

APPROVED MINUTES OF INFORMATION SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB

An open information session of the Board of Trustees of the Community College District of the County of Macomb was held Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 6:00 p.m., in Room K307 of the John Lewis Student Community Center, South Campus, 14500 E. Twelve Mile Road, Warren, Michigan.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lorenzo at 6:00 p.m.

2.0 ROLL CALL

Present: Katherine Lorenzo, Chairperson
Frank Cusumano, Vice Chairperson
Kristi Dean, Secretary
Joan Flynn, Trustee
Shelley Vitale, Trustee

Absent: Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer
Vincent Viviano, Trustee

Also present: James Sawyer, President
Elizabeth Argiri, Vice President, Business
Kevin Chandler, Vice President, College Advancement & Community Relations
Sharon Kowal, Assistant to the President
James Matheney, Chief of Police
Deborah Mende, Director, President's Office
Donald Ritzenhein, Provost/Vice President, Learning Unit
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel
Denise Williams, Vice President, Human Resources

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Flynn, supported by Cusumano, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

5.0 REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIAL

Dr. Sawyer's Updates:

Closed Session: There is no need for closed session. There has not been any change in the PSI situation.

Enrollment: Winter registration started November 4. Credit hours are down 3 percent and head count is down 3.5 percent. At this time, we have 88 students on the payment plan.

Residency Policy, First Reading: For clarification, the definition of an athlete has been changed to a "rostered" athlete.

Land Updates:

15 Mile Road and Hayes Property – This deal has closed.

- At the October meeting, Trustee Cusumano inquired if the college had any claims with the title company regarding the discrepancy with the property description. General Counsel researched the inquiry and discovered that the college's general council and business manager at that time knew there was only 5.29 usable acres at the parcel. As such, General Council does not see any grounds to file a claim against the title company.

Healthier Way/Commons Drive Property – There are some title issues with the property we are selling to the Macomb Intermediate School District to be shared jointly with Henry Ford Hospital that need to be resolved but nothing that should stop the sale.

Wayne State University's Macomb Education Center on Hall Road -- Dr. Sawyer has had preliminary conversations with Ahmad Ezzeddine at WSU. Dr. Sawyer anticipates slow progress on this through the end of the calendar year, but he will continue to stay in contact with Dr. Ezzeddine.

- Trustee Cusumano asked if the building has been remediated for asbestos and other hazmat materials. J. Sawyer said WSU did a complete renovation in 2008/2009 but he would have to ask them to be 100 percent certain.

Comedy & Cocktails: Thank you to those who were able to attend. Over 350 people attended. The net proceeds were over \$80,000, the most we have ever raised. Congratulations to Christina Ayar and her team, they did a fabulous job. C. Ayar and W. Woods worked together in picking a great act that was quite a crowd pleaser.

Veteran's Day Celebration held on Friday, November 8. This event started a few years ago with a request by one of our veteran students to have a celebration more meaningful for veterans. The event developed into a breakfast and photo display. It started modestly with a few students participating, but this year we had 19 students involved who shared over 200 pictures. Trustee Flynn attended. The students do a fantastic job displaying very impressive pictures that range from their military service to their families. We were also happy to have the new commander of the 127th Wing at Selfridge, Brigadier General Rolf Mammem, join us.

Annual People, Vets and Pets Event held on October 26. Dr. Lori Renda-Francis and her team do an incredible job with this event. It always brings hundreds of people to campus to see our vet tech area.

Adjunct Faculty Service Awards held on November 8. We had a nice turnout of adjunct faculty with about 200 people attending. Trustees Flynn and Vitale attended. It was a very positive night.

Fire Academy Graduation held on November 11. Academy 73 had 19 cadets graduate. The Police Academy graduation is on December 17.

Hosted Lt. Governor Garland Gilchrist on October 28. The Lt. Governor has been traveling across the state on a listening tour visiting 18 urban areas, including Warren. The Lt. Governor had five specific issues he was seeking input on and the theme that resonated throughout the different sessions was the lack of opportunity for young people. This visit was for data collection for the Lt. Governor and he was unsure how the information collected would be deployed. Dr. Sawyer was invited to the pre-session along with Mayor Fouts, Representatives Lori Stone, Nate Shannon, Senator Paul Wojno, Sterling Heights councilman Mike Radtke, the CAO from Warren Con District and a few others.

