

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

October 22, 2013
12:00 p.m.

Department of Higher Education
1 Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, Massachusetts

Special Meeting Minutes

A special meeting of the Board of Higher Education (BHE) was held on Tuesday, October 22, 2013, in the DHE Conference Room, 14th floor of One Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

The following Board members were present:

Charles Desmond, Chair
David Barron
C. Bernard Fulp
Nancy Hoffman
Saeyun Lee, Designee for Secretary Malone
Kathy Matson
Fernando Reimers
Henry Thomas
Paul Toner

The following Board members were absent:

Louis Ricciardi, Vice Chair
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education
Dani Monroe
Keith Peden
Tina Sbrega

The following North Shore Community College Board of Trustees members were present:

Richard Yagjian, Chair
Martha Farmer
James Ridley
Steven Seeche

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:18 p.m.

II. MOTION

A. Board of Higher Education

BHE 14-01 North Shore Community College Presidential Appointment

Chair Charles Desmond opened the meeting by welcoming North Community College (NSCC) Trustees and administrators. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to consider and vote on the NSCC trustees' presidential nominee Dr. Patricia Gentile. He then asked members of the BHE and representatives from NSCC to introduce themselves. He continued by giving a brief overview of the process for selecting a president. Chair Desmond said that the BHE had the ultimate statutory authority to approve the recommendations of the local Boards

for presidents. Pursuant to the new BHE guidelines, BHE members had the opportunity to interview semi-finalists; he thanked BHE members Saeyun Lee and Paul Toner for participating in the interviews. He noted that he also participated in the interviews and that Commissioner Richard Freeland interviewed all of the semi-finalists. Chair Desmond said that NSCC Chair Richard Yagjian led the search and asked him to tell those present more about the process.

NSCC Chair Yagjian said that the search for a new president began in January after Dr. Wayne Burton announced he would retire. After soliciting proposals from different search consultant firms, they chose RH Perry and Associates from Washington, DC in March. The initial pool consisted of 73 candidates and, all but five, met the minimum requirements. The search committee spent several weeks reviewing the 68 candidates, and narrow the pool down to 18 through that process. Of those 18, one withdrew and the committee did further analysis on the background reviews of the remaining 17 candidates. There were then 13 semi-finalists who were asked to come to Boston and interview with the search committee. This took two and a half days and the committee asked each applicant the same series of questions within a 90 minute sessions. The committee was virtually unanimous regarding the top five candidates selected as finalists. Chair Yagjian said it was an extraordinary process and experience. He mentioned that General Counsel Constantia Papanikolaou represented the Department of Higher Education and thanked her for all of her assistance.

He continued, saying that the five finalists spent one day visiting the Lynn campus and another at the Danvers campus, and concluded their stay with another round of interviews with the trustees. NSCC Chair Yagjian stated that it was a grueling process to become the president of a community college and that he gives all of the candidates tremendous credit for all of the work they had to do to prepare for it. He said the presidential nominee they bring forth to the Board rose to the top and the NSCC Board was very active in the process and were all strong supporters of the nomination. When the NSCC Board went to vote, the meeting room was at capacity and the attendees appeared to be happy with the choice. NSCC Chair Yagjian shared that in addition to consulting with the search committee, he spoke with roughly 25 to 30 members of the campus community to elicit their opinions and thoughts because he wanted to have a good sense of the feeling of the community at large.

Chair Desmond then asked NSCC Chair Yagjian why he thought Dr. Gentile was the best candidate. He responded by saying that one of the things that struck him was her business background and degree from The Wharton School. NSCC is foremost an educational institution, but he also sees it as a business and the leader needs to be able to lead. Dr. Gentile can see the college in its entirety he said and possessed all the qualities necessary to lead. He also admired her perseverance and determination and shared in this regard when the 13 candidates came to Boston, Dr. Gentile was the first on the agenda at 7:30 a.m. Her flight had been cancelled from New Jersey and the committee offered to reschedule her interview. However, she did not accept that and instead rented a car and drove all night to make it Boston in time for her 7:30 a.m. interview. Dr. Gentile arrived at the hotel at 4:00 a.m. and to NSCC Chair Yagjian it showed her determination and that was a characteristic of someone who could lead North Shore Community College. He added NSCC needs a president that can go into the community and meet with private industry in order to gain their support and also have the ability to work with the Department of Higher Education and political delegations. NSCC Chair Yagjian thinks she has the qualities to do that. He commented that the pool contained exceptional candidates, including two out of

the five final candidates were sitting presidents. However, Dr. Gentile's potential is unlimited and she has the capability to take the institution a higher level.

Dr. Gentile thanked NSCC Chair Yagjian and the NSCC Board for their faith in her and she said she looked forward to leading the institution in partnership with them. She went on to say she was struck by the Commonwealth's commitment to community colleges and student success. That was instrumental to her in knowing that she wanted to come NSCC. NSCC is a polished gem and should be proud of what it has achieved in the past and what is going to be accomplished. She said that she was very excited to be called and told that she was chosen as a NSCC presidential finalist, especially knowing there were sitting presidents in the pool. Dr. Gentile stated the choosing her was riskier than choosing a sitting president, but that choice says something about NSCC and where they want to go. Higher education is a major catalyst that helps lift Americans out of poverty and that is why she is committed to higher education as a whole. She referenced the tremendous work that has gone into the Vision Project and agreed that successful higher education is the key to a competitive nation. Higher education institutions need to supply the country with leaders and smart individuals. The institutions, she said, that are doing this work are the community colleges. Higher education has a huge return of investment when students successfully complete their goals – not just for the students, but for the community and state. Dr. Gentile added that she is very excited and eager to work with NSCC, the BHE and the Department to help students, the Community and the Commonwealth to attain those goals.

