

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

**A. COMMUNICATION ITEMS:**

- 1. Call to Order and Attendance:** Chair Jason Rush called the meeting to order at 5:29 p.m. Other Board Members in attendance included: Ms. Karen Myers-Vice-Chair (via Zoom), Ms. Madeleine Collins (via Zoom), Retired Maryland State Senator George C. Edwards, Mr. Kurt Heckman, Mr. Gary Ruddell, and Mr. Duane Yoder. College Administrators in attendance included: Professor Christa Bowser-Dean of Academic Affairs, Dr. Robert “JR” Kerns-Dean of Student Affairs (*Via Zoom and Serving in the President’s Role for this Board Meeting*), Ms. Lisa Nichols-Dean of Administrative Services, and Ms. Julie Yoder-Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Development. Guests present included: Mr. Stacy Miller, 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:** Dr. Kerns provided the following report since it is Spring Break and no student was available to attend:

  - Student Life took approximately 40 students to the Wisp for a night of tubing – which is one of the most popular activities that we offer to students throughout the year.
  - Students observed National Oreo Day on March 6<sup>th</sup> in the Laker Café. Over 60 students participated (25 in-county and 35 residential students).

**Faculty Senate:** Co-Chair Stacy Miller provided the following update:

  - Co-Chair Lewis sent his apologies that he was not available to attend the meeting.
  - Faculty Senate has not met since the last Board Meeting.
  - Most faculty members are enjoying Spring Break this week. Professor Kevin Dodge and Assistant Professor Ammo Oliverio are on the annual NRWT Program trip in Arizona.
  - The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Friday, March 27, 2026.

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

  - Staff Senate set another attendance record on February 27th.
  - Dean Christa Bowser was the guest speaker.
  - Staff Senate is taking nominations through mid-March for Erica’s Co-Chair position since her term will end on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Official voting will take place at the next meeting.
  - Financial Aid Director, Andrew Harvey will be the guest speaker for the next meeting and will discuss *Robert’s Rules of Order*.
  - The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.
- 4. Approval/Changes to the Agenda:** Trustee Collins noted that she will provide an update from the recent Foundation Board of Directors Meeting under Agenda Item D.5. Report of Board Members. On a motion by Trustee Heckman, seconded by Trustee Ruddell, the Board unanimously approved the agenda as noted above and distributed (Vote=7-0-0).

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

1. *Approval of the minutes from the February 17, 2026 Board Meeting*

**C. ACTION ITEMS:**

1. **Board Award Nominations:** The 2026 Board Award Committee consisted of Trustee Kurt Heckman, who served as the Committee Chair, and Vice-Chair Karen Myers. Trustee Heckman announced that the Committee recommends Mr. Randy Murphy as the 2026 Recipient of the Board Award for Outstanding Contributions to Garrett College. Mr. Murphy recently retired from Garrett College after a 30-year career where he excelled in numerous positions. He is truly an unsung hero.

On a motion by Trustee Heckman, seconded by Vice-Chair Myers, the Board unanimously approved the committee nomination (Vote=7-0-0). The Board plans to present this award to Mr. Murphy at the Spring Garrett College Employee Recognition Luncheon.

**D. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

1. **#700 Building Renovation Update:** Trustee Rush and Dean Kerns turned the meeting over to Dean Nichols to provide an update regarding the #700 Building Renovation. Dean Nichols provided photos of the construction progress taken this afternoon. She explained and summarized progress and invited the Board to take a tour of the area at any time. Chair Rush suggested that the Board tour the facility prior to the April 21<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting. Details will be worked out and sent to the Board in advance of the next meeting.
2. **MSCHE Self-Study Steering Committee Update:** Dean Kerns reported that the Self-Study efforts continue to move forward. Co-Chair Bowser and Kerns and Accreditation Liaison Officer Sisler are now drafting the self-study report which includes compiling and summarizing evidence from all areas of the institution that document Garrett College's compliance to all seven of the Middle States accreditation standards. This process is going well so far.
3. **Policy Informational Updates from College Council:** The following policies were recently reviewed through College Governance and posted to the College Intranet and to the [Policy and Procedures webpage](#): Timely Warning Policy, Video Surveillance Policy, Weapons Policy, and Posthumous Awards for Students Policy. The only changes made to these policies were updates to the policy format, updates to titles, and updates to contact information.
4. **Report of the Chair of the Board:** Chair Rush did not have any updates to report at this time.
  - a. **Upcoming Events:** The upcoming events were included in the previously distributed Board Agenda file. No updates were provided during the meeting.
5. **Report of Board Members:** Trustee Collins, who serves as the Garrett College Board of Trustees representative to the Garrett College Foundation Board of Directors, reported on the quarterly meeting held on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. She noted that a summary of the updated Foundation Strategic Plan was shared and discussed, along with monthly committee and

financial reports, and election of officers. One action item that came out of the meeting involved better communication between both boards. Trustee Collins will be providing regular updates during monthly Board of Trustees meetings and members of the Foundation Board of Directors may be invited to attend and present updates on topics that are relevant for both boards to discuss, etc.

- 6. **Report of the President of the College:** Dean Kerns reported on local plans to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the United States of America at the Garrett County Fairgrounds on July 18, 2026 from Noon to 10 p.m. Garrett College will be working with event organizers for appropriate ways to support this event. Additional event details can be found on the following website: [www.Garrett250.com](http://www.Garrett250.com).

Garrett College also recently hosted the Maryland State Boys’ and Girls’ Class 2A-1A region wrestling championships on February 27-28, 2026. Forty-six teams representing 23 schools participated in the two events. He thanked everyone who assisted with this successful event.

Dean Kerns then reported that the College continues to work on both short- and long-term student housing options given our projected future housing shortage. A draft MOU between the College and the Wisp Resort, as well as a draft student contract for students residing at the Wisp, are currently under review by Wisp officials.

Lastly, he thanked John Rudd, Marketing Assistant and Creative Services Specialist, for the new board meeting name plates that are displayed today. They look great and we appreciate his assistance with this project.

- 7. **College Administrative & Financial Reports:** Dean Nichols explained two anomalies this month in terms of state funding and a new audit standard for doubtful accounts. There were no additional questions or updates regarding 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 Edwards, the Board unanimously recessed the Open Session at 5:54 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)(1)	Personnel	Personnel matters are confidential.
§ 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 April 21, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the College’s #100 Building, Board Room #102.

**G. ADJOURNMENT:** The Board did not reconvene Open Session and adjourned the Executive Session at 6:37 p.m. on a motion by Trustee Heckman, seconded by Trustee Edwards (Vote=7-0-0).

**Summary of the March 17, 2026 Board Executive/Closed Session Meeting:** A closed session of the Garrett College Board of Trustees was held on Tuesday, March 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 Board Award of Outstanding Contributions to Garrett College and Personnel.

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 and Dean Lisa Nichols (see the “roll call” section of the minutes for additional details).

Respectfully submitted by:

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

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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:** March 17, 2026 **Time:** 5:54 p.m.

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

**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)(1)	Personnel	Personnel matters are confidential
§ 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