

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 26-43

BOARD DATE: April 7, 2026

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the March 16, 2026, recommendation of the Berkshire Community College Board of Trustees recommending Dr. Hara Charlier as President of Berkshire Community College. Such appointment is effective on or before July 1, 2026, 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 and Conditions of Appointment.

VOTED: Motion adopted by the BHE on 4/7/2026.

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 Berkshire Community College (BCC) Board of Trustees initiated the search process for the next President of BCC on September 8, 2025, and conducted the search with the assistance of search consultants at Academic Search. As required under state law and the BHE's implementing guidelines, the Commissioner appointed a voting member to the search committee, Cynthia Brown, Associate Commissioner for Regulatory & Veterans Affairs, who 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 Berkshire Community College Presidential Position Profile may be accessed through the following link: [position posting](#), [BCC webpage](#))

Although the search committee selected five finalists for advancement, one candidate withdrew, before the announcement and, accordingly, an unranked list of four finalists was advanced to the Board of Trustees for on-campus interviews and consideration. The four candidates participated in BCC Board of Trustees interviews and campus visits during the weeks of February 23rd and March 9th. During that time, the

BHE was extended an opportunity to interview all four candidates, as required by the BHE Presidential Guidelines. The Commissioner and Board of Higher Education Member Bill Walczak engaged in this procedural touchpoint and interviewed all four candidates on behalf of the BHE.

On March 16, 2026, the BCC Board of Trustees unanimously voted to recommend Dr. Hara Charlier 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 BCC 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 24-43:

03a_Dr. Hara Charlier Presidential Search Cover Letter

03b_Dr. Hara Charlier Resume (CV)

03_c_ Summary of Search Process

03d_Terms and Conditions of Appointment Letter_Hara Charlier

03e_Letter from Berkshire CC Chair Bowen to Commissioner Ortega