

GARRETT COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OPEN SESSION MEETING MINUTES
February 17, 2026
McHenry, Maryland

A. COMMUNICATION ITEMS:

1. Call to Order and Attendance: Chair Jason Rush called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Other Board Members in attendance included: Ms. Karen Myers-Vice-Chair, Ms. Madeleine Collins (via Zoom), Retired Maryland State Senator George C. Edwards, Mr. Kurt Heckman (via Zoom), Mr. Gary Ruddell, and Mr. Duane Yoder. College Administrators in attendance included: Dr. Richard Midcap-President, Professor Christa Bowser-Dean of Academic Affairs, Dr. Robert "JR" Kerns-Dean of Student Affairs, Ms. Lisa Nichols-Dean of Administrative Services, and Ms. Julie Yoder-Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Development. Guests present included: Mr. Richard Lewis, Co-Chair of Faculty Senate; and Ms. Erica Hook and Ms. Tasha Mongold-Co-Chairs of Staff Senate.

2. Communication from the Public: None

3. Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Campus Advisory & Activities Board (Student) Updates:

CAAB: No update this month.

Faculty Senate: Co-Chair Richard Lewis provided the following update:

- Faculty Senate has not met since the last Board Meeting.
- The next meeting will be held this Friday, February 20, 2026. Dr. Midcap, the four College Deans, and Dr. Sisler will attend to present the All-College Forum presentation to Faculty.

Staff Senate: Ms. Erica Hook and Ms. Tasha Mongold, Staff Senate Co-Chairs, shared the following report:

- President Midcap, the four College Deans, and Director Sisler attended the last meeting on Friday, January 23rd to present the All-College Forum information since the January 15th ACF meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.
 - Fifty-one members were in attendance for that meeting.
 - Attendance has been up 37% since August 2025.
- Members are currently reviewing the By-laws.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 27th at 9:30 a.m.

4. Approval/Changes to the Agenda: On a motion by Trustee Edwards, seconded by Vice-Chair Myers, the Board unanimously approved the agenda as distributed (Vote=7-0-0).

B. CONSENT AGENDA: On a motion by Vice-Chair Myers, seconded by Trustee Ruddell, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda as distributed and listed below (Vote=7-0-0).

1. Approval of the minutes from the January 20, 2026 Board Meeting

C. ACTION ITEMS:

1. Emeritus Nominations: The Board tabled this item until nominees were discussed in Executive Session. The Board reconvened the Open Session at 6:19 p.m. to vote on Award of Emeritus

Status. On a motion by Vice-Chair Myers, seconded by Trustee Ruddell, the Board unanimously approved four recipients to be awarded Emeritus Status. The names of the recipients are confidential until notifications are complete. The recipients will be honored during the May Commencement Ceremony.

2. **FY2027 County Funding Request:** President Midcap reported that the Board previously received a copy of the County Funding Request Letter to review prior to this meeting. The draft funding request was developed last fall and discussed with the Board. The request includes: funding Year 5 of the Faculty Compensation Plan; and funding a staff compensation strategy to address compression in grades and make our staff rates more competitive when compared to GCPS, Garrett County Government, and Allegany College of Maryland. We also shared the key results of the study that the College conducted using publicly available Open the Books data with the County. President Midcap and Dean Nichols will present this request to the County Commissioners at their public meeting on April 21, 2026. In the meantime, the FY2027 County Funding Letter is due to the Commissioners by Friday, February 20, 2026.

On a motion by Trustee Yoder, seconded by Vice-Chair Myers, the Board unanimously approved the Garrett College FY2027 County Funding Request Letter as presented and discussed (Vote=7-0-0).

D. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. **Board Award Criteria Review and Committee Selection:** President Midcap reported that the Board reviews the criteria for the Board Award for Outstanding Contributions to Garrett College annually. Chair Rush appointed Trustee Heckman and Vice-Chair Myers to the Board Award Committee. Trustee Heckman will serve as the Chair of this committee.

The Board further discussed the award criteria in Executive Session and asked President Midcap and Ms. Knepp to solicit nominations for this award via the internal and external College Community. Nominations will be due in early March for committee review and recommendation to the Board during the March 2026 Meeting.

2. **MSCHE Self-Study Steering Committee Update:** Self-Study Co-Chairs Dean Bowser and Dean Kerns reported that they are in the process of reviewing the documents submitted by the seven College working groups. In addition, the co-chairs are working closely with Dr. Kelli Sisler to begin a rough draft of the self-study document. During this process, the co-chairs may need to reach out to the working group liaisons if they need additional information.
3. **Report of the Chair of the Board:**
 - a. **Upcoming Events:** Chair Rush remarked that it was great to see the College Baseball Team practicing on the turf field today on his way to the Board Meeting.
4. **Report of Board Members:** Vice-Chair Myers reminded the College that the County Commissioners have dedicated some funding toward the celebration of the 250th Birthday of our Country. The committee has been meeting and there are several events planned already. If

the College would like to be a part of this celebration, a representative can contact Ms. Sarah Meyers, Committee Chair. Board Chair Rush and Vice-Chair Myers are also on this committee.

Trustee Yoder then provided an update on diversity and the recent Federal Government’s ruling on this matter.

