

Blue Ridge Community College

Local New Board Member Orientation

August 20, 2025

Board Members Present:

- Dr. Bruce Bowman
- Dr. Robin Crowder
- Ms. Allison Dugan
- Ms. Janet Ewing
- Mr. Danny Ledford
- Dr. Drew Maerz

Board Members Absent:

- Mr. John Butler, Jr.
- Mr. Tony Davenport
- Ms. Vermell Grant
- Ms. Sandy Hernandez
- Ms. Cathy Welsh

College Staff in Attendance:

- Dr. John Downey, President of the College and Secretary of the Board
- Dr. Dave Urso, Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Ms. Anastasia Triplett, Vice President of Finance and Administration
- Ms. Amy Kiger, Executive Director of the BRCC Educational Foundation
- Ms. Laura Otrhalik, Executive Assistant to the President

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Downey called the meeting to order at 12:54 p.m. and welcomed the Board's new and returning members. Brief introductions were shared.

College Management Personnel

Dr. Downey provided an overview of Blue Ridge Community College's personnel and their roles. He noted that Board members serve in an advisory capacity to the State Board on matters important to the College. The State Board is responsible for determining the internal organization and operational procedures of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).

Dr. Bowman and Ms. Ewing recently attended the 2025 Chancellor's Retreat, *Mission Possible*, in Roanoke, representing their roles on the Local College Board and the Educational Foundation. The retreat reviewed the Chancellor's *Focus Priorities* and *One System Goals*. Through the Chancellor's *One System* initiative, the VCCS is working to centralize operations across all 23 institutions, promote a culture of care, and evaluate programs and services to ensure equal access for all students. One example shared was the review of funding for dual enrollment courses, with a focus on addressing cost disparities across community colleges throughout the state.

Blue Ridge Community College Board Members

Dr. Downey reviewed the current list of Blue Ridge Community College Board members and provided background information on those unable to attend.

Terms of Board Members

A summary of current Board member terms was discussed and included as a handout in the *2025–2027 College Board Manual*.

Accreditation and BRCC Mission, Values and Strategic Questions

An overview of BRCC's accreditation process was shared, along with a review of the College's mission, vision, values, and strategic directions. The discussion also included a summary of the programs offered at BRCC, such as transfer programs, continuing education opportunities, and specialized workforce training.

Key policies from the *Virginia Community Colleges Policy Manual* were discussed, with an emphasis on the advisory role of the Local College Board and board appointment procedures. Handouts of these policies were also included in the *2025-2027 College Board Manual*.

Dr. Downey invited Dr. Urso, Ms. Triplett, and Ms. Kiger to provide a brief overview of the reports the Board can expect in future meetings.

A. Academic Affairs

Dr. Urso explained that upcoming Board action items related to Academic Affairs will include curriculum proposals aimed at streamlining academic programming across key areas such as nursing, aviation, and EMS into a more unified system across the VCCS. These recommendations are provided by faculty, endorsed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and presented to the Local College Board for approval before they are submitted to the State Board.

B. Finance and Facilities

Ms. Triplett discussed the Board's role in approving the College's budget for the upcoming fiscal year. She noted that financial reports typically include data from the previous quarter and highlight spending by targeted areas. Updates on major projects are also shared.

C. Educational Foundation

Ms. Kiger shared that the Board will receive updates on the Blue Ridge Community College Educational Foundation's activities. The Blue Ridge Fund provides vital financial support to students, including scholarships for those with significant financial need. Additional initiatives have included partnering with local food trucks to offer meal vouchers to students, totaling \$8,000 last year. The Foundation also awarded over \$500,000 in student scholarships and worked closely with BRCC's career coaches to support various student needs and programs. The Blue Ridge Fund raised \$1.7 million in the past year, marking its most successful fundraising year to date.

Rights and Responsibilities under FOIA

Dr. Downey reviewed a handout *What Every Board Member Absolutely Has to Know About FOIA*, which was included in the Board's *2025–2027 College Board Manual* for reference.

There being no further business or discussion, the new Board member orientation adjourned at 2:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ms. Laura Otrhalik