

**PENNSYLVANIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
December 17, 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, December 17, 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 4:32 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
Dr. Leah Spangler
Dr. Janet Grady
Ms. Adelyn Dull

TRUSTEES ABSENT

Mr. Mike Puruczky
Ms. Carissa Westrick
Mr. John Augustine
Mr. Brett Smith
Ms. Jackie Kulback

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

GUESTS & SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Dr. Nunez thanked everyone in attendance and introduced Mr. Cregg Dibert, the Director of the Police Academy and Campus Security. While Cregg has been employed at Penn Highlands for 10 years as the Director of Security, he has also taken on the role of Director of the Police Academy. He is attending today to discuss the Police Academy and his vision for its future. Mr. Dibert introduced himself and shared his background in law enforcement, noting that his career

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. Cregg Dibert, Director of the Police
Academy and Campus Security
Mr. Ray Weible, Jr., Executive Director of
Marketing Communications

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

began not in Pennsylvania, but in California. He spent about 14 years with the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, which serves a highly populated area with millions of residents. During his tenure, he gained extensive experience working in various divisions, including patrol, special operations, and fugitive warrants. His last assignment involved traveling across the country to apprehend individuals wanted in California who had been arrested in other states. Throughout his career, Mr. Dibert held numerous collateral duties. He was a member of the SWAT team, a field training officer for several years, and part of the training unit. He has trained first responders in active shooter scenarios, defensive tactics, and other critical skills. Additionally, he has been involved in training for basic SWAT, sniper schools, and other classes, teaching law enforcement personnel from across California at their facility.

Mr. Dibert explained the requirements to become a police officer in Pennsylvania, as set by the MPOETC (Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission). These include a physical agility test, a physical examination, a psychological exam, a vision test, and a reading assessment. Only those who meet these standards can begin training as academy cadets. He also clarified that becoming a police officer in Pennsylvania involves a three-step process: graduating from an accredited police academy, passing a certification exam with about 200 questions, and then becoming eligible for hire. This complex process highlights the dedication and effort required to become a certified police officer in the State.

Mr. Dibert highlighted the serious shortage of police officers, which means most departments are not fully staffed. This results in increased overtime costs, budget strains, and officers working extra hours without adequate rest, potentially leading to poor decision-making. Additionally, fewer officers on duty can reduce the level of service provided to the community. He expressed pride in leading the third Police Academy class at Penn Highlands, noting the Academy's significant positive impact on law enforcement agencies in the service areas. Of the 19 graduates from the first two classes, 18 are now serving as police officers in Cambria, Somerset, Blair, and Indiana counties.

Looking ahead, he expressed his motivation to expand and increase the number of cadets in the program. Beyond recruiting from high schools and colleges, the program will focus on organizations that attract young men and women interested in law enforcement. Additionally, he plans to intensify efforts to recruit military veterans and individuals from related fields, such as EMS and fire services, due to the significant crossover in these professions. Additionally, he plans to expand training opportunities beyond the classroom by increasing hands-on training. Instead of relying heavily on PowerPoint presentations, the program will engage cadets in real-world scenarios and activities, such as mock crime scenes. This practical approach ensures cadets are well-prepared for real-life situations and can build strong cases for prosecution.

He stated that upon graduation, cadets earn a criminal justice certificate worth 18 credits toward an associate degree in criminal justice. Starting in January, efforts will be made to increase this credit count to about halfway toward the degree to encourage more cadets to complete their associate degree.

He stated that these are some of the initiatives he is currently working on, and he is very motivated and excited about them.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

- Approval of Minutes from October 15 Board of Trustees Meeting

- Liberal Arts and Science AA Degree and Certification Program Review (AASS 1014-2024)
- College Admissions and Matriculation Policy Revision (AASS 1015-2024)
- Academic Integrity Policy Revision (AASS 1016-2024)
- Use of Cords and Stoles at Commencement Policy and Graduation Honors Policy Merger (AASS 1017-2024)
- Student Academic Overload Policy Deletion (AASS 1018-2024)
- College Donations Policy (EXAF 1001-2024)

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr. Greg Winger highlighted that the Foundation's annual giving campaign information was included in the meeting packet. He emphasized the campaign's importance and stated that the Foundation helps fulfill the mission of supporting students in need and those requiring extra help to achieve their dreams and goals. He asked the Board of Trustees to review the information and consider contributing, stressing the importance of their support.

