

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Kuhlemeier moved and Ms. Kaufman 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 reported that the Association of Community College Trustees is doing a survey of community college trustees, and he encouraged trustees to complete the survey. Ms. Kuberski reported that this is peak enrollment season. Although it is premature to know where the College will land with Spring enrollment, as of Monday, headcount was down .4 percent and credit hours were up 5.4 percent. Full-time students tend to complete and be retained better than part-time students. If this enrollment increase continues, it would be the sixth consecutive semester with an increase. Ms. Kuberski shared that Ms. Andrea Schultz Winter, Executive Director of Greater Freeport Partnership, let Ms. Kuberski know that SmartAsset, a financial advising company, did a comparison of community colleges across the nation looking at the best community colleges in the United States with 500 or more full-time students. They based the ranking on the three key indicators of retention, faculty to student ratio, and finances (tuition and fees). Highland ranked 59th out of 616 community colleges nationwide in the comparison group and number one in Illinois. She has shared this information with Ms. Jeniece Smith, Director of Marketing & Community Relations, and believes there will be more attention paid to this in the future. To be number one in Illinois, and especially to have such a high retention rate, points to the work that has been done on wrap around services and retention.

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

Updates from YMCA Task Force

Pool Consultant

A meeting was held of the YMCA task force on Tuesday. Information was shared related to the pool and sagging roof, and Ms. Kuberski would like input regarding how the Board would like to proceed. Mr. Kurt Simpson reported that the College architect felt having a more qualified person look at the pool would be better and the architect recommended a company. Mr. Simpson explained what the 12-week evaluation process would include, at a cost of \$18,000. The YMCA has asked about other local companies doing the evaluation, but Ms. Kuberski has not responded to that at this time. She told the YMCA that the College would be willing to share the cost of the consultant but not bear the cost entirely, and the YMCA approached Mr. Simpson about using a local person. Ms. Kuberski believes that, should we choose to not rely on the person recommended by the architect, that could be problematic. The YMCA recommended the Helm Group but was unsure of their background, and Ms. Kuberski has reservations about going in a different direction. The contract to evaluate the pool includes a statement that the fee was good for 30 days, so it may now have increased. The YMCA board has a meeting next

week and another one prior to the Highland Board meeting in January. Ms. Kuberski explained that she is not opposed to someone else evaluating the pool if they are qualified and credible, but the College should still be in charge of the project. Mr. Block suggested Mr. Scott Johnson be asked to contact the Helm Group and see what qualities they might possess. The College will proceed that way and explain to the YMCA that if we go the Helm route, Mr. Simpson would be in charge. Mr. Block noted that the College needs to be the lead because it owns the building. Ms. Kuberski envisions the cost split would be 50/50 or 65 percent paid by the YMCA and 35 percent paid by Highland. Trustees agreed it would be okay to go with a 50/50 split. If it is decided to go with Helm and Mr. Johnson is okay with it, Mr. Johnson will be asked to vet that. Mr. Rhyne asked if the YMCA is not interested in sharing the cost, would the College still go ahead, and Ms. Kuberski noted that she can see advantages to moving ahead, and she can see pros and cons on both sides. Also, if the pool is not part of the restructuring, the College would need to know if it is sound enough to repurpose. She will contact Mr. Rich Haight, YMCA Executive Director, and let him know that the College will proceed and have Mr. Scott Johnson contact Helm, and that the College is willing to do a 50/50 split so Mr. Haight knows how to proceed with his board.

Roof Repair

The roof has begun to fail on the east side of the facility. For years, there had been a bow to the roof but last summer the northeast corner had a sudden change and the wood began to fail, with the corner hanging down about 13 inches. A post has been installed to temporarily support the roof and a contractor has evaluated the situation. Full replacement of the mansard is estimated to be \$440,000, but the College can save about \$50,000 by going with a metal roof and not copper. To remove the mansard and replace it with steel siding would be around \$190,000, and rebuilding the roof without copper would be \$390,000. Every College building has a similar mansard but not as wide. Ms. Kuberski is concerned about the safety, particularly with the children playing. If the roof is not fixed, she would not want the children playing there, and she believes the College will need to invest in removal at some point. Mr. Boldt asked where the \$190,000 would come from and when the work would be done, and Mr. Simpson indicated that if the project is above the bid limit, it would take longer. Ms. Janssen informed trustees that this could be considered a PH&S project, and the College has typically not asked the YMCA to share in costs of a PH&S project. Mr. Rhyne asked about the safety risk, noting that part of the roof definitely is a risk but it is unknown about the rest of it. Mr. Simpson explained that the bid process could be three to five months after the design process, but his best guess is three months. The bid would come to the Board for approval, and typically the Board would approve funding to proceed with the design. Mr. Block suggested going ahead with the project. Ms. Kuhlemeier requested that Ms. Kuberski ask the YMCA not to have kids playing there, and to let them know they need an alternative place to play until the roof is evaluated. Mr. Simpson will work with Mr. Johnson on getting things prepped and ready to go up until there is a cost, with Board approval in January. There will also be an agenda item to approve the PH&S project. Ms. Kuberski will email Mr. Haight on the direction of the pool and will send a separate email informing him about the playground and that they need to find a separate place and alternative location until the work is done. Mr. Anderson noted that others use the playground, so Mr. Simpson will put caution tape up as soon as Ms. Kuberski contacts the YMCA.

