Blue Ridge Community College
College Board Meeting
September 9, 2026

Board Members Present:

- Dr. Bruce Bowman
- Dr. Robin Crowder
- Mr. Tony Davenport
- Ms. Allison Dugan
- Ms. Janet Ewing
- Ms. Sandra Hernandez-Brown
- Dr. Drew Maerz
- Ms. Cathy Welsh

Board Members Absent:

- Mr. John Butler, Jr
- Ms. Vermell Grant
- Mr. Danny Ledford

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. Avie Thacker, Coordinator of Library Services & Academic Support

Welcome and Call to Order

Ms. Welsh welcomed the Board and called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Moment in Mission

Dr. Downey introduced Avie Thacker, Coordinator of Library Services & Academic Support. Ms. Thacker presented an overview of the BRCC Archive. Following the presentation, Board members visited the Houff Student Center to view selected archived materials.

Approval of May 13, 2026, Minutes of Proceedings

***Ms. Ewing motioned to accept the minutes of the May 13, 2026, meeting as presented. Dr. Maerz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Reports

A. Finance and Facilities

Ms. Triplett reviewed the financial reports provided in the meeting materials for the fiscal year period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

***Ms. Dugan motioned to approve the Financial Reports from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. Dr. Maerz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

The FY27 Budget Updates were presented for review and approval.

***Ms. Dugan motioned to approve the FY27 Budget Updates. Dr. Crowder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Triplett reported on the College E&G Operating Budget. Each year, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) distributes a chart showing the allocation of base general funds, non-general funds, and total funds across the 23 community colleges. For FY27, BRCC received approximately $29 million, representing 2.7% of the overall VCCS budget. For the past few years, BRCC has received funding increases due to course fees and aviation program allocations. Personnel costs remain the College's largest expenditure at approximately $21 million. The College is expected to spend down its annual budget and seeks to limit carryover funds to less than $1 million. For FY26, BRCC carried forward a little over $600,000.

Updates were provided on current and upcoming facilities projects. The wayfinding project continues to move forward, with drawings being prepared for bid. The space planning analysis project is approximately 90% complete. Emergency lighting upgrades in the T and J Buildings were completed over the summer, with additional upgrades planned for the V and P Buildings next year. BRCC is working to update its Master Plan to evaluate campus space utilization and review future needs. The update to the Master Plan will require Board involvement and approval. Ms. Triplett and Dr. Downey recently met with architects to discuss the Tennis Court Study. Options under consideration for the tennis courts include resurfacing the existing courts, replacing a portion of the courts with pickleball courts, or returning the area to green space. Additional information regarding the tennis courts will be shared at the Board's next meeting.

Curriculum and Student Affairs

Dr. Urso provided a handout of the updated VCCS Educational Programming Chart. The State Board recently approved changes to program classifications, with Workforce Training expanded to include all programs previously classified as non-credit, Applied and G3 programs reclassified as Career Education, and transfer degrees redesignated as Academic Transfer Programs. BRCC's Workforce division will continue to operate under the name Workforce Solutions.

One action item was presented for the Board's consideration involving revisions to the course description for VET 218. The proposed change included removing the statement, "this course is optional," and adding clarifying language indicating that "this course may be a supplemental laboratory requirement for VET 217, as identified by the college."

***Dr. Bowman motioned to approve the Action Item for VET 217 as presented. Dr. Maerz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Additionally, Dr. Urso shared an informational item for the Board's review regarding the 2026-2027 Curriculum Committee Charges. The committee has been charged with reviewing items 27-

C1 through 27-C4, as outlined in the meeting materials, and evaluating their alignment with the President's priorities and the VCCS Strategic Plan.

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

At Secretary Downey's request, Dr. Urso provided an enrollment update. Handouts were shared on FTES (Full-Time Equivalent Student) Enrollment and FastForward Enrollments by College through Fiscal Week 11. A 30% increase in FastForward enrollments for FY27 was reported. Significant growth in dual enrollment had also occurred statewide, with some areas experiencing increases of up to 60%; however, dual enrollment does not generate additional state funding. Dr. Urso discussed FastForward funding trends and shared that, in prior years, colleges had exhausted available funding before the end of the fiscal year. Funding limitations last year resulted in a 13% reduction in the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program across the VCCS.