He stated that this is his last meeting as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, reflecting on his seven-year tenure. He thanked the current and past trustees for their support and trust. He also thanked the president, the cabinet, senior staff, and all employees at the community college for their assistance and cooperation and acknowledged their efforts in addressing any questions or concerns over the years, which helped him perform his duties effectively.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Nunez thanked Mr. Winger for his service as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. He expressed gratitude for the collaborative efforts of the great leadership team that supports the College and acknowledged the immense talent and knowledge of the Board of Trustees that has been invaluable during his tenure as President.

Digital Connectivity Grant – Dr. Barb Zaborowski announced that the college has received a Digital Connectivity Grant, administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development COVID-19 ARPA funds. Out of 134 statewide applications requesting over 10,147 PCs, 117 awards were granted, covering 41 of the 67 counties and accounting for 9,122 laptops. The college will receive 100 HP laptops, which will be shipped directly the College. The grant has a two-pronged approach: first, to help students who lack access to a computer by allowing them to borrow one, and second, to promote digital literacy for seniors, which aligns well with the opening of a Senior Center in January. The contracts are expected to be released shortly after the first of the year, with the laptops arriving 30 days later. An HP representative will assist with the technical setup of the computers. Quarterly reports will be required over the next year to document how the laptops are being used.

Middle States Accreditation –Dr. Barb Zaborowski stated that the first draft of the self-study report has been submitted and it will be discussed during the start-up in January. The second draft is due in February, which is a quick turnaround. When we return in January, we will have exactly one year until the final report is submitted, in anticipation of the visiting team coming in the spring of 2026.

Additionally, on December 14th, the Middle States Commission committee met to review our application to change the accreditation status of the Bellefonte Center from an instructional location to an additional location. The College hopes to receive notification of their decision within the next few days.

Strategic Plan and Strategic Dashboard Update – Mr. Gary Boast stated that we are in the fourth year of our five-year strategic plan, which began in 2021. The College is pleased to report significant progress, as detailed in the strategic plan progress dashboard in the packet. Out of 31 stated objectives, 16 have been successfully completed, and overall, the College has achieved an 82% completion rate. The dashboard related to institutional effectiveness is also included, showing positive results. We update this rolling one-year dashboard throughout the year, and all metrics are complete for fall 2023 through fall 2024. Enrollment has stabilized after year-over-year declines during the COVID years, face-to-face enrollment is strong, and three-year completion rates are at their highest levels ever. Transfer-out rates without completion are very low, the lowest in 10 years, and retention is stable and steady.

Many strategic plan imperatives not on the dashboard have also been accomplished, such as reengineering our assessment system, upgrading facilities, enhancing cybersecurity and technology infrastructure, and expanding our geographic service area into Centre County. As we approach the end of our current plan, we are discussing the next planning effort, which will align with our Middle States accreditation process.

Mr. Gary Boast stated that the Strategic Plan process allows for dynamic changes and additions as the environment evolves. In response, IT has collaborated with Cabinet to incorporate cybersecurity objectives and goals into the Strategic Plan. These objectives consist of six specific targets: implementing the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) framework; enhancing access control measures; increasing cybersecurity awareness and training for employees, students, and the community; strengthening incident response and risk management capabilities; improving system resiliency and redundancy; and regularly assessing and updating security policies.

Additionally, performance metrics aligned with both Microsoft and NIST standards have been developed and will be added to the dashboard to track progress over time.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Mr. Winger reported the minutes are included in the packet from December 10, 2024.

Board of Trustees Officer Election (EXEC 1014-2024) – Mr. Winger introduced the motion. The survey was done via Survey Monkey.

- Nominated Slate for 2025-2026
- Chairperson: Dr. Janet Grady
- Vice Chairperson: Ms. Jennifer Anderson
- Secretary/Treasurer: Mr. Greg Winger
- Public Relations Officer: Ms. Lladel Lichty
- At Large Officer: Mr. John Augustine

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the Board of Trustees Officer Election.

