PENNSYLVANIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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PENNSYLVANIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
August 18, 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, August 18, 2026, via Zoom teleconferencing, with some members present at the Richland campus in the Holtzman Boardroom.

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Janet Grady, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 4:30 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
Mr. Brett Smith
Mr. Greg Winger
Ms. Kate Porter
Rev. Reginal Floyd

TRUSTEES ABSENT

Ms. Linda Thomson
Mr. Carl DeYulis
Mr. Benjamin Estell
Dr. Jennifer Mitchell
Dr. Leah Spangler

ALSO PRESENT

Dr. Steve Nunez, President
Dr. Sara Conroy, Vice President of Academic Affairs & Student Services
Ms. Susan Fisher, Vice President of Finance and Administration
Mr. Matthew Hoffman, Chief Information Officer
Ms. Michelle Stumpf, Dean of Student Engagement & Success
Ms. Katie Markum, Director of Finance & Accounting
Adjunct Instructor Allegra Slick, Professor Robert Clark, Assistant Professor Matthew Stumpf, Professor Sherri Slavick, Associate Professor Robin Hughes, Associate Professor Melissa Boback, Professor Yvette Madison, Professor Mary Ann McCurdy, and Assistant Professor Mark Parfitt

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

GUESTS & SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Dr. Sara Conroy stated that Academic Affairs and Student Services have spent the past year integrating into a single division and are now advancing several new strategic initiatives to better support student success. She introduced Michelle Stumpf, Dean of Student Engagement and Success, to present a new student support model being implemented for the upcoming academic year.

Ms. Stumpf presented the College's new Student Success Coach initiative, which reassigns select admissions and student services staff into coaching roles focused on academic support and student engagement. Each coach will serve as a single point of contact for degree-seeking students from onboarding through graduation, providing guidance with academic planning, registration, progress monitoring, and referrals to faculty advisors and support services.

She explained that coaches will maintain regular contact with students throughout the semester, offering encouragement and assistance while proactively identifying and addressing concerns. The initiative will utilize data from the College's learning management system, analyzed with Microsoft Copilot, to help identify students who may need additional support. Coaches will then conduct timely outreach and connect students with appropriate resources. Ms. Stumpf stated that proactive advising is a well-established practice in higher education and has been associated with improvements in student retention, graduation rates, and overall satisfaction with the advising process. She explained that Penn Highlands has been moving toward this model for several years through initiatives such as Guided Pathways, career exploration support, and enhanced collaboration between staff and faculty advisors. The Student Success Coach initiative represents the next step in creating a sustainable and measurable proactive advising model, aligned with the College's Strategic Enrollment Management and Retention Plans. Key performance indicators will include student retention, completion rates, and time to degree completion. The College will also monitor coach caseloads and regularly assess the program to identify trends and opportunities for improvement.

Ms. Stumpf stated that College leadership has been highly supportive of the initiative and that the new positions and job descriptions were implemented effective July 1. Recommendations regarding future staffing and technology needs will be evaluated after the program's first year. A discussion was held regarding the number of coaches and non-academic barriers. Ms. Stumpf stated that three staff members are primarily serving as Student Success Coaches, while additional staff support students within their respective program areas. Academic difficulties often signal underlying non-academic challenges, such as technology access, food insecurity, or other personal concerns. Student Success Coaches will help identify these needs, connect students with resources, and refine outreach efforts based on collected data.

