

**Roxbury Community College**  
**Board of Trustees**  
*Gerald Chertavian, Chair*  
**Meeting Minutes**  
*December 13, 2016*

**Board of Trustees Members:**

**Present:** Gerald Chertavian, *Chair*; Michael Curry, *Vice Chair*; Glynn Lloyd, *Treasurer*; Mark Culliton, *Secretary*; Jeffrey Greenberg; Josiane Martinez; Jusu Coker; Mayra Leith; Amanda Fernandez.

**Absent:** Steven Tompkins, Amanda Schaefer

**Others Present:**

Valerie Roberson, *President* Cecile Regner, *Vice President*; Kevin Hepner, *Vice President*; Lorita Williams, *Vice President*; Patricia West, *HR Chief/Officer*

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:12 PM and determined that a quorum was present.

**I. Moment of Silence**

President Roberson informed the board of the loss of Suzanne Tompkins, wife of Board member Steven Tompkins. The board observed a moment of silence.

**II. Report of the President**

President Roberson began by informing the Board of activities that have taken place over the last several months. Concerning the ongoing construction projects, \$71 million of projects have commenced across campus. The energy project is on schedule and due to be completed on time. Parking lot 1 will be open for the start of the spring semester. Window replacements in all buildings will be starting in the new year, along with utility upgrades such as lighting. The elevator project has begun but is now two months behind schedule due to a shortage of parts and inspection personnel. We have modified the construction schedule to accommodate this delay. Work scheduled for spring break will now take place at the end of the semester. The bids for the main campus renovation have come back around even. We are now slightly below the projected cost. Work in buildings 1 and 4 will commence in early January of 2017. The Reggie Lewis energy project and landscaping project will be rebid this spring. We hope to use the energy program construction to build a new academic program where individuals will be trained in energy and facilities management.

The College has received a number of grants including a \$490,000 workforce skills grant that will be applied to the simulation lab in building 4. As second skills work grant has been submitted for the radiology technician program. Casa Myrna has also awarded the college a small grant. They will provide services to students and mandatory reporter training for college staff.

The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) just finished a site visit for the nursing program. RCC's NCLEX scores have dropped in recent years, but are rates have rebounded to 81% pass rate in recent months. State officials have been impressed with the resources we have been able to bring to the program.

After 5 years the College has received a report on Cleary Act violations from the US Department of Education. The college has 60 days to respond. Significant progress has been made since that time to be in full compliance.

The public records laws in Massachusetts are changing as of Jan 1<sup>st</sup> so the College is developing a public website to be in full compliance with the new law along with designating a public information officer.

The College does intend to have a Kwanzaa celebration in partnership with the NAACP on Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, which has been requested for several years. The College will provide this opportunity to the community free of charge, along with food and entertainment and adequate space for vendors. Building 1 is being chosen for the venue because it is due to be under construction and has been cleared. We have asked the construction personnel to adjust their timetable to allow the celebration to take place here. The Massachusetts Cultural Council recently met at the Media Arts Center and are considering designating it a cultural center. The College is trying to bring more events to campus and we have been informed that one of our alumni has assisted us in bringing the Legacy of Timbuctoo to campus during black history month.

Chairman Chertavian asked what processes were in place for recruitment of woman and minority owned businesses in our construction.

The President responded the Board that as a state agency the College must follow the rules set forth by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance. The College hosted a forum for contractors earlier this fall and will have another forum for workers wanting to be hired for those contracts.

### **III. Report of the Chairman**

The Chairman began by stating that the College continues to improve with the clean submission of financial documents for financial aid, a true change from 3 years ago. This is in the service of our students. He also welcomed new employees present at the board meeting.