Hosted Congressman Andy Levin on November 11 for a round table discussion seeking input on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the main workforce legislation that changed a few years ago. Congressman Levin was seeking feedback on WIOA and sharing his thoughts on how he would like to have employers more engaged in paying for that workforce training. This discussion was a listening session for the Congressman as well and we do not know what the result will be. Dr. Sawyer attended along with Don Hutchison, Dean, Engineering & Advanced Technology and Patrick Rouse, Director, Workforce & Continuing Education. Representatives from the Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Michigan Works! Offices were there also.

Dr. Sawyer said it is a credit to the college and to our staff that these important visitors seek out the college to host their events. Their events go very well when they are here because of the professionalism of the Conference Services staff, the coordination by Nicole McKee from his office and the active involvement of the police. This is good for the college, it is nice visibility and gives us a seat at the table.

December Meeting Afterglow: Dr. Sawyer invited the trustees and PC members along with their guests for an afterglow after the board meeting on December 18 to celebrate the end of the semester. Please let Ms. Kowal, over the next couple of weeks, if you will be attending.

December 13 – Commencements are at the Macomb Center for The Performing Arts at 7 p.m.

6.0 ISSUE AND UPDATES

1. Strategic Plan 2025 Approval

Dr. Sawyer said Strategic Plan 2025 is a very significant event for the college. The planning process has been comprehensive including the board's involvement and valuable input. A number of people across the college have put forth a lot of time and effort working on this and identifying our plans going forward to serve our students and community better.

Dr. Sawyer asked if the trustees had any questions or concerns about the strategic plan to address before the regular meeting.

There was none.

2. Investment Manager Update

Dr. Sawyer said Ms. Argiri is going to provide an update on our investigation into hiring the services of an investment manager. This is all in relation to the conversations we have had about managing our investment portfolio within the limited options available in the Community College Act or looking into the services of an investment manager and working within the confines of that.

Ms. Argiri said in response to the request for proposal (RFP) for investment management services, nine firms submitted proposals. Five of the firms are located in Michigan. The fees range from \$115,000 per year to \$700,000 per year. Some of the costs include custodial fees as well. The committee held interviews on November 15 and continue to work on their recommendation to the board in December.

Trustee Cusumano asked whether the Foundation uses Vanguard Mutual Funds. Ms. Argiri said the Foundation uses the services of Plante & Moran Financial Advising Group, so the Foundation is invested in several mutual funds. Trustee Cusumano asked if the board will be presented with what the anticipated increase will be on the return on investment with an advisor compared to putting money in a mix of mutual funds. He also asked if Plante & Moran responded to the RFP. Ms. Argiri said Plante & Moran did not bid on it. He asked if they were advised there was an RFP. Ms. Argiri said they were but did not submit a proposal. Ms. Argiri said if we are moving forth with a recommendation on an investment manager, her hope is to demonstrate how value will be added with respect to financial and other benefits.

Dr. Sawyer said we will continue our analysis and report back to the board.

3. Presentation on the Policy for Awarding of Associate Degrees and Academic Certificates

Dr. Sawyer said in October he briefed the board that we were looking to change our degree structure from 62 credit hours for degrees to 60 credit hours for degrees and how that change is seen as being advantageous for our students in making degrees more attainable. With the recently negotiated Michigan Transfer Agreement, the change puts us more in line with the 28 community colleges and the 15 public universities as well as a handful of private universities. Dr. Ritzenhein will give a brief presentation and share our thoughts on why we are making this recommendation to the board.

The degree structure is governed by the board policy Associate Degrees and Academic Certificates. On the agenda is the first reading of that policy change – from 62 credit hours to 60 credits hours.

Dr. Ritzenhein gave his presentation.

- Macomb requires 62 credits but the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) does not and never has to our knowledge. The requirement for an associate degree at a community college is 60 credits. Most of our colleagues in the state have 60 credit requirements not 62.
- Why does Macomb require 62 credits? Macomb's first catalog from 1954 states that a diploma will be awarded to students who complete 60 semester hours of an approved planned program and 2 hours of credit in physical education. We have required some version of physical or wellness education ever since.

