

Highland Community College
Board Retreat
September 14, 2022
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 8:01 a.m.

Members Physically Present: Mr. Doug Block, Mr. Jim Endress, Ms. Pennie Groezinger (arrived 8:05 a.m.), Mr. Shawn Boldt, Mr. James Rhyne, Ms. Sarah Kuhlemeier, Mr. Craig Knaack, and Ms. Chloe Smith (departed 9:00 a.m.)

Members Virtually Present: None

Members Absent: None

Others Physically Present: Ms. Chris Kuberski, President; Mr. Pete Fink, Director, ITS; Mr. Dan Dick, Acting Executive Director, HCC Foundation (arrived 8:06 a.m.; departed 8:54 a.m.); 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/CSSO, Student Development & Support Services; Mr. Jim Phillips, Interim Vice President/CAO, Academic Services; Dr. Chelsea Martinez, Faculty Senate President; Mr. Pete Norman, Director, Athletics & Physical Education; Dr. Misty Thrumman, Director, Institutional Research; Mr. Jeremy Bradt, Director, Enrollment & Records; Ms. Carolyn Petsche, Director, Retention & Learning Services; Ms. Jeniece Smith, Director, Marketing & Community Relations; and, Mr. Dan Dick, Acting Executive Director, HCC Foundation

Illinois continues to be under a disaster proclamation related to public health, and an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meeting was properly noticed and is accessible to the public over Zoom. Mr. Endress asked if trustees who were attending virtually were able to hear.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Kuberski provided an update on the search for a Vice President/Chief Academic Officer, Academic Services. The committee met with the consultant and at this point there are 11 viable candidates who meet the majority of the criterion and three who the consultant does not believe are viable or meet the criterion. The search committee will select those who will be interviewed via Zoom and will bring three finalists to campus for an interview. Meetings were held with the feasibility study consultant, and Ms. Kuberski is looking forward to the feedback from the consultants. Mr. Endress reported that the consultants relayed that in their experience with feasibility studies, 20 percent move ahead, 30 percent have no chance of working out, and 50 percent have a chance if we do "X," and he was pleased to hear the consultants say that not everything works. Last week's Farm to Table event had good representation from trustees and administration, and Mr. Michael Gunderson was there to help with the technology. Mr. Endress believes Mr. Justin Ebert and Ms. Monica Pierce had the students very well organized. They are running a good program, and it speaks highly of Highland. He also noted that the Ag and Nursing programs were mentioned in the feasibility study meeting of programs that the community supports. Mr. Rhyne asked about the company's involvement continuing after the feasibility study is complete, and Mr. Endress noted that it could continue in the construction and management phase, which gives the College more options. The Foundation Executive Committee met and held a full Board meeting to adopt the budget and have named Mr. Dan Dick as Acting Executive Director. Their rationale is that this will give the Foundation board a chance to think about what their options are, and it is also a chance for Mr. Dick to "shine."

Ms. Kuberski noted that last week was Welcome Week with much more student engagement. Over 200 students went through the lunch line. An ice cream social was held on Friday including activities to help students get to know each other, and over 100 students participated. Ms. Kuberski recognized the Student Services staff for their efforts to help students feel engaged and connected. The time capsule was also buried on Tuesday with around 30 – 40 people in attendance with the biggest question being how to let people know 40 years from now to dig it up. The capsule included a number of items such as a Cougar mask from the pandemic, the strategic plan, Legacy Campaign brochure, One Highland cultural beliefs and the journey card that shows the progression of the culture work, the Opening Days agenda, a pin from the Nursing and Medical Assistant pinnings and the pledges for each, a ribbon from the Simulation Hospital ribbon cutting, a picture of the Board, and 60th anniversary cards on which faculty, staff, and students could write a memory.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Cafeteria Philosophy

Ms. Janssen provided an overview of the cafeteria, noting that there are some upcoming plans that are bold. Ms. Julie Atz is the Cafeteria Manager. The cafeteria has been taking a lot of steps to make sure it is aligned with the Key Results and strategic themes. Some operational improvements have been made, focusing on creating an exceptional student experience and an engaging, welcoming environment. One challenge the cafeteria has always faced is that it is not a profit center. A lot of things have been done to contain costs and still have the service and quality needed. Ms. Janssen shared the financial results, noting that FY23 is looking at a deficit of \$87,000 in the cafeteria, while in FY21 and FY22, the College could use federal funds to cover lost revenue. A cafeteria work group met, which included employees from across campus, trustee Shawn Boldt, who is also an industry expert, as