### **IV. Public Comment**

- a. John McColgan, Not Present
- b. Cheryl McDermott, Not Present

c. Sadiki Kambon

Mr. Kambon began by asking for more than 3 minutes based on the current situation. He is the voice of discontent from the community members. They get information all the time and know that there are many problems on campus. The community essentially feels that things are not appropriate and there many discrepancies. He was initially encouraged but since the real Dr. Roberson has come forward it has been a real disappointment for the community. KWANZAA was the initial incident that has caused problems. RCC has been a charter member of celebrating KWANZAA in Boston and when Dr. Roberson first came she said she was really impressed and KWANZAA and the Malcolm X Breakfast were the most important cultural events on the calendar. The second year they were told the group could not use the campus due to construction. They were suspicious as they did not see any construction taking place, but saw hundreds of people from outside the community coming in to utilize the Reggie Lewis. The entire community was lied to. This year we were told that despite requesting the gymnasium we could not utilize it. Building 1 cannot accommodate the number of people who come to the KWANZAA event. We were told that the Reggie Lewis gym was non-negotiable. This is a taxpayer funded public facility. The full group planning the night, which includes the NAACP, had a meeting. The NAACP was present so he was confused by the President's statement that they are sponsoring the event with the College. The vote was unanimous, except for abstention from the RCC reps, that is was the Reggie Lewis gymnasium or nothing. The event cannot be done in the Media Arts Center, there are too many people, there is only one elevator. Now the College has said it will do its own KWANZAA, not in the spirit of cooperation. They have full knowledge of taking on this expense of their own KWANZAA, not the community KWANZAA which no one will attend. This is a matter of continued deception and lies that the community are being told. There are also questions around the trustee board because of the fact that we understand that your duty is to have oversight in regards to have oversight of the performance of the president. We're learning that certain trustee members are getting perks like office space here at the College. I understand that Year Up is going to be doing a program with State Street Bank starting in March so the question I would have is can you objectively evaluate the performance of the President if you're beholden to that person. So let me just say that in terms of the many problems that are here, that the community is really fed up with this administration and that is Sadiki speaking. In terms of the discontent that is out there you can talk to a number of people who will say "you know what, there are problems at that problem that need to be remedied." It starts with this administration, so let me just say this. Number one as the governing body we would like to this college functioning in such a way that it serves this community and not telling us that we won't function with the KWANZAA committee anymore. See that sends a signal that we've been getting all along, that we don't get the respect that we're supposed to get. The last trustee meeting that I attended there was an armed state trooper in the hallway. That sends a message to the community that you view us a bunch of hoodlums and we fear for our safety when we're hear. I know you're going to go into executive session and there are two things we'd like you to do as the governing body. One is to instruct the administration that

this college, which a part of the community, you see we're Roxbury Community College and we're being treated like you know what we do what we want around here and you don't count. I hope that when you go into executive session there will be two things. Number 1 is that the trustees instruct the leadership to stop this nonsense about the Reggie Lewis being non-negotiable for the community use when during that entire week and this time of year we have all these folks coming from outside the city who are welcome, but we get the message we are not welcome. We want to do KWANZAA at the Reggie Lewis gymnasium. It is out gymnasium. Number 2, concerning the marriage of the administration and the community it is time for a divorce. This community has no confidence in Dr. Roberson.

d. Kodjo Agblekpe

Mr. Agblekpe began by introducing alumnus Sam Fern, class of 87. On June 11, 2015 he was elected as president of the alumni association for a second term. On Oct 21, 2016 he received a call from Rick Iacobucci from the RCC alumni office. Under the direction of Lorita Williams, Kodjo was being replaced as the president of the alumni association by Latifa Ali who was appointed by Lorita Williams. On Oct 23, 2016 Latifa Ali sent out an email blast to all alumni members, including the students, as interim alumni president. Nov 1, 2016 I sent an email out to Latifa questioning her appointment. She denied the fact that she was appointed and told him to address any concerns he had to the administration. On Nov 3, 2016 Lorita Williams sent an email to him denying that she was the one appointed Latifa. He needs confirmation from the college administration and this board that he is still the president of the alumni association and that Latifa Alis not the president of the alumni association. The administration has the mandate to work with the alumni association and its president for the relation and promotion of the alumni association. The administration does not have the authority to disregard any officers. I can go on and on. Mayra was elected and I was elected according to the by-laws of the association. All information that was requested by Governor Patrick was submitted and that is why we have Amanda Schaefer. I don't know if she is still on the board, I will inquire about that. If she is missing meetings, by our by-laws she has to step down. She needs to be accountable to us and she is not reporting into us. I will submit all the information I have on this matter. Attorney Fern appeared in the capacity as Mr. Agblekpe's attorney.

