

**Highland Community College**  
*Board Retreat*  
*September 13, 2023*  
*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 8:03 a.m.

***Members Physically Present:*** Mr. Doug Block, Mr. Jim Endress, Ms. Pennie Groezinger (arrived 9:17 a.m.; departed 9:36 a.m.), Mr. Shawn Boldt, Mr. James Rhyne, Ms. Sarah Kuhlemeier, Ms. Mary Kaufman, and Ms. Allison Coon

***Members Virtually Present:*** None

***Members Absent:*** None

***Others Physically Present:*** Ms. Chris Kuberski, President; Mr. Pete Fink, Director, ITS; Ms. Liz Gerber, Vice President/CSSO, Student Development & Support Services; Mr. Pete Norman, Director, Athletics and Physical Education; Dr. Brendan Dutmer, Dean, Natural Science & Mathematics; 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, Administrative Services; Mr. Scott Anderson, Vice President, Business, Technology, and Community Programs; Ms. Liz Gerber, Vice President/CSSO, Student Development & Support Services; Mr. Chance Sharp, Student Success Coach; Mr. Dan Dick, Executive Director, HCC Foundation; Mr. Antwon Harris, Highland Alum; Ms. Karla Giuffre, Faculty; Ms. Jodi Rogers, Office Coordinator, Athletics; Dr. Andy Dvorak, Retired Faculty; Mr. Alan Nowicki, Faculty; Ms. Karen Brown, Director, Human Resources; Mr. Jeremy Bradt, Director, Enrollment & Records; Mr. Aaron Heim, Volleyball Coach; Ms. Paige Klever, Student Information Specialist; Ms. Beth Groshans, Student Advisor; Ms. Christie Lewis, HRIS Administrator/HR Generalist; and, Ms. Jeniece Smith, Director, Marketing & Community Relations

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

Mr. Endress reported that Ms. Groezinger had requested to attend the meeting virtually due to work commitments, which is allowable under the Open Meetings Act. Ms. Kuhlemeier moved and Ms. Kaufman seconded the motion to allow Ms. Groezinger to attend the retreat virtually. The vote being unanimous, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Karla Giuffre, Biology instructor, provided public comments in support of a potential new athletics, learning, and event center. She noted that if there is any potential for a track team, the College at a minimum would need a training track, which people could also use for walking. She recommended that when talking to the public about the idea, the discussion should center on more than athletes.

### **OPENING REMARKS**

Ms. Kuberski reported that 10<sup>th</sup> day enrollment was up 15.6 percent in head count and 9.4 percent in credit hours, but as of this past Monday, head count was up 18.8 percent and credit hours were up 10.6 percent, with second eight-week classes still to start. The College is continuing to see this leveling out in a positive way. This would also indicate that we have passed the date when students can withdraw with a full refund. A straw poll was done at the recent Presidents' Council meeting and more presidents indicated they had a zero to five percent increase in credit hours, with around five presidents raising their hands for a five to 10 percent increase. Several presidents did not participate in the poll. This is the first time since Ms. Kuberski has been at Highland that enrollment numbers have been positive in the Fall semester.

Mr. Endress attended the Ag Research Plot Day at the Highland farm, which was well attended and people thought it was very well done. Yesterday, Ms. Kuberski took the administrative negotiations team out to lunch to thank them for bringing faculty negotiations to a conclusion, and the group reflected on a lot of things. He noted that it was "neat to rub elbows" with the administrators on a different level. He also noted that later in the agenda, after Ms. Groezinger is able to join the meeting, trustees will discuss when to hold the quarterly Board retreats.

### **CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON THE FEASIBILITY OF A POTENTIAL ATHLETICS, LEARNING, AND EVENT CENTER**