Using AI Technologies (EXEC 1015-2024)- Dr. Nunez introduced the policy, which establishes the guidelines for utilizing AI technologies for both students and employees.

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the Using AI Technologies Policy.

FINANCE & FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Mr. DeYulis stated that the minutes from the December 5, 2024, meeting are included in the packet.

Financial Audit ending October 31, 2024 (FF 1019-2024)- Mr. Strohm presented the Financial Audit ending October 31, 2024. A summary of the Operating and Capital Budget, the Statement of Revenues and Expenses and the Net Position was reviewed.

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the Financial Statements ending October 31, 2024.

Reallocation of Capital Funds (FF 1020-2024) – Mr. DeYulis presented the motion for the reallocation of capital funds. He stated that the College officially opened the Centre County location in August and has \$82,475 remaining from the renovations project. The College would like to reallocate these funds to the current and ongoing capital improvements at the Richland Campus. The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires a separate action by the Board of Trustees to approve this reallocation.

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the reallocation of capital funds from the originally adopted used at the Bellefonte Center to the current and ongoing capital improvements of the Richland Campus.

PA State Public Building Authority Loan (FF 1021-2024)-Mr. DeYulis presented the motion for the PA State Public School Building Authority loan. He stated that the loan amount is \$140,000, with a term of five years starting in January 2025, at an interest rate of 3.5%. The financing will be reimbursed at 50% by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and will be used to purchase new computer equipment for the college.

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

MOVED: The Board of Trustees approves the borrowing from the PA State Public School Building Authority Revolving Loan Fund to purchase IT equipment upgrades.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Administration – Ms. Susan Fisher presented a PowerPoint of the 2023 Clery Report. She explained that the Clery Act is a federal law that mandates all higher education institutions receiving federal financial aid to disclose crime statistics for incidents occurring on or around their campuses. As part of the Clery Act, the

College is required to record crimes, train our students and staff on crime awareness, and publish an annual security report detailing crimes near our campuses. These statistics are also submitted to the Department of Education.

The Clery Report includes statistics on criminal offenses, hate crimes, violence against women, and arrests and referrals for disciplinary action related to weapons. Historically, the College has had zeros in all these categories, for which we are very grateful. The Director of Security, Cregg Dibert, prepares this report. Even when no crimes have occurred, the report is very extensive. It is published in multiple locations for our staff, students, and the public, including our internal intranet page. Hard copies are also available from the security office for those interested in reading the full report.

The College is actively preparing for the opening of our fitness center, aiming for the beginning of the spring semester. Facilities have been working diligently with Student Services and Student Activities and Athletics on this project to ensure everything is in place for smooth and safe operation. The fitness center will be open to both staff and students during the week, with hours extending until 7:00 PM from Monday to Thursday and until 4:00 PM on Friday to allow employees to use the facility after work and students to use it after class.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Technology and Analytics – Mr. Gary Boast stated that his report includes the annual review of the college's composite financial ratios and indicators for fiscal year 2024. This review is reported annually to the board after the financial audit concludes and is part of our institutional effectiveness evaluation, specifically regarding the financial health of the college. We use the standard analysis method now employed by the Department of Defense and our Middle States accreditor. This method helps us communicate our financial health transparently and informs our strategic planning efforts.

The report provides a three to five-year trend to guide strategic planning. Two of the four indicators were positive, which is good, but two did not meet expectations, specifically related to net position over the prior year and operating surplus from the prior year. We accounted for these discrepancies this year, considering the three to five-year timeframe. Last year, we received significant COVID grant funding, and the end of that funding, along with the timing and posting of PHR grant dollars across fiscal periods, contributed to the downward trend.

Finance has prepared a forecast for 2025, and all indicators show improvement over the prior year for fiscal year 2024.

Lastly, our CRM software now includes an artificial intelligence component that works behind the scenes to detect fraud on student applications. This new form of identity theft is affecting higher education, but the AI assistant uses various technologies, such as geography, phone numbers, and IP addresses, to detect fraudulent applications. This AI technology supplements the human review process in recruiting and admissions.

