

**PENNSYLVANIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
October 15, 2024 – 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, October 15, 2024, via Zoom teleconferencing with some members present at the Richland campus in the Holzman Boardroom.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Greg Winger, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM. Roll call was taken by Mr. Carl DeYulis, Secretary and Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and a quorum was established.

TRUSTEES PRESENT

Ms. Jennifer Anderson
Mr. Carl DeYulis
Mr. Greg Winger
Ms. Linda Thomson
Rev. Reginal Floyd
Ms. Lladel Lichty
Ms. Jennifer Mitchell
Mr. Ralph Stewart
Mr. Mike Puruczky
Mr. Brett Smith
Dr. Leah Spangler
Dr. Janet Grady
Ms. Adelyn Dull

TRUSTEES ABSENT

Ms. Carissa Westrick
Mr. John Augustine
Ms. Jackie Kulback

ALSO PRESENT

Dr. Steve Nunez, President
Dr. Cynthia Doherty, Vice President
Academic Affairs
Ms. Trish Corle, Vice President of Student
Services
Ms. Susan Fisher, Associate Vice President of
Administration
Mr. Gary Boast, Associate Vice President of
Technology and Analytics
Ms. Carole VanMeter, Director of the
Foundation
Mr. Omar Strohm, Associate Vice President
of Finance
Dr. Barb Zaborowski, Dean of Library
Services & Special Projects
Mr. Cory Fairman, Assistant Director of
Security & Safety/Use of Force Simulator
Manager
Ms. Megan Freidhof, Wessel and Company

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

GUESTS & SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Dr. Nunez introduced Ms. Meghan Freidhof from Wessel and Company, who was present to deliver their annual audit report. Ms. Freidhof, a principal in the audit department, mentioned her long-standing involvement with the College's annual audits. She thanked the fiscal department for their hard work during this transition year, which saw the retirement and

appointment of a new Associate Vice President of Finance. She then provided an overview of the Financial Audit for FY 2023-2024, noting that Wessel and Company issued an unmodified audit opinion.

Dr. Nunez introduced Mr. Cory Fairman, the Assistant Director of Security & Safety and Use of Force Simulator Manager, who provided an overview of the Use of Force Simulator. Mr. Fairman explained that the simulator includes over 750 scenarios, ranging from verbal de-escalation to weapons training. It is rated for impact weapons such as tasers and batons, and additional components for OC and pepper spray, rifles, and shotguns can be purchased for law enforcement training.

One significant advantage of the simulator is that it offers indoor firearms training without the cost of ammunition. The simulator serves a diverse range of clients and partners, including high schools, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Police Academy, the Criminology Department, and County Sheriff Departments. Recently, bus driver safety training focused on verbal de-escalation was provided.

During the discussion, Mr. Fairman mentioned that partnerships with school districts face challenges such as contractual obligations, funding, and the amount of training required. Jennifer Mitchell, a superintendent in a school district, highlighted the importance of School Safety Teams and suggested that marketing the training to these teams could help avoid many contractual issues. Mr. Fairman stated that an open house with local school districts will be held again. The training is offered at \$100 per hour which includes a customized training plan. Further discussion was held regarding non-profits and service industries that could also benefit from the verbal de-escalation training. Mr. Fairman noted that the technology is new, and many people are not yet familiar with it.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Linda Thomson, seconded by Dr. Janet Grady, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

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

- Approval of the Minutes from August 20, 2024, Board of Trustees Meeting

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr. Greg Winger welcomed the 2024-2025 Student Trustee, Adelyn (Addy) Dull. Adelyn Dull introduced herself. Addy, a sophomore at Penn Highlands Community College studying Criminal Justice, has started the Criminal Justice Club and is a supporting scholar in the honors program. This semester, she joined the cheer club for fun. Addy enjoys being actively involved both at the College and in her community. She has coached Special Olympics and finds helping individuals in her community to be a very rewarding pastime.

Dr. Nunez expressed his excitement about having Addy serve as the Student Senate President and Student Trustee to the Board. Today, Addy successfully ran her first student government meeting, which was well attended and featured good discussion. Dr. Nunez was very impressed and encouraged her to discuss any necessary changes or improvements with him. She has already brought up some topics, showcasing her proactive approach. Additionally, Dr. Nunez mentioned that Addy is a Presidential Scholar, receiving \$6,000 annually to support her education. He thanked Addy for her commitment and dedication.

