

**PENNSYLVANIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
December 16, 2025 – 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, December 16, 2025, 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 4:35 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
Mr. Carl DeYulis
Mr. Benjamin Estell
Rev. Reginal Floyd
Dr. Janet Grady
Ms. Jackie Kulback
Mr. Brian Lanham
Ms. Lladel Lichty
Dr. Jennifer Mitchell
Mr. Greg Winger
Mr. Brett Smith

TRUSTEES ABSENT

Mr. Joseph Hurd
Ms. Carissa Westrick
Mr. Mike Puruczky
Dr. Leah Spangler
Ms. Linda Thomson

ALSO PRESENT

Dr. Steve Nunez, President
Ms. Trish Corle, Senior VP of Strategic Initiatives
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
Ms. Carl VanMeter, Director of the Foundation
Dr. Barb Zaborowski, Dean of Library Services & Special Projects
Mr. Gary Boast, Associate VP of Technology and Analytics
Mr. Matthew Bodenschatz, Executive Director of Recruiting & Admissions
Mr. Ray Weible, Jr., Executive Director of Marketing & Communications
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 Dr. Jennifer Anderson, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

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

- Approval of Minutes from October 21 Board of Trustees Meeting
- Payment Plan Policy Revision (FF 1020-2025)
- Red Flag Policy Revision (FF 1021-2025)
- Total Withdrawal Policy Revision (FF 1022-2025)
- Paralegal Studies A.A.S. Degree Program Review (AASS 1006-2025)
- Pre-Health Professions; Nursing Certificate Program Review (AASS 1007-2025)
- Reinstatement Following Academic Suspension Policy Revision (AASS 1008-2025)
- Repeating Courses Policy Revision (AASS 1009-2025)
- Right to Know Policy Revision (EXAF 1001-2025)

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dr. Grady extended holiday greetings and reminded attendees of the upcoming 2026 events listed on the agenda.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Annual Review of Board Policies-28 Board Policies were reviewed in 2025-Dr. Nunez explained that a recommendation from the Middle States self-study team was to establish a policy requiring systematic reviews of board policies. The adopted policy mandates that all board policies be reviewed every five years, which translates to reviewing approximately 20% of policies annually. In the current calendar year, 28 policies were reviewed, meeting this requirement. This serves as confirmation that the institution is adhering to the policy and performing well in maintaining compliance.

Dr. Nunez requested, with the chair's permission, to change the agenda item from "Regional Networking Update" to "Strategic Planning Recap." This adjustment reflects a commitment made during the last board meeting, which was inadvertently omitted from the original agenda.

Strategic Planning Update – Dr. Nunez noted that the meeting packet includes a one-page recap of the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan, which is nearing completion. Mr. Boast explained that in early 2020, the College launched a five-year plan developed by a cross-functional team engaging stakeholders. The plan focused on four imperatives: advancing student success, growing quality programs, enhancing partnerships, and improving infrastructure. The plan included 13 goals and 32 objectives, of which the College has achieved approximately 90%, positioning the College strongly for Middle States review and demonstrating alignment with its mission and standards.

Dr. Nunez presented a summary of some of accomplishments from the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan. Dr. Nunez stated that he is excited for the next strategic planning phase, noting the upcoming plan will span three years to allow greater flexibility in a rapidly changing educational environment. The draft will be reviewed with the College community for feedback before finalization. A discussion was held regarding the unmet 10% of the plan and the factors contributing to it.

Accreditation Update – Dr. Barb Zaborowski reported that the writing team has been revising standards since June and posting draft chapters for public comment on the College's portal under the "Visiting Team" tab. She shared that six team members, including herself and Dr. Nunez, attended the recent Middle States conference, where she met the new accreditation liaison. The College expects to receive the names of the full visiting team in January. All self-study

documents and evidence must be uploaded to the Middle States portal by January 11, and preparations are on track for the team visit at the end of March.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Grady reported that the minutes are included in the packet from December 9, 2025. Dr. Nunez stated that details of the Employee Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan are included in the packet, with a summary in the motion. He noted the College is operating under deficit spending this year, prompting discussions on future financial stability. After several months of review and consultation with leadership and the solicitor, a plan was finalized.

