Student Success and Academic Affairs Committee
Board of Trustees
Massachusetts Bay Community College
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, June 23, 2026
by WebEx

MINUTES

Trustees Present: Rebecca Negreli, Chair; Tobey Choate; Alfonso Hidalgo; Ilissa Povich; Pranshu Shah; Reyad Shah; Lili Silva

Trustee Shah arrived at 8:13 am, and Trustee Hidalgo arrived at 8:40 am. Trustee Shah departed at 9:00 am.

Staff Members Present: Karen Britton, Executive Director and Board Liaison; Liz Blumberg, Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students; Lynne Davis, Dean of Health Sciences; Catherine Gildae, Associate Dean for Institutional Effectiveness; Courtney Jackson, Vice President of Academic Affairs & Provost; Nina Keery, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences; Henry Lopez, Director of End User Services; Mike Lyons, Chief Information Officer; Nhon Pham, EDP Systems Analyst; David Podell, President; David Protano, Dean of Automotive Technology and STEM; Halye Sugarman, Dean of Business and Professional Studies; Richard Williams, Dean for Student Success and Strategic Initiatives

CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Committee Chair Negreli called the meeting to order and declared that a quorum was present.

April 16, 2026, Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Trustee Choate moved to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2026, meeting, and Trustee Povich seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Trustee Choate – YES; Trustee Negreli – YES; Trustee Povich – YES; Student Trustee Shah – ABSTAINED; Trustee Silva – YES

Vice President and Provost Jackson reported that at today's meeting two faculty members will be presenting two different topics. The first is Professor Heidi Getchel-Bastien, who is leaving MassBay at end of month to become Dean of Business and Professional Studies at Northern Essex Community College. MassBay is sorry to see Professor Getchell-Bastien go but happy for her, and she will be staying on as an adjunct.

How OERS Help Students

Professor Getchell-Bastien's presentation entitled *How OERS Help Students* included the following:

What are OERs?

There are many definitions for the term "Open Educational Resources" (OERS) because educators, publishers, and other stakeholders disagree on the characteristics that make, or do not make, a resource an OER, and technology continues to

expand the ways educational resources can be shared and adapted. The two definitions below are the most utilized. Others are in the hyperlink included in the calendar invitation for this meeting.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) definition: Open Educational Resources are learning, teaching, and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others.

OER Commons definition: Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning, and research materials that are either (a) in the public domain or (b) licensed in a manner that provides everyone with free and perpetual permission to engage in the 5R activities. OER creators retain copyright and can set specific permissions for how their materials are used, modified, and distributed. This is where Professor Getchell-Bastien's site is posted.

OER Licensing and Permissions

Various types of OER licensing and permissions are granted to others to use, as long as the author is given credit, meaning the source must be attributed. It was noted that plagiarism is possible. Faculty can create their own OERS based on using someone else's.

Financial Savings for Students

The main purpose of OERS is to save students money. The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), an educational nonprofit, published findings that OERS had generated $1 billion dollars in cumulative savings for students in K-12 and higher education in the United States and Canada between 2013-2018. Last year, updated figures from SPARC found that a single pilot program funded by the United States Department of Education generated $250 million dollars in cumulative student savings. The most recent statewide Massachusetts data available reports that students in Massachusetts saved $21.5 million in 2024 through no-cost and low-cost course materials, including OERS. Last year, MassBay saved students over $700,000 in textbook costs. Approximately 17% of course sections offered used no-cost course materials, an increase of 3% from the prior year.

Other Advantages for Students/Benefits of Open Educational Resources

There are many advantages of OERS. They are created by educators and scholars, more students are doing the reading, and it is now easier to share information. OERS reduce the need to create new learning resources, as they can continually be updated and offer increased opportunities to collaborate and flexibility to adapt. They reduce costs and increase accessibility, offering freedom of access and including different voices and perspectives. They encourage lifelong learning, incorporating authentic, or "real life", experiences.

Professional Getchell-Bastien's OER – Civil Rights and Liberties

Professor Getchell-Bastien shared certain pages of her own OER, Civil Rights and Liberties: An OER Textbook for Undergraduate Students, which was the recipient of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) OER Creator Award. She noted that one of the biggest challenges is keeping the information in the OER updated. Included at the beginning of Professor Getchell-Bastien's OER is disclaimer referencing that it is updated regularly.