North Shore Community College Board members were then given the opportunity to make remarks. Trustee Martha Farmer said that Dr. Gentile was articulate and smart, both of which made a difference. She notices that Dr. Gentile was a first generation college student who went to the University of Pennsylvania and graduated *magna cum laude*. She described Dr. Gentile as a risk taker who has raised four sons, two of which were adopted at adolescents. That was a personal characteristic, which demonstrated a commitment to kids. That giving, generous nature, along with being articulate, brilliant, and being good at fundraising was an awfully attractive package, she said. Trustee Farmer also said that Dr. Gentile had broad experience outside of the community college sector, having previously run a non-profit. That capacity to bring people together made her stand out of a group of extremely qualified candidates.

NSCC Board Member James Ridley said he had the opportunity to interview Dr. Gentile and the students she interacted with during her campus visit. He said she was so genuine with the students and that was very important for an educator, which is why he voted for her.

NSCC Board Member Steven Seeche stated that he was on the Board for six months and supported the decision to nominate Dr. Gentile with great delight. He also thanked NSCC Board Chair Yagjian for organizing the process. He added that Dr. Gentile has presence and potential, desire, commitment and humanity. North Shore Community College has made great progress and they are ready to go to the next level. He said that Dr. Gentile was the best candidate to move the college forward and improve the lives of the students.

Chair Desmond stated that he would now turn to the BHE members and that they should feel free to ask any questions or make any comments. Board Member C. Bernard Fulp Spent asked what kind energy and transformative processes did Dr. Gentile seek to bring to NSCC as the Commonwealth strives to have the best higher education system in the country.

Dr. Gentile shared that Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC), where she is currently Dean, is an Achieving the Dream institution. AACC has been challenged with the Atlantic City industry. It has also dealt with students who needed English as a Second Language instruction and like every good community college there was a need to step up their game. Dr. Gentile sees similarities in the student populations being served by NSCC and a need for the college to also up their game. The Vision Project has a lot of goals and benchmarks to help ensure more students get to their personal goals and that NSCC was giving them an opportunity to improve their lives and community. Board Member Fulp said that with the possibility of a casino being built in Boston, it was helpful to have a president leading the institution who was familiar with that industry.

Board Member Fernando Reimers stated that over the next 15 to 20 years jobs that exist now would not exist then. How do we prepare students for the needs of industry of the future, not today? He asked Dr. Gentile how could NSCC be an engine of social development. Dr. Gentile spoke about the culinary work and the casino industry impact at ACCC and the commitment sustainability that cuts across curriculum. She said it was definitely a challenge to prepare students to understand where these industries are going. She said higher education administrators have to be close to the industry and listen to employers to see where they are going, not just in STEM, but liberal arts as well. Community colleges are a part of the community. It is important to have employers engaged in what you do and to build those relationships, especially with local community-based organizations. Dr. Gentile said it was the job of the president to engage and invite the community.

Board Member Henry Thomas noted that those BHE members who attended the Academic Affairs Committee meeting had just participated in a discussion around student success. He asked Dr. Gentile what kind of strategies she would use to facilitate student completion. Dr. Gentile responded by first stating that there were many people working the developmental education and that she believed it would be solved. She said that the focus should be on how to scale existing strategies up. Dr. Gentile added that another strategy for ensuring student completion revolved around intrusive advising and having a student support service network. The number one reason why students drop out is financial and she said they had to look at financial aid and funding streams to help students stay and meet their financial obligations. She continued, stating that most community colleges students have one or two jobs and have child care needs, and the research shows that when students work over 21 hours a week, their academic performance suffers. Dr. Gentile said that it is necessary to reduce a student's financial obligation so that they can stay in school and engage in activities and support services offered. Students are asking themselves "How am I going to pay my rent and my tuition?" If the Commonwealth is really going to address the needs of low-income students, then they need to pay attention that that area.

Board Member David Barron asked if there were any models that were providing that type of financial aid and creating a shift in life in the community college sector. Dr. Gentile answered there was no specific model because people think community colleges are affordable, they have not really paid attention to financial aid in the sector. She said there was a need to help students who were not eligible for the Pell grant. She added that changes on the federal level about financial aid have affected community colleges and there were plenty of difficulties. Higher education leaders need to think about incentives to work hard, build institutional resources, and increase endowment, scholarships and financial

aid.

Dr. Gentile shared that she was an adjunct instructor at ACCC while studying at The Wharton School. She also worked with a conservationist company. However, she enjoyed being in the classroom. After working in Washington, DC, she returned to South Jersey and called the President of ACCC and asked if there was something she could help with. She was asked to coordinate the efforts that sprouted from a New Jersey Department of Labor grant. Students involved in the program were considered to be in transition and upon completion, they were thankful to be given the opportunity to move back to productive citizenry. Dr. Gentile fell in love with the mission and she said advocacy has always been in her heart. Community colleges are a way for individuals to transform their lives and it was a transformational business.

Chair Desmond thanked Dr. Gentile for answering the Board members' questions. He also took time to recognize and thank Interim President Janice Forsstrom, who he said had been terrific, handled the situation elegantly and kept NSCC moving in the right direction.

The following motion was brought forth and seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

BHE 14-01 NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the October 7, 2013 recommendation of the North Shore Community College Board of Trustees recommending Patricia A. Gentile as President of North Shore Community College. Such appointment is effective January 1, 2014, is subject to the successful 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. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.