

**Blue Ridge Community College  
College Board Meeting  
March 11, 2026**

**Board Members Present:**

- Dr. Bruce Bowman
- Dr. Robin Crowder
- Mr. Tony Davenport
- Ms. Allison Dugan
- Ms. Janet Ewing
- Ms. Vermell Grant
- Mr. Danny Ledford
- Dr. Drew Maerz
- Ms. Cathy Welsh

**Board Members Absent:**

- Mr. John Butler, Jr.
- Ms. Sandra Hernandez-Brown

**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
- Ms. Velma Bryant, Dean of Student Services

**Welcome and Call to Order**

Ms. Welsh welcomed the Board and called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**Moment in Mission**

Dr. Downey introduced Velma Bryant, Dean of Student Services, to present an overview of BRCC's new Career Academy, scheduled to begin in Fall 2026, following Harrisonburg City Schools' decision to withdraw from the Massanutten Technical Center to pursue expanded CTE partnerships. The Career Academy's vision is to develop a highly skilled, career-ready workforce by offering rigorous, career-aligned concurrent enrollment programs for high school juniors and seniors that integrate academic, technical, and experiential learning. Students will attend classes on BRCC's campus and have access to additional supports such as mentoring, tutoring, and career services. The academy will offer both credit and non-credit pathways leading to college degrees and certificates, with initial enrollment projected at approximately 50 students in 2026–2027. Curriculum development is underway with five programs planned for launch in Fall 2026, instruction primarily delivered by adjunct faculty, and plans to expand program offerings over the next three years to support increased post-secondary enrollment.

Ms. Welsh thanked Ms. Bryant for her presentation.

## Approval of January 14, 2026, Minutes of Proceedings

**\*Ms. Dugan motioned to accept the minutes of the January 14, 2026 meeting as presented. Dr. Maerz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### Reports

#### A. Finance and Facilities

Ms. Triplett reported that there were no financial reports to review, as the college was between financial quarters.

Ms. Triplett provided updates on current and upcoming facilities projects. The C Building renovation is underway, with interior finish work expected to be completed by the end of April. Remaining work includes filling the space underneath the building and completing bathroom renovations. Over the past several months, multiple HVAC issues have occurred across campus, including a boiler failure that required the use of reserve funds for emergency repairs. Replacement parts have been ordered and additional expenses will appear in upcoming financial reports. At the Board's last meeting, it was noted that the Houff Student Center fan coil project was complete; however, additional repairs were needed to address lingering issues. The fan coil replacement project in F Building remains on schedule and is expected to be finished by the end of the semester. Emergency lighting replacement projects in the J and T Buildings are scheduled to take place during the summer, with both buildings scheduled to be closed to complete the work. The space planning focus groups have concluded, and the final report is in progress. This report will help to identify underutilized areas and potential classroom relocations to support new program offerings. New cafeteria furniture is scheduled to arrive next week, and the space will be repurposed as a student lounge and multipurpose area. Additional vending machines have also been installed.

Ms. Triplett provided an update on the wayfinding signage project, reporting that she recently met with architects to review design concepts and signage placement for the project's third phase. BRCC's current signage includes inconsistencies in vehicular, parking, and building signage, with limited pedestrian wayfinding signage. Planned improvements include numbering all parking lots and installing pedestrian signage in key sidewalk areas. Ms. Triplett also presented renderings of the proposed signage to the Board.

#### Curriculum and Student Affairs

Dr. Urso reported that the structure of the Curriculum and Student Affairs report was revised to accommodate the new accessibility mandate, which requires all digital content to be accessible by April 24. The report was reorganized into three sections, a Consent Agenda, Action Items and Information Items.

The items listed on the Consent Agenda consisted of course actions related to adoption from the VCCS Master Course File and edits resulting from actions taken the Deans Course Review Committee. These actions included the removal of the prerequisite for *ART 154: Ceramics Wheel Throwing I*; the inactivation of *SDV 101: Orientation for Criminal Justice, Law, and Forensics Professions*; and revisions to the course title and description for *ART 236: Ceramics: Wheel Throwing II* to align with the VCCS Master Course File. The following courses were adopted from the VCCS Master Course File: *ADJ 131: Legal Evidence*, *ADJ 172: Forensic Science II*, *ADJ 288: Capstone Course in Police Science*, *ADJ 296: On-Site Training*, *AGR 242: Animal Production*,

*Products and Emerging Technologies, and AGR 234: Chemical Application and Pest Management.* Two additional non-substantive edits included re-sequencing program prerequisites to create a pre-admission prerequisite semester for the *Nursing AAS* and adding *ART 180: Introduction to Computer Graphics* to the list of eligible Liberal Arts electives. **\*Mr. Ledford motioned to approve items 1–12 on the Consent Agenda as presented. Dr. Crowder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Dr. Urso presented Action Items for the Board’s review, including the addition of local BRCC co-requisites to Nursing courses *NSG 230: Advanced Professional Nursing Concepts*, *NSG 252: Complex Health Care Concepts*, and *NSG 270: Nursing Capstone*. Proposed revisions to *ADJ 171: Forensic Science*, *Intermediate Cybersecurity – CSC*, *Office Professional Technologies – CSC*, *Computer and Electronics I – CSC*, *Criminal Justice – AAS*, *Criminal Justice Foundations – CSC*, and *Credit for Prior Learning – Criminal Justice* were also discussed, as well as the discontinuation of *Information Systems Technology – CSC* and *Banking Services Professional – CSC* certificates. Additional action items included removing *HLT 116: Introduction to Personal Wellness Concepts* from the *AA Liberal Arts Electives*, *AS General Studies Electives*, *AS Science- Transfer Core Electives*, *AS Health Science Additional Transfer Electives*, and *AS Social Science Additional Transfer Electives*; adding *HMS 100: Introduction to Human Services* to the *AS Social Science Additional Transfer Electives*; creating a new *Sustainable Agriculture Practices – CSC*; and awarding Credit for Prior Learning for *SHRM training in the area of Business*, the *Institute of Professional Managers – Certified Manager*, *Certiport IT Specialist – Data Analytics*, *Certiport IT Specialist – HTML and CSS*, and *AP African American Studies*. **\*Dr. Bowman motioned to approve the Action Items 1-18 as presented. Dr. Maerz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

As part of the Information Items, Dr. Urso’s report included a draft proposal for the 2026–2027 Curriculum Advisory Committee memberships for review. A final proposal will be presented at the Board’s May meeting for approval.