e. Heywood Fennell

Mr. Heywood began by stating that he had received an award from RCC for his work in the community. He is here tonight because he is concerned that the community is under stress because of the mess we have here tonight. There is a need for more transparency between the college and this community, a clear need, one that I hope you will take under advisement. We do not have enough students from this community coming to this school. We have a lot of our students who go to Bunker Hill Community College. For the bidding, you have a construction project going on here with a construction company here in this community with a history of doing major work, John Cruz, and they are not on this site. John Cruz hires out young

people and women. They are not there, I don't see them. That's a slap in the face. The other thing is that I've met the President on two or three different occasions and spoke with her, and I met the President through Keith McDermott. We all loved Keith, 18 years he worked at the Reggie Lewis, doing everything he could to make it what it is today. Well the administration here at RCC had no clue, had very bad credibility, but at the same time Keith McDermott was making jobs possible, making people come from across the Commonwealth and across the nation based on his understanding of what an athletics center is all about. Not only does the Commonwealth benefit for that, but the community benefits from that. There have been a lot of inferences in our community and innuendos about why Keith was dismissed from his job. Imagine that, if that was you. He's not here to speak for himself, because he may feel let down. I'm here to let you know that whatever decision you make here this evening it better have something to give back to our community as to why this man was dismissed in the manner in which he was dismissed. I wouldn't want you to be dismissed in the way he was dismissed. Keith McDermott has done a lot for this community. People in this room are here because they are tired of just rhetoric and no action. This facility is for the community. I remember standing in the mud when they were trying to lay the foundation and the groundwork for this school because they had dreams and hopes. The facilities of this school should be open to anyone in the community who does the work Sadiki Kambon does and I do with kids. You should not be inflexible when it comes to community. I just feel that whatever your decision is tonight you make the right decision and one that will respect the work that Keith McDermott has done in this community and that this school revises the way it deals with this community and that the President and her staff have a new plan to deal openly with our community. This college belongs to the community, it is all we have and there is a dark cloud over it right now.

f. Robert Lewis Junior, Not Present

g. Brother Rodney

Brother Rodney began by stating that this institution, Roxbury Community College, represents 30% of our young people, which are 100% our future. Whenever a college like this is in the position that it is in and is wanted by someone else they will always use someone black to do their dirty work so fingers won't be pointed at them. Most of the staff that looks like us, or me or you Dr. Roberson are gone from this institution. I drove by the institution this morning, I drove by it many times. I don't see any black construction workers yet and still you have millions of dollars poured into this institution. That is a problem. It is totally disrespectful that a man like Sadiki Kambon who is over 70 years old, never has been politically correct, for him to be disrespected. In most cases when we stand up we have to stand up against our own because of vultures that don't look like us, they sit at the table. There is an agenda that you are working on ma'am. As a doctor and you're making the community very sick about what's going on. Tend to your patients better than you have been. You're going to have a KWANZAA, without this man and the community he represents.

Don't think that the force isn't right here. This is not the strength of what we're saying in this community. 41 years almost now and you're going to have KWANZAA because you think this is something personal about Sadiki? It's not about him, it is about the black people in this community and you got into the position that you are in ma'am on our backs. Everyone that looks black ain't exactly black. Black is not a color, it's an essence. Some of you all better have some god darn backbone. You know what's going on, you claim to be educated and you're going to allow this crap to go on at this black institution. Excuse my rawness but I'm about to take this to the TV and to the newspaper and to the media. Get your act together or you will be uncovered and then the community will be making a decision and you won't be making it. The gymnasium at Reggie Lewis is not an option. We want it, you should have us there. It seems that someone is not listening to what we're saying. I'm not coming back here again. You will have to address the community. The Reggie Lewis, that name is of a black man and I know him, I went to school with him, we were in the same classroom. But most of those who use that facility don't look like the people in this neighborhood and you have a hell of a nerve not to allow us to have that. If you can pull back construction you can cancel whatever it is that is in that gymnasium and allow us to use the space. So the community can see their accomplishments. This is the black community but it doesn't look like the black community runs Roxbury Community College. That is a sad indictment on the thieves, sister, that are behind you. You either have backbone or you don't have it and you have too much education to not now what I'm talking about and I'm trying to say it as respectfully as possible. But no one bides my tongue so I speak what's on my mind, I go to sleep good at night and I hope you do too. I know my time is up but you all's time will be up if you don't get this right. No more hi-tech lynching on our behalf. Think about it.

**V. Approve Minutes, September 13, 2016**

Minutes were approved upon a motion made by Trustee Curry and seconded by Trustee Martinez.

**VI. Board Reports**

**Academic and Student Affairs (VP Cecile Regner and Dr. Jeffrey Greenberg)**

VP Regner began by referring to the written report in the board members binders. She brought specific attention to tuition assistance programs for students being offered by both the Governor's office and Mayor Walsh's office, noting that RCC has been at the table for planning both programs to make sure they work for full-time, part-time and DACA students. The Mayor's program includes all of those students.

The Governor's office has made mid-year budget cuts and there is one program at RCC that will be effected by the cuts and that is the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Program. That program is in partnership to provide college-level experience for special needs students who are about to age out of the high school system. RCC has been involved in that for more than three years. We have typically have 20 special needs on campus in an academic year. We anticipate a shortfall of

\$20,000 reduction in the program. We are waiting to see how the cuts will affect us and we still plan on servicing those students through the spring semester. Staff may be affected and the program might end a few weeks early.

On the topic of affordability, we have been very active in working on the statewide initiative called Open Education Resources (OER). It is a project designed to find free education materials for students. We know that students are making a significant financial sacrifice to attend college. 80% of our students are Pell eligible. Text books can cost up to \$300 and RCC is committed to utilizing OER and seven faculty members have made applications to development grants to phase in this technology. The quality of applications was impressive.

With regard to professional development, there were two individual faculty members who applied for sabbatical in 2016-2017. One was Professor Rhonda Gray and the other was Professor Priscilla Bolte. They received approval from the President after being vetted by the sabbatical committee.

Finally, the College has implemented an early alert system for students. It is an electronic communication network that brings together faculty, advising staff and Project Access with financial aid.

#### **Finance and Budget** *(VP Kevin Hepner and Glenn Lloyd, Trustee)*

Vice President Hepner began by presenting guests from O'Connor & Drew to present the FY '16 financial audit. The draft audit report is in the board materials book along with an outline of the comments the auditor will make.

David DiIulis, O'Connor & Drew began by introducing his colleagues Emily and Keith. They began in May/June to begin the planning for the audit. The financial statement component of the audit was completed in September. There have been significant improvements from last year where there were two material weaknesses which have been brought down to one. Once approved the final audit will be sent to the state. He read the required communications then discussed the financial statement broadly. He did note that they did not have numbers from the RCC Foundation Board finalized and the final audit must be sent without their information, creating a gap departure. There were no disagreements from RCC management.

In 2018 post-employment health benefit liability will be added to the books. Trustee Lloyd asked about income on the pension adjustment liabilities. Mr. DiIulis responded that it is noted on the financial statement presented to the board.

Trustee Lloyd noted that the College was down to one finding, which is good news compared to the over dozen findings when he first became a board member. He credits this improvement to the work of Vice President Hepner and his staff.

Mr. DiIulis thanked the administration for their cooperation.

Vice President Hepner reminded the board that a vote was necessary to accept the audit report. He explained that this was a completed report, despite the absence of Foundation Board data.

By a motion made by Trustee Curry and seconded by Trustee Culliton the Financial Statement Audit was approved unanimously.

Finally, Vice President Hepner drew the board's attention to the first quarter financial statements in the board member's packets and reviewed significant items in the report.

Trustee Lloyd asked if there was a significant departure in Federal grants and contract funding given the significant change in the amount for FY 2017 over FY2016. VP Hepner responded that the discrepancy is due to the College being more efficient in awarding its financial aid with the funds being dispersed quicker in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. This led to the fall financial aid revenue being recorded in the first quarter where last year the financial aid revenue was recorded in the second quarter of the fiscal year.

Trustee Culliton asked how the drop in tuition and fees affects projections.

VP Hepner explained that the College is not down headcount, but the same amount of students are taking fewer credit hours.

President Roberson added that until recently the College's IT deficiencies prevented us from being able to look at long term data trends in regards to enrollment. This is the first year we can accurately report those numbers. She also noted that students receive the same amount of financial aid at 12 credit hours that they do at 16 credit hours.