- 5. **Report of the President of the College:** President Midcap displayed a presentation for Board Members regarding the following – Final Credit Headcount Enrollment-FY26 vs. FY25; Final Credit Hour Enrollment FY26 vs. FY25; Final HSDE Headcount Enrollment-FY26 vs. FY25; Fall Academic Honors-Fall 2025 vs. Fall 2024; GC Wrestling Team recently claimed the Gulf Atlantic Championship and will now participate in the NJCAA national tournament; the 2A/1A West Region MPSSAA Wrestling Tournament will take place at GC at the end of February; international students recently visited Crellin Elementary School and presented; and President Midcap, Dean Kerns, Student Activities Manager Drew Catone and seven GC Students attended Student Advocacy Day in Annapolis last week and were also able to meet with Delegate Jim Hinebaugh.

Board Members asked some clarifying questions related to High School Dual Enrollment participants, Garrett College student athletes, home-schooled students, and additional student housing options for Fall 2026.

- 6. **College Administrative & Financial Reports:** There were no questions related to the previously distributed College Administrative and Financial reports.

- E. **RECESS OPEN SESSION TO GO INTO AN EXECUTIVE/CLOSED SESSION OF THE BOARD:** On a motion by Trustee Heckman, seconded by Trustee Yoder, the Board unanimously recessed the Open Session at 5:59 p.m. for the purpose of convening an Executive Session to discuss the following matters listed in the chart below (*see also the attached Exclusionary Basis for Closing a Meeting Sheet* and related exceptions covered under the Maryland Open Meetings Act) (Vote=7-0-0):

***For each citation checked on the attached, the reasons for closing and topics to be discussed include:**

Citation (Insert # from above)	Topic (We expect to discuss these matters)	Reason for closed-session discussion of topic (We are closing the meeting to discuss this topic because)
§ 3-305(b)(2)	Award of Emeritus Status	The nominees for the Award of Emeritus Status and related discussions are confidential until finalized.
§ 3-305(b)(2)	Board Award of Outstanding Contributions to Garrett College	The Board Award nominees and discussions are confidential until finalized.

- F. **NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING:** The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Garrett College Board of Trustees is March 17, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the College’s #100 Building, Board Room #102.

- G. **ADJOURNMENT:** The Board reconvened the Open Session Meeting at 6:19 p.m. to vote on the Award of Emeritus Status – See Agenda Item C.1. for details. Then, on a motion by Trustee Edwards, seconded by Trustee Collins, the Board adjourned the Open Session at 6:22 p.m. (Vote=7-0-0).

Summary of the February 17, 2026 Board Executive/Closed Session Meeting: A closed session of the Garrett College Board of Trustees was held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 in the Board Room #102 in the GIEC #100 Building at Garrett College. The purpose of this session was to discuss confidential matters regarding the Award of Emeritus Status and the Board Award of Outstanding Contributions to Garrett College.

Each Board member voted to close the session pursuant to the Maryland State General Provisions Article, Title 3-Open Meetings Act. All board members were present for this closed session as well as President Richard Midcap (see the “roll call” section of the minutes for additional details).

Respectfully submitted by:

Dr. Richard Midcap
President of Garrett College
Secretary/Treasurer, GC Board of Trustees

Mr. Jason Rush
Chair
Garrett College Board of Trustees

***EXECUTIVE SESSION - PRESIDING OFFICER’S WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING (“CLOSING STATEMENT- EXCLUSIONARY BASIS FOR CLOSING A MEETING”) UNDER THE MARYLAND OPEN MEETINGS ACT (General Provisions Article § 3-305):** The Board of Trustees of Garrett College adheres to the Open Meetings Act of the State of Maryland. The topics discussed and the exclusions permitting the Board to meet in closed session are stated below:

Date: February 17, 2026 **Time:** 5:59 p.m.

Location: Board Room #102 & Zoom **Motion By:** Trustee Heckman **Seconded By:** Trustee Yoder

Recorded Vote to Close the Meeting:

BOARD MEMBER	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mr. Jason Rush, Chair	√			
Ms. Karen Myers, Vice-Chair	√			
Ms. Madeleine Collins	√			
Mr. George C. Edwards	√			
Mr. Kurt Heckman	√			
Mr. Gary Ruddell	√			
Mr. Duane Yoder	√			

STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE MEETING/SESSION (Check all provisions that apply): The meeting will only be closed under the provision or provisions checked below, all from the Maryland General Provisions Article § 3-305(b):

- (1) To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals;
- (2) To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business;
- (3) To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto;
- (4) To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State;
- (5) To consider the investment of public funds.
- (6) To consider the marketing of public securities;
- (7) To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice;
- (8) To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation;
- (9) To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations;
- (10) To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans;
- (11) To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination;
- (12) To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct.
- (13) To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter;
- (14) Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiation strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process; and
- (15) To discuss cybersecurity, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to” (i) “security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology”; (ii) “network security information,” such as information that is related to passwords, personal ID numbers, access codes, encryption, security devices, or vulnerability assessments or that a governmental entity collects or maintains to prevent, detect, or investigate criminal activity; or (iii) “deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices.

For EACH provision checked above, the corresponding topic to be discussed and the public body’s reason for closing that topic in closed session, in as much detail as possible without disclosing the information that may be discussed behind closed doors:

Citation <i>(Insert # from above)</i>	Topic <i>(We expect to discuss these matters)</i>	Reason for closed-session discussion of topic <i>(We are closing the meeting to discuss this topic because)</i>
§ 3-305(b)(2)	Award of Emeritus Status	The nominees for the Award of Emeritus Status and related discussions are confidential until finalized.
§ 3-305(b)(2)	Board Award of Outstanding Contributions to Garrett College	The Board Award nominees and discussions are confidential until finalized.

This statement is made by: Mr. Jason Rush, Board Chair

Signature of Presiding Officer: On file in the Garrett College President’s Office