

Highland Community College
Board Retreat
June 10, 2021
Highland Community College Student/Conference Center
Robert J. Rimington Board Room
Freeport, Illinois

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mr. Jim Endress, Board Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Members Physically Present: Mr. Doug Block, Mr. Jim Endress, Ms. Pennie Groezinger, Mr. Shawn Boldt, Mr. James Rhyne Jr., Ms. Sarah Kuhlemeier, Mr. Craig Knaack, and Ms. Hailey Johnson

Members Virtually Present: None

Members Absent: None

Others Physically Present: Ms. Chris Kuberski, President; Mr. Pete Fink, Director, ITS; Dr. Stephanie Eymann, Dean, Nursing & Allied Health; and, Ms. Terri Grimes, Board Secretary

Others Virtually Present: Ms. Jill Janssen, Vice President/CFO, Administrative Services, Board Treasurer; Mr. Scott Anderson, Vice President, Business, Technology, and Community Programs; Ms. Liz Gerber, Vice President, Student Development & Support Services; Dr. David Naze, Vice President/CAO, Academic Services; Ms. Karen Brown, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Leslie Schmidt, Director, Marketing & Community Relations; and, Mr. Pete Norman, Director, Athletics & Physical Education

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Kuberski attended the Illinois Community College Trustees Association's (ICCTA's) awards banquet and was proud of Mr. Endress, who was the recipient of the Ray Hartstein Trustee Achievement Award. Ms. Karla Giuffre, Biology Instructor, was also recognized as Highland's nominee for the Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Award. Work on the Science labs is underway, the auxiliary gymnasium work has been finished, and there are many projects happening over the summer. Summer enrollment is currently up two percent over last summer, but down compared to Summer 2019, however, the Thomson cohort students may not yet be registered. Ms. Kuberski distributed ONE Highland recognition cards to trustees and noted that a cultural belief and definition is listed on the front of each card. Another ONE Highland culture workshop is being planned for the Fall.

Mr. Endress reported that the ICCTA event was a remarkable experience, largely because trustees were able to see each other face-to-face. Around 100 people signed up for the trustee training. Mr. Endress' award introduction video included that he was a part of the College's Shared Governance task force, and two trustees asked him about this and requested that he share information.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Nursing Variable Tuition

Variable tuition had been discussed for several years leading up to implementation in Spring 2020. A work group found many community colleges have been using variable tuition for nursing and tech education courses. Typically, the programs that cost more to provide are those with variable tuition. The College is using a phased-in approach and has realized over \$50,000 in revenue since variable tuition was implemented for the Nursing program. The next phase was not implemented due to COVID, but now Ms. Janssen is proposing that more courses have variable tuition beginning in Spring, Summer, and Fall 2022. The tuition recommendation requires two readings, and she will bring the first reading to the June 22 Board meeting, with the second reading in July, and if approved, implementation in Spring 2022. The variable tuition is 25 percent higher than the normal tuition rate. In considering this, Ms. Janssen looked at what other schools are doing so that the College remains competitive. There are also cost factors involved, including limited class size. Nursing is currently the only program with variable tuition. Clinicals are more expensive due to the ratio of students to instructors, and this is different than in other classes. When variable tuition was first implemented for some of the Nursing courses, it did not impact enrollment, but Ms. Janssen will doublecheck to make sure there is no impact and that it does not impact student scholarships. The Nursing classes are more costly due to the need for an additional instructor and having high quality, cutting edge equipment, such as manikins. The course fees will still apply for consumables. Ms. Schmidt noted that area health systems, such as Monroe Clinic and FHN, have scholarship assistance available. Ms. Janssen stated that all the Nursing courses will have variable tuition if the recommendation is approved. Implementing variable tuition in Spring 2022 would also impact the start of the Spring part-time Nursing program, since the new cohort starts in Spring 2022.

Dual Credit Student Mental Health Fee Waiver

Ms. Gerber provided historical information on the student mental health fee, which was initially implemented in connection with the State's Mental Health Early Action on Campus legislation. A fee could not be implemented after June 2020, so a \$5 fee (per student, per semester) was approved prior to the deadline. Implementation has been difficult because most dual credit students are not charged tuition and fees. The College received \$152,000 in State tuition reimbursement for 1,596 duplicated dual credit students. If dual credit students were charged the \$5 fee, it would generate less than \$8,000 for the duplicated students, likely closer to \$5,000. Ms. Gerber explained that dual credit students have access to the same mental health services available to other students, but she coordinates this with the high school staff. She recommended waiving the fee for dual credit students in the future, and plans to bring that recommendation to trustees at the June meeting. The College continues to offer counseling services through a contract with New Horizons. An improvement to the College website includes a self-assessment tool that may also be used. Ms. Gerber will send information to Ms. Grimes to distribute to trustees in preparation for the June Board meeting. The recommendation will be to waive the fee for dual credit students due to the risk of losing those enrollments.

Part-time Instructor Pay Rates

Dr. Naze provided historical information on part-time instructor pay rates, noting that the rates were most recently increased in 2018, and previously increased in 2012, 2013, and 2014. The College has a solid ratio of full-time to part-time instructors, with approximately 70 percent of courses taught by full-time instructors, and 30 percent by part-time instructors. From a Higher Learning Commission or regional accreditation perspective, they look at this. For the Fall 2021 semester, the College has 50 full-time and 70 part-time instructors. Dr. Naze provided a comparison of the part-time instructor rates at the College's cohort schools, with Carl Sandburg at \$887, John Wood at \$612, Highland at \$528 per contact hour based on an average, and the State average at \$823. There are different rates for part-time instructors based on their degree, and there is also a \$15 per contact hour one-time merit pay increase if instructors meet certain qualifications. Dr. Naze explained that a 5.5 percent increase over the next five years would, for the most part, protect the College from the SURS six percent issue and get the College to a better place in comparison to our cohorts. If the rate was increased 5.5 percent each of the next four to five years, it would put the College right in the middle of the cohort, at \$680 per contact hour by FY26. The current federal minimum wage is \$15 per hour, and the current part-time instructor rate, based on 120 clock hours per course, comes out to \$13.20 per hour per course. If approved, the first pay increase would be August 27. The College is currently having a difficult time recruiting or retaining part-time instructors due to the rate of pay. Since the College does not have a collective bargaining agreement with part-time faculty, there is leeway on what the College can do regarding an increase. Mr. Endress noted that a \$15 merit increase could impact part-time instructors with the SURS six percent rule, and Dr. Naze will work with Ms. Janssen on this, going through the list of individual instructors to see which ones already received the increase. Mr. Knaack asked how the full-time rate compares, and Dr. Naze reported that the College's full-time salaries are very competitive with those in and outside the cohort. Mr. Endress noted that, during the last faculty negotiations, the only non-suburban or Chicago college with a higher salary rate than Highland was Lincoln Land. Ms. Kuberski said that, at that time, Highland was in the top five percent of faculty salaries in the State, although that will change slightly due to some faculty retirements. Mr. Knaack asked if the College values full-time instructors at that level, why wouldn't they also value part-time instructors at that level? Mr. Rhyne asked if this could impact tuition, and it was noted that it could. Ms. Grimes will provide trustees with Dr. Naze's PowerPoint presentation.

Salary Increases for Nonunion Employees

Ms. Janssen reviewed salary options for nonunion employees. Taking the insurance premium increase into consideration, she suggested a two percent increase because a \$1,000 increase could cause compression issues. Another consideration could be \$1,000 or 2 percent, whichever is greater. A recommendation will be presented to trustees at the June regular meeting.