2026 Employee Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan (EXEC 1018-2025) – Ms. Susan Fisher explained that the voluntary retirement incentive applies to full-time employees meeting one of two criteria: age 55 with 15 years of service or age 60 with 10 years of service. Eligible employees who elect to participate will receive six weeks' salary, a lump-sum payment of \$11,000 that may be used for COBRA, and their PTO payout per policy or collective bargaining agreement. Nineteen employees qualify. Administrators and support staff must review plan documents by January 16 and retire by May 29, while faculty have until March 1 to opt in and retire by July 31.

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves and adopts the 2026 Employee Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan as presented in the plan effective as of December 17, 2025.

Regional Community College Grant Scholarship (EXEC 1019-2025) – Dr. Nunez reported that the Somerset County Board of Commissioners has applied for a Regional Community College Grant to fund tuition scholarships for Somerset County residents. If approved, the grant will provide a \$25 per-credit tuition discount for a total of \$33 including the previous reduction of the capital fee. While the grant has not yet been received, the motion ensures the College can implement the discount immediately upon approval; no action will occur if the grant is not awarded.

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the \$25/credit tuition reduction scholarship for Somerset County Residents for the Spring 2026 semester and the Summer 2026 Sessions (A&B) contingent upon the approval and receipt of the full grant funding from the 2025–2026 Regional Community College Grant.

FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Mr. Greg Winger stated that the minutes from the December 4, 2025, meeting are included in the packet.

Financial Statements ending October 31, 2025 (FF 1019-2025)- Mr. Omar Strohm reviewed the Operating and Capital Budget Summary, the Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Net Position and the Statement of Net Position for the period ending October 31, 2025. He stated that the lack of revenues from the State, along with reduced tuition and fees, negatively impacted the financial statements, though operations remained unaffected. Increased personnel and operating costs, combined with revenue shortfalls and asset depreciation, contributed to a decline in net position.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Greg Winger, seconded by Dr. Jennifer Anderson, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the Financial Statements ending October 31, 2025.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Administration – Ms. Susan Fisher stated that her full report is in the packet and announced that the annual Clery Report has been published, showing no reported crimes at any campus. She shared photos of the recent improvements to Black Bear Fitness Center and thanked the facilities team, student athletics, and marketing for their efforts.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Technology and Analytics – Mr. Gary Boast noted that his full report is included in the packet and highlighted the results of the College's FY25 Strategic Financial Analysis, which provides an overall assessment of fiscal health and serves as a key indicator for the strategic planning process. To sustain progress and reverse the post-COVID downward trend caused by enrollment declines and reduced state funding, he emphasized the importance of strengthening the College's net position year over year. This can be achieved through enhanced revenue generation, careful expense control, enrollment growth, and strategic resource allocation. Despite these challenges, he noted that the College continues to manage effectively within its means and maintain strong debt management.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Finance – Mr. Omar Strohm reported he is making progress on accreditation work for Standard 6 to address questions from Dr. Austin's from his recent visit.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS/STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Jennifer Anderson stated that the minutes from December 5, 2025, are in the packet.

Report from the Student Trustee and Student Senate President – Mr. Brian Lanham reported that students have completed the semester and are now on holiday break. He expressed appreciation for the Thanksgiving meals provided to students by the Student Engagement and Success Committee in partnership with local churches. Sports highlights included the selection of Aidan Barnick to the All-Region 20 First Team, while Riley Olish and Tara Corradini were recognized with Region 20 Honorable Mention distinctions. Zack Gomer secured the first regional wrestling victory with a pin over an opponent from Garrett, Maryland. Student Senate is planning an appreciation event for facilities staff and organizing a dodgeball tournament for

next semester. They are also brainstorming ideas for activities that enhance student engagement and strengthen community connections.

Report for Academic Affairs – Dr. Nunez gave a review for Dr. Sara Conroy in her absence. He stated that the full report is included in the packet. Most of the meeting discussion focused on the two program reviews approved on the consent agenda: the Paralegal Studies A.A.S. Degree Program and the Pre-Health Professions: Nursing Certificate Program. There was significant enthusiasm for the Paralegal Studies program, particularly its potential for growth in the online space. The Pre-Health Professions Nursing Certificate Program also generated excitement, as connecting programs to career pathways remains a key strategy for growth. Additionally, Dr. Nunez highlighted ongoing work with faculty on the comprehensive program analysis rubric to identify opportunities for program improvement.