Ms. Kuberski reported that the last pro forma, 2B, has been received from Sports Facilities, so there are now four potential possibilities. At a recent Presidents' Council meeting, a construction company reported that in 2019, the cost to put a new "face" on a building was \$311.20 per square foot, and in 2024, it will be \$462.53 per square foot. The company suggested if colleges are going to build, they should do so as soon as possible. Ms. Kuberski suggested the College needs to get to the point so they know the direction as soon as possible, and she is hoping the Board will vet out and give direction as to how much money they are willing to spend, the time line, and what is feasible so the College can start thinking about how to fund the project. The first meeting with the YMCA is scheduled in the next couple weeks. Mr. Endress suggested that the size and scale of the facility will drive the dollars needed, and how much money is available depends on potential partnerships. Ms. Kuhlemeier noted that the last pro forma (2B) felt "safe" and would only be meeting the current needs. She believes we need to



allow for opportunity and innovation. Ms. Janssen provided information on the College's legal debt margin, which is based on property values. The College also relies on bonds to fund other things. Our maximum debt margin is \$53 million. If we issued \$18 million in bonds, a property owner's tax bill would be about \$12 more. Other funding opportunities include the YMCA, Foundation, and grants. Another avenue is to go to 30 percent of the debt margin but the College may want to go to referendum to see if the public is willing to add that to their tax bill. The College could also be added to the State's list of potential Capital Development Board projects. Mr. Boldt noted that the Department of Agriculture has a low interest loan program, which might be something to look into, and he will get the information to Ms. Janssen. Ms. Kuberski reminded trustees that the Foundation's Legacy Campaign pledges will be paid off in June 2026, and that would be the time to discuss this with donors. Should there be a large donor for the facility project, that would speed up the process. Following discussion, it was agreed that the YMCA partnership is a critical piece, and the first meeting with the YMCA will be held on Wednesday. Trustees would like to tour other facilities, either all attending together and scheduling an open meeting, or pairing off in groups of two. Administration will finalize what is needed in a new facility and from that, the group can come up with key talking points to share consistently and collectively. Additional information will be gathered by December so there is a clearer understanding of the target. Ms. Kuberski believes this will be a planning year, with the next academic year being implementation but not necessarily groundbreaking. Mr. Endress requested that this topic be kept on the agenda for every Board meeting going forward so that information can be shared at each meeting to hopefully get answers to all the questions and make a decision. The preference would be to avoid a referendum unless that is the only way to get there. If we need to go to referendum, the community would need to know the College considered all other options. Mr. Block stated that he is not in favor of a referendum. Mr. Rhyne stated that it may be time to start "leaking" this information out so people will start thinking about their level of commitment. It was suggested that the College get on the agenda of city councils, county boards, Greater Freeport Partnership, etc. and put the concept on the website. Ms. Kuberski stated that the College will try to have talking points ready by the next Board meeting or soon after, and Ms. Kuberski will share the information with Greater Freeport Partnership and Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED).

### **DIVISION FOCUS: NATURAL SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS**

Ms. Kuberski introduced Dr. Brendan Dutmer, Dean of Natural Science & Mathematics, noting that he was instrumental in the College now displaying the flags of the international students. Dr. Dutmer reported that the math program review was recently completed. He reviewed the math course hierarchy, math and math education program objectives, and outcomes. A lot of program modifications have taken place in the last five years, and there are two new full-time Math instructors, with one instructor also serving as the Math Achievement Center (MAC) Director. He noted that the success rate for those enrolled in Math is around 70 percent, which is comparable to what is seen nationally. The current program review asked if there were any identifiable equity gaps, including racial equity gaps, and Institutional Research built a report with PivotTables that allowed faculty to look at numerous overlapping characteristics. Dr. Dutmer concluded his report by sharing his division's future goals, including updating marketing and recruitment materials, identifying problems that lead to the Equity Gap indicators, and implementing possible solutions.



## **OLD BUSINESS**

### *Future Board Retreat Dates and Times*

Mr. Endress asked that trustees determine the dates and times of future Board retreats, since Ms. Groezinger needed to leave the meeting. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Board retreats will be held on the second Thursday of the month from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. beginning in December. The retreats will include lunch.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### *September Board Meeting*

Mr. Endress will be out of town for the next regular Board meeting. Ms. Kuberski reported that the budget needs to be approved by September 30, and the public hearing on the budget requires a 30-day notice so the meeting cannot be rescheduled, but there needs to be a quorum. Ms. Groezinger noted that she is unable to attend, and Mr. Boldt has a conflict that he will work out. Mr. Block will review the bills. Ms. Janssen also informed trustees that the November Board meeting has equal issues because of posting for the tax levy. Ms. Kuhlemeier and Ms. Kaufman will not be at the November regular meeting. Senator Andrew Chesney will attend the September regular meeting to present a Resolution.

