

CHESAPEAKE COLLEGE
Wye Mills, MD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
February 26, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Chesapeake College Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. in the Dorchester Administration Building Board Room in Wye Mills, Maryland and via Zoom video conference. Chair, Mr. Reza Jafari called the meeting to order.

ATTENDANCE

Dr. Blenda Armistead, Ms. Mary Dennard-Turner, Ms. Addie Eckardt, Mr. Reza Jafari, Mr. Brent Fuchs, Ms. Erica Osterhout, Ms. Shelly Gross-Wade, and Ms. Brenda Shorter attended the meeting in-person. Mr. Chris Garvey attended the meeting by Zoom. Dr. Clifford Coppersmith and Ms. Latellya Stewart were also present.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Gross-Wade, seconded by Ms. Eckardt and carried unanimously, the Board approved the following consent agenda items:

- Approval of Minutes - The minutes of the January 22, 2026 meeting.
The minutes of the January 22, 2026 closed session meeting.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Ms. Sarah Crump, SGA Secretary, reported on several recent student activities and initiatives. She began by acknowledging Black History Month and shared that earlier this month students participated in Maryland Student Advocacy Day. During the event, they met with delegates and caucus members and gained valuable insight into the legislative process. Nearly every student group was represented. Ms. Crump served as the student speaker and advocated for increased student funding for Chesapeake. The Black History Month luncheon was well attended, as was today's Annual Black History Read-In. Ms. Crump shared that she met with the new Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management along with SGA and other student leaders, to directly advocate for student needs. Student leadership is also working with college leadership to review the immigration policy. Transportation continues to be a barrier for many students in accessing the College, and advocacy efforts are ongoing. Students are also exploring additional college resources for skilled courses and discussing the possibility of implementing a universal free period to allow students dedicated time to seek academic support resources. Looking ahead, SGA is planning several spring events, including a Women's History Month panel discussion and a spring dance. Mr. Jafari thanked Ms. Crump for bringing her energy to the meeting and shared that he is looking forward to graduation.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Coppersmith thanked Dr. Hall on another successful Black History Month Lunch event, that was held on Saturday.

Dr. Coppersmith reported that the college is currently between major updates while the budget process continues. The college anticipates a modest increase in the state allocation capped at 3% across the community college system. Faculty continue instruction as the semester approaches mid-term and are addressing the ongoing challenges and opportunities associated with the use of artificial intelligence in the classroom, with efforts focused on supporting faculty and encouraging ethical student use.

Enrollment remains steady and is showing improvement, with a recent state study indicating that students across Maryland are returning to college in greater numbers and demonstrating stronger persistence. The college is experiencing its highest credit enrollment since 2016.

Dr. Coppersmith attended Student Advocacy Day in Annapolis with Student Government Association leadership. Student representative Ms. Sarah Crump delivered the keynote address and students met with members of the state delegation to advocate for community college support.

Recent winter storms resulted in the loss of four instructional days. Appreciation was expressed for the maintenance and public safety staff for their significant efforts to maintain campus safety and restore operations.

Dr. Coppersmith and Board Chair, Mr. Jafari, attended the Legislative Leadership Conference in Washington, DC, where discussions included the introduction of Workforce Pell Grants, which will provide financial support for students in non-credit workforce programs once regulations are finalized.

Dr. Caroline Wood was welcomed as the new Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management.

Dr. Coppersmith provided an update on the Queen Anne's County Technical Center project, noting continued county support and the anticipated final approval from the Department of Budget and Management to begin the design phase. Contracts with the architect and construction manager have been completed, with design expected to begin within two months and project completion projected for Fiscal Year 2029. A capital campaign is also being planned to raise approximately \$3 million for equipment and scholarships not covered by state and county funding.

Dr. Coppersmith concluded by thanking the Board for their leadership and service to the college.

FINANCE AND FACILITIES REPORT

Ms. Gross-Wade presented the following action items to the board for approval.