Mr. Greg Winger stated that the two-year board officer positions are expiring. All five officer positions will be open. As per the bylaws, Greg Winger, Chairperson, Dr. Janet Grady, Vice

Chairperson, and Buddy DeYulis, Secretary/Treasurer, are ineligible to run for the same officer position for the next two-year term.

When reappointments come up, a nominating committee must be established. In the past, this was always handled by an external party, but this year, trustees will be part of the nominating committee. The process will likely start towards the end of October and run through the last week of November. During this period, the nominating committee will accept nominations for officer positions. We will ensure that those nominated are aware and willing to accept the position if they receive the requisite votes. The nominations will then be reviewed by our executive committee, and a slate of officers will be elected at the December board meeting, ready to assume their roles in January of next year. Anyone interested in serving on the nomination committee should contact Mr. Winger.

All trustees are eligible to run for one of the officer positions, except Ralph Stewart and Joseph Hurd, due to the one-year service requirement. There are no trustees whose terms of service are expiring this upcoming year.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PA Board of Higher Education – Dr. Nunez announced that the PA Board of Higher Education has been established. This Board will serve in an advisory capacity and will only provide recommendations about how Pennsylvania should move forward in the higher education system. Dr. Ann Bieber, the president of Lehigh Carbon Community College, will represent community college presidents on the board. She is highly regarded, and the community colleges are very excited about her appointment. There are four legislative appointees: Senator Jay Costa, Senator Wayne Langerholc, Representative Peter Schweyer, and Representative Jesse Topper. Dr. Nunez had the opportunity to meet with Representative Jesse Topper, whose district includes Bedford. The meeting was very productive, and a positive discussion was held on higher education, the board, and community colleges.

Membership and responsibilities of the board are outlined in the article included in the packet. The new Board unites leaders from higher education, the business community, labor, students, legislators, and members of the Governor's Administration. Their mission is to craft a strategic plan for higher education, coordinate efforts between institutions and sectors, make education more accessible and affordable, and ensure that institutions are equipping students with the skills and credentials needed to address critical workforce shortages and drive economic growth.

Strategic Plan Update- Dr. Nunez reported that the College has made tremendous progress in achieving the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. As part of this plan, the College has created a dashboard to track various metrics. As expected, some metrics are moving in the desired direction, while others are not. One goal is to increase enrollment in fully online programs. Although overall enrollment has declined since COVID, our online programs have rebounded well, showing year-over-year growth in the number of students enrolled.

Dr. Nunez announced that the College has signed the SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement), which allows us to recruit out-of-state students for our fully online programs. Dr. Cindy Doherty stated that an application was submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education to offer online classes to out-of-state students. This national network ensures we comply with all the rules for offering online courses in various states, simplifying the process for us. This is very exciting, as it opens up new opportunities to recruit students for our online programs.

Last fall, we had about 12 out-of-state students enrolled in our online programs. Each additional student taking 3 to 15 credits contributes to our out-of-state tuition revenue, which is a significant benefit.

The First-Year Retention Rate has remained relatively steady, with significant rebounds among minority and low-income students. The overall Three-Year Completion Rate stands at 31% which is outstanding for a community college. A discussion was held regarding completion rates and what specifically the College has been doing. Dr. Nunez stated that as a small institution, the College staff maintains a personal touch. We know our students well and reach out with personal communication when students struggle or don't re-enroll, making a big difference. Dr. Doherty added that initiatives like Guided Pathways, improved advising, and outreach through PAWS Alerts to support struggling students are contributing to improved retention and completion rates. This hands-on approach, combined with multiple strategies, is proving effective.