Project Draft Timeline

Ms. Kuberski, Ms. Gerber, Mr. Simpson, and Ms. Janssen have discussed a proposed timeline for occupancy of a new facility in 2029. Ms. Janssen reviewed the timeline and steps along the way. The timeline document will be shared with the Board if the Board is supportive of continuing on the

trajectory. If Ms. Kuberski believes this is supported by the Board, other things will need to happen, such as hiring someone to assist with finding grants. It was agreed that the YMCA work group will get together in mid-January to touch base on several items so the timeline will be shared at that time.

Communication Plan Updates

Since the last time trustees met, Ms. Gerber, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Kuberski met with Chartwell and asked them to give feedback on key talking points. They gave good suggestions on how to fine tune those and emphasize that the partnership is not just a building but shared services and shared support. It emphasizes that if the College does not share a building, it does not mean the College and the YMCA are not partners and that the College still wants to work with the YMCA on childcare and other things. Ms. Kuberski attended the Freeport Noon Rotary and will speak to the Galena Chamber in February. She is still working to get on FREEPOD.

At 12:06 p.m., the Chairperson declared a recess; the meeting resumed at 12:34 p.m.

REPORT FROM ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION (AFIT) SUMMER INSTITUTE

Introduction

Ms. Kuberski, Mr. Anthony Musso, Mr. Pete Fink, Ms. Karen Brown, and Mr. Jim Phillips attended the AFIT Summer Institute. Ms. Kuberski provided background on the Summer Institute, which is very team-focused and includes team time to process and think about how the project the team comes up with will impact the institution. AFIT is an invitation only organization of around 45 higher education institutions. This year's Summer Institute was focused on future ready organizations, AI and VR and how to leverage those to be more effective and efficient.

AFIT Representative

Ms. Kuberski explained that Ms. Brown is the College's AFIT representative.

Takeaways from Summer Institute

The theme of the Summer Institute was based on the movie "The Matrix." Ms. Brown gave a short presentation using a BOT, and Mr. Musso provided a student services perspective using AI with resume writing. Mr. Phillips shared the academic services side of AI and VR, noting that the College is creating a campus wide AI policy. He explained that Ag, Welding, Criminal Justice, Nursing, and Manufacturing all have simulators, and Criminal Justice has VR. The College will purchase Apple Vision Pro for faculty to experiment with to see if there is application. If so, there could be a bond project for a VR lab.

Using ChatGPT/Prompt Exercise

Mr. Phillips led trustees through a series of prompts using ChatGPT beginning with the prompt of, "Write a framework for a college board of trustees' self-evaluation," each time adding a prompt to get a more specific, detailed result.

Discussion

Mr. Boldt shared that he spent a lot of time at the AI work station at the recent ACCT conference. There was a lot of information on trustee training and how in two years things have gone from an absolute fear

of AI to learning how AI is taught and people are trained, including having a student AI portal. The Illinois Community College Trustees Association will have a training session during the first quarter of the year on what trustees need to know about AI and why. The ACCT Central Region is also trying to put together a virtual training. Mr. Boldt noted that, as policy setters, this will become critical for trustees. Ms. Kuberski shared that she had challenged College Council and Cabinet to use AI. She used it for taking notes during the DEI Coordination Team meeting, and AI did a good job of summarizing the discussion and capturing the to dos, but she found that when she left the Zoom meeting early or when other participants talked after the meeting, it also summarized those conversations so she cautioned people to be careful. The campus is exploring what the policies and practices should be for using AI. Mr. Boldt asked if the College had thought about having classes related to AI, and Mr. Phillips reported that there have been some preliminary discussions and Business Institute is doing some things.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