Report from the Associate Vice President of Finance – Mr. Omar Strohm stated that the Black Bear Micro-Market in the café has been open for a few months. A survey was sent out to students and staff. The feedback will be evaluated and will discuss any potential changes.

The College's bookstore is now under new management. The College is meeting with the new management to discuss segmented services and resolve any issues in preparation for the Spring semester.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS/STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Janet Grady stated that the minutes from December 3, 2024 are in the packet and the committee had five action items on the consent agenda. She gave some details on those action items approved earlier.

Report from the Vice President of Academic Affairs – Dr. Cindy Doherty reported on new and revised courses as part of our ongoing program updates, driven by program reviews, advisory committee input, and faculty evaluations. She stated that the College has created a new hospitality management course to support the culinary program and has updated the marketing program with the addition of two new courses: Social Media Marketing and Digital Analytics, which are crucial in today's marketing landscape. Lastly, three different professional writing courses have been consolidated into a new, comprehensive professional writing course to reduce redundancy.

Report from the Vice President of Student Services – Ms. Trish Corle reported that enrollment for the Spring Semester is 16% below the goal. There has been a delayed response in students waiting until the end of the semester to enroll in Spring classes. There will also be lots of opportunities to get first-year students after the first of the year. After the break, Student Services will continue to push forward with their efforts.

Recruitment and Admissions are finishing up their Fall Semester school visits and will begin Spring Semester visits after the holiday break. They are looking forward to spring events, including CareerFest. The team is moving forward with the recruiting process and addressing any concerns as they arise.

The WebNet funds were delayed, as applications did not open until December 2nd. Consequently, funds were not available for distribution, and training could not be offered. The process is now ongoing with our partner agencies, and we expect funding to be distributed and training to be available after the first of the year.

The Johnstown Housing Authority Grant is wrapping up, with graduation scheduled for January 31. A grant was received from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies for the Non-Profit Learning Center, and meetings are scheduled to discuss training for that group. Workforce Education is also looking into a PA Initiative Manufacturing Grant. Additionally, the Somerset Career and Tech Center has requested another phlebotomy training session, which will kick off in March.

As previously discussed, the admissions team is actively monitoring and handling fraudulent applications. Essentially, individuals are submitting fraudulent applications to institutions to receive grants, aid, and loan money. They enroll in classes, do just enough work to stay enrolled, receive the funds, and then disappear. These applications are often submitted under false identities, creating a multi-million-dollar problem nationwide.

Fraudulent applications have become very sophisticated, with individuals providing documents on official-looking letterhead from school districts and forging transcripts. However, we have implemented robust measures to catch these fraudulent applications. As mentioned, our CRM system is instrumental in identifying these applicants. We also have stringent requirements in place before allowing students to proceed with the application process and gain acceptance.

An Advisory Council Committee meeting was held last week in Bellefonte. She explained that each time the Advisory Committee meets, there is an education session for any questions about various processes. Last week's meeting focused on recruitment and enrollment processes, as

well as articulation and transfer, to ensure everyone understands how this work. Marketing also joined the meeting to discuss their role. Each campus location has unique needs. Therefore, it's crucial to listen to the Advisory Councils to understand their community's specific marketing and communication needs and how we can effectively meet them.

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 3 inducted members of 23. Phi Theta Kappa has 5 new members.

The Gaming Club held a gaming night on November 12 and the Tea Club went to the Carnegie Museum on November 15.

Five individuals and one team were inducted into the Black Bear Athletics Hall of Fame on November 15th. The renovated gym was revealed on November 15th and the Basketball players are very happy with it.

Students, staff, and their guests from each of our campus locations hopped on two buses to New York City on November 16th.

Student Senate went Christmas Caroling at the Richland Healthcare and Rehab Center on December 3 and helped with Holiday Fest on December 4.

Ava Dobransky and Autumn Montgomery were named to the WPC and Region 20 Volleyball Teams. Bryan Donitzen, Christian Haberkorn, and Connor Haberkorn participated at the Region 20 and National Cross-Country Meet. Bryan finished first amongst Division 3 runners at the Region 20 meet and finished 87th at nationals.

Community Involvement Events:

The Fantasy Sports Club, X-Files Club, Cheer Team, Media Production and Caring for Cubs Club participated in the Safe Trick or treat held on October 28.

The Caring for Cubs Club sold butterfly pins for epilepsy awareness in November and hosted a Visit with Santa on December 3 at the Ebensburg Center.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Report from Committee Chair – Dr. Nunez stated that the minutes from December 4, 2024, are included in the packet and the committee had one action item on the consent agenda. The College didn't have a formal process, and this is just to establish how donations can be accepted.

Marketing Report – Mr. Raymond Weible stated that his full report is included in the packet. He reported that marketing has added two testimonials to our website in the form of Q&A from former police academy cadets who are doing well. These testimonials are connected to our police academy web page and will be used in promotions. Police academy advertising will run from January through June.

Additionally, Marketing has another testimonial video scheduled for January with a recent graduate from Somerset. The Marketing department has covered numerous events over the past few months, including the gymnasium ribbon-cutting, community trick-or-treat, and the academic and workforce exhibition. Photos from these events are included in the final two pages of the marketing communications report and have been used on social media, press releases, and other platforms.

Marketing has started traditional advertising methods such as local radio and billboard advertising. Billboards went up this month, and local radio ads will begin in January, running through May and June. We have 40 billboards set to go up over the next few months in Johnstown, Ebensburg, Somerset, and Centre County, along with at least 100 local radio ads per month on pop stations.

In the past two months, we have had 111 mentions in various media outlets, reaching an audience of roughly 3 million, with an estimated publicity value of \$89,000. Since moving into Centre County with our Bellefonte facility, we have gained more coverage, particularly from local stations tied to Penn State, increasing our audience reach and frequency.

Marketing has also enhanced our press releases by adding special graphics to improve engagement on social media. This approach has increased shares, likes, and click ability. Marketing is currently testing this method and will report back on its effectiveness.

Foundation Report – Ms. Carole VanMeter reported that she sent an email to students to gauge the demand for Holiday Food Boxes before Christmas Break. With the help of volunteers, she was able to assemble the boxes using the remaining funds from the 2024 Hunger Free Campus Grant. She was pleased to announce that 42 students signed up for these holiday food boxes: three students in Centre County, 11 in Blair, six in Ebensburg, 21 in Richland, and three in Somerset. She was pleased that they reached all five campuses. Additionally, the Foundation has received the 2025 Hunger Free Campus Grant, which will provide \$20,000 starting January 1st to continue the food pantry and address food insecurity.

Ms. VanMeter announced the establishment of the Police Chief James Monk Police Academy Memorial Achievement Award. In September, Chief James Mock's daughter, Mary Mock, reached out to the Foundation to allocate funds for the creation of this annual award for a Police Academy graduate. In February, there will be an unveiling ceremony for a plaque, followed by a reception. This award will grant \$1,000 to a deserving police cadet at each graduation, chosen by our instructors and Police Academy Director, Craig Dibert. Mary Mock will be invited to join the graduation to present her father's achievement award. Chief Jim Mock was instrumental in helping Richland become the Police Department it is today, and the College is very excited for the community to learn about this new initiative.

The Foundation has received two EITC donations: \$3,000 from First National Bank and \$2,500 from First Summit Bank. Additionally, Spruce Street Animal Clinic has pledged \$10,000 for the 2025-2026 scholarship season. This generous pledge will benefit residents of Huntington and Mifflin County.

Finally, as previously mentioned, the Foundation completed all of the community reports this week and has already received some pledge cards back from the Annual Giving Campaign, which has a goal of \$20,000. Everyone's support is greatly appreciated.

REPORTS/COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Winger thanked Mr. Joseph Hurd and Mr. Ralph Steward for serving on the nomination committee for the slate officer elections.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion duly made by Dr. Janet Grady, seconded by Ms. Lladel Lichty and unanimously carried by voice vote, all non-board members were excused and the Board of Trustees went into executive session to discuss the employment, performance, and compensation, of an employee at 6:24 PM.

Ms. Lichty and Dr. Grady made a motion to leave executive session at 6:27PM which was unanimously approved by voice vote.

ADJOURN

With no further business to be discussed, at 6:27PM, Mr. Greg Winger and Ms. Linda Thomson made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting which was unanimously approved by voice vote.