

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 23-48

BOARD DATE: May 9, 2023

HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the April 25, 2023 recommendation of the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees recommending Dr. George Timmons as President of Holyoke Community College. Such appointment is effective on or about July 15, 2023, is subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check and is subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment.

VOTED: Motion adopted by the BHE on 5/9/2023.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel

Background

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) is a coordinating board, with some governing authority, over the public higher education system. Among the BHE's governing functions are its statutory responsibilities to approve the appointment and removal of, and set the compensation for, the president of each state university and community college within the public higher education system. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(q) and 21.

In furtherance of these legislative requirements, and consistent with the BHE's responsibility to establish overall goals in order to achieve a well-coordinated, quality system of public higher education in the Commonwealth, to establish coordination between and among institutions, and to resolve conflicts of policies or operations, the BHE issued guidelines and procedures for the search, selection, appointment and removal of the chief executive officers at state universities and community colleges. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(c) and (u). [BHE Presidential Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal Guidelines \(2013\)](#). The BHE Presidential Guidelines establish minimum procedural expectations for Board of Trustees conducting presidential searches, delegate to the Commissioner the authority to act on behalf of the BHE as specified therein, and include several touchpoints between local Board of Trustee Chairs and the Commissioner to ensure that the Presidential search process is being conducted consistent with the BHE and the Commissioner's expectations.

The Holyoke Community College (HCC) Board of Trustees initiated the search process for the President of HCC in October, 2022, shortly after President Christina Royal announced her plans to step down. The HCC Board of Trustees conducted the search with the assistance of search consultants at The Pauly Group. As required under state law and the BHE's implementing guidelines, the DHE Commissioner at the time, Commissioner Santiago, appointed a voting member to the search committee, DHE Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness, Bob Awkward. Dr. Awkward participated in the development of the position profile, the selection and interviews of semi-finalist candidates, and the search committee decisions to recommend final candidates for public interviews. The HCC Presidential Position Profile may be accessed through the following link: <https://hccpresidentialexecutive.com/position-profile>

After the semi-finalist interviews, the search committee recommended the following four candidates as finalists:

- Noemi Custodia-Lora, Ph.D., Northern Essex Community College Vice President of the Lawrence Campus and Community Relations;
- Tony Hawkins, Ph.D., Frederick Community College Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Continuing Education and Workforce Development;
- Arlene Rodriguez, Ph.D., Middlesex Community College Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs; and
- George Timmons, Ph.D. Columbia-Greene Community College Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs

During that time, the BHE was extended an opportunity to interview all candidates, as required by the BHE Presidential Guidelines. The Commissioner and the Secretary of Education engaged in this procedural touchpoint and interviewed all candidates on behalf of the Board.

On April 25, 2023 the HCC Board of Trustees convened a special meeting to discuss the final candidates and after deliberation voted to unanimously recommend Dr. George Timmons to the BHE for approval and appointment, subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment. M.G.L. c. 15A, § 21.

The Commissioner has received and reviewed the HCC Board of Trustee's recommendation, along with all supporting materials, and has determined that the submittal is complete, and the search was conducted in alignment with the BHE Presidential Guidelines. Accordingly, the Commissioner is forwarding the recommendation to the BHE for consideration and formal action.

Attachments to BHE 23-48:

04a_Cover Letter

04b-Resume (CV)

04c_Holyoke Presidential Search Process Summary

04d_Presidential Terms of Appointment for George Timmons