

MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, December 20, 2017
6:00 P.M. in the Louison Board Room, Brockton Campus
Brockton, MA
Approved January 17, 2018

Attendees: Bonnie Blackler, Crystal Camp, Thomas E. Carroll, Eshita Chakrabarti, Deborah Enos (via telephone) Robert W. Harnais, Pamerson Ifill, TJ Lacey, Ann Sullivan, Valerie Sullivan

Also in attendance: Carlos Santiago, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; Kenneth Tashjy, General Counsel, Massachusetts Community College System; and Dr. Shirley Pippins and Kate Nolde, Consultants with Academic Search, Inc.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm.

Chair Harnais thanked everyone for attending the special meeting. He said that after thoroughly reviewing the membership of the 2017 Presidential Search Committee he noted that it is comprised of 99% faculty and staff and he is looking to place additional community leaders on the committee and have the Massasoit Community College Foundation involved as well. Chair Harnais said that it is equally important to have external community stakeholders involved in the process. He acknowledged Kevin Walsh, President of the Massasoit Community College Foundation and thanked him for attending the meeting.

Chair Harnais raised concern about the lack of a current 3-5 year strategic plan. He wants to ensure that the Board is in agreement about what the goals are for Massasoit Community College, and what the skills and qualities of the next president need to be so that the College is successful in meeting those objectives. Furthermore, it is the fiduciary responsibility of this Board to set the vision for the institution and the incoming president.

Trustee Ifill added that it is imperative to have the input of the new president when developing the strategic plan. Chair Harnais agreed that the president should have a voice in the process. Carlos Santiago, Commissioner for Massachusetts Public Higher Education, addressed the Chair and clarified the strategic planning process. The Commissioner stated that it is the duty of a president to launch the strategic planning process, inclusive of campus and wider community. Once the plan is developed it is brought to the trustees for approval, and once Board approval is received the plan is sent to the Board of Higher Education for review and recommendation to be approved by the Secretary of Education.

Chair Harnais thanked the Commissioner and reiterated his unease that during the retreat in December members of the Board were not able to clearly identify the goals and objectives for the next president. He advised that as he was brought into the search process mid-search, he wanted to take a pause in the process to ensure that the Board is in full agreement about what the vision is for the college and what skills and qualities the next president should possess. He said that the search committee was less than 48 hours away from interviewing candidates and he was not confident that the Board had set the vision.

Trustee A. Sullivan said that, as a Board, they have discussed the goals and vision in general terms including the need for a financially stable college, increasing retention, and improving fundraising. Trustee V. Sullivan concurred. Trustee Enos added that the very fact that this conversation is taking place is indicative that this discussion needed to happen and she is supportive of Chair Harnais taking a pause so the Board can come to an agreement on a shared vision.

Chair Harnais acknowledged Dr. Shirley Pippins and Kate Nolde of Academic Search, the firm with whom Massasoit Community College has contracted to conduct the presidential search. He thanked the consultants for attending the meeting and recounted a prior conversation with Dr. Pippins where he expressed his desire to pause the search so the Board could have a unified vision.

Dr. Pippins addressed the Board and stated that the College is in a unique position, bringing in a new president who will lead the charge for a new strategic plan presents, in many ways, an optimal situation for the new president to work with internal and external stakeholders. Chair Harnais said he feels that the Board is not at an impasse and he is confident that the Board can develop the foundation for their shared vision with one or two more meetings.

Trustee Lacey said that his takeaway from the conversations at the December retreat was that the Board had a solid understanding of the skills and competencies desired for the next president, what was unclear was the prioritization of said skills and competencies. Trustee Enos concurred. Trustee V. Sullivan suggested that the Board convene to prioritize the skills and competencies in the search prospectus.

Commissioner Santiago added that the role of the Board in a presidential search is made very clear in the guidelines. He added that the Board and the Committee have done everything by the book. A list of 9 candidates was provided to him and approved. He noted that this is one of the strongest candidate pools he has seen. If the Search Committee adds or removes anyone from the approved list, he would need to review it again. He noted that if the Board adds non-voting members to the Committee it is within their right and he would approve. Chair Harnais thanked the Commissioner again for participating in the meeting.

Vice Chair Carroll said that he was not in support of adding additional members to the search committee and feels that there is solid community representation on the Board of Trustees who can lend that perspective to the search process, however; he will defer to the Search Committee regarding the addition of non-voting members. Trustee Ifill added that the position profile clearly addresses the qualities desired in the next president, if the Board wants to meet again to address the prioritization of those qualities he would not disagree.

A motion was made by Trustee A. Sullivan and seconded by Trustee Lacey to convene another Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees on January 3, 2018 to review the Presidential Profile and prioritize the skills and attributes desired by the Board and define the vision of the Board for the next President of Massasoit Community College.

Rollcall Vote

Chair Harnais – yes

Vice Chair Carroll – yes

Assistant Secretary Blackler – yes

Trustee Camp – yes

Trustee Chakrabarti – yes

Trustee Enos – yes

Trustee Ifill - yes

Trustee Lacey – yes

Trustee A. Sullivan – yes

Trustee V. Sullivan – yes

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Carroll and seconded by Trustee Lacey to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Prepared by:



Lydia B. Camara
Interim Executive Administrative Assistant
To the President



Thomas E. Carroll
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees