

**MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2025
Virtual Meeting**

Approved January 21, 2026

Attendees: Tom Carroll, Bonnie Blackler, Jim Dunphy, Carl Kowalski, Laura Lawson, David Offutt, Daniel Pestana, Eval Silvera, Kate Welch

Absent: Eshita Chakrabarti

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes
Vice Chair Dunphy – yes
Trustee Blackler – yes
Trustee Kowalski – yes
Trustee Lawson – yes
Trustee Offutt – yes
Trustee Pestana - yes
Trustee Silvera - yes
Trustee Welch – yes

Chairman's Report

Chair Carroll welcomed everyone to the meeting. He touched upon the events that happened at Brown University in Rhode Island and Bondi Beach in Australia. Many people were impacted by these tragedies, and he asked that we keep all involved in our prayers. A special thank you to Chief Cummings and our police staff for all they do to keep our campus safe. As the holiday season approaches, I want to thank the people at Massasoit for all your efforts, and hope that you find some time to rest, relax and reflect on all you do to make this college such a special place.

President's Report

President Mitchell thanked Chair Carroll for his kind words and stated that Brown University hits close to home because we transfer some of our students there and because of its proximity, we know people that either work there or have children that attend there. President Mitchell added that the police department at Massasoit CC is trained and prepared to keep our campus safe. On a lighter note, we have a couple of upcoming retirements. Dr. Pamela Witcher, Associate Vice President, Continuing Education Division. Pamela has been at Massasoit for several years and has done wonderful work for us. She was our fix-it person when we had an issue and needed details, good thinking and strategy and she never failed. As a colleague and as a friend, I want to wish her the best personally, and for what she has done for Massasoit. Chair Carroll also added that Pamela announced the student names at commencement and that is one job that will be tough to replace. Our next retiree is John Caffelle, Director of Administrative Services, who has been at the college for over 20 years. Mr. Caffelle was a Staff Associate in the Administration and Finance CFO office, and because of his knowledge of the college and his excellent customer service skills, he was promoted to Director of Administrative Services, which incorporates procurement, the mailroom and the print shop. His attention to detail is second to none and he loves Massasoit. Best wishes on your retirement!

President Mitchell discussed the Workforce Pell grant, which is being discussed currently in Washington. The idea is to allow Pell Grants to be used for short-term certificates, training programs, EMT, Phlebotomy etc. The rules haven't been worked out yet, but it is being debated in Washington, and it seems to have a lot of support.

President Mitchell discussed the meeting that the union conducted with the elected officials. The meeting was very well attended. It was a very powerful meeting, so kudos to Robin Peery, President, Massasoit Professional Association and his colleagues for coordinating the meeting at Massasoit.

Robin Peery thanked President Mitchell and stated that the meeting was 2 hours long and there were some very emotional and powerful testimony. Everyone who works at Massasoit is doing their absolute best to serve our students. As you know, professional staff and faculty are not paid a handsome wage. We have a survey that's passed through the State House that is in the works, but more work needs to be done. We need the support of the trustees, and we need our administrative support.

President Mitchell stated that we have hired a Vice President of External Relations. Her name is Kendra Butters, we are thrilled to have her, and she starts on Monday, January 5, 2026. Kendra thanked President Mitchell and said that she is excited for this opportunity. She shared how warm and welcoming everyone has been. Her father is a Massasoit alum, so it is deeply personal and she's very proud to be able to step into this position.

Student Trustee Report

Daniel Pestana, Student Trustee, stated that in the last SAC meeting, they talked about the Pell Grant and the eligibility limits on them. The last meeting the Student Senate had, they met with Carine Sauvignon, Associate Vice President of the Future of Work Institute and she told the group what the Future of Work Institute is working on. We talked about Diesel and HVAC programs and a new Behavioral Program they are working on for a pathway to transfer to BSU and some other social fieldwork. We then met with Paula Fontes from Success, who talked about a new peer mentoring program. These mentors will meet with new students to show them around campus and to offer additional support. Next, we met with Alex Villanueva in Marketing who introduced the Senate to the new website coming out in January and how easy it will be to navigate. We also added two new clubs at Massasoit. Artists Union, which is based in Canton and Active Minds, which is a mental health advocacy club and I'm excited to see what events they have coming to campus. Student Life scheduled two major events in November and December, a Winter Wonderland event which included snowman bowling and an Ornament Decorating event in Canton.