well as a student member. During the Spring 2022 semester, time was spent gathering input and coming up with ways to improve. A survey was conducted of employees and staff with the assistance of Dr. Misty Thruman, and the results showed that there was room to raise awareness of the cafeteria and the menu. Those responding wanted weekly specials (hot meal with an entrée and side), and expanded hours, and the respondents thought the appearance was dated. The results also showed that respondents appreciated the quality of food, the friendly, welcoming staff, and the catering experience. For Fall 2022, a new name, Cougar Café, was soft launched, and new furniture will be installed. A menu has been developed for the next six to eight weeks to assist with a better marketing plan, and hours have been expanded. So far this year, sales have been around \$500-\$550 per day, with around 155 people. In the summer, Upward Bound students are also served, which is now around 35 students. The new wall art is up and installed. The work group proposed some updates for refreshing the serving area to make it more modern and welcoming, more like other colleges and universities that were visited virtually. The work group reimagined the Cougar Café as a place for students to eat, spend time, interact, meet new people, and feel welcome, which will build engagement, contribute to retention, increase traffic and sales, and support the financial stability of the College. Ms. Janssen concluded her report by noting that the pumpkin bars provided for the meeting were made by Ms. Lisa Bardell, Assistant Cafeteria Manager and talented baker.

Mr. Endress asked trustees for their philosophy regarding the cafeteria. The cafeteria is of value to the athletic team members, and athletes are customers and can use their financial aid vouchers to buy meal cards. Mr. Knaack asked if there are indicators, targets or measurements, or “this is better because of X.” Ms. Janssen explained that it is a little difficult to identify indicators unless it is the number of students served or the dollars raised. Mr. Knaack observed that there are a lot of areas that do not make a profit. Perhaps the survey could be used to determine year-to-year satisfaction. Ms. Chloe Smith noted that students wish there were more hours in the cafeteria. Many athletes do not have cars to get to the grocery stores, and if the hours were longer, students could be more engaged on campus. Ms. Kuhlemeier asked if anything was mentioned about a coffee shop, which may be a growth opportunity, and Ms. Groezinger also noted that relationships equal retention, and if we provide an area that is inviting, that will provide the momentum needed. Ms. Kuberski explained that plans pre-COVID were to update the furnishings but this was postponed. Mr. Mike Gunderson has been instrumental in keeping the project alive, and new furnishings should be here by the end of the month, including high- and low-top tables, booths, and charging stations. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Board is generally saying to keep up the good work, and look at the financial philosophy sometime down the road, but they agree that we need a place for people to gather. Ms. Groezinger stated that the extension of hours is far-reaching for the diverse student groups. Ms. Kuhlemeier also suggested that the College needs something on the exterior of the building to draw people in, and Ms. Groezinger suggested that perhaps the Eagle Scouts could “spruce up” the entryways. Internal signage was one of the original projects, but there have been roadblocks on the digital sign project due to price increases and these are on the radar of Ms. Gerber and Ms. Jeniece Smith. Ms. Groezinger also suggested that banners would look nice. Mr. Endress expressed his desire for a left turn lane into campus from Pearl City Road. Ms. Chloe Smith reported that students are frustrated that the cafeteria is only open four hours, and it would be beneficial to have breakfast, lunch, and dinner, which would open up additional student worker positions.

