. The College is currently housed in the Logan Valley Mall, which has been listed for sale following Namdar Realty Group's decision to sell the property. While potential buyers have expressed interest in retaining the College as a tenant, the space is larger than necessary for current needs. Discussions have included the possibility of downsizing by retaining only the renovated upper level while relinquishing the lower level. Over the past six months, the College has passively evaluated alternative locations and intends to begin a more active site search after the start of the fall semester. Capital funding has already been secured to assist with future lease obligations and any build-out costs that may be required should the College relocate.

Faculty Advancement and Tenure Recognition-Dr. Sara Conroy announced several faculty advancements in rank that were approved at the April Board of Trustees meeting. Faculty members were invited to attend the meeting in recognition of these accomplishments. While not all the individuals receiving promotions were present, Dr. Conroy acknowledged each faculty member and their achievements.

Dr. Richard Bukowski was promoted to Professor. She stated that Dr. Bukowski leads the College's Media Production program and played a key role in developing the two new certificate programs approved by the Board earlier in the meeting. Robin Hughes was promoted to Professor. Professor Hughes, a mathematics instructor, joined the College after teaching at Kent State University. She stated that the College is fortunate to benefit from her expertise, particularly her strong background in actuarial science and mathematics. Laura Gaunt was promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. Professor Gaunt oversees the College's Health Sciences programs, including the Medical Assisting Program. Before joining Penn Highlands, she spent more than 20 years working as a nurse and has brought valuable real-world healthcare experience to the classroom.

Lastly, Dr. Conroy recognized Gregory Paonessa, Assistant Professor of Computer Technology, for earning tenure, stating that it is one of the highest honors a faculty member can achieve. She stated that Assistant Professor Paonessa has been instrumental in advancing the College's computer technology and computer science programs, including helping secure the College's National Center of Academic Excellence (CAE) in Cyber Defense designation and leading several successful grant-funded initiatives.

Mr. Gregory Paonessa expressed his appreciation for the recognition and stated that he looks forward to the College's future initiatives and continued collaboration with his colleagues. He stated that his time at the College has been a tremendous opportunity and that he is grateful to be part of the institution. Professor Paonessa shared that he began his career with Concurrent Technologies Corporation (CTC) in 1992 and served in various leadership and project management roles until 2011. After working in a family business, he joined Penn Highlands as an adjunct instructor and soon transitioned to a full-time faculty position. He stated that teaching has been a rewarding experience, particularly helping students learn and seeing concepts come together for them.

Strohm Retirement-Dr. Steve Nunez congratulated Mr. Omar Strohm on his retirement and noted that this would be his final Board meeting with the College. He stated that Mr. Strohm has served Penn Highlands for approximately two and a half years, bringing extensive knowledge and experience from a long and distinguished career. Dr. Nunez thanked Mr. Strohm for his leadership, dedication, friendship, and many contributions to the College and expressed his appreciation for the positive impact he has made during his tenure.

Mr. Strohm stated that his time at Penn Highlands had been one of the most rewarding experiences of his professional career. He stated that he had never worked with a better group of people and praised the dedication of the College's employees and leadership. Mr. Strohm thanked the Board of Trustees and College staff for their trust, confidence, and support during his tenure and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve the institution.

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Grady reported that the minutes are included in the packet from June 9, 2026.

Board Appointed Trustees (EXEC 1010-2026) – Dr. Janet Grady presented the motion for approval, noting that the Board appoints one Trustee from each non-sponsoring county served by the College for a three-year term. She explained that the appointments would run from August 1, 2026, through July 31, 2029, and emphasized the value of broad county representation and the expertise these individuals bring to the Board. The recommended appointments were Benjamin Estell (Centre County), Joseph Hurd (Blair County), Lladel Lichty (Somerset County), and Dr. Jennifer Mitchell (Huntingdon County).

Upon a motion duly made by Dr. Kristy Chunta, seconded by Dr. Leah Spangler, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

> **MOVED**: The Board of Trustees appoints the above-named individuals to serve as Trustees for a three-year term beginning August 1, 2026, and ending July 31, 2029.

FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Mr. Greg Winger stated that the minutes from the June 4, 2026, meeting are included in the packet.

Business and General Liability Insurance Renewal (FF 1011-2026)-Mr. Greg Winger presented the recommendation to renew the College's business and general liability insurance coverage for the upcoming year through its broker, AJ Gallagher. He stated that details of the proposed coverage and premiums were included in the Board materials. The total cost of the insurance package is $147,801 with coverage information outlined in the accompanying documentation.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Carl DeYulis, seconded by Mr. John Augustine, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

> **MOVED**: The Board of Trustees approves renewal of the FY 2027 business and general liability insurance packages through broker A. J. Gallagher in the amount of $147,801.