## B. Personnel Report

At the request of Secretary Downey, Ms. Triplett presented the Personnel Report to the Board. A personnel handout was included in the meeting materials.

### Enrollment Update

Dr. Downey asked Dr. Urso to provide an enrollment update. Dr. Urso shared three handouts on Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Student Enrollment, VCCS Spring 2026 Point-in-Time FTE Enrollments, and All FastForward Enrollments by College from the beginning of the fiscal year through Fiscal Week 37. BRCC’s total FTE enrollment increased by 2.72 percent from Spring 2025 to Spring 2026, while regular FTE enrollment declined by 0.5 percent. The count for regular FTE enrollment excluded dual enrollment students.

### Report from the Educational Foundation

Ms. Kiger reviewed the Educational Foundation reports, including the Blue Ridge and All Funds Comparison reports, and shared information on upcoming Educational Foundation events.

## Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

## **New Business**

### **Graduation Update and Attendance**

Dr. Downey provided the Board with an update on BRCC's commencement ceremony, announcing that Katie Frazier, Virginia's newly appointed Secretary of Agriculture, has agreed to serve as the commencement speaker. Arrangements for the student speaker are currently in progress. The ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 9, at the Atlantic Union Bank Center at JMU and will include a graduation breakfast for members of the Board, the commencement and student speakers, and BRCC administration. A chart listing each Board member's name and regalia details was distributed, and Board members were asked to indicate whether they plan to attend and to verify the accuracy of their regalia information.

### **Information on the President's Evaluation Process**

Dr. Downey provided a brief overview of the President's Evaluation process and noted changes that had been made to the evaluation timeline. Materials included in the Board's meeting packet included the revised evaluation timeline, VCCS Policy 2.A.2.9.D.2.a-j, a PDF copy of the evaluation survey, 2025–2026 Presidential Evaluation Metrics and Definitions, and the 2025–2026 One System Goals. Dr. Downey shared that he was preparing a Goals Report, developed in accordance with BRCC's Institutional Priorities and the VCCS One System Goals, outlining objectives accomplished over the past year. The report will be distributed to the Board by Wednesday, April 1. Following distribution of the report, the VCCS College Advisory Board survey link will be sent to Board members, who will have until Friday, April 10, to complete the survey. At the Board's May meeting, the Board will be asked to vote on a letter prepared by the Board Chair, Ms. Welsh. Once approved, the letter will be forwarded to the Chancellor, who serves as the official evaluator of college presidents.

### **Information on the Board's Self Evaluation Process**

As part of the SACSCOC accreditation process, the Board is asked to participate in a self-evaluation survey, which will be distributed via email later this week by Ms. Otrhalik.

### **Report from the President**

Dr. Downey shared his report with the Board and thanked Ms. Kiger and the Educational Foundation staff for hosting the Annual Scholarship Luncheon, as well as the Board members who attended and the donors who continue to support BRCC students. He also highlighted the student speaker, stating that she did an outstanding job sharing her personal story of perseverance, the support she received from her community, and the importance of education in shaping the future for herself and her son.

BRCC was awarded Large Business of the Year by the Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce at the 2026 Business Excellence Awards following an anonymous nomination and community voting process.

The College is currently in the process of developing its next three-to-five-year Strategic Plan. Pamela Monger-Storey, Associate Professor of Biology and chair of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee, who presented to the Board at their last meeting, has been working to gather input from student focus groups, the Occupational Technology Advisory Boards, BRCC faculty and staff, and the Educational Foundation Board members. If the process goes as planned, the Board is scheduled to review the updated Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Directions in May 2026,

prior to final review and approval by the Chancellor on behalf of the State Board. BRCC's Strategic Plan is modeled in part on the VCCS *Accelerate Opportunity* framework.

Dr. Downey and Dr. Urso attended a Memorandum of Understanding signing at James Madison University with Dr. James Schmidt, JMU President, for the BR2JMU program. Several of BRCC's staff and the BR2JMU students were also in attendance. At the event, a Memorandum of Understanding for one of the first applied science agreements in business was also signed, allowing students to complete an associate degree and transition seamlessly into JMU's Business program.

The Virginia Community College System on behalf of BRCC and Danville Community College have requested additional funding from the General Assembly to expand the Aviation Maintenance Technician program. BRCC currently produces approximately 20 graduates per year, and the General Assembly has expressed a desire to increase that number. Federal support has been provided by Senator Kaine and Senator Warner, including efforts to secure funding for the construction of a hangar at Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport, which would allow BRCC to operate in the new facility with no rental costs. Dr. Downey acknowledged Delegate Runion and Chancellor David Doré for their leadership and advocacy in these efforts.

## Public Input

There were no members of the public in attendance, and no public input was presented or discussed.

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

*\*Items requiring action.*

*Respectfully submitted by Ms. Laura Otrhalik*