FY26 Budget Projection

Ms. Janssen reported that this is the time of year when she updates the Resource Allocation and Management Plan (RAMP), which gives historical financial information from FY21 through FY25 and includes a financial projection for FY25 through FY28. The FY24 budget included a projection of \$15 million in revenue, and the actual came in at \$16.7 million. Expenditures were projected at \$15.5 million, while the actual was \$16.2 million. At this point, Ms. Janssen has assumed that property values will increase by six percent over the next couple years, and that Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) will remain at the level budgeted for FY25. The current projection also assumes no change in the tuition rate and 28,500 credit hours, which is about flat with what was budgeted. Each \$1 increase in tuition equals about \$32,000 and each 1% increase in enrollment equals about \$50,000. A variance adjustment of \$900,000 (5% of revenues) has been included in the revenue portion of the projection at this time based on the comparison of prior projections to actual costs. Ms. Janssen shared expenditures budgeted in FY25 through projected FY28, noting that the salary trend increase is a combination of known contractual agreements and past trends. Transfers include a full spend down of the remaining funds in the Health Insurance Fund and do not include support of the Auxiliary Funds. A variance adjustment of \$900,000 to \$1 million per year has been added to expenses based on a comparison of actual versus projected results from previous years. At this point, no additional costs are included for a potential new or renovated athletic center. Ms. Janssen reviewed the resulting fund balance from each year, noting that the fund balance declines by 63% or about \$4,800,000 by the end of FY28. The fund balance as a percent of projected expenses would dip to about 10% of expenses, which is below the recommendation from the Illinois Community College Board. It was also noted that the College's expenses may dramatically increase in FY29 if the athletic center is up and running. Ms. Janssen reviewed several long-term budget stabilization measures that have been taken including investing in new positions; negotiating with Blue Cross Blue Shield for a 2% renewal rate on premiums, due in large part to the implementation of plan design changes that had been negotiated with the faculty union; and using Foundation funds for items linked to the College's strategic plan that Operating funds were not able to support.

Tuition

Ms. Janssen noted that tuition changes require two readings and would need to be approved in March due to the April 14 opening of Fall 2025 registration. The current projection of a \$800,000 budget deficit

would mean the College would need to increase tuition by \$25 per credit hour, which Ms. Janssen is not recommending. She plans to bring forth a recommendation to increase tuition by \$8 per credit hour, which would generate \$255,000. She explained that there has been no tuition increase since 2023, and the technology fee did not increase for Fall 2025, but the activity fee was increased by \$2. She shared that the total per credit hour tuition and fees is currently \$204, and with the recommended increase in tuition and the increase in the activity fee, it would bring tuition and fees to \$214. Credit hour fees have increased by \$13 since FY23, and with a \$2 per hour activity fee increase and the \$8 proposed per credit hour tuition increase, the total increase for FY26 would be \$10. She explained that, throughout the strategic planning process, the College consistently received feedback that it is considered affordable. Previously the College compared our per credit hour tuition and fees to other Illinois community colleges to try to gauge this, but that data did not factor in variable tuition, per course/per semester fees, or textbook costs. Ms. Janssen shared a chart that showed the average net price of attendance for in-district full-time students at Highland, Sauk Valley, Rock Valley, and Kishwaukee Colleges for FY21 through FY23. These numbers take into account College-specific information, including tuition and fees, average cost of books and supplies, average cost of living, and the federal, state, local, and institutional grants awarded to students. In this comparison, Highland has the lowest net price of attendance, and Ms. Janssen noted that the College uses inclusive access of textbooks, which saves students a lot of money. She explained that today was an opportunity for trustees to provide feedback on the recommended increase. Mr. Endress requested a bar graph of the per hour cost, including tuition and fees, for the January Board meeting. It was noted that Rock Valley and Kishwaukee have more variable tuition, mostly in the career and technical areas, but Ms. Janssen will get the information. Ms. Kuberski noted that the information shared at the beginning of the meeting (regarding the rating by SmartAsset) looked at tuition and fees, and the College fared very well when that was taken into account.

BOARD UPDATES

Key Takeaways from Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Annual Leadership Congress
Highlights from the ACCT fall Leadership Congress included innovative things being done with ag, leadership development for students, and the culture of tomorrow's leaders.