Enrollment Opportunities and Challenges

Ms. Liz Gerber, Dr. Misty Thruman, Ms. Jeniece Smith, Mr. Jeremy Bradt, and Ms. Carolyn Petsche presented an overview of enrollment opportunities and challenges. Dr. Thruman provided a number of statistics on the current enrollment, noting that this year at 10th day there were about 100 more dual credit students, while in FY22, about 40 percent of students were dual credit. Ms. Jeniece Smith reported that Interact developed the new “It’s All Here” brand, which will be rolled out, including open-access templates, tools and training. Recent marketing highlights include a mailer series with Chartwell, media buys and ads from Interact, a “State of the College” report, new view book, 60th anniversary time capsule, and Welcome Week activities coordinated by Ms. Stacey Moore. A new catalog will be published in 2023, and updates to several website pages will be made this Fall. Mr. Jeremy Bradt highlighted several initiatives including an online GECC credential that will hopefully be marketed this Fall semester, as well as two short-term certificates in Spring 2023. Over 500 students who did not come back to Highland were contacted beginning in May, and the top three reasons given for not continuing at Highland included that they were taking a semester off; they were frustrated with their Highland experience; or, they needed to earn more money to come back to College. The College partners with Amazon, and we currently have two students who are attending Highland for which Amazon is investing in their education. New recruitment initiatives include Lunch and Learns targeting over 60 nonprofits in our four-county district to hear about Highland; a mail campaign to encourage students to apply to Highland; a partnership with UMOS, which paid for 67 students at a total of \$288,000; a Nursing & Allied Health open house this past May; a mailing to GED completers; and community outreach events including Cruise Night, Fall into Stockton, the Stephenson County Fair, YMCA Healthy Kids event, and an invitation to the Boys and Girls Club to tour campus. Mr. Bradt encouraged trustees to consider lowering out-of-state tuition for Wisconsin online students as other Illinois community colleges have done across the state to make it more marketable for students across the border. He also noted that some high schools in our district have no dual credit, so it is a strategic goal to make sure high schools have both occupational and transfer options. Mr. Bradt reported that it is clear that students want face-to-face classes, with 64 percent of students surveyed wanting face-to-face or hybrid classes. He also presented data showing that students overall prefer in-person classes. Ms. Carolyn Petsche provided information on a calendar developed by the Retention Task Force with retention events addressing five categories: student engagement, student development, outreach, recruitment, and academic support/wraparound services. The College has begun embedding mentors in classrooms, and the mentors help meld academic support with role modeling and social support. Ms. Gerber explained that the College received a new Educational Opportunity Center grant, which will allow the College to have more “feet on the streets”, with two to three new employees, of which two will be targeting 850 individuals per year to discuss how these individuals can continue their education. There has been an incredible amount of adaptability shown throughout the pandemic, an improved use of data, a high level of collaboration across departments, and new initiatives designed to address strategic challenges. Mr. Block asked if there were early indicators of the success of initiatives. Ms. Gerber explained that with many of the new initiatives, ways to evaluate the success have been built into Banner, with things such as coding, which allows students to be put into a cohort group. Mr. Block also noted that it is the Board’s responsibility to look at lowering tuition for neighboring states, and he would like this brought to the Board for discussion. He referred to the schools that do not have dual credit, and asked how we can look into the philosophy of why a school district does not have dual credit. Mr. Bradt believes it is a matter of going out and being strategic and talking with superintendents and principals. Ms. Kuberski reported that our online offerings will remain strong. The GECC transfers in as a package to a four-year institution. Ms. Gerber noted that dual credit was a

challenge that was recognized by the Strategic Planning Council and is included in the new strategic plan. Mr. Knaack asked how many dual credit students come to Highland, and Ms. Gerber responded that the number was about 20 percent a few years ago, but the data will need to be reviewed again to see if it changed. Mr. Rhyme expressed his appreciation for the discussion, noting that when discussing tuition increases, a lot of that ties back into student enrollment. He thinks it is important to continue to look at this information and, if we do that, we can make strides to impact student enrollment. Ms. Groezinger asked at what point do we as a campus community, including faculty, embrace and address that our students want to be face-to-face, noting that she realizes it is a delicate topic but if we want students and we want this institution to thrive, we need to be there for students. Mr. Block asked about embedded mentors, and Ms. Gerber explained that those are mentors who attend class with the students, serve as role models, and meet with students one-on-one outside of the classroom. Ms. Gerber concluded the presentation by announcing that Ms. Petsche is retiring at the end of this month. She has been working right up to the end, and Ms. Gerber and Mr. Endress congratulated Ms. Petsche on her retirement. Ms. Petsche thanked everyone, noting that it has been an honor and privilege to work at Highland for the last 34 years and to be part of the team.

Ms. Groezinger suggested that if trustees have not been contacted by Mr. Anthony Musso in Career Services to be a mentor for students, that is a great way to pay it forward.

Community Outreach

Mr. Endress reminded trustees that several months ago, trustees offered to help with an outreach program whereby they would attend local school board meetings, etc. He explained that Ms. Kuberski and Ms. Jeniece Smith have thought of a different opportunity for trustees. Ms. Kuberski noted that what she is hearing is how do we have our “feet on the streets” and a stronger presence, and there may be other opportunities to think about. She explained that she is not redirecting trustees but offered other things for trustees to think about. When Ms. Kuberski became President, there was an idea to have a Report to the Community (or call it an annual report or President’s report), but because of COVID, the College put a pause on many things that would normally happen at that time and we lost community outreach opportunities because of that. Ms. Kuberski, Ms. Gerber, and Ms. Jeniece Smith talked about something that would highlight the 60th anniversary and ultimately things happening at Highland, the reimagination and renovations that many are not aware are happening. With that in mind, the College has been working with Chartwell, and there will be a postcard mailed to the community with a QR code to the video of highlights of all that is happening at the College, including renovations and programming. Much of the b-roll taken will also be used for program highlights. The plan is to have the video released in October, which is key recruitment time and prior to Spring registration. This is an opportunity for trustees to point people to the video and encourage people to watch it and see what has been happening and how we are trying to be visionary. Other opportunities for reaching out to the district include the Northwest Illinois Economic Development and Greater Freeport Partnership annual meetings, Farm to Table, and other campus events that are equally important. If trustees attend events, they have things to talk about and have had the experiences themselves. It is important for the campus community to know trustees are supporting events and have talking points outside the Board room. Ms. Groezinger asked if the College had participated in local parades in the past, and Ms. Kuberski noted that this was feedback received from discussion at Opening Days, and Strategic Enrollment Management is going to look at the comments from the feedback next week. Suggestions for parades include Roary handing out candy, and having athletic teams on wagons, such as volleyball, etc. Mr. Endress stated that it would be helpful for Ms. Kuberski and Ms. Jeniece Smith to know that

