

**REGULAR MEETING**  
BOARD OF ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NO. 519  
Counties of Stephenson, Ogle, Jo Daviess and Carroll

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

The regular meeting of the Board of Illinois Community College District No. 519 was called to order by Mr. Jim Endress, Chairperson, at 4:01 p.m. on May 23, 2023, in the Robert J. Rimington Board Room (room H-228) in the Highland Community College Student/Conference Center, 2998 West Pearl City Road, Freeport, Illinois in said district.

The following members were physically present: Mr. Doug Block, Mr. Jim Endress, Ms. Pennie Groezinger, Mr. Shawn Boldt (departed 4:48 p.m.), Mr. James Rhyne, Ms. Sarah Kuhlemeier, Ms. Mary Kaufman, and Ms. Allison Coon

The following members attended virtually: None

The following members were absent: None

Others physically present: Ms. Chris Kuberski, President; Mr. Pete Fink, Director, ITS; Mr. Kam Merryman, Network Administrator; Mr. Steve Mihina, Faculty; Mr. Gerald Podraza, Taxpayer; Mr. Harry Bodell, Speech Instructor and Director of Forensics; Ms. Kevyn-Ann Sutter, Assistant Forensics Coach; Forensics team members Mr. Mason McIntyre, Ms. Olivia Wilhelms, Ms. Brooke Allison Parkinson, and Ms. Maria Bender; and Ms. Terri Grimes, Board Secretary

Others virtually present: Ms. Jill Janssen, Vice President/CFO, Administrative Services, Board Treasurer; Mr. Sam Agdasi, Vice President/CAO, Academic Services; Mr. Scott Anderson, Vice President, Business, Technology, and Community Programs; Ms. Liz Gerber, Vice President/CSSO, Student Development & Support Services; Ms. Maddie Eppenstein, Forensics team member; Mr. Matt Mullen, Director of Development, HCC Foundation; Mr. Dan Dick, Executive Director, HCC Foundation; Ms. Jeniece Smith, Director, Marketing & Community Relations; Ms. Amber Macklin, Coordinator, Disability Services; Ms. Alyssa Lipinski, Digital Media & Creative Specialist; Dr. Brendan Dutmer, Dean, Natural Science & Mathematics; Mr. Jeremy Bradt, Director, Enrollment & Records; and Dr. Andy Dvorak, Retired Faculty

**APPROVAL OF TRUSTEE(S) ATTENDING MEETING VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS**

There were no trustees who wished to attend the meeting virtually.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Groezinger moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to approve the agenda, as presented. The vote being unanimous, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Groezinger moved and Mr. Boldt seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2023, regular meeting, as presented. The vote being unanimous, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

### **STUDENT RECOGNITION: HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE FORENSICS TEAM**

Ms. Kuberski introduced Mr. Harry Bodell, Director of Forensics, who provided an overview of the Forensics team's successes during the past academic year. A few of the highlights of the season include winning over 50 individual awards in speech and debate, attending over eight different tournaments, placing in the top five community college teams, Ms. Brooke Allison Parkinson's state champion in Prose Interpretation, a top five team finish at the state tournament, and Mr. Noah Redmore taking home a National Gold Medal. During the year, the team also collected clothing for the Cougar Closet, and received a donation of over 50 suits and other items from the Kiwanis Club. Ms. Kevyn-Ann Sutter, Assistant Forensics Coach, also informed trustees that Mr. Bodell won a service recognition award at nationals for his work on the state level for speech and debate.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Gerald Podraza addressed the trustees on several topics he outlined in a letter to Mr. Endress and trustees. (See attached letter.) After his allotted time, he indicated he would return for the next meeting to discuss additional topics outlined in the letter.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Ms. Gerber introduced new employee Ms. Amber Macklin, and Mr. Dan Dick introduced Mr. Matt Mullen. Mr. Endress commended Mr. Dick on sending the Gala thank you notes out in a timely manner, stating that they arrived in mailboxes the Monday after the Gala. Mr. Dick recognized the work of Ms. Pat Dunn, Foundation Director of Operations, and Ms. Vicki Warthen, Foundation Director of Marketing and Annual Giving.

### **BUDGET REPORT**

Ms. Janssen reported that last year the College received about \$800,000 in Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) funding, which was more than in years past. Since then, the Internal Revenue Service has audited the State's calculations and determined that the funding will need to be reallocated. At this point, Ms. Janssen is unable to tell what that means for Highland but she would expect more than a five percent decrease in CPPRT funding, which will have a significant impact on the budget.

