

Highland Community College
Board Retreat
March 14, 2024
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 11:03 a.m.

Members Physically Present: Mr. Doug Block, Mr. Jim Endress, Ms. Pennie Groezinger (departed 1:00 p.m.), Mr. Shawn Boldt (arrived 11:53 a.m.; departed 1:05 p.m.; returned 1:30 p.m.), Mr. James Rhyne (arrived 11:04 a.m.), Ms. Sarah Kuhlemeier, and Ms. Allison Coon

Members Virtually Present: None

Members Absent: Ms. Mary Kaufman

Others Physically Present: Ms. Chris Kuberski, President; Ms. Jill Janssen, Vice President/CFO, Administrative Services, Board Treasurer; Ms. Liz Gerber, Vice President/CSSO, Student Development & Support Services; Mr. Pete Norman, Director, Athletics & Physical Education; Mr. Pete Fink, Director, ITS; 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/Chief Academic Officer, Academic Services and Dean, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Fine Arts; Ms. Jodi Rogers, Office Coordinator, Athletics; Mr. Aaron Greene, YMCA; Ms. Leslie Schmidt, Stamats; Mr. Rich Haight, YMCA; and, Dr. Andy Dvorak, Retired Faculty

APPROVAL OF TRUSTEE(S) ATTENDING MEETING VIA ELECTRONIC MEANS

There were no trustees who requested 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 motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Endress and several others attended the NWILED annual meeting in East Dubuque, and there was coverage of the event in the *Carroll County Mirror Democrat*, including a photo of Mr. Endress and Mr. Jim Phillips. Mr. Endress passed around a thank you for the memorial donation from the College and Board following his wife's passing. Ms. Kuberski reported that the Foundation's Corporate Partner breakfast was held this morning, and she recognized Mr. Dan Dick, Foundation Executive Director, and Mr. Matt Mullen, Foundation Director of Development, for their efforts to have opportunities to put the College in a positive spotlight. The corporate partners who were there were engaged and asked good questions. The College received official word that the \$150,000 dual credit grant was received, which will allow the College to work directly with the high schools in the western part of the district to expand dual credit offerings, particularly in the gen ed core. Those high schools also have some instructors who are relatively close to being credentialed to teach dual credit, and hopefully the grant will help the College provide support for those instructors with some tuition money, which would then help them to continue teaching dual credit long-term. Ideally, we would have additional classes in place for Fall 2024. Ms. Kuberski commented on Highland hosting the regional basketball championship, noting that the President of Triton made a comment to Ms. Kuberski at the Presidents' meeting last week about how much she appreciated Highland continuing to host the region tournament and what a good job Mr. Pete Norman does to organize it and communicate with the schools. They always look forward to the College hosting the tournament. Ms. Kuberski reported that our teams had a very good showing and even when they saw that they were not going to be the champions, they gave it their all the whole game, which speaks to the coaches and commitment of the students. There was a good fan base who showed up for the regional championship game, which also speaks to the local interest in athletics.

UPDATE AND DISCUSSION: FEASIBILITY OF AN ATHLETIC, LEARNING, AND EVENT CENTER

There was a special Board meeting last month to provide a lot of information on the feasibility of an athletic, learning, and event center. Ms. Kuberski noted that there was a lot to process so the group wanted to revisit it today with trustees and have more discussion to give the administrative team that is working on the possibility a clearer direction, especially regarding funding.

Update on Space Needs

Ms. Gerber and Mr. Pete Norman reviewed the comparison of the College's facilities to other athletic facilities. Mr. Norman noted that currently rental fees for Fitness Lifestyles and the Rawleigh building run about \$1,500 for three months. Ms. Gerber reviewed the square footage needs for the College and the YMCA. In total, the YMCA is requesting 59,000 square feet, and the College's needs are a little bit larger, but this is still a work in progress. The group is still talking about the possibility and how to make the partnership work, and is working with an architect to see what can be renovated, what the needs are, and the square footage not currently in the building. Some of the square footage that the YMCA uses could be shared space but Ms. Kuberski noted that one of the challenges is that, while the space could be shared, it is only in a small window, so there would need to be a determination of how it is scheduled so that it is truly shared space. Ms. Kuberski also expressed her concern about how the funding stream would work for both entities and how it works in tandem. She reported that the child

care center lease is separate from the YMCA partnership and is on a three-year cycle, which expires at the end of June 2024, so it needs to be determined how that fits into the bigger picture. For example, the child care center lease renewal could be for one year to allow flexibility on both sides. The YMCA has indicated that additional space for childcare is on their minds.