trustees are willing to help, and he encouraged trustees to think about what trustees think they could do to best help the College. Ms. Kuberski noted that Ms. Jeniece Smith came in at a peak year, with it being a catalog year, new view book, the video, and 60th anniversary, and there are a lot of opportunities but also a lot to balance, so they are trying to pick out things that will give the most return on investment. Ms. Kuberski does not believe it is necessary to have an annual report to the community every year but the 60th anniversary is a key moment to do that. It also sets up perhaps a four- to five-year cycle with strategic planning.

At 10:02 a.m., the Chairperson declared a recess; the meeting resumed at 10:15 a.m.

Bike-Hike Trail

Ms. Kuberski explained that the Resolution, which will be presented to trustees for approval later in the meeting, would commit the College to up to \$200,000 toward the bike-hike trail project. She has talked with Mr. Rich Haight, CEO of the YMCA, and he is open to taking the topic to his board, and Ms. Kuberski has talked with the Foundation board. Attorney Tim Zollinger has reviewed the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and sent back some questions with regard to insurance and responsibility for certain things, and the Foundation is also reviewing the MOU. The MOU would not go into effect unless the grant is funded. The map has been redrawn to go on the perimeter of the College property, and Ms. Kuberski noted that the grant submission is for the concept, not the final map. Mr. Endress reported that the topic was discussed at the Foundation meeting with mixed feelings, and they suggested that the City look for additional partners. Ms. Kuhlemeier asked if lighting was included in the rural areas, and Ms. Kuberski reported that they have not indicated that the trail would be lit.

MAIN MOTION (ACTION)

A. **Resolution Authorizing Support and Commitment of Funds for a Grant Application to the Illinois Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) for Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities**

Mr. Knaack moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to approve the Resolution, as presented, supporting the submittal of an application to the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT's) Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) for expansion of Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities. It is further recommended that the Board affirms its commitment of up to \$200,000 over a four-year period as Highland's portion of the required 20 percent match for the City of Freeport's \$3,000,000 application for ITEP funding. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried and the Resolution adopted.

BOARD UPDATES

Board Virtual Attendance Policy

Mr. Endress explained that right now through the Governor's Executive Order, trustees may attend the Board meetings electronically because of the disaster proclamation. Mr. Boldt reported that an Illinois Community College Trustees Association legislative priority will be to make this permanent and eliminate the video requirement. In the meantime, Ms. Grimes will take a draft policy to the Policy Review Committee for approval.

CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Groezinger moved and Mr. Block seconded the motion to move into Closed Session for the purposes of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body under Open Meetings Act exception 2-C-1; and, collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives under exception 2-C-2, 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: Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Knaack, Block, Endress
NAYS: None

At 10:29 a.m., the Chairperson declared the motion carried and 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: Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Knaack, Block, Endress, Groezinger
NAYS: None

At 10:52 a.m., the Chairperson declared the motion carried and the Closed Session ended.

ACTION, IF NECESSARY

No action was necessary following Closed Session.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Knaack reported that he read *The Prairie Wind* cover to cover and it is an exceptional publication.

NEW BUSINESS

Voting Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the Association of Community College Trustees 2022 Leadership Congress

Mr. Endress asked for volunteers for the delegate and alternate delegate for the upcoming Association of Community College Trustees Leadership Congress. Ms. Groezinger volunteered to be the College's

voting delegate, and Mr. Boldt volunteered to be the alternate delegate. Action will be taken on the appointments at the September regular meeting.

Board of Trustee Nomination Packets

Mr. Endress announced that petition packets for those wanting to run for a seat on the Board of Trustees will be available beginning September 20, 2022. The petition filing dates are December 12 – 19, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Groezinger moved and Mr. Block seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

At 10:56 a.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