MAIN MOTIONS (ACTION)

- A. CollegeNOW Agreements Between Highland Community College and Eastland CUSD #308, Forrestville Valley School District #221, Lena-Winslow School District #202, Pearl City CUSD #200, and Stockton CUSD #206

Mr. Block moved and Mr. Boldt seconded the motion to the CollegeNOW agreements, as presented, for the 2025-2026 (FY26) academic year for qualified students attending Eastland CUSD #308, Forrestville Valley School District #221, Lena-Winslow School District #202, Pearl City CUSD #200, and Stockton CUSD #206. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

B. 2025-2028 Academic Calendar

Ms. Kuhlemeier moved and Ms. Kaufman seconded the motion to approve the 2025-2028 Academic Calendar, as presented. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

C. Purchase of Zoom Video Subscription Including Video Conferencing and Telephone Service

Ms. Kaufman moved and Mr. Block seconded the motion to approve the order form, as presented, from Zoom Video Communication for the Education Enterprise Premier plan, including video conferencing and telephone service, at a cost not to exceed \$52,625 for one year. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

D. Naming Opportunity: Don Opel Foundation Executive Director Office

Mr. Boldt moved and Mr. Rhyne seconded the motion to approve the naming of the Highland Community College Foundation's Executive Director office, located in the Student/Conference Center (building H), the Don Opel Foundation Executive Director Office. It is further recommended that the name remain in place indefinitely until further action of the Board. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

E. Naming Opportunity: Whiton Family Rehearsal Room

Ms. Kaufman moved and Mr. Block seconded the motion to approve the naming of room F-21, located in the Ferguson Fine Arts Center, the Whiton Family Rehearsal Room. It is further recommended that the name remain in place indefinitely until further action of the Board. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Kaufman 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, the semi-annual review of all Closed Session minutes and audio recordings under exception 2-C-21, 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: Block, Endress, Boldt, Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Kaufman
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 1:54 p.m., the Chairperson declared the meeting in Closed Session.

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

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

At 2:19 p.m., the Chairperson declared the motion carried and the Closed Session ended.

ACTION, IF NECESSARY

A. Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees of the Public Body or Legal Counsel for the Public Body

1. Appointment: Interim Director, Athletics and Physical Education

Mr. Block moved and Mr. Rhyne seconded the motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Thomas Smargiassi as full-time interim Director, Physical Education and Athletics beginning January 2, 2025, at an annualized salary of \$90,000 (biweekly salary of \$3,461.54) during the length of this appointment. It is further recommended that this appointment end at a mutually agreed upon time or when the position is filled.

The roll call on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Rhyne, Kuhlemeier, Block, Endress
NAYS: Boldt

The vote being four ayes and one nay, the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

2. Appointment: Career Pathways Navigator

Mr. Rhyne moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Andrew Martin as full-time Career Pathways Navigator beginning January 21, 2025, at an FY25 salary of \$47,389, plus appropriate fringe benefits. This is a full-time, non-exempt professional, grant-funded position and is within the FY25 grant budget. This position is dependent on continued grant funding. The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

B. Collective Negotiating Matters

No action was necessary.

C. Semi-annual Review of Closed Session Minutes and Audio Recordings

Mr. Block moved and Ms. Kuhlemeier seconded the motion that the Closed Session minutes, which were previously closed, remain closed at this time and unavailable for public inspection. It is further recommended that the audio recordings from the following Closed Sessions be destroyed at this time, pursuant to the Open Meetings Act: January 24, 2023; February 28, 2023; March 30, 2023; April 25, 2023; and May 23, 2023 (Audit & Finance Committee and regular meeting). The roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

Whereupon the Chairperson declared the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Photos Donated by Former Trustee David Shockey

Ms. Kuberski informed trustees that former trustee Mr. David Shockey donated funds for a collection of photos, which are hung in the east entrance of the Student/Conference Center. This was not brought to the Board for a naming opportunity because it is not a room or building that is being named. A public announcement will be made. The photography is stunning and captures Mr. Shockey's vision representing northwest Illinois.

Recommendation to Employee Search Firm

Ms. Kuberski noted that the recommendation to employ a search firm for the search for a Director of Athletics and Physical Education was tabled at the November meeting but it will be included on the January regular meeting agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Opening Days activities will be held on Thursday, January 9, 2025. The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. The Association of Community College Trustees National Legislative Summit will be held February 10 through February 12, 2025, in Washington, DC. The February regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., and the next quarterly retreat is scheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. The March regular meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Block moved and Mr. Rhyne seconded the motion to end the meeting. At 2:27 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