Budget Scenario Discussion

Ms. Janssen reviewed potential funding options, noting that it will likely be a combination of bonds, gifts, grants, and partnerships. If the College were to issue \$18 million in bonds, this would keep the increase in the tax rate as small as possible and keep the five-year bond cycle. This would be a 20-year bond, where the College would need to publish the intent and the taxpayers could get petitions to object to the increase. If the College increased the tax rate by four cents, which is seven percent, the cost on a \$100,000 property is estimated to be \$12 per year. The College would need to be ready to spend a small amount of the bond funds within six months and a larger amount in 18 months. Ms. Kuberski stated that it would be good to know the amount and what funding options the Board will support. It was noted that Waubensee Community College knew what their board would support and downsized the facility to the amount their board was willing to spend. Mr. Block believes the \$30 million figure is something the College could work off of, and Mr. Rhyne noted that he was thinking around \$35 million.

Determine Focus for Potential Funding Options

Following discussion, trustees expressed support for an \$18 million bond issuance. They would then think about donors, grants, and other options. Mr. Dick is building the fundraising feasibility study into the Foundation's budget. Ms. Janssen noted that the College could apply to the Capital Development Board (CDB) through the Illinois Community College Board. One issue with that is needing to put aside a 25 percent match. Ms. Kuberski noted that it took seven years at Rend Lake to get the money after they applied to the CDB and, in listening to other community college presidents, it is a frustrating process. The College could look into the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity but it is unknown if they would fund an athletic facility. Mr. Block noted that, in his tenure on the Board, the Board has never raised the tax rate while other taxing bodies have. In his opinion, the Board has to support this. It was explained that the tax rate would increase from 54 cents to 58 or 59 cents.

Next Steps

An architect has been engaged to evaluate the space and square footage needs that the YMCA and College have identified, and Ms. Kuberski believes it will be about two months before the College gets the basic floor plans and ideas. Meetings with the YMCA will be put on pause until then, at which time the architect will meet with the group to talk through the plans so the group can collectively ask questions, hear the answers, and use that as a determining factor for what is next, how much it will cost each entity, and how that impacts the considerations for the future. Ms. Kuberski should be ready to present the information to the Board shortly after that. She is unsure if this will be ready for the May Board meeting, and there is no regular June meeting, so it may be July. From the group's point of view, that determines how to proceed with some of the other things. Knowing the funding mechanism potential gives a good gauge of what trustees should be considering. The group has learned a lot in the process and there have been good conversations. The administrative group is narrowing in on making a determination on what it is they truly want and can afford simultaneously, but they want to make sure they are visionary and not limiting themselves, so they are trying to find a balance. When they saw the

pictures of the Rawleigh building and where the students are practicing baseball and softball, that propelled the group and reinforced why the College is on this path. The updates about a potential facility were on a recent Campus Connection, and the group has received the survey feedback, but has not had time to digest the information. The group will pick out the themes and present the information to trustees. About 70 students attended the student forum, and they confirmed many of the things that the group was thinking and had heard. The students were very interested in the process. While they will not benefit from this directly, they realize it is important for future students.

At 12:31 p.m., the Chairperson declared a recess; the meeting resumed at 1:01 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Positions to be Recommended for Inclusion in FY25 Budget

Ms. Kuberski explained the position request process, noting that it happens every year but this time it is earlier so that it is done prior to budgeting. Different areas make recommendations to their respective supervisor and Vice President, who take the recommendations to the President's Direct Reports (PDR). A detailed request sheet is completed with justification data, explanation, impact, how it impacts the strategic plan goals, and even how it might impact compliance and those aspects. As those were gathered, a rubric was identified that PDR used to score the positions based on those criteria. PDR tried to rank those positions as to which would get the College to meet the strategic goals, fill immediate needs, and have the best return on investment, looking at retention, student engagement, enrollment, cost value, etc. to try to be as consistent as possible. Once the positions were ranked, PDR had detailed discussions to see if that was where they wanted to land, and each time additional information would come up to consider. PDR came to agreement on the key positions to be included in the budget for the coming year. The investment is around \$500,000, which will tap into the reserves somewhat, but it is conservative enough that it maintains the reserves at a very strong level and also takes some reserves and reinvests in positions that will impact recruitment, enrollment, and retention. Some positions will be coming to the Board as recommendations to approve job descriptions and some will be coming as recommendations to hire. Two recommendations are faculty positions. Mr. Jim Palmer is retiring as Automotive Technology instructor and will be replaced. A third Ag instructor will be added due to the extreme amount of overload, which pushes against the faculty contract and causes burnout. Our part-time faculty have been paid at a lesser level than our peer institutions so money is being invested to increase part-time instructor pay to be in keeping with peers. The College will continue to fund the Success Coach position. The position had been funded by HEERF funds, but will now be funded through the Room 2 Grow (R2G) grant, which will allow funding for at least four years. The Testing Center and Career Services Center share one full-time person, so an additional full-time person is being added so there is an additional half-time person in Career Services and a half-time person in the Testing Center. An ITS End User Specialist was recommended for direct support for faculty and students, and also an Instructional Technologist, which would help with online, hybrid, and Hyflex classes. The Instructional Technologist position will be a joint venture with our Teaching & Learning Services. The person in the position will handle the technology pieces, while the Coordinator of Teaching & Learning Services will do the professional development. Online learning is an area where the College can improve so the College needs the bandwidth to support faculty and students. There will also be a Pathways Coordinator connected through the R2G grant, but it will be grant funded, and Ms. Kuberski is waiting to hear from Northern Illinois University to give us direction on that. Mr. Rhyne asked about