- Through the years, physical education has undergone a few name changes but it has remained a standalone. We put our basic education program into groups and physical education has always been a standalone group IV requirement of two or three credits.
- In 2014, we had the Michigan Transfer Agreement and that needed to change. Getting 28 community colleges and 15 universities to agree on what constitutes a general education of an undergraduate student is a momentous accomplishment. The policy states 30 credits, with at least a C in each of those credits, transfers automatically in fulfillment of every public universities general education requirements.
 - However, we had to make sure our degree aligned with the requirements needed to meet the Michigan Transfer Agreement. In some cases, we found that we were not in alignment. The faculty worked very hard to change their courses, their requirements and now we are aligned with our associate of arts and associate of science degrees.
- What does this mean for health and physical education? It does not fulfill the Michigan Transfer Agreement and is no longer a standalone group V requirement. It is offered in the associate of applied science degrees. We now offer two applied science degrees that lead to careers in health and wellness. One is the health and wellness promotion degree and the other is exercise science.

In summary, we have aligned our transfer degrees to meet the Michigan Transfer Agreement, the two-credit health and wellness requirement is gone, health and wellness has been reinvented in two new programs that started this fall. Our recommendation is to reduce our degrees from a 62-credit requirement to a 60-credit requirement, which aligns with the Michigan Transfer Agreement, HLC and the vast majority of our colleagues.

Trustee Cusumano asked why was this issue not addressed sooner. Dr. Ritzenhein said because the Michigan Transfer Agreement did not exist. All of our transfer agreements were one-on-one and students did not complete. They often transferred without a degree.

Trustee Vitale said with the Michigan Transfer Agreement all 60 of those credits will transfer to any public university in the state. Dr. Ritzenhein said not the 60, but the 30 credits that fulfill our basic education. However, for the 60 credits, we all agree on the requirements for 12 specific majors and they will transfer. He said four of them are well on their way and the other eight are scheduled in the year ahead. Dr. Sawyer said those 12 majors were selected based on demand.

Trustee Dean asked how many years it takes to get an associate's degree. Dr. Sawyer said that it varies based on the number of classes a student chooses to take in a given term and whether or not they go in the summer. We know approximately 70 percent of our students go part-time. Across the board, the average number of credits our students take is eight.

Trustee Dean said if a student went full-time are all of the classes offered so they can actually get an associate's degree in a two-year period. Dr. Sawyer said yes, but there is a caveat because some of the advanced classes do not run every term. We share that information with students, but in areas where the curriculum is very defined, nursing for example, that is a very rote curriculum, very set process, they go through as a cohort. That is an example of if you follow that plan you will be done in two years, but you have already taken some classes prior to that to qualify.

Trustee Dean said she would like to see that if a student is going for an associate's degree that it can be obtained in two years versus her hearing that a class is not offered so the student has to wait until it is. Dr. Sawyer said we would need to know the specifics because there are some advanced courses that only run once a year and that is driven by demand. It could happen, but fairly unlikely. Dr. Ritzenhein agreed, saying that is why students meet with counselors and we are committed to the Guided Pathways approach to get a student on a path and to keep a student on a path. Sometimes that means planning ahead and once we roll out year long registration it will be much easier for students to think ahead and know a class is only offered in the winter so they can plan on taking other classes in the fall. Trustee Vitale stated that she wants to know if that does become a prevalent problem. If classes are not being offered and students cannot get their associates degree, she wants to be kept updated on that in case it becomes an issue.

Trustee Cusumano said in relation to the enrollment data, there was a trend upward of the students taking more classes with slightly higher credit loads, is that still the case. Dr. Sawyer said yes, over the last year or two. Dr. Carrie Jeffers, Registrar, said we have seen an increase over the last year or two; right now, we are plateaued with enrollment. She said we are only two weeks into the enrollment cycle and tuition is not due until December 10. When we do our first sweep of students who have not paid yet then we will have a better understanding of where we are at.

Trustee Cusumano said the board has been amending the meeting calendar away from the established bylaws for several years now. The bylaw, as he reads it says, if there is some reason for conflicts, which would make it advisable to make a change in the schedule regular meetings, the meeting dates, times and/or locations may be changed by action of a majority of the board members. Would that be an action of the majority of board members of the seven board members or those present? Mr. Steele said he thinks it is the seven board members because you are making an amendment to the actual bylaws.

Trustee Dean said the board made the change based on one trustee who recommended moving the meeting from Tuesday to Wednesday and he has not attended many board meetings. We have done it for one person and now he does not show up. Trustee Cusumano said no disrespect to the board member, because he understands he has some issues, but he also ran for an office that conflicted with the schedule. Trustee Cusumano added that when a person runs for multiple public offices, that should be taken into account.