### **FOUNDATION REPORT**

Mr. Dick noted that there has been preliminary growth in enrollment, with Fall enrollment trending in a positive direction. He announced that 131 scholarships were awarded to 103 individuals, and

those who applied currently have an 84 percent chance of receiving a scholarship. He reported that 100 percent of the trustees, as well as all members of Cabinet donated to the recent Foundation Gala, which was a successful event. Mr. Dennis Endress and Mr. Carl Fairbairn, former Highland trustees, were recognized at the event as recipients of the Delbert Scheider Lifetime Achievement Award. Mr. Dick expressed his thanks to Highland's Marketing team for issuing a press release within five days of the event. The College's first ever Day of Giving was successful and included great stories from Ms. Vicki Schulz, Ms. Beth Groshans, and the Forensics team. In addition, Mr. Pete Norman issued a challenge that he would match up to \$2,500 in donations for Highland Athletics during the Day of Giving. The event raised a total of over \$36,000 through 207 gifts, including 128 alumni, 37 faculty and staff, and 69 first-time donors. The Foundation is hosting a quarterly board meeting, retreat, and emeriti celebration on Thursday, May 25, which will celebrate the legacy of former Foundation board members Mrs. Virginia Ames, Mr. Jim Berberet, Mr. David Shockey, and Mr. Todd Weegens. Mr. Dick ended his report by noting that the deadline for submitting Distinguished Alumni nominations is July 15. The deadline was moved up to provide better communication. The Distinguished Alumni will be recognized on September 8.

### CONSENT ITEMS

A. Academic

1. Revised Joint Educational Agreement Between Columbia College and Highland Community College

*Recommendation:* That the Board of Trustees approves the revised joint educational agreement between Highland Community College and Columbia College, as presented.

B. Administration (None)

C. Personnel

1. Part-time Instructors, Overload, and Other Assignments

*Recommendation:* That the Board of Trustees approves the list of part-time instructors, overload, and other assignments, as presented.

D. Financial (None)

Mr. Block moved and Mr. Boldt seconded the motion to approve the consent items, as presented. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Endress, Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

## **MAIN MOTIONS**

### A. Academic

1. New Program: Commercial Applicator I Certificate Program

Ms. Groezinger moved and Mr. Boldt seconded the motion to approve the new Commercial Applicator Certificate program, as presented. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block,  
Endress, Con  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

### B. Administration

1. First Reading – Policy Manual Chapter I: Board of Trustees

Mr. Rhyne moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to approve for first reading the revised policies in Chapter I of the Policy Manual, as presented, and affirm for first reading the unchanged policies in Chapter I of the Policy Manual. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress,  
Groezinger, Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

2. First Reading – Revised Policy 5.133: Use of Skate Equipment and Recreational Vehicles

Ms. Groezinger moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to approve for first reading revised policy 5.133, Use of Skate Equipment and Recreational Vehicles, as presented. The policy is included in Chapter V, Finance, of the policy manual. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress, Groezinger,  
Boldt, Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

3. First Reading – Revised Policy 4.095: Leave, Vacation – Administrative/Professional/Classified Employees

Ms. Kaufman moved and Mr. Boldt seconded the motion to approve for first reading revised policy 4.095, Leave, Vacation – Administrative/Professional/Classified

Employees, as presented. The policy is included in Chapter IV, Personnel of the policy manual. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress, Groezinger, Boldt,  
Rhyne, Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

4. First Reading – Revised Policy 4.12: Leave, Sick – Administrative/Professional/Classified Employees

Mr. Boldt moved and Mr. Rhyne seconded the motion to approve for first reading revised policy 4.12, Leave, Sick – Administrative/Professional/Classified Employees, as presented. The policy is included in Chapter IV, Personnel, of the policy manual. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Kaufman, Block, Endress, Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne,  
Kuhlemeier, Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

5. First Reading – Revised Policy 4.16: Leave, Personal Days

Ms. Kaufman moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to approve for first reading revised policy 4.16, Leave, Personal Days, as presented. The policy is included in Chapter IV, Personnel, of the policy manual. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Block, Endress, Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier,  
Kaufman, Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

C. Personnel

1. Acceptance of Staff Member Requesting to Participate in the Planned Retirement Program

Mr. Boldt moved and Ms. Groezinger seconded the motion that the Board of Trustees accepts the request of the following staff member to participate in the Planned Retirement Program:

Brian Leahy, planned retirement June 30, 2026

The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Endress, Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman,  
Block, Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

2. Appointment: College Access Specialist, TRIO Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) (Grant Funded)

Ms. Kaufman moved and Ms. Groezinger seconded the motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Kirk Cabana as full-time College Access Specialist, TRIO Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) beginning June 5, 2023, at an FY23 salary of \$40,000, plus appropriate fringe benefits. This is a full-time, exempt professional, grant-funded position and is within the FY23 budget. This position is dependent on continued grant funding. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block,  
Endress, Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

3. New Job Description: Multimedia Content Specialist

Mr. Block moved and Ms. Kaufman seconded the motion to approve the new job description, as presented, for Multimedia Content Specialist with placement at range 28 on the Highland Salary Range Table. This is a full-time, exempt professional position and is included in the FY24 budget. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress, Groezinger,  
Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

D. Financial

1. Course Fee Changes for Spring 2024

Mr. Rhyne moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to approve the following fee changes, as presented, beginning with the Spring 2024 semester.

| <b>Course</b>                    | <b>Current</b> | <b>Proposed</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| WELD130 Intro to Welding         | \$85.00        | \$90.00         |
| WELD 135 Shielded Arc Oxy. Weld. | \$85.00        | \$90.00         |
| WELD232 Intermediate Welding     | \$85.00        | \$90.00         |
| WELD233 Adv. Welding             | \$85.00        | \$95.00         |

*The consumable supplies required for the welding classes continue to increase in costs.*

| <b>Course</b>                               | <b>Current</b> | <b>Proposed</b> |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| ACCT115 Computer Applications in Accounting | \$25.00        | \$15.00         |
| ACCT220 QuickBooks Accounting               | \$25.00        | \$15.00         |

*Software cost decreased*

The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress, Groezinger,  
Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

2. Auditor for Fiscal Year 2023

Mr. Endress noted that, at the Audit and Finance Committee meeting, which preceded the Board meeting, it was pointed out the \$2,500 fee is for the implementation of Government Accounting Standards Board statement No. 96 (GASB 96), but Wipfli would like to roll that cost into a \$5,500 fee that would cover both the implementation, as well as the calculation of credit. He suggested correcting the recommendation to strike the \$2,500 for implementation of GASB 96.

Ms. Kaufman moved and Mr. Rhyne seconded the motion to approve that the firm of Wipfli be retained to perform the annual audit for Fiscal Year 2023 at a cost not to exceed \$60,375 for the main audit, \$2,500 for the Consolidated Year-end Financial Report (CYEFR), and \$5,000 for each additional major program, and removing the \$2,500 for the implementation of Government Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 96, as Mr. Endress suggested. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress, Groezinger, Rhyne,  
Coon  
NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

3. Health Insurance Rates

Mr. Block moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion that the Board of Trustees establishes the following rates for medical, dental, and vision insurance during FY24 under a fully-insured health insurance plan.

|  |            |                          |            |
|--|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Medical (Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO Plan): |            |                          |            |
| Employee Only                              | \$ 881.49  | Retiree Only             | \$ 881.49  |
| Family Plan                                | \$2,203.74 | Retiree with Family Plan | \$2,203.74 |

|   |            |                          |            |
|---|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Medical (Blue Cross Blue Shield HDHP Plan): |            |                          |            |
| Employee Only                               | \$ 775.72  | Retiree Only             | \$ 775.72  |
| Family Plan                                 | \$1,939.29 | Retiree with Family Plan | \$1,939.29 |

|   |            |                          |            |
|---|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Medical (Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO Co-Pay Plan): |            |                          |            |
| Employee Only                                     | \$ 765.23  | Retiree Only             | \$ 765.23  |
| Family Plan                                       | \$1,913.05 | Retiree with Family Plan | \$1,913.05 |

|                                  |           |                          |           |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Dental (Blue Cross Blue Shield): |           |                          |           |
| Employee Only                    | \$ 27.34  | Retiree Only             | \$ 27.34  |
| Employee + Spouse                | \$ 55.62  | Retiree + Spouse         | \$ 55.62  |
| Employee + Child(ren)            | \$ 57.42  | Retiree + Child(ren)     | \$ 57.42  |
| Family Plan                      | \$ 102.54 | Retiree with Family Plan | \$ 102.54 |

|                                  |          |                      |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
| Vision (Blue Cross Blue Shield): |          |                      |          |
| Employee Only                    | \$ 7.80  | Retiree Only         | \$ 7.80  |
| Employee + Spouse                | \$ 14.83 | Retiree + Spouse     | \$ 14.83 |
| Employee + Child(ren)            | \$ 15.61 | Retiree + Child(ren) | \$ 15.61 |
| Family                           | \$ 22.95 | Retiree with Family  | \$ 22.95 |