TRiO presentation by Ms. Melisaa Yoffee, Director of TRiO Programs

TRiO is a long-standing program which started in 1964 and serves 870,000 students in about 3,400 programs across the country. All the programs are focused on helping low-income, first-generation students, and students with disabilities. The programs are performance based, and Massasoit is one of the most accountable programs in the federal government. TRiO programs work because the staff know how to work with first-generation, low-income students and they possess expertise in helping students pursue their degree. All our programs have an early intervention component, and often we can identify problems before they happen. We work with students from the day they step foot on campus, all the way through to the transfer process. Our TRiO Talent Search program is new. We have about 500 students working on high school success and college success with the support of guidance counselors and principals. Statistics show that students who earn a college degree earn \$300,000 more over their lifetime than those without a degree.

Ms. Yoffee introduced Mayara Martins, an amazing student who started the talent search program at Brockton High School. Mayara was introduced to TRiO in her senior year of high school. English was not her first language and one of her biggest accomplishments was being part of the English class. Through this, she was able to give back and help her community.

Chair Carroll asked how the TRiO program supported students in Canton and Middleboro. Ms. Yoffee stated that she visits both campuses at least once a month to have a presence. They also do a lot of individual outreach, cold calling, texting and emailing. Trustee Offutt stated that he is extremely impressed with the program and asked how well a financial therapist was received and at what moment did the students realize that this is life changing? Ms. Yoffee responded that she herself had some aha moments when she realized that the 28 students loved it! They talked about the financial part, and budgeting.

Transformation through Renovation and Facilities Update by Mr. William O'Neill, Vice President of Administration/CFO

Work continues inside the new Science Building. One of the focuses over the next couple of weeks is the soffits and the fascia. Most of what is going on inside is roughing the mechanical, electrical and plumbing. This is a \$51.8 million project, and we've put up \$11.2 million of our own funds. As of last week, the state had total expenditures of \$13.3 million, which is roughly a third of what they were putting up. Bids have gone well, and everything has come in favorably. Spring will be the halfway point of the total project. Second phase turns the current Science building into the new Health Science Building, essentially replicating what we are doing in phase one. We are in great position fiscally for the rest of the project and we want to turn over the new Science building as quickly as possible. By Commencement, the old Science building should be packed up and ready to move. We are closing in at the end of the work on the T building. The switchgear is in and they are well into wiring the place up. We hope to transition into inspections and testing quickly.

Chair Carroll asked if we were running under budget. Vice President O'Neill responded, "It is favorable". He stated that he is unclear from the DCAM numbers on the comparative burn rate of this project to the other and not sure where they are on a billing schedule. Are we going to see a blizzard of invoices in the next 6 weeks that will drive that \$13.3 number up? When I look at the bids, they are favorable, so we are encouraged. Chair Carroll thanked Bill for his time and attention to a project of this size, as it requires constant attention to make sure it doesn't go sideways.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Trustee Kowalski and seconded by Trustee Welch to approve the consent agenda.

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes
Vice Chair Dunphy – yes
Trustee Blackler – yes
Trustee Kowalski – yes
Trustee Lawson – yes
Trustee Offutt – yes
Trustee Pestana - yes
Trustee Silvera - yes
Trustee Welch – yes

The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Trustee Offutt and seconded by Trustee Pestana to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Roll Call:

Chair Carroll – yes
Vice Chair Dunphy – yes
Trustee Blackler – yes
Trustee Kowalski – yes
Trustee Lawson – yes
Trustee Offutt – yes
Trustee Pestana - yes
Trustee Silvera - yes
Trustee Welch – yes