SUMMARY OF MEETING

A meeting of the Massachusetts Community Colleges Trustees’ Association (MCCTA) was held at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center on Thursday, October 27, 2016.

I. Welcoming Remarks:
At 4:10 p.m., Mr. Jeff Linehan, President of the MCCTA and Chair of the Board of Trustees at Northern Essex Community College, called the meeting to order. Trustee Linehan thanked everyone for making it to the meeting and attending the earlier activities of the Trustees’ Conference. He started by welcoming many of the new trustees and appointees what role the MCCTA has in advocacy, educational opportunities, and the exchange of information. He reminds the MCCTA members that he is appreciative that everyone elected him President at the past Spring Meeting, and he has big shoes to fill of his colleague, Trustee Tina Sbrega at Mount Wachusett Community College. He alerted everyone to the by-laws and a brief overview of the MCCTA mission that he included in the packets. He recapped the past Spring Meeting, where MCCTA officers were elected, celebrated the 3rd Annual Student Leadership Awards, and recognized Speaker DeLeo with the “Community College Champion Award,” for his support of the community colleges and the STEM Starter Academy initiative.

He referred to the by-laws and the one-pager, explaining the MCCTA’s overarching role as a resource to trustees in advocacy, educational opportunities, advisement to external groups, collective action, exchanging of information, and partnerships with other institutions. He also referred to the letter that he sent at the tail-end of the FY2017 budget process, where he explained the fiscal realities facing the campuses and the trustees’ that govern them. Trustee Linehan stated that the collective action of the MCCTA continues to put weight behind these advocacy efforts.

Mr. Linehan then took a moment to thank the Department of Higher Education for their coordination with the MCCTA in order to make the entire day a trustee-focused symposium, and combine forces to benefit the busy schedules of trustees. He thanked Bill Hart and new Director of Trustee Relations Mike Mizzoni for their work to make the day a success. Mr. Linehan then lauded the special guest speaker, David Baime from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), who would provide insight into federal policy with the looming presidential and congressional elections.

II. Approval of Minutes:
Upon a Motion duly made and seconded, the April 20, 2016 MCCTA Minutes were approved unanimously as presented.
III. Presentation and Discussion:
Trustee Linehan introduced the featured guest speaker, David Baime, the Senior Vice President for Government Relations and Policy Analysis at AACC, the American Association of Community Colleges. Mr. Linehan invited Mr. Baime up and described how the election clearly would have an impact on federal funding and programs that potentially could reverberate to community college campuses.

Mr. Baime provided a PowerPoint and spoke of the fiscal reality of Washington, DC and the federal government, mentioning both that there’s “no new money in DC,” and that “the federal government provides more money in financial aid than state governments.” He discussed that they expect a continuing resolution for the federal budget by the end of the year, and that areas such as Year-Round Pell, Perkins Act, and the Higher Education Act (HEA) remain top priorities for those in higher education. Under the HEA Reauthorization, he mentioned that they’re looking at ways to prevent graduation or cohort default rates being used against institutions that were not in mind when the metrics were put together. He discussed some major differences between the two major candidates for the presidency on higher education, and how that could shape itself into policy once one takes office.

He then entertained questions from the members on free community college, the leadership on key House and Senate Committees, and the outlook for the Pell Grant. Mr. Baime again reiterated the importance of events such as the National Legislative Summit in making sure that the community college system remains united in areas to improve federal policy and funding. Mr. Linehan thanked Mr. Baime for his presentation, and commented that the MCCTA would look forward to partnering with the national organizations in advocacy efforts.

IV. Board of Higher Education Segmental Representative Report: Dr. J.D. LaRock, Chair of the North Shore Community College Board of Trustees:
Mr. Linehan then invited up Dr. J.D. LaRock, Board Chair at North Shore Community College and the Segmental Representative to the Board of Higher Education. Mr. LaRock thanked Trustee Linehan for the introduction. He began his remarks on items in front of the Board of Higher Education and recent developments at BHE committee meetings.

He described the recent activity of the Strategic Planning Committee and the rigorous process the Committee is undertaking. He continued by discussing the work of the Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy Committee, which covered the finalization of the FY2017 state budget as well as the update on the Campus Safety and Violence Prevention Conference held in September. Mr. LaRock then updated the members on the Academic Affairs Committee, where the Board had made it clear that it has discussed revising its relationship in the program approval process. Further, he provided an update on the Commonwealth Commitment initiative and the work on early college, which could ideally provide opportunities for funding in the near future. He then asked if there were any questions from the membership.