The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Kaufman, Block, Endress, Groezinger, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier,  
 Coon  
 NAYS: None

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

4. Payment of Bills and Agency Fund Report – April 2023

Mr. Block moved and Ms. Kaufman seconded the motion to approve the Resolution authorizing and directing Ms. Jill Janssen, Treasurer, to make payments or transfers of funds for the April 2023 bills, including Board travel, in the amount of \$894,229.50 Automated Clearing House (ACH) debits W0000642 amounting to \$58,980.26, and Electronic Refunds of \$18,399.37, with 8 adjustments of \$9,595.72, such warrants amounting to \$962,170.21. Transfers of funds for payroll amounted to \$646,439.84. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Block, Endress, Groezinger, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman,  
 Coon  
 NAYS: None

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



## REPORTS

### Treasurer's Report: Statements of Revenue, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance

Ms. Kaufman noted that Union Loan and Savings is now known as Union Savings Bank, and Ms. Janssen will make the change.

### Student Trustee

Ms. Coon stated that there is not a lot going on. It was a lovely graduation ceremony and Honors Convocation, and students are happy to have a break before Summer or Fall classes.

### Audit and Finance Committee

In Mr. Boldt's absence, Mr. Endress reported that the Audit and Finance Committee met earlier today with the auditors and reviewed the timeline, and also met in Closed Session. He noted that there is always a new GASB, which means there is something else for the auditors to look for. Ms. Janssen and her staff are in line with the timeline and ready to go.

### Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) Representative

In the absence of Mr. Boldt, Mr. Endress noted that Mr. Boldt attended Lobby Day and the ICCTA meeting on May 2 and 3, and his name will be brought forward for the position of ICCTA Treasurer. ICCTA adopted a neurodiversity statement last Fall, which the State legislature has implemented statewide. Ms. Groezinger stated that legislatively, they spent time with Governor Pritzker at the community college legislative reception and listened to his vision and commitment to community colleges, noting that parties do not matter, but it is what is best for the students. Those who attended Lobby Day also spent time with Senator Andrew Chesney and Representative Tony McCombie.

### Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)

Ms. Groezinger reported that ACCT's Diversity Committee will meet a day ahead of when others will be coming in for ACCT's Fall conference.

### Board Chair

Mr. Endress passed around a thank you note from the Stockton Post-prom Committee, as well as a program from the Phi Theta Kappa banquet where two Highland students were recognized. He also passed around a letter he received from former trustee Mr. Craig Knaack, which offered a little perspective of Mr. Knaack's vantage point serving on the Board after having served in administration at the College. Mr. Endress said that Honors Convocation was exceptional. It was amazing to think that the student speaker graduated from high school and Highland at the same time. There were interesting stories behind the award recipients. He participated in a joint meeting with the YMCA and HCC, with more information coming later. He closed his comments by stating that it is an honor to be reelected chair by his peers.

### President

Ms. Kuberski provided an update on enrollment. A weekly report is received each Monday which compares registration date to registration date. The report looks at a four-year window. The last four Mondays, credit hours have been up eight percent, eight percent, 11 percent, and 12.5 percent, respectively. Keeping in mind that in Fall 2020 we were still under the COVID cloud, we are up 11.4 percent from Fall 2021 and 9.7 percent from Fall 2020. As of Monday, Summer is up 15.7

percent in credit hours and 10.8 percent in headcount, much attributed to the Early Childhood Program and CNA classes. The College had opened a CNA class that filled, so a second one was opened, which also filled. Dual credit students will be registered in the Fall. Last year, we had 30 CollegeNOW students and are anticipating 40 this Fall. The primary students in Calculus I classes right now are CollegeNOW students.