Report from the Senior VP of Strategic Initiatives – Ms. Trish Corle stated that her full report is included in the packet. The report details workforce education initiatives, including the Housing Authority Program and recently hosted events, as well as plans for next spring's professional program and the DCED manufacturing grant project. She stated that staff provided support for students affected by delays in State budgets and potential loss of their SNAP benefits. The College fulfilled its Article XXG obligation by delivering required training on sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking for the fall semester, with plans to repeat in spring. Supporting Scholars held a bake sale that raised \$700 for the Joyce Murtha Breast Cancer Center. Applications for ALL USA academic scholarships have been received, and selections are underway. Strategic planning updates include new articulation agreements with IUP. Lastly, the College is having discussions with Berks and Lancaster County officials on workforce needs for code enforcement training, with efforts underway to explore non-credit options that address statewide demand while complying with regulatory requirements.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Ms. Lladel Lichty stated that the minutes from December 3, 2025, are included in the packet.

Foundation Report – Ms. Carole VanMeter noted that her full report is included in the packet. She shared that the Foundation raised over \$40,000 through the Chef Auction, with all expenses covered and revenue received. The Foundation's recent audit by Wessel and Company resulted in a clean opinion, reflecting the excellent work of the Business Office. As of June 30, the Foundation's net assets total \$3,121,981, exceeding \$3 million. Scholarships have more than doubled, and scholar support continues to grow. She also reported receiving the final payment from the Margaret J. Pardee Trust and announced that EITC donations were received from First National Bank and First Summit Bank. In addition, UPMC Health Benefits has contributed \$5,000. Annual giving pledge cards are being prepared, and online donations are encouraged. She expressed appreciation for ongoing support and reminded everyone that Puttupalooza is scheduled for Friday, March 13.

Recruiting and Admissions – Mr. Matthew Bodenschatz reported that as of December 1, Spring enrollment stands at 2,329 credits, though this number is expected to increase as the January 20 semester start approaches. The weeks leading up to the start of classes typically see the highest enrollment activity, with staff working diligently to register students. Current trends show an increase in part-time students, contributing to an overall credit decline of about 8%, similar to the fall semester. This shift reflects students balancing work and family responsibilities. Enrollment in

Liberal Arts and Sciences programs is also down, aligning with a growing preference for short-term credentials. On a positive note, two fall open houses attracted 17 more students than in previous years, and additional open houses are planned for spring. A new partnership with Juniata College will allow academically dismissed or probationary students to take 12 credits at Penn Highlands to regain standing. Online enrollment continues to grow under the SARA agreement, enabling recruitment beyond Pennsylvania. A discussion was held regarding the partnership with Juniata College and the potential of working with other local schools to develop similar partnerships.

Marketing Report – Mr. Ray Weible stated that his full report is in the packet. He shared that the Marketing and Communications team recently received a Silver Medallion Award for original photography from the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations, which serves two-year community colleges. Recent projects and campaigns are detailed in the packet. Website enhancements include more prominent call-to-action buttons on program pages, a change from “Contact Us” to “Request Info” for improved engagement, and work on accessibility updates to meet WCAG guidelines by April. These updates include improved color contrast, alt text for images, paragraph alignment, and ongoing monitoring through Siteimprove. Marketing has also increased athletics promotion through social media, game-day highlights, press releases, and a near-complete athletics video. Campaigns currently underway include promotion for the Cybersecurity Certificate (funded by the ARC grant), the new Center County location, and the Police Academy (supported by Perkins funding). Marketing has nearly doubled press releases in recent months, resulting in a significant increase in media mentions.

REPORTS/COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Lladel Lichty, seconded by Dr. Jennifer Anderson and unanimously carried by voice vote, all non-board members were excused, and the Executive Committee went into executive session at 5:45 PM to discuss employment and compensation.

Mr. Greg Winger made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Jackie Kulback to leave the executive session at 6:05 PM, which was unanimously approved by voice vote.

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the changes to the compensation agreement with the President.

ADJOURN

With no further business to be discussed, at 6:12 PM, Mr. John Augustine and Ms. Jackie Kulback made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting which was unanimously approved by voice vote.