Chairman Chertavian asked about savings on the expense side and whether this is a timing difference or if they will be carried throughout the year.

VP Hepner explained that some of the savings are timing but that some savings will be carried throughout the year. We may still need to make additional adjustments to spending levels to ensure that we keep our spending in balance.

### **Institutional Advancement** *(VP Lorita Williams and Josiane Martinez)*

Vice President Williams began by talking about the transition at the Reggie Lewis. The College has purchased an upgrade to Fastbook, the scheduling software utilized across campus. Once installed, all scheduling related documents will be in one location, greatly improving efficiency and oversight. The business office will be able to access the software to track funding. The position of college events manager has been posted and this individual will be responsible for scheduling all campus events.

A new space utilization and rental fee schedule is being generated for board approval in February of 2017.

The College has been awarded close to \$700,000 in grants which the presentation touched on, including the MA Skills Capital grant, Mass Clean Energy Center grant in partnership with



Goodwill Industries, Casa Myrna, the Music Drives Us Foundation, Mass Department of Early and Secondary Education and Mass Department of Higher Education.

There are some fundraising activities underway. RCC received 15 bibs from the Boston Athletics Association for runners to utilize in the Boston Marathon this year. Each runner will commit a minimum of \$5,000 yielding a corresponding minimum amount raised of \$75,000. One employee will be running on behalf of the College.

The Media Arts Center is closed for renovation and we will be launching a campaign next month to support the center. The campaign will allow individuals to purchase a commemorative brass plaque for seats in the auditorium.

The development office hosted an event at the Media Arts Center on Nov 3 with speaker J. Philip Thomas and a fashion show.

The pharmacy tech program in Corporate and Community Education has been approved by the Massachusetts Board of Pharmacy.

On September 14, 2016 the College hosted RCC Day at Fenway Park where Dr. Roberson and Vice President Regner were introduced with our “29 Who Shine” Awardee Fatimah Shields.

Trustee Curry asked whether the challenges the College was facing with the Foundation Board would affect any of the grants mentioned previously.

Vice President Williams responded that most grants do not come through the Foundation.

Trustee Leith asked whether community members could take advantage of the programs being offered at Corporate and Community Education.

Vice President Williams responded in the affirmative. They can apply, but ITA’s are only available for low income individuals who are not working and is administered through the Private Industry Council. There is no age limit.

### **Human Resources (HR Director Patricia West and Amanda Fernandez, Trustee)**

Director West referred trustees to the Human Resources annual report for 2016 noting the new mission statement in particular. Over 500 personnel files were audited to bring all human resource documents into compliance.

She recognized the following new employees: Victor Ng, Payroll Manager, Raymind Cruz, Manager of Information Technology Services and Kurt Mueller the Director of Disability Services.

Trustee Culliton asked about the file audit and if the 521 files represent the files for all employees.

Director West responded that the audit was conducted over all files with the exception of work study employees. We now know which files are not complete and we have contacted those individuals to complete their files.

Chairman Chertavian asked how many work study students the College has at any given time.

Director West responded she would get this data to the Chairman and that she did not have it in front of her at this time.

Trustee Fernandez commended Director West and her staff for making positive gains in completing the audit. Trustee Leith seconded these comments.

**VII. Executive Session**

There was a motion made to enter executive session. The chairman wished the general public a good evening and thanked them for their attendance. The time was 7:55 PM

**VIII. Adjourn** **9: 20 PM**

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**Attachment 1**

**Roxbury Community College**  
Board of Trustees  
December 13, 2016  
**RESOLUTION**

This resolution is for the approval of the operating College Budget for Fiscal Year 2017, from July 1, 2016 until June 30, 2017.

***WHERE AS,***

- An Annual Review of the budget is prudent to endure compliance with all pertinent Commonwealth legislation and policies; and
- A comprehensive review of expected revenues and expenditures is needed to ensure that the College is operating within a balanced budget; and
- The College administrators will be responsible for evaluating all expenditures and requests and ensuring that the College is operating within this budget; and
- The FY '17 General Appropriations Act of the Commonwealth has been signed by the Governor

***NOW THEREFORE,***

It is resolved by the Roxbury Community College Board of Trustees that the attached budget shall be effective July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. The President or her designee shall take the necessary steps to implement the budget as voted.