Dr. Nunez stated that the Student Success Coach initiative shares similarities with TRIO, a federally funded program that has successfully supported at-risk and first-generation students through proactive advising and individualized support. Dr. Nunez stated that he is excited to see the initiative move forward and is proud of the College's innovative use of data and technology to identify students who may be at risk before challenges become significant barriers. Dr. Grady added that, unlike programs that serve specific populations, this initiative will support all students, making it a comprehensive strategy for improving student success and retention.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

- Approval of Minutes of June 16 Board of Trustees Meeting
- Tuition Waiver for Administrative Employees Policy Revision (EXEC 1012-2026)

*The policy revision was incorrectly titled **Administrative Tuition Reimbursement Policy in the packet**; however, the policy under consideration was the **Tuition Waiver for Administrative Employees Policy**. This correction is provided here to ensure accuracy and clarity.*

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dr. Janet Grady welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new Board of Trustees member Kate Porter. She highlighted Ms. Porter's extensive background in human services, behavioral health, prevention programming, quality management, and community outreach. Dr. Grady stated that Ms. Porter has more than 15 years of experience serving Cambria County residents through a variety of leadership and administrative roles and welcomed her to the Board.

Ms. Kate Porter thanked the Board for the warm welcome. She shared that she is a lifelong Cambria County resident who grew up in Loretto and continues to live on the property where she was raised. Ms. Porter expressed her strong commitment to the community and her belief that Cambria County is a wonderful place to live. Ms. Porter stated that she is excited about the opportunity to serve on the Board.

Dr. Nunez stated that Ms. Porter will be a great addition to the Board and that her wealth of experience and her expertise will benefit both the Board and the College as a whole.

Dr. Grady reminded the Board that the Chef Auction is scheduled for October 7 and encouraged members to save the date.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest of Dr. Nunez – Dr. Nunez stated that, in accordance with Board policy, he is required to disclose any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest to both the Cabinet and the Board on an annual basis. He stated that, as part of his commitment to community engagement, he serves on several local boards and organizations, including JARI, Conemaugh Health System, the Somerset County Chamber of Commerce, the Cambria County Chamber of Commerce, the Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Board, and is a member of the Greater Johnstown Regional Partnership. Dr. Nunez stated that the College remains his top priority and that these organizations are valued community partners whose relationships support and benefit the College. The Board confirmed that it had no concerns regarding Dr. Nunez's participation in these organizations and committees.

Accreditation Update (Dr. Zaborowski) – Dr. Nunez reported that the College's successful Middle States reaccreditation was a significant accomplishment for the year. He commended the faculty, staff, and administrators who worked collaboratively to prepare the self-study, gather supporting evidence, and demonstrate the College's commitment to continuous improvement. Dr. Nunez stated that the reaccreditation process provided valuable opportunities to assess institutional performance, address challenges, and strengthen operations. He reported that the evaluation team was highly impressed with the College's strong community partnerships and dedication to student success. The College subsequently received reaffirmation of accreditation from Middle States with no follow-up reports or site visits required. He stated that this outcome reflects the College's ongoing commitment to excellence and positions the institution well for the future.

Top 10: Highlights for FY 2026 – The Top 10 List of College Achievements for 2026 were discussed. Dr. Nunez stated that these achievements were made possible through the collective efforts of faculty, staff, administrators, and the Board. He explained that Cabinet members identified key accomplishments from their respective areas, resulting in an annual summary of institutional successes and progress. The list is referred to as a "Top 10" list, but it reflects the many accomplishments achieved across the College during the year. Dr. Nunez reported that Dr.

Zaborowski identified the College's successful Middle States reaccreditation as the institution's top accomplishment of the year. He recognized Dr. Zaborowski's leadership throughout the two-year process, noting her longstanding involvement with the College's accreditation efforts and her role as accreditation liaison.

Mr. Matt Hoffman identified the College's growing use of artificial intelligence, data analytics, and technology tools to improve efficiency and support decision-making as a top accomplishment of the year. He commended faculty, staff, and students for embracing innovative technologies and noted the importance of preparing students to effectively utilize AI in their future careers.

Dr. Conroy identified the launch of the Black Bear Academy, funded through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Dual Enrollment Innovation Grant, as the institution's top accomplishment of the year. The program allows selected high school seniors from participating school districts to complete their senior year on the Richland campus while simultaneously earning college credit. She stated that the Academy is designed to provide students with an immersive college experience and strengthen pathways to higher education. The Black Bear Academy generated significant interest from participating school districts. Due to strong demand, the College was able to expand the program to accommodate an additional five students. As a result, 15 students will begin the Black Bear Academy at Penn Highlands this fall. She stated that the College looks forward to welcoming the first Black Bear Academy cohort to campus.