Mr. Rhyne recognized Dr. Brendan Dutmer for the Chemistry report he submitted, and Mr. Block thanked Mr. Agdasi for including Dr. Dutmer's report in Mr. Agdasi's administrative report. Trustees also discussed opportunities for students, and Mr. Anderson explained that students can receive the UMOS scholarship, as long as the students are working and receiving some type of payment from the ag community. There are also a number of opportunities available to students through WIOA, the CNA PATH grant, and the Early Childhood Education grant.

### **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 of the public body or legal counsel for the public body under Open Meetings Act exception 2-C-1; collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives under exception 2-C-2; and, pending litigation under exception 2-c-11, 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, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Coon  
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. The video stream and meeting would resume after the Closed Session.

At 5:23 p.m., the Chairperson declared the meeting in Closed Session.

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

AYES: Groezinger, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman, Block, Endress, Coon  
NAYS: None

At 6:23 p.m., the Chairperson declared the motion carried and the Closed Session ended.

### **ACTION, IF NECESSARY**

No action was necessary.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### *Appointment of Decennial Committee*

Mr. Endress met with Ms. Kuberski and Ms. Grimes to consider members for the Decennial Committee, and he recommended appointing Mr. Mark Williams of Greater Freeport Partnership, Mr. David Schmit of Northwest Illinois Economic Development, and former trustees Mr. Rob Urish and Mr. Craig Knaack. Mr. Endress explained the purpose and requirements of the Decennial Committee, noting that it must meet at least three times and submit a final report within 18 months. The first meeting of the committee will be on August 22 at 3:00 p.m.

### *Feasibility of a Potential Athletics, Learning, and Event Center*

Ms. Kuberski reported that she has received the draft of the final report from Sports Facilities, and it is ready to be sent to trustees. If trustees have questions after reviewing the report, they should let Ms. Grimes know by June 14. Discussion of a potential facility will be a focus of the June retreat. The President's Direct Reports (PDR) are hoping to receive direction from the Board by September. The direction received will guide the next steps throughout the academic year. Ms. Kuberski reminded trustees that the longer time away from when the report was received, the less accurate the report will be. The YMCA is in the process of completing their strategic plan, so they are interested to know the Board's thoughts about a potential facility, as well. They suggested and agreed to having a SWOT analysis completed on continuing the partnership, and Ms. Kuberski noted that the YMCA is part of the feasibility study, to some degree.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### *Appoint ICCTA Representative and Alternate Representative*

Mr. Endress appointed Mr. Boldt to serve as the College's ICCTA representative and Ms. Groezinger to serve as the alternate representative.

### *Review of Bills*

Mr. Endress explained that in the past years, the Audit and Finance Committee members have reviewed the bills on an alternating basis, and he asked if trustees wanted to continue this practice or have every trustee take a turn. Following discussion, it was suggested that the current practice continue.

### *Northwest Illinois Ag Research Center*

Mr. Endress reported that Ag Instructor Mr. Justin Ebert has scheduled a meeting to discuss the possibility of a northwest Illinois ag research center, and only two trustees will be able to attend (due to the Open Meetings Act.)


## **DATES OF IMPORTANCE**

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for July 25, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. in the Robert J. Rimington Board Room in the Student/Conference Center. The meeting will be preceded by a budget work session at 3:00 p.m. The next quarterly Board retreat is scheduled for June 21, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Block moved and Ms. Kaufman seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. At 6:40 p.m., there being no further business, the Board Chairperson declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



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

Mr. James Endress,  
Chairman, HCC Board of Trustees  
Highland Community College  
Freeport, Illinois

Dear Sir:

It is my intention to attend the HCC Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for May 23, 2023. During that meeting, 3-minute public commentary, I will address one of the issues I bring to your attention from the following list, all of which together contribute to deep concern about the ENROLLMENT STATUS at Highland Community College:

1. Leveraging scholarship other than Pell Grants and Illinois MAT.
  - a. Local philanthropic organizations, (see attached letter)
  - b. Out-reach and marketing through Adult and Continuing Education
  - c. Reciprocal agreements, Illinois Community College System
  - d. Business partnerships
  - e. Community partnerships [REDACTED] Foundation for example)
  - f. Communication-Public Radio
2. Course alignment and dual credit with high schools
3. Trades related Certificates/Degrees
  - a. Formal partnerships with unions
4. Minority enrollment in targeted, high demand occupations
5. Agricultural Degrees/Certificate in subject areas that emphasize regionally produced/distributed food.
6. HCC District wide college fair that selectively includes only Illinois Colleges/Universities that honor conferring credit for high school AP courses, and are members of the Illinois State wide articulation agreement.