Trustee Cusumano said the schedule change has created some conflicts for him because Wednesdays are the day he usually attends certain functions as a citizen, so he is going to be making a motion to reestablish the schedule as set forth in policy and see whether that garners a majority vote or not.

Trustee Flynn commented that both of the new hires on the personnel report are from Michigan. Were they promoted from within? Ms. Williams responded yes, they are both adjunct faculty. Dr. Sawyer said that is similar to hiring within, it is analogous with that. Ms. Williams said 67 percent of our full time faculty came from adjunct faculty.

Trustee Flynn said if a board member is not attending meetings then something has to be done. Trustee Cusumano said that he believed the college once looked into whether the board could declare a vacancy, or impose sanction, if a trustee stopped attending meetings. He knows this is not set forth in the Community College Act. However, he asked whether a self-autonomous board can do something to encourage attendance on a consistent basis. Mr. Steele stated that he has not researched whether the board can expel a trustee. He does not think there is anything in the board's bylaws that addresses that issue. He would have to look at the Community College Act or other statutes to determine whether the board has authority to do that, given that trustees are elected officials. Trustee Cusumano requested Chair Lorenzo to query the board for consensus to allow general counsel to research available options for this board and future boards to remedy that potential of occurring. Chair Lorenzo asked if there was a consensus to move in that direction. There was consensus. Mr. Steele will research it.

Trustee Vitale said she knows that at community colleges many adjunct faculty are professionals in a variety of fields and are teaching in addition to their daily job. There are also so many fields that people get four-year degrees in with the idea of getting a professorship at some point. When she was younger that was doable, but because of the temperament and finances at colleges, it is almost impossible to realize that kind of position, everything is adjunct across the board. She said some people do aspire to teach full time so if we can support that in any way it is always a great thing. Dr. Sawyer said it is in our best interest too, because we know these people. It adds value and strength to our faculty enabling us to pick good candidates.

Trustee Flynn asked about the meeting on the 2020 calendar of meetings scheduled at east campus. Dr. Sawyer said a couple of years ago we held a board meeting there to give the trustees a chance to visit that campus. In addition, K building is closing for renovation so it made sense to schedule a meeting there. Trustee Dean asked if there will be a tour of the campus and Dr. Sawyer said that we could do that. Trustee Flynn asked if a meeting could be scheduled at MTEC. Dr. Sawyer said we could, there is space. It is a high bay area and not the best acoustically, making it a little difficult to hear, but we can do it. Chair Lorenzo polled the board on their interest in having a board meeting at MTEC. The board is interested and interested in a tour of the facility.

7.0 Closed Session

There was no need to go into closed session.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by Dean, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by Dean to call the meeting back into session at 6:45 p.m.

Motion carried.

Trustee Cusumano said that if we do not take action tonight on the 2020 calendar of meetings, is the schedule enacted as per our bylaws or do we need to vote on it. Mr. Steele said the board's bylaws say Tuesday, therefore to alter the schedule there would need to be a vote.

Trustee Cusumano said we could change this schedule, at any point in time during the year, by majority vote of the board members. Dr. Sawyer cautioned him about the space issue. Trustee Cusumano added based on room availability. Mr. Steele said yes, subject to proper notice and subject to voting that you will be changing the bylaws requires a majority of the entire board. Chair Lorenzo said we do not need to change the bylaws to go back to Tuesdays. Mr. Steele said no. Chair Lorenzo said we could just vote and go back to Tuesdays.

Mr. Steele said the decision to move the day of the meeting predates his time, so as a precaution, if you are going to go back to Tuesday, he would recommend a vote on that and there would be no need to do anything with the bylaws. Mr. Steele suspects that there was a resolution of the board to change the meetings to Wednesdays, so you would in effect be overruling that resolution.

Trustee Cusumano recalls we set the meeting as a vote similar to the process we are using currently every year at this time and it was done at that meeting for the next year 2018-2019. Chair Lorenzo said it was on the agenda and we voted yes we are going to do that.

Mr. Steele suggested if the desire is to keep the meetings on Wednesday for the balance of the year, with the last meeting on the third Wednesday of December as scheduled, then it would be up to the board to determine the schedule from that point forward. Mr. Steele said you could amend the agenda and not vote on it tonight. Ms. Kowal can check room availability and then we can inform the board properly of what is available.


Dr. Sawyer said at the Regular Meeting at Agenda Item 3 a trustee will have to make the motion to remove item 5.2.

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by Flynn to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES


Secretary