Culinary Center Lease (FF 1012-2026)-Mr. Greg Winger presented a three-year lease agreement for the Culinary Center at the Frank J. Pasquerilla Conference Center, with an option to renew at the end of the term for approval.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Jackie Kulback, seconded by Mr. Joseph Hurd, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

> **MOVED**: The Board of Trustees authorizes the College to enter into a three-year lease, with an option to renew, for the Culinary Center at the Frank J. Pasquerilla Conference Center, located at 301 Napoleon Street, Johnstown, PA 15901, at a cost of $3,041.67 per month or $36,500 annually.

Financial Statements ending April 30, 2026 (FF 1013-2026)- Mr. Omar Strohm gave a review of the Operating and Capital Budget Summary, the Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Net Position and the Statement of Net Position for the period ending April 30, 2026. He stated that lower-than-anticipated revenue, driven by declining core enrollment and reduced state funding, combined with higher-than-expected expenses, resulted in a tighter financial position than originally projected. Grant revenue has exceeded expectations and has helped offset revenue shortfalls in other areas. The positive trend in grant funding is expected to continue into the next fiscal year. Despite ongoing asset depreciation, which is primarily an accounting requirement and does not significantly impact day-to-day operations, the College's cash position and cash reserves remain strong.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Jackie Kulback, seconded by Mr. Carol DeYulis, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

> **MOVED**: The Board of Trustees approves the Financial Statements ending April 30, 2026.

Operating and Capital Budget FY 2026-27 (FF 1014-2026)– Mr. Omar Strohm presented an overview of the proposed 2026-2027 budget, noting that it was developed over five months with input from all levels of the organization, including cost center managers, Cabinet members, and College leadership. The proposed budget totals $14,555,951, a 3.2% decrease from the current year and only 0.3% different from the draft budget presented in April. He stated that projected revenues are expected to increase by 1.6%, with state operating and county funding remaining flat. Tuition and fee revenue is projected to remain stable, reflecting nearly flat enrollment and a 3.6% tuition increase. The total expenditures are projected to decrease by 3.2%, driven primarily by a 4.4% reduction in personnel costs resulting from workforce reductions and retirements. Health insurance costs will increase by 8.5%, while operating expenses are projected to rise by 3.9% due to inflation and higher utility costs. Capital expenses are projected to decrease by 8.7%, largely due to reduced debt service obligations.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. John Augustine, seconded by Rev. Reginal Lloyd, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

> **MOVED**: The Board of Trustees approves the FY 2026-2027 Operating and Capital Budget of $14,555,951 that will become effective July 1, 2026.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Administration – The Board was advised that Ms. Susan Fisher's complete report is available in the meeting packet.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Finance –The Board was advised that Mr. Omar Strohm's complete report is available in the meeting packet.

Report from the Chief Information Officer –The Board was advised that Mr. Matthew Hoffman's complete report is available in the meeting packet.

<u>ACADEMIC AFFAIRS/STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE</u>

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Jennifer Anderson stated that the minutes from June 2, 2026, are in the packet and that four action items were approved on the consent agenda.

Report for Academic Affairs – Dr. Sara Conroy stated that her full report is included in the meeting packet. She stated that the College celebrated 244 graduates at its spring commencement ceremony and extended her congratulations to each graduate on this significant accomplishment. She stated that commencement remains one of her favorite events of the year and a highlight for the College. She also reminded the Board that the current Police

Academy cohort will graduate on June 26 and encouraged members to attend if possible. She further reported that recruitment for the next Police Academy cohort has been very successful, with enrollment expected to reach or approach the program's maximum capacity of 30 students.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Janet Grady stated that the information from June 3, 2026, are included in the packet and there were no action items.

Report from the Director of the Foundation– The Board was advised that Ms. Carole VanMeter's complete report is available in the meeting packet.

Report from the Dean of Admissions & Outreach –The Board was advised that Mr. Matthew Bodenschatz's complete report is available in the meeting packet.

Report from the Executive Director of Marketing & Communications–The Board was advised that Mr. Raymond Weible's complete report is available in the meeting packet.

REPORTS/COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Jennifer Anderson, seconded by Dr. Jennifer Mitchell and unanimously carried by voice vote, all non-board members except Dr. Nunez and Ms. Fisher, were excused. The Board entered executive session at 5:38 p.m. to discuss compensation and security matters.

Dr. Anderson made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Kulback to leave the executive session at 5:58 PM, which was unanimously approved by voice vote.

ADJOURN

With no further business to be discussed, at 6:00 PM, Dr. Anderson made a motion, which was seconded by Ms. Kulback to adjourn the Board meeting, which was unanimously approved by voice vote.