It is my intention to prioritize, speak to #1 letters a, b, and f.

Lastly, since the above list surely demonstrates broad concerns, expect me to attend further meetings, take 3 minutes to focus on how the above items integrate into a comprehensive marketing plan.

Sincerely,

Gerald Podraza  
3219 E. Stage Trail (1975-2019)  
Apple River, Illinois

Mr. Michael Casper,

May 9, 2023

CEO, Jo-Carroll Energy Coop

793 U S Rte #20 W.

Elizabeth, Illinois

Dear Mr. Casper:

As a member/client in good stand of the Jo-Carroll Coop since 2019, I write you to express concerns regarding awards/scholarships that are annually presented to deserving graduates of local high schools.

You must be aware, State of Illinois enrollment in higher education has decreased, some schools be they 4-year universities or community colleges show enrollment dwindling by upwards of 40%.

Out of state Universities, maybe Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, have developed schemes, recruitment strategies, that poach numerous Illinois residents away from an outstanding array of Illinois institutions of higher learning. These schools award scholarships to our high achieving students, funds of which draw down out of state tuition to the point where their tuition is competitive or even less than the average of Illinois schools.

From what I can determine, based on public notices published in the Warren Flash and Galena Gazette, over 90% of scholarships awarded to eligible graduates by Jo-Carroll Energy support their matriculation at out of Illinois schools.

Your philanthropic efforts worthy as they seem, based on resources made through energy bills, enable a dysfunctional process that contributes to a siphoning of Illinois economic power to neighboring states. Instead of students spending Illinois money inside Illinois, they end up providing direct economic development to other out of state communities.

What better use of local Illinois money that generates scholarships than to target students who intend to go to higher education institutions in Illinois, invest in Illinois, bring economic vitality to Illinois communities.

Sincerely,

Gerald Podraza

304 Territory Drive

Galena, Illinois 61036

Cc Ms. Peggy Francomb

Highland Community College  
Board of Trustees May meeting

Commentary: What's going On?

3-minute Public Comment

Gerald Podraza

Illinois Higher Education Institutions have experienced dramatic decreases in enrollment.

Bordering States, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota have instituted strategies that operationally poach Illinois students. As a result, not only enrollment declines, but economic inputs, Illinois generated monies (savings, inheritance, estate) move out of state. As a result, Illinois communities experience major downturn in economic viability.

What can be done?

EXAMPLE A

Multiple philanthropic organizations in the HCC District boundaries award scholarships. At least three are noteworthy in Jo Daviess County. As an aggregate, number of scholarships total between 35-40. Over 90% of those scholarships are awarded to high achieving students who matriculate at OUT OF STATE SCHOOLS. This activity has a long history! Inadvertently, these well-intentioned organizations directly contribute to dis-enrollment at Illinois schools and the potential economic fallout experienced by their local communities.

Resolution?

Strategy 1. Hold a luncheon/seminar

Invite philanthropic organizations, discuss how scholarships awards can be coordinated and integrated with Highland Foundation or Pell/MAT grants to promote attendance at HCC (targeted academic concentrations) and to follow with articulated programs at Illinois 4-year colleges/universities.

- a. Collect data from those organizations related to academic disciplines student are selecting for their out of state school experience. Use data to drive marketing of HCC and articulated programs.

**Strategy 2. Hold an all-district college/career fair**

Invite only schools of higher education that are located in Illinois to include all Universities/Colleges that are participants in the Illinois Articulation Consortium and 2-year community colleges who formally partner with HCC through the Community College reciprocal agreement. In addition, representatives from the Northwest Illinois Building Trades Council.

- a. Develop a 2-year degree, Construction Management, that incorporates skill-based training with an internship, Certificate, that can be potentially folded into requirements for the two-year degree.
- b. Invite high school junior and senior students, high school counselors, FFA teachers, community college students, parents, and members of the philanthropic community.

**Strategy 3. Northwest Illinois is flooded with news/publicity and marketing info from PBS stations in Northeast Iowa and Southwest Wisconsin. Alarming, the PBS station at Augustana College, Rock Island, has recently established a partnership with Iowa PBS. The result, more Iowa news less Illinois.**

- a. Develop formal relationship with WNIJ, PBS at Northern Illinois University. Their broadcast signal extends only just beyond the Villages of Lena and Pearl City. Can a new transmitter be located at the HCC campus or even better, a satellite station?