Report from the Educational Foundation

Ms. Kiger announced that Tami King, Fiscal Technician, planned to retire at the end of September after many years of dedicated service to the BRCC Educational Foundation. She expressed appreciation for Ms. King's contributions to the College. Ms. Kiger noted that, with Ms. King's retirement, duties had been reassigned across positions in the Foundation to better support operational needs. The new Donor Relations and Development Services Coordinator will begin on September 21.

Educational Foundation reports, including the Blue Ridge and All Funds Comparison reports, were reviewed. Examples of program support provided during 2025-26 through unrestricted funds, temporarily restricted funds, and endowments were also highlighted. Ms. Kiger thanked Board members who attended the Community Breakfast Series presentations. Attendance totaled 40 in Waynesboro, 61 in Harrisonburg, and 50 in Staunton.

Ms. Kiger shared that an anonymous donor had once again offered a challenge to provide an additional $1,000 match if all College Board and Educational Foundation Board members made a gift or pledge to the 2026-2027 Blue Ridge Fund by October 31.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

College and Foundation Events 2026-2027

Dr. Downey reported that Board approval is required annually to permit the service of alcohol at the Educational Foundation's Casino Royale fundraiser. BRCC has also been asked to host an annual Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP) Connect event, which would also require approval to serve alcohol. Dr. Downey shared that SVP is an important partner in the region's economic development efforts.

***Ms. Dugan motioned to approve serving alcohol at the upcoming SVP Connect and Casino Royale events. Ms. Hernandez-Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

President's Institutional Priorities

Dr. Downey introduced his 2026-2027 Institutional Priorities and reviewed the 15 initiatives. The priorities were intentionally developed to align with both the BRCC Strategic Plan and the VCCS Accelerate Opportunity 2030 Strategic Plan. Areas highlighted included campus infrastructure improvements, expansion of Aviation Maintenance and Nursing programs, and continued growth in student enrollment and engagement. Dr. Downey discussed significant enrollment growth in BRCC's Aviation Maintenance program, which had doubled in size, and reported that enrollment in the Nursing program had expanded to 119 students, with approximately 60 students graduating annually.

Dr. Downey shared that progress updates on the Institutional Priorities will be provided throughout the year. The Board will review accomplishments at the end of the year as part of the evaluation process, and the results will be included in the President's annual evaluation submitted to the Chancellor.

***Dr. Bowman motioned to accept the President's Institutional Priorities for 2026-2027. Dr. Crowder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Conflict of Interest Signatures

Annual Conflict of Interest forms were distributed to Board members for their review and signature. ***Eight Board members in attendance completed and signed the form.** Ms. Otrhalik will follow up with the three remaining Board members to obtain their signatures.

Report from the President

Dr. Downey presented his report and shared that members of the Administration team recently attended the Chancellor's Retreat, "Mission Possible II: Make It Matter," in Roanoke. Dr. Bowman and Ms. Ewing also attended as representatives of the College Board. The retreat continued to emphasize operating as one system and increasing efficiencies across the VCCS. Discussions also focused on student success outcomes and moving beyond access and completion to include post-completion measures.

A letter from VCCS Chancellor Dr. David Doré regarding the Executive Compensation Program was distributed to the Board. Dr. Downey shared that BRCC and several other colleges in the system do not participate in the program. However, it was important for the Board to be aware of the option should it be considered in the future. Dr. Downey emphasized that BRCC has historically viewed the directing of Foundation resources toward institutional priorities and support for faculty, staff, and students rather than executive compensation.

Appreciation was expressed to the Board for its support of college events throughout the summer, including attendance at the Community Breakfast Series and locality meetings. Dr. Downey noted that the Board's engagement, questions, and decisions made a meaningful difference to the College.

Dr. Maerz noted that the Board's November meeting was scheduled on Veterans Day. It was suggested that the meeting be moved to Friday, November 13 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Ms. Welsh requested that Ms. Otrhalik contact Board members to determine whether a quorum would be available on the proposed meeting date.

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 7:40 p.m.

**Items requiring action.*

Respectfully submitted by Ms. Laura Otrhalik