Accreditation Update – Dr. Barb Zaborowski reported that the latest edition of our accreditation newsletter, “The Introspective” has been sent out. The monthly publication highlights standards and provides helpful hints to the working groups. The first draft of the self-study report is due in December, with the second draft is due in February. Recently she was invited by the Middle States to speak and had the opportunity to hear questions and comments from other institutions participating in the self-study. Some new additions in this 14th edition didn't exist before, which some schools are struggling with. However, she feels confident that the College is in good shape because we excel in comprehensive assessment, unlike many other schools. Dr. Nunez stated that the accreditation process is a significant institutional effort, adding work to our faculty and staff who are already managing their regular duties. He is incredibly proud of how our institution has come together to get this done. Dr. Zaborowski explained that out of approximately 100 full-time employees, 67 are serving on some kind of working group connected to Middle States. When asked how Penn Highlands keeps everyone engaged, she noted that it is due to everyone's involvement in the self-study, unlike larger institutions where a small percentage of employees handle this task.

For the news board members, she explained that the College started the self-study in August, and we expect a visit from a team in spring 2026, before April. The Board of Trustees will be involved when the team is on campus, and you will also be involved when the team chair arrives next spring in 2025. There are several benchmarks between now and spring 2026, and the College will keep the Board updated through the process.

Reminders

- Volleyball Game: Sophomore Night: October 15
- PACCC Board Meeting and State Update (virtual): November 20 at 6:00PM- Board members were asked to let Dr. Nunez know if they plan to attend.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Mr. Winger reported the minutes are included in the packet from October 8, 2024.

FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Mr. DeYulis stated that the minutes from the October 3, 2024, meeting are included in the packet.

- **Financial Audit ending June 30, 2024 (FF 1016-2024)**- Mr. DeYulis presented the Financial Audit ending June 30, 2024, as presented by Wessel & Company.

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees accepts the College's 2023-2024 fiscal year audit ending June 30, 2024.

- **Financial Statements ending July 31, 2024 (FF 1017-2024)** – Mr. Strohm stated that the statements have been revised to enhance transparency and clarity for the board. He noted that a summary of the three types of statements and the financial dashboard included in the financial review is provided in the packet. Dr. Nunez stated that the financials are for only one month rather than two months. The December meeting will provide a report of financials through October. Mr. Strohm then 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 July 31, 2024.

Upon a motion duly made by Rev. Reginal Floyd, seconded by Ms. Linda Thomson, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the Financial Statements ending July 31, 2024 (FF 1017-2024).

- **Lease Agreement with Cambria County Area Agency on Aging (FF 1018-2024)**-Mr. DeYulis presented the proposed lease agreement with the Cambria County Area Agency on Aging. The lease term is four years, beginning on February 1, 2025, in the amount of \$1,400 per month (\$16,800 annually) which includes utilities. The lease agreement will provide space for the Cambria County Area Agency on Aging at the Richland Campus for Senior Center Activities. The lease has been approved by the Cambria County Board of Commissioners. Dr. Nunez stated that he is very excited about this opportunity.

Upon a motion duly made by Dr. Janet Grady, seconded by Ms. Lladel Lichty, and unanimously carried by voice vote, it was:

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the lease between Pennsylvania Highlands Community College and the Cambria County Area Agency on Aging.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Administration – Ms. Susan Fisher reported that Facilities' primary activity over the past couple of months has been preparing the athletic side of the building for use. Most areas on that side have been repainted. Construction to refinish the main gym floor will begin tomorrow. New basketball hoops, scoreboards, and shot clocks will be installed over the next few weeks. Weight and cardio equipment have been moved into the newly repainted weight and cardio rooms, which also had new flooring installed. The student activities staff will be relocated to that side of the building by the end of December. The College is very excited to have this space available for students and staff.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Technology and Analytics – Dr. Nunez gave an update on the financial value transparency and gainful employment compliance. All institutions must submit extensive student program data for benchmarking against graduate salary and wage data held by the Department of Education. The US Department of Education has extended the submission deadline from October 1st to January 15th. This extension is based on reports indicating inaccuracies and incomplete data in the federal government's reporting systems.

Lastly, Dr. Nunez reported that the IT department is advancing a security project across all college program sites by implementing a protocol called RADIUS security. This protocol will prevent unauthorized devices from connecting to the College network. This project is progressing at no cost.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Finance – Mr. Omar Strohm reported that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for catering services at the College was circulated and two proposals were received. Those proposals are currently being reviewed.

The Richland campus now has a Black Bear Micro-Market. The market provides prepackaged sandwiches, salads, a variety of snack foods, cold drinks, and hot drinks. The market opened 2 weeks ago. Dr. Nunez stated that students have requested a way to provide feedback on the food available at the market. A discussion was held on providing a method to allow both employees and students to share their opinions on the items offered.