FY21 and FY22 Budgets

Ms. Janssen reviewed the federal funding and explained the calculation for lost revenue. The auditors have recommended that the lost revenue be shown as a negative expense. Ms. Janssen believes the College will receive \$2.3 million in federal funds for FY20 and FY21 for lost revenue, and an estimated \$1.1 million for FY22. A calculation for lost revenue takes into account a comparison of the last five years of revenue. Tax revenue looks like it will be over budget, and tuition under budget by around \$385,000. She expects salaries and benefits to be down due to the federal funds, with mostly everything else at budget. Under normal circumstances, the College would end the year with a deficit of \$185,000 or 29 percent of the fund balance. Ms. Janssen provided an early projection on the FY22 budget.

Mr. Endress stated that the College has never had a situation like this with federal funds flowing in and they must be dealt with wisely. He reminded trustees of the budget work session at 3:00 p.m. prior to the July regular meeting. Ms. Grimes will send Ms. Janssen's PowerPoint presentation to trustees.

DIVISION FOCUS: NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH

Ms. Kuberski introduced Dr. Stephanie Eymann, new Dean of Nursing and Allied Health, noting that many other Nursing faculty are also following suit and getting their doctorate degrees. Ms. Grimes will send trustees links to the other division focus presentations from previous retreats.

Dr. Eymann reported that the Nursing lab is being renovated, thanks to a generous donor. The remodeling will begin the week of November 22 and be completed in time for the Spring semester. The lab will look like a hospital and classroom setting, with viewing hallways to run simulations and a two-way communication system, and rooms will be equipped with different manikins. Dr. Eymann reported that Dr. Kay Sperry received her doctorate, and Ms. Jessica Larson and Ms. Chrislyn Senneff are working on theirs. Ms. Brittany Petrelli and Ms. Larson attended a conference on the changes in the format of the NCLEX exam so faculty can focus on learning more about the new format. The Nursing program is now officially accredited by ACEN (Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing), which is required by 2023. The Nursing Student Organization held food and clothing drives, a blood drive, and volunteered at Ms. Carly's. Nursing students also administered over 1,500 COVID-19 vaccinations and logged over 80 hours working in flu vaccine clinics. Students continued their virtual learning through COVID and completed community service, including school presentations, blood drives, reaching out to the nursing homes, and giving handwashing and infection control presentations. Thirty-nine (39) Nursing students graduated, as well as seven Medical Assistant students, and an in-person pinning ceremony was held. The first Advanced CNA cohort was completed, and Highland is the first and only program in the State to have a running Advanced CNA program. Admissions criteria has been updated, including benchmarks for admissions, ratios, and having students develop a success plan as part of their admission. Curriculum review will take place in the Fall, and Dr. Eymann is looking at requiring an NCLEX review course. Statistically, if students complete the review course, they have a higher success rate of passing the NCLEX. The class of 2020 had a 67 percent pass rate, which Dr. Eymann hopes is a "blip on the radar." Dr. Eymann would like to have at least a 90 percent pass rate. Faculty have been stepping up to look at when the program meets, program offerings, and admissions criteria. The State requires a remediation plan with a presentation to the State board if the pass rate is under 70 percent. A benchmark for reading will be required and there will also be additional recommendations. The Nursing graduates are starting to get authorization from the State to take their NCLEX. The State sends out the pass rates quarterly but waits almost the entire year to provide the final rate. All colleges have public pass rates and the trend did seem that other schools had rates that decreased, but not as significantly. COVID could have been part of that, and also students were not able to take the tests as soon as normal. Dr. Eymann noted that everyone has come together to do their part to make the needed changes, and Ms. Kuberski stated that faculty have "owned it" and were planning what to do to address the issue.

BOARD UPDATES

Board Retreat Dates

Mr. Endress reminded trustees that currently the Board retreats are the second Thursday in the morning two times a year and the second Wednesday in the afternoon two times a year.