Ms. Susan Fisher identified the College's reorganization as one of its most significant accomplishments of the year. She recognized Dr. Conroy's leadership in successfully integrating Academic Affairs and Student Services into a single division. Ms. Fisher acknowledged that the transition required employees to adapt to new roles and responsibilities and commended faculty and staff for their flexibility and commitment throughout the process. She noted that the College is already seeing positive results from the reorganization including enhanced student support, strengthened recruitment efforts, and operational cost savings.

Dr. Nunez stated that the College's complete list of accomplishments includes more than 20 significant achievements. While time did not permit a review of every item, he identified student completion and academic success as one of the institution's most important accomplishments of the year. He stated that he chose this accomplishment because supporting students through graduation is central to the College's mission and reflects the collaborative efforts of faculty, staff, and administrators. He stated that he is proud the College awarded 98 Associate in Applied Science degrees, 93 Associate in Arts degrees, 8 Associate in Science degrees, and 44 diplomas and certificates this year.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Grady reported that the minutes are included in the packet from August 11, 2026. The Committee had one action item that was covered by the consent agenda.

FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Mr. Greg Winger stated that the minutes from the August 6, 2026, meeting are included in the packet.

Financial Statements ending June 30, 2026 (FF 1015-2026)- Ms. Katie Markum presented the financial reports for the period ending June 30, 2026. A summary of the Operating and Capital Budget, the Statement of Revenues and Expenses, and the Statement of Net Position was reviewed.

Upon a motion duly made by Dr. Jennifer Anderson, seconded by Ms. Jackie Kulback, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the Financial Statements ending June 30, 2026.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS/STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Jennifer Anderson stated that the minutes from August 5, 2026, are in the packet. She reported that the Academic Affairs Committee had no action items for Board consideration. She noted that the Advisory Board membership list was included in the meeting materials and highlighted the addition of new adjunct faculty for the fall semester.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Sara Conroy presented the report on behalf of the External Affairs Committee. She stated that the minutes from June 3, 2026, are included in the packet and there were no action items.

She stated that the upcoming Chef Auction is scheduled for October 7 and encouraged Board members to consider attending and supporting the event. She also noted that sponsorship opportunities are available and asked members to share this information with colleagues, friends, and community partners.

She stated that Fall 2026 enrollment is up, at this point in time, nearly 5% compared to Fall 2025, and the College has met its enrollment goal by achieving 100% of its budgeted enrollment target for the fall semester. Dr. Conroy credited the admissions and recruitment teams for their focused outreach and student engagement efforts that contributed to this success.

She reported that the Marketing and Communications team remains actively engaged in promoting the College and its initiatives. She highlighted a recent event recognizing the College's partnership with Conemaugh Health System in the Surgical Technology program, during which Dr. Nunez and Conemaugh's CEO met to celebrate the collaboration. The event generated significant media attention and evolved into an impromptu press conference. Dr. Conroy noted that additional Marketing and Communications activities were detailed in the Board packet.

REPORTS/COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Greg Winger, seconded by Dr. Jennifer Anderson, and unanimously approved by voice vote, all non-Board members, with the exception of Dr. Nunez Dr. Conroy, and Ms. Fisher, were excused. The Board entered executive session at 5:28 p.m. to discuss compensation and security matters.

Dr. Chunta made a motion which was seconded by Dr. Anderson to leave the executive session at 6:23 PM which was unanimously approved by voice vote.

ADJOURN

With no further business to be discussed, at 6:24 PM, Mr. Augustine made a motion which was seconded by Dr. Chunta to adjourn the Board meeting which was unanimously approved by voice vote. No further action was necessary.