a grant writer, and Ms. Kuberski explained that the College may be relying too much on internal people to write grants, and a consultant can be hired, if needed. Mr. Boldt reported that at the Illinois Community College Trustees Association meeting last week, the seminar was on AI (Artificial Intelligence), and he learned that many community colleges are looking at an investment in an AI person. Ms. Kuberski reported that at the professional development day next week, there will be a presenter on AI to make sure people are informed of the ramifications and impacts.

Organizational Chart Updates

Ms. Kuberski noted that the organizational chart has not been modified much, and there was no indication that modifications had been approved by the Board in the past. She explained that the Library faculty and staff previously reported to the Vice President/CAO, which was a different reporting mechanism than other faculty, and she believes it would be in good order to have them report to the Dean, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Fine Arts. She asked how trustees would like to formalize this recommendation, and Mr. Block noted that it is an administrative function and it falls under Ms. Kuberski's position to organize, and other trustees agreed.

Upcoming Recommendation to Increase Leadership Institute and Leadership Forum Tuition and Fees

A recommendation will be on the March regular Board meeting agenda to increase the Leadership Institute and Leadership Forum tuition and fees to \$2,000. Mr. Phillips explained that the Leadership Institute began in 1992 and the Leadership Forum in 2001. The programs are housed in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Fine Arts division, and he provides administrative oversight and sometimes instructs the classes along with Mr. Kirk Pearson. The Leadership Institute tuition and fees were last raised in 2014, and the Leadership Forum in 2018. The recommendation will be to increase the tuition and fees for both programs. There is a scholarship fund that can help support the tuition. There are also multiple ways to pay for a person to attend, including payment by the sponsoring organization or participant, or a split between the participant and the organization. The Leadership Forum and Leadership Institute have scholarship funds, which the HCC Foundation oversees, for those who cannot afford it, particularly nonprofit organizations. The Foundation gives around \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year from the golf outing for both the Leadership Forum and the Leadership Institute.

VP/CAO Search

Before moving into Closed Session, Ms. Kuberski reported that interviews for a VP/CAO have been happening via Zoom, with the last interview this morning. Over Spring break, the candidates will be ranked and tabulated by the facilitator, followed by campus interviews.

BOARD UPDATE: ACCT'S NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

This will be discussed at the March regular meeting.

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; collective negotiating matters under Open Meetings Act exception

2-C-2; and, pending litigation, under Open Meetings Act exception 2-C-11, and to return to Open Session for possible action. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Endress, Groezinger, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, 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 12:27 p.m., the Chairperson declared the meeting in Closed Session.

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

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

At 1:05 p.m., the Chairperson declared the motion carried, the Closed Session ended, and a recess for lunch. The meeting resumed at 1:27 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Janssen referenced the report on the Matching Fund that was emailed to trustees previously, noting that a formula is used for the annual drawdown from the fund. The fund has done well recently. She explained that historically, this was a federal grant opportunity where, if the Foundation raised a certain amount, the federal government would match it. The money had to be held and allowed to grow for 20 years. Every year, Ms. Janssen takes the average of three years' market value and four percent is taken from that (for the drawdown). The Foundation invests the dollars but it is technically the College's money. Perhaps down the road, there could be a small layer of funding for the potential athletic center, but the College must be cognizant that the drawdown helps the Operating Funds.

Mr. Endress reminded trustees of the Forensics team's showcase tonight at 4:00 p.m., which includes a Zoom option.

Mr. Block encouraged trustees to watch the last 60 seconds of the video of the men's basketball game against Sauk Valley, stating that the baseball team has "phenomenal cheerleading skills." It was also noted that Triton is ranked number 7 nationally.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Block moved and Mr. Rhyne seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. At 1:38 p.m., the vote being unanimous and 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