Looking Ahead

The future of OERS is positive, with approximately 33% of college faculty nationwide reporting that they use at least one OER. This number is increasing each year at a rate of 3-5%. MassBay continues to support OER development through sabbaticals and a wide variety of learning opportunities through its Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). At the same time, colleges and universities must continue to prioritize support for OERS because the U.S. Department of Education continues to cut funding for programs nationwide. Similarly, although the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) has made significant investments for community colleges statewide, they have made cuts to small programs and committees, such as to the DHE Open and Low-Cost Advisory Council (OLERAC) and to the

division of Civic Learning and Engagement. It is easier to find OERS for more common topics. MassBay supports the use of OERS, and the CTL has been very supportive. Professor Getchell-Bastien wrote her OER while on sabbatical. She noted that barriers to using OERS are faculty not having time, as well as colleges not having a CTL or staff to provide support.

Committee Chair Negreli acknowledged the great collaboration on this work and congratulated Professor Getchell-Bastien on the award she received.

Supporting Student Success in Online Classes

Vice President Jackson introduced Dean Richard Williams, whose presentation entitle *Supporting Student Success in Online Classes* included the following:

What is an online course?

Online courses at MassBay are asynchronous. There are no class meetings, and students complete the work each week on their own schedules. There are no required meetings, though faculty can have remote office hours. Students access courses through Blackboard, a learning management system. In the fall and spring semesters, just over 33% of the College's course sections are online, while in summer the number is approximately 66%. Enrollment in online courses has increased significantly since before the pandemic and is now at 40%. Historically, successful course completion rates in online courses have lagged behind in-person sections by 10-15%.

Online Student Support

Numerous virtual supports and resources are offered to students, such as advising, support with tutoring, counseling, and instructional videos. Student orientations are offered both virtually and in-person. Peer support drop-in hours are offered during the first few weeks of classes.

Introduction to Online Learning

Dean Williams shared the "Introduction to Online Learning" course, which was designed by a group of faculty and developed and implemented by Online Learning and CTL. It is promoted to all students in online courses and includes sections on navigating Blackboard and posting to discussion board. A video from Professor McGrath, who presented at the April committee meeting, is also included. Students do hands-on exercises while following along with an Orientation Leader. There has been good attendance. Faculty can make this part of their online course. Over 300 students have enrolled, and over 200completed the course. Feedback has been positive. It can be challenging to measure if the students who most need this course are accessing it. Dean of Teaching and Learning Heimel has also designed a lesson on AI. Students receive a certificate when they complete the course.

Course Completion Rates

Dean Williams presented course success rates (a grade of C- or better), comparing online success rates to face-to-face. In the past, students have not been as successful in online courses, but over the years, the numbers are becoming more similar to in-person. The designation WR indicates faculty withdrawing students from courses. In the Fall of 2025, the College revised the WR policy, and this status is now used only for students who have never attended. This change had a positive impact on success rates in online classes. Student success rates in online foundational courses, English and Math, are also improved. There are some subjects where students are lagging behind.

In terms of identifying and recognizing students who need the most "training" and support, the College is continually looking as to how to improve. Students are tracked at beginning to be certain they do not "fall through the cracks".

Advisors reach out if students have not signed on or accessed a course, to be sure online courses are the right choice and connect with students who can benefit the most. MassBay is starting to have embedded tutors in online courses. Lack of

technology at home can be a barrier. Students can do on-line coursework on their phones, but this is not ideal. It is important to have the right technology.

Training on creating an online course is provided by the Department of Online Learning. Workshops are also offered, where faculty present their online courses to other faculty.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Trustee Choate motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Student Trustee Shah seconded.

The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Trustee Choate – YES; Trustee Hidalgo – YES; Trustee Negreli – YES; Trustee Povich – YES; Student Trustee Shah – YES; Trustee Silva - YES

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 am.



9/29/26

Rebecca Negreli, Chair Date
Student Success and Academic Affairs Committee