Action Item: Recommendation for M&R Budget Transfer – Caroline Center Hot Water Heater Replacement

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Gross-Wade, seconded by Ms. Eckardt and carried unanimously, the Board approved a budget transfer in total of \$34,332 for the replacement of two gas water heaters in the Caroline Center from the Child Center Space Renovations project and the FY2025 M&R Surplus.

Action Item: FY2027 Budget Proposal

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Gross-Wade, seconded by Dr. Armistead and carried unanimously, the Board approved FY 2027 Operating Budget by Function, Total Authorization \$30,521,458, County Contribution \$8,062,088.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Gross-Wade, seconded by Ms. Eckardt and carried unanimously, the Board approved FY 2027 Maintenance and Repair Fund - Annual Project Plan \$397,800. Total Authorization \$397,800, County Contribution \$397,800.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Gross-Wade, seconded by Dr. Armistead and carried unanimously, the Board approved FY 2027 Auxiliary Services Operating Budget - Total Authorization \$1,013,988.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Gross-Wade, seconded by Ms. Eckardt and carried unanimously, the Board approved FY 2027 Tuition and Fees Schedule.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Gross-Wade, seconded by Dr. Armistead and carried unanimously, the Board approved FY 2027 Course Specific Fees.

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Gross-Wade, seconded by Ms. Eckardt and carried unanimously, the Board approved Fund Balance Request – 2 projects - Total Authorization \$173,500, and Fund Balance Request from Unrestricted Fund Balance \$173,500.

GOVERNANCE & HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Ms. Dennard-Turner did not have any action items to present to the board.

PROGRAMS, PLANNING AND OUTREACH

Ms. Shorter presented the following action items to the board for approval.

Action Item: New Program: Social Work AA (215)

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Shorter, seconded by Ms. Gross-Wade and carried unanimously, the board approved the new program: Social Work A.A. (215).

Action Item: New Program: Technical Design and Build Pre-Professional Certificate (746) and Program Termination: Drafting & Design Certificate (742)

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Shorter, seconded by Ms. Gross-Wade and carried unanimously, the board approved the termination of the program Drafting and Design Certificate (742) and replace with the new program: Technical Design and Build Pre-Professional Certificate (746).

COLLEGE REPORTS

Faculty Assembly

Mr. Crouse, Faculty Assembly Chair, reported that the faculty are in the process of identifying a replacement for the Faculty Assembly Chair position. At this time, there has been limited interest in the role. The matter will be discussed further with the administration. The Faculty Assembly needs both a Chair and Vice Chair.

Mr. Crouse also shared concerns regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in coursework. He noted that more institutions are requiring live, proctored testing to address academic integrity issues. This may

present challenges for the College, given that it serves a five-county area. Efforts are being made to educate students on the proper and improper use of AI. Additional considerations include implementing live testing options and arranging for high school dual-enrollment students to test at their respective high schools. The issue of academic integrity is complex and will require a multi-pronged approach.

Mr. Jafari stated that the administration is aware of these concerns.

Staff Assembly (StARs)

Ms. Fearins, Staff Assembly Representative, reported that the Super Bowl Squares winners were announced, and the winners received a small gift. The next staff social event is scheduled for this evening. She also shared that an Innovation, Learning, and Effectiveness training session will be held in the LRC on March 12. Staff are encouraged to attend training sessions on AI and other topics designed to enhance efficiency and support their work. Additional upcoming events include a doormat decorating activity and an ice cream social. There was no Staff Member of the Month recognized for February.

TRUSTEES REPORT

Mr. Jafari, Board Chair, reported that the March Board meeting will be held at the Cambridge Center, with dinner to follow. He also shared that ACCT registration is now open, and proposals will be accepted through May 1. Mr. Garvey expressed his appreciation to all members of the Board, stating that it is an open and honest group with which to work.

ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** by Ms. Dennard-Turner seconded by Ms. Gross-Wade and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 3:37 PM.

Latellya Stewart, Staff Associate to the Board

APPROVED: _____ DATE: 3/26/26
Reza Jafari, Chair