The College's primary operational software expires at the end of the year. Negotiations have led to a reduction in the initial renewal costs. However, despite being budgeted, the cost represents a significant increase compared to last year. This is included as an informational item to highlight the substantial expense. The College needs to lock in this price before the end of the month.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS/STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Janet Grady stated that the minutes from October 1, 2024.

Report from the Vice President of Academic Affairs – Dr. Cindy Doherty stated that the full report in the meeting packet. She highlighted the significant progress made in implementing guided pathways, which she believes has contributed to the improved student retention numbers observed earlier. This includes a new first-year experience class with standardized content that all instructors will use to ensure students receive a consistent foundation in college success skills and tools.

Academic Affairs is also expanding and enhancing remote learning opportunities. One example is the SARA application mentioned earlier. Additionally, the College is using video course connections to allow students to take classes at different locations while still receiving instruction from our faculty. The College continuously works to improve programs and courses based on feedback and assessment results. Over the summer, new classes were developed, and we are excited to enhance our programs with updated content. Lastly, the College is exploring new program partnerships in healthcare and manufacturing.

Report from the Vice President of Student Services – Ms. Trish Corle reported that we are currently 194 credits behind our goal for the fall semester. However, we are about 230 credits ahead in total enrollment compared to the same time last year. We have recruited 60 more recent high school graduates, including those who graduated in May or June of last year, compared to the previous fall. This brings our total increase to 125 more students this fall.

Specifically, new student enrollment in Cambria County increased by 76 students, and Somerset County saw an increase of 21 students. Enrollment numbers in other areas remained relatively stable. We attribute this overall increase to several factors, including the successful implementation of our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and issues with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that may have prevented some students from attending four-year institutions.

The ACE Dual Enrollment program has achieved approximately 7,450 credits, which is about 600 credits more than our goal for the end of the year. The Spring session is remaining, where we typically earn between 700 and 1,000 credits, so the outlook is positive. Overall, it was a very successful fall recruiting effort.

The annual college fair was a great success, with around 800 students from 16 local school districts attending. Over 60 colleges and universities were represented. School visits for fall 2025 have already begun. The Johnstown Housing Authority training program, in collaboration with JARI, has commenced with 15 students enrolled. Graduation is set for January 31st at the College.

Roundtable discussions have concluded for the non-credit Administrative Assistant Program, which will be offered in February. This program was requested by local employers who either struggle to find administrative assistants or needed continuing education opportunities for their current staff. The program has been added to the state's eligible training provider list, allowing providers to help cover the costs for students enrolled through Career Link and other programs.

The Webnet Partnership review with the State Representative was held yesterday and it went well. The statewide Webnet program experienced a \$2,000,000 reduction in funding this year, which resulted in a \$60,000 decrease for us. Consequently, our funding is just under \$300,000 this year, compared to just over \$350,000 last year. We have received a grant from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies to fund our nonprofit Learning Center. We plan to start work on this project soon, with the aim of scheduling events after the first of the year. We are forming a partnership with nonprofit organizations to help facilitate these trainings and determine the necessary topics. The goal is to conduct one large training session annually and four quarterly trainings. Additionally, we have some extra funds for further training opportunities. We are very excited to launch the nonprofit Learning Center here at the college.

She stated that she greatly appreciated the efforts of the athletes who volunteered their time to paint the fitness areas. She reminded everyone about the Hall of Fame induction on Friday, November 15th, here at the college during our first home men's basketball game. It promises to be a wonderful weekend of events, including a bus trip to New York City on Saturday.

The College has hired new men's basketball coaches and a wrestling coach. Wrestling is set to begin in the fall of 2025.

Report from the Student Trustee – Ms. Adelyn Dull reported on several student activities and events including:

Club and Athletics

The National Society of Leadership and Success has 23 new members.

Phi Theta Kappa has 4 new members.

The Gaming Club has over 25 students participating in gaming nights in the library.

The Fantasy Sports Club held their football and hockey drafts. The Esports teams has over 20 participants this Semester.

The Tea Club, X-Files Club, Caring for Cubs, CRU, Yes You Can!, Criminal Justice, and Computer Club are actively meeting.