At 9:34 a.m., the Chairperson declared a recess; the meeting resumed at 9:56 a.m.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Board retreats will be held on the second Thursday of the quarter beginning at 8:00 a.m., with breakfast available at 7:30 a.m. Mr. Endress noted that an additional trustee orientation meeting could also be scheduled for the new trustees if they so choose.

CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Groezinger moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to move into Closed Session for the purposes of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in an educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in an educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body, or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity; and, collective negotiating matters between the public body or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees, pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, and to return to Open Session for possible action. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Endress, Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Knaack, Block, Johnson
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

Mr. Endress explained that the public attendees through Zoom would remain in the meeting, with the video and audio muted, while the Board was in Closed Session. Mr. Pete Fink would update the public attendees from the Zoom chat during the Closed Session, as needed, and the video stream and meeting would resume following Closed Session.

At 10:04 a.m., the Chairperson declared the meeting in Closed Session.

Ms. Groezinger moved and Mr. Knaack seconded the motion to end the Closed Session. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Knaack, Block, Endress, Johnson
NAYS: None

At 11:25 a.m., the Chairperson declared the motion carried and the Closed Session ended.

ACTION, IF NECESSARY

No action was necessary following the Closed Session.

OLD BUSINESS

Campus Signage Recommendation

Ms. Schmidt provided an overview of the proposed campus sign project to improve campus navigation and external signage, with signs at decision points. The current signs are not the Board approved, branded colors and blend with the background, and some signs are difficult to see, such as around buildings F and M. There are currently no directional signs, some locations lack signs, and there is inconsistency. Through the 2019 bond process, \$106,000 was approved to replace or add proper entrance signs, remove the building monument signs, add or replace the panel sign in the proper location, add a campus map sign and directional signs, and replace parking lot signs and the campus map on the drive, as well as the sign at the ball field entrance. There was also \$99,495 approved through the 2016 bond process for digital signs, with Columbia College and the YMCA each committing \$5,000 for the project. At that time, trustees discussed adding a sign at the Barn entrance, but Ms. Schmidt suggested foregoing the digital sign there, believing the Pearl City Road and Kiwanis Drive entrances provide more of an “ah” moment when people come on campus. She reviewed the location of the current entrance signs and noted that it is very important for students to have a backdrop to display their success stories on social media. Trustees discussed the Barn entrance being used by many people and perhaps it could be marketed as the second entrance, but Ms. Schmidt expressed concerns about safety. There could be internal communication suggesting employees to use the other entrance. Ms. Schmidt had shared her presentation with Mr. Endress earlier in the week and he noted that she raised great points that need to be figured out. It is a much more attractive look if people are coming off Kiwanis Drive or the main Pearl City Road entrance. If we believe the Barn is an important entrance, we need to upgrade it and see if the County Highway Department could put in a left turn lane, although it could be a traffic concern for the county with people trying to turn in there. Mr. Endress thought in 2016 that it was a shortfall not having a sign there in case of an emergency and believes someone should talk to the Highway Department to see if it is feasible to have a turn lane and, if not, other possible options. Ms. Gerber noted that there is an urgency to use the 2016 bond funding. Ms. Groezinger suggested recognizing the opportunity and investing in making the Barn entrance welcoming. Ms. Schmidt would like to begin the sign project, and it will need to go out for bid. A caution was raised on the placement of the sign at the Barn in case the road is widened. Trustees agreed that the project needs to keep moving, with the Barn entrance determined later.

Feasibility Study Update

Due to time constraints, the feasibility study for a possible event center on campus will be discussed at the June regular meeting under “old business.”

NEW BUSINESS

Open Discussion

Mr. Block asked that every trustee donate toward a basket for the Foundation Gala. This will be discussed at the next meeting. It was noted that individuals or businesses may also donate to the Gala.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Knaack moved and Mr. Block seconded motion to adjourn the meeting. At 12:16 p.m., there being no further business, the Chairperson declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Terri A. Grimes, Board Secretary
Illinois Community College District No. 519