V. Executive Officer’s Report: Bill Hart, Executive Officer, Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office (MCCEO)
After a short five-minute break for dinner to be served, Trustee Linehan then introduced Bill Hart, the Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office (MCCEO) to offer remarks on the final FY2017 state budget and other recent statewide initiatives. Mr. Hart thanked Trustee Linehan for the introduction. Mr. Hart first thanked the many new trustees he has been able to meet with throughout the day. He mentioned the coordination with the Congressional Delegation
on many recent federal legislative issues, such as “risk-sharing.” He also mentioned the work with Trustee Linehan and the MCCTA Executive Committee to reiterate the importance of the Year-Round Pell Grant to the Delegation. He continued by discussing the recent partnership that he had with the Attorney General’s Office, particularly in student debt and the aftermath of the closing of ITT Tech. Mr. Hart then provided an update on the FY2017 GAA and the concern over potential 9C mid-year spending cuts, that seemed to be lurking for the following week. Mr. Hart was hopeful that higher education could still be spared for the upcoming cut, however. He continued by discussing the top state budget priority for the current and upcoming year – collective bargaining. With the DCE contract process ongoing, the recent funding of FY2016 MCCC funding, and a budget exposure for FY2017 MCCC contract funds – he mentioned that work with the other segments will be crucial to get these dollars to the campuses in order to be “whole.” He noted the intention of many presidents and trustees to travel down to DC in February for the National Legislative Summit. With a new Congress and a new Administration coming in, he thought advocacy for key federal programs would be timely and important. He then answered questions from the MCCTA members.

VI. Remarks: Dr. Ellen Kennedy, President of Berkshire Community College, on behalf of the Community Colleges Presidents’ Council
Trustee Linehan then introduced Dr. Ellen Kennedy, President of Berkshire Community College, who would offer remarks on behalf of Dr. John Cox, President of Cape Cod Community College, and current chair of the Community Colleges Presidents’ Council. She started by going around the room and having everyone introduce themselves to the crowd. After, she discussed the stagnant nature of MassGrant and the need for it to be replenished back up to levels that could meet the actual need throughout the Commonwealth. Also, she discussed tax credits for businesses that contribute to community colleges, and how this could help develop the local and regional industry relationships. She finished by mentioning that the board leadership process should be strengthened – having leaders that each board could pick themselves may ease boards that are under continual transitions.

VII. Treasurer’s Report:
Mr. Linehan then invited Dr. Mabry up, who is the President of Middlesex Community College and the MCCTA Treasurer. He would report on the final FY2016 budget and the up-to-date MCCTA FY2017 budget.

Dr. Mabry gave an update on the MCCTA budget over the past year. He described that the actual expenses for FY2016 were $40,045, and the balance forward into FY2017 was now $5,039. With the new assessment per campus of $2,500, the total funds available for FY2017 was $42,539. This would just about cover the projected budget. A delay in salary adjustments and a raise in fringe rates caused these costs to be raised. He continued by stating that the expected expenditures for FY2017 include costs for the Fall Meeting, some expected costs for ACCT in February, and the yearly Spring Meeting in 2017. Dr. Mabry stated that although the funds should just about cover the costs of the budget projected, funds will be scarce. Thus, dues may need to be raised to $3,250 or $3,500 in order to provide adequate reserve for the budget going forward. This decision would be made at the Spring Meeting. Dr. Mabry reminded the members that MCCTA dues were $4,500 about 5 years ago. There were no questions from MCCTA members.

Upon a Motion duly made and seconded, the report was approved unanimously as presented.
VIII. **Trustee Forum:**
Trustee Linehan mentioned that in order to continue to engage with community college trustees, he wanted to continue to provide a forum for general discussion on salient and timely trustee issues.

- **Top Issues for Trustee Board Chairs**
  One item brought up by Trustee LaRock was to gauge the short-list issues that board chairs have been facing on their campuses. MCCTA members discussed some of their top issues – including collective bargaining, food insecurity, federal funding, and periods of transition for Boards.

IX. **Old Business:**
Trustee Linehan entertained any questions from MCCTA members, and asked if there was any old business to discuss. Hearing none, Trustee Linehan thanked the members and the guests at the meeting.

X. **Adjournment:**
Trustee Linehan then provided closing remarks. With no further items to come before the Association, there was a motion for adjournment duly made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:44 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

David Koffman
Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office