

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

January 17, 2017
11:45 a.m.

Department of Higher Education
One Ashburton Place, 21st Floor
Conference Room 3
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Special Meeting Minutes

A Special Meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held Tuesday, January 17, 2017 in the Conference Room in the 21st Floor at One Ashburton Place in Boston, Massachusetts.

The following Board Members were present:

Jasson Alvarado Gomez
Sheila Harrity, Vice Chair
Nancy Hoffman
Tom Hopcroft
Fernando Reimers
Robert Johnson
Henry Thomas
Paul Toner

Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner and Secretary to the Board

The following Board Members were absent:

Chris Gabrieli
J.D. LaRock
Paul Mattera
Dani Monroe

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Harrity called the meeting to order at 11:52 p.m.

II. Motion

A. Board of Higher Education

Documents Used:

- BHE Motion 17-04 Bristol Community College Presidential Appointment, and attachments

BHE 17-04 Bristol Community College Presidential Appointment

Vice Chairperson Sheila Harrity began by explaining the purpose of the Special Meeting, which was to consider two presidential appointments: the first of which being the appointment of Dr. Laura L. Douglas to position of President of Bristol Community College (BCC). She then invited Commissioner Santiago to make comments and introduce the motion.

Commissioner Santiago began his remarks by thanking all of the many participants in the process. He acknowledged the work of Ms. Elena Quiroz-Livanis, Special Assistant to the Commissioner and Director of Postsecondary Success Strategies, who was the BHE representative on the search. He continued that the DHE worked with the search committee and campus representatives to develop a campus profile, and he was in frequent contact with BCC Board of Trustees Chairman Joseph Marshall. He additionally had the opportunity to interview the finalists. Commissioner Santiago concluded that he believed the process worked well and is pleased with the outcome.

He then turned the meeting over to BCC Trustee Stephen Torres, who gave an overview of the process. Mr. Torres remarked that the process began with current BCC President John Sbrega announcing his retirement. This was followed by the selection of a search committee, carefully selected to be a complete representation of the campus community and led by BCC Board of Trustees Chairman Joseph Marshall. He continued that the initial pool had 45 applicants, and the committee met to narrow it to 23. From that pool, they selected 12 candidates for interviews, and then selected 5 candidates to bring before the Board of Trustees for a campus visit and interview.

Vice Chairperson Harrity thanked Trustee Torres and then invited the selected candidate, Dr. Laura L. Douglas, to make comments. Dr. Douglas provided an overview of her educational background and professional experience. She remarked that she had experience in both teaching and student services, and had demonstrated her ability to connect with staff at the ground-level. She highlighted her extensive responsibilities and achievements in her current position as Provost in the Iowa public higher education system, including developing community partnerships, closing achievement gaps in student success and retention, and leadership in a multi campus system. She continued by discussing her interest in the position, noting that she believed the campus environment, culture, and size of BCC and the area it serves is a good fit for her, given her background in organizational behavior and her experience in community outreach. She concluded by noting that she is a Massachusetts native and her grandfather was born and raised in Fall River, and she is excited to return to her roots.

Vice Chairperson Harrity opened up the next portion of the meeting for comments and questions. Several Board members extended their congratulations to Dr. Douglas for being selected as the next president of Bristol Community College. Topics covered during the question and answer portion included: Dr. Douglas' strategies for promoting civic engagement and developing leadership opportunities for her students, a discussion of the successful diversity and inclusion efforts utilized in her current position in the Iowa public higher education system, as well as strategies for translating that success to southeastern Massachusetts, especially in STEM education, and lastly, a discussion on dual enrollment and early college partnerships.

There being no further discussion, Vice Chairperson Harrity called for a motion. The following motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Laura L. Douglas was duly made, seconded and passed unanimously by all Board members present:

MOVED: BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the December 15, 2016 recommendation of the Bristol Community College Board of Trustees recommending Laura L. Douglas as President of Bristol Community College. Such appointment is effective on or about January 1, 2017, is subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check, and is subject to and in accordance with the attached terms and conditions of appointment.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel

III. Motion

B. Board of Higher Education

Documents Used:

- BHE Motion 17-05 Bristol Community College Presidential Appointment, and attachments

BHE 17-05 Mount Wachusett Community College Presidential Appointment

Vice Chairperson Harrity called the meeting back to order at 12:30 and introduced the next motion, the appointment of Dr. James Vander Hooven as Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) President. She asked the BHE members in attendance to introduce themselves, and then invited Commissioner Santiago to offer remarks.

Commissioner Santiago began his remarks by thanking participants in the search and providing an overview of the process. He acknowledged the work of Dr. Patricia Marshall, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success, who was the BHE representative on the search. He continued, adding that he worked closely with the campus throughout the process, reviewed the institutional profile, approved the list of semifinalists, and interviewed each of the finalists with Secretary of Education James Peyser. He commented that conducting multiple presidential searches at once has been challenging and this period represents an era of change in leadership in our community college sector.

Vice Chairperson Harrity then introduced Ms. Tina Sbrega, Chairperson of the MWCC Board of Trustees, and invited her to offer remarks. Ms. Sbrega thanked the Commissioner and DHE staff for their support and availability during the process, which fell within strict adherence to BHE guidelines. She remarked that the campus is in eternal gratitude for outgoing MWCC President Dan Asquino's 30 years of service to the campus community, and that his departure has created some anxiety over the loss of his leadership.

Ms. Sbrega then introduced attorney Dick Cella, Vice Chair of the MWCC Board of Trustees and Chair of search committee. Mr. Cella provided an overview of their process, beginning with the selection of a search firm and the development of an institutional profile. He continued that the committee identified 34 applicants who were qualified, and categorized by number so the committee would not know who they were.

The search committee reduced that pool to 20, and then a further review reduced the list to 10. Those candidates were all interviewed with a series of standard questions. He continued that the committee then reduced that pool to 5 finalists, who were invited back for campus interviews, which resulted in the trustee selection of Dr. James Vander Hooven. Commissioner Santiago commented that this search process was particularly unique in that there usually is a member of the search committee who remembers the last time a presidential search happened but in this case, there was no one who had been around the last time a search happened at MWCC, which was 30 years ago.

Vice Chairperson Harrity invited Dr. Vander Hooven to make comments. He began his remarks by acknowledging the anxiety over the departure of longtime President Dan Asquino, and that he hopes to alleviate that by bringing calm and reassurance to the campus community. He provided some anecdotes about his experience as a high school teacher, and what inspired him to work in higher education. He remarked that he was honored to be selected to lead MWCC and is energized and excited to work with the community by expanding community partnerships, business and employment opportunities. He continued that he brings a very even keeled approach to leadership, as he believes that approach fosters an environment that allows people to thrive.

Vice Chairperson Harrity opened the next portion of the meeting up for questions. Several BHE members extended their congratulations to Dr. Vander Hooven. Topics covered during the question and answer period included the development of new programs as it relates to best serving the statewide public higher education system and the Commonwealth as a whole, developing community partnerships, the challenges of declining enrollment trends, developing stronger alignment with K-12 to improve college readiness, affordability, and early college awareness and community outreach.

There being no further discussion, Vice Chair Harrity called for a motion. The following motion to approve the appointment of Dr. James L. Vander Hooven was duly made, seconded and passed unanimously by all Board members present:

MOVED: MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the December 15, 2016 recommendation of the Mount Wachusett Community College Board of Trustees recommending James L. Vander Hooven as President of Mount Wachusett Community College. Such appointment is effective on or about January 1, 2017, is subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check, and is subject to and in accordance with the attached terms and conditions of appointment.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.