Community Involvement Events:

The volleyball team hosted a "You Matter" Night to promote suicide awareness on September 19th and raised over \$500 for Maverick's Mission. They along with the supporting scholars are also hosting a "Pink Out" today, October 15th, and all proceeds will be donated to the Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center.

The basketball team volunteered at the Cambria County Backpack Project on October 10th.

The Caring for Cubs Club made bracelets in support of suicide awareness and are selling bask goods in Ebensburg to raise funds for club t-shirts. Members also participated in planting mums in downtown Johnstown. They also volunteered at the food kitchen.

Members of the volleyball and basketball teams along with athletic staff painted the weight rooms in preparation for equipment delivery.

Special Projects:

Student Senate wants to bring back physical ID cards for safety and convenience purposes. The IDs on phones are sometimes hard to upload when wi-fi is not available and needed to board busses, and present at businesses and are being questioned for validity by some.

Student Senate would like more assistance with the internship process. Assistance and advisors should help at least the semester before the actual internship begins or provide more alternative programs.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Linda Thomson stated that the minutes from October 2, 2024, are included in the packet. She congratulated Carole VanMeter on hosting a successful Chef Auction.

Foundation Report – Ms. Carole VanMeter reported that 211 tickets were sold, and 190 attendees were present at this year's Chef Auction. Including staff and student volunteers, the ballroom hosted over 200 guests, which is an increase compared to last year. The proceeds from the Chef Auction were broken down as follows: ticket sales generated \$28,625, the trip auction brought in an estimated \$3,800, and the silent auction, 50/50 baskets, and live auction raised \$16,505. Additionally, there were donations from attendees who chose not to purchase sponsorship tables but made separate contributions during the event. The 1889 Foundation also donated \$15,000 for scholarships, bringing the total outside donations to \$16,650.

Overall, the event raised a total revenue of \$65,580. After deducting estimated costs, the proceeds amounted to \$56,470, which is fantastic. Carole expressed her gratitude to everyone who supported the event, including the chefs and culinary students who participated. She noted that the culinary students were proud of their involvement and did a tremendous job. She thanked

the 1889 Foundation for their generous donation and everyone who contributed to making the Chef Auction a success.

Marketing Report – Mr. Raymond Weible stated that his full report is included in the packet. He stated that recently the Marketing Department created and updated recruitment publications. Each year, from June through August, they collaborate with admissions and recruitment offices to produce new materials, including viewbooks, financial aid planning guides, and transfer guides. These materials have been delivered to the team and are available for download on pennhighlands.edu/recruitment. This ensures that they can be easily distributed, emailed, or shown to prospective students.

He also showcased the community report, which serves as an encyclopedia of the past year, covering everything that happened from 2023 to 2024. This 32-page document includes news articles, photos, and events, and is useful for donors, government agencies, and other stakeholders. Hard copies are available, and it can also be downloaded from the website.

The Marketing Department supported various events over the past few months with photography and other services. These events include the police academy graduation, college fair, 30th anniversary picnic, and the Centre County ribbon-cutting. One of the current marketing campaigns focuses on promoting the Open Houses.

He stated that Marketing is integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into its marketing efforts with the use of audio AI for hold messages and voiceovers. This includes a recent ad featuring an AI voiceover, which is included in the biweekly update. He reviewed the distribution of press releases and media reports. He stated that Marketing uses Critical Mention to track all our media coverage, and its reporting components are detailed in the full report. From July 1 to December 15, our press releases and other media activities resulted in 104 mentions across various outlets, reaching a duplicated audience of 3.3 million. This includes multiple articles in the Tribune-Democrat, which contribute to the duplicated audience numbers.

The media coverage generated approximately \$90,000 worth of publicity through online, television, and newspaper articles. This snapshot is part of a comprehensive 32-page report that provides details on each article, including its duration, publication, estimated value, and reach.

He explained that to ensure an accurate representation of our media impact, national coverage is excluded to avoid skewing the numbers. This localized approach focuses on our audience in central and western Pennsylvania.

REPORTS/COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURN

With no further business to be discussed, at 6:26PM, Ms. Linda Thomson and Ms. Adelyn Dull made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting which was unanimously approved by voice vote.