At 9:56 a.m., the Chairperson declared a recess. The meeting resumed at 10:06 a.m.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES**

### *HR Dashboard*

Ms. Karen Brown and Ms. Christie Lewis presented the new HR dashboard, which provides workforce statistics. The dashboard will continue to be refined, and it will be used for benchmarking purposes going forward. Ms. Brown thanked Ms. Lewis for developing the dashboard, which includes FY23 information on employee gender, race/ethnicity, and turnover, as well as recruitment, new hires, median years of service, average salary by employee classification, unemployment and worker's compensation claims, FMLA, average health insurance (medical/dental) cost, and professional development. This information will be tracked going forward. A question was raised regarding whether the information was broken out by bargaining (union) or non-bargaining (nonunion) employees, and Ms. Lewis reported that she had not done that but it could be done.

### *Internships and Externships*

Mr. Anderson provided information on internships and externships, noting that the Science departments average two to three students interning per year, with nine companies participating. Cosmetology does short-term internships with one to two students interning per year. Early Childhood Education has five programs where a practicum is required, and the College has nine two-year degree programs and 12 certificate programs that require workplace experience. A large number of Automotive Mechanics students go to school part of the day and go to work after. Mr. Block stated that he had two interns from Black Hawk College at his farm and asked if that would be an opportunity for any of our programs. Mr. Anderson stated that our students work more than any other, and he would request that interns be paid and the internships be long-term through graduation. Ms. Grimes will send the information provided by Mr. Anderson to trustees.



*Elizabeth Business Hub*

Ms. Kuberski provided information on the Elizabeth Business Hub. The College is an initial partner at the hub, which was a \$1,000 investment, and Ms. Sam Schaible represents the College at the meetings. Ms. Kuberski showed trustees slides of the space, noting that the Deans have been charged with thinking of things they could bring to the hub, such as coursework, Lifelong Learning classes, advising during peak registration times, etc. Dr. Stephanie Eymann is working with Ms. Schaible on a nursing recruitment event. Ms. Kuberski noted that the College continues to try to think of ways to serve the western part of our district. The Elizabeth Business Hub is located on Main Street in Elizabeth. The College is also part of Build It, Grow It through NWILED, and Mr. Evan Talbert will present to participants during the program. The focus will be around entrepreneurship, and it may generate interest in the entrepreneurship certificate. The Board will be informed if and when a ribbon-cutting for the Elizabeth Business Hub is scheduled. A group is planning to tour the facility and talk to the person overseeing it. Mr. Rhyne asked how an entrepreneur would use the space, and Ms. Kuberski believes that there is a contact person, and there is probably also a fee attached. With the College being a partner, the College would get a free or reduced rate depending on the amount of time it was used. Ms. Kuberski also noted that the College is still waiting to hear about funding for the mobile medical unit that would travel to Galena and those part of the district if and when funding is received.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Block moved and Ms. Kaufman 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: Endress, Boldt, 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 10:43 a.m., the Chairperson declared the meeting in Closed Session.

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

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

At 10:48 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** (Continued)

There was no additional old business.

**NEW BUSINESS** (Continued)

*Athletics Facility Visits*

Ms. Kuberski asked how to proceed with trustees visiting other athletics facilities. Mr. Endress suggested organizing the visits in teams, with at most two trustees attending per visit.

Ms. Kuberski will have someone contact the facilities and try to get the visits done by the November regular Board meeting, if not sooner. Student Services is also visiting other facilities to tour their welcome centers. Ms. Grimes will send out a spreadsheet where trustees should indicate their availability. Ms. Kuberski, Ms. Gerber, and Mr. Pete Norman will work on a form for those who attend a visit to fill out on what they liked or did not like about the facility.

*ICCTA Northwest Region Meeting*

Trustees were reminded of the upcoming ICCTA Northwest Region meeting at Kishwaukee. Ms. Gerber is trying to schedule time prior to the meeting to view their athletic facility.

*RSVP Open House*

The RSVP open house is this afternoon, with comments at 4:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Kaufman moved and Mr. Block seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. At 11:05 a.m., the vote being unanimous and there being no further business, the 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