

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, March 18, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., in Assembly Hall, University Center, Professional Development Center, Center Campus, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township, Michigan.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lorenzo at 6:03 p.m.

2.0 ROLL CALL

Present: Katherine Lorenzo, Chairperson
Frank Cusumano, Vice Chairperson
Kristi Dean, Secretary
Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer
Shelley Vitale, Trustee
Vincent Viviano, Trustee

Absent: Joan Flynn, Trustee

Also present: James Sawyer, President
Elizabeth Argiri, Vice President, Business
Sharon Kowal, Assistant to the President
Donald Ritzenhein, Provost/Vice President, Learning Unit
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel
Lauren Willey, Director of Human Resources, Human Resources

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by DiMaria supported by Dean, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

5.0 REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIAL

None.

Dr. Sawyer's Updates:

Dr. Sawyer said there is no need for a closed session.

Enrollment: As of yesterday, credit hours for winter are down two percent and headcount is down five percent. As of this morning, we had received 14 requests for refunds due to COVID-19. We anticipate more in the coming days.

Capital Outlay for R, S, T (Advanced Technology Center) – The college’s capital outlay proposal was included in the most recent supplemental budget request and was approved by the senate and the house. Currently we are waiting for the governor to sign it. It is not a done deal until she signs it, but it is a bipartisan bill, so we expect that to happen soon. Dr. Sawyer recognized the tremendous job by B. Simonson, L. Argiri, N. McKee and our architects in updating the proposal, literally over a weekend, and putting us in a position to be included in the supplemental. Additionally, our new lobbyist, GCSI, was helpful in getting our request in. Thank you to everyone for the great team effort.

Achieving the Dream Leader College: Dr. Sawyer said Macomb has been selected for the third to be recognized as an Achieving the Dream Leader College. This is a national recognition and is a reflection on the progress we are making in our work to address equity gaps. This is great, it is a three-year award. We have made progress in this area and have identified it as a major area of improvement. There are specific objectives in the strategic plan that continue our work on the equity gap, but it is nice to be recognized for the work that we have done thus far.

FIRST Robotics Tournament - The college hosted the FIRST Robotics Tournament a few weeks ago. This event is for middle and high school students who are given a project to build a robot to perform a specific task. The tournament has existed for a few years and is very impressive. We have positioned the college to be more involved with FIRST through our work with the Robotics Collaboration and Innovation Center with the County and the ISD. This event was also a great opportunity for the college to be able to bring hundreds of students and their parents on to our campus.

Brookings Event with Janet Yellen – The Brookings Event was great, and Janet Yellen was very interesting. It is rewarding to be able to offer events of that caliber to the community. Dr. Sawyer received feedback from several people who appreciated the opportunity to interact with someone of that stature.

Girl Scout Engineering Day – Dr. Sawyer said it was gratifying to host an engineering day for the Girls Scouts. We like to do whatever we can to promote STEM careers, particularly with young women.

Athletics Spring Season – The NJCAA made the decision to cancel the spring athletic season as a direct result of COVID-19. They also decided that the athletes will maintain their year of eligibility.

6.0 ISSUE AND UPDATES

1. COVID-19 Update
2. College Preparedness

Dr. Sawyer provided a timeline of the college’s reactions and actions to the COVID-19 crisis.

Dr. Sawyer said the college’s goal is to be able to offer online classes starting Monday, March 23. In this effort the college has shined through. Faculty and staff have done a phenomenal job and have gone the extra mile to make this happen.

Friday, February 28, 2020

- A communication was sent to all faculty, staff and students to inform them that the college was closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation.

Week of March 2, 2020

- Universities and colleges in other parts of the country, with confirmed COVID-19 cases, start to announce conversion to online learning
- Major conferences began to cancel

Sunday, March 8, 2020

- Convened crisis team and made some initial decisions
- Students, faculty and staff returning from spring break on Monday, March 9
 - Sent a communication to staff, students, faculty to report travel to a Level 3 Health Notice Country, China, South Korea and Iran
 - Twelve staff and 17 students identified themselves and we asked them to self-quarantine for 14 days
 - We decided to maintain pay and not charge PTO for all Macomb employees
- Started focusing on the steps to transition to online classes
- Launched first coronavirus webpage

Monday, March 9, 2020

- The federal government added cruise ships to the embargoed travel list
- A few more people reported they had traveled on cruise ships and self-quarantined
- Increased cleaning on high touch surfaces
- Tried to obtain more hand sanitizer
- The CDC posters were hung up around campus encouraging proper hand washing and staying home if sick
- Started list of events on campus, particularly at the Macomb Center, Sports and Expo Center and the Lorenzo Cultural

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

- The first cases of COVID-19 reported in Michigan
- On conference call with Macomb County Executive Office and the Health Department to share information
- Local community events start getting canceled
- Beginning to get more questions from faculty and staff
- The DOE gave broad instructions around distance technology

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

- The regional universities started to suspend face to face classes
- Participated in conference call with governor and the state's community college presidents telling them what she was announcing at her 5 p.m. press conference:
 - Where feasible she wanted all institutions to move to online instruction
 - Cancel large events of 100 or more people
 - Keep these emergency measures in place until April 12, 2020
- We began to assess our inventory of laptops for students and adjunct faculty who do not have access to technology

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 - continued

- Communicated with faculty about the transition of classes from on ground to online
 - Many faculty had already started to prepare
 - Thirty percent of classes are fully online and continue to run
 - Up to another 70 percent of classes have the course shell. The course shell is part of the learning management system (Canvas). The faculty member loads their first day handout, inputs grades and supplemental materials. It is a little easier to convert classes to online if they already have a shell.
 - Roughly 30 percent of courses did not have a core shell and required a bit more work. The good news - many of the faculty in that category had Canvas training
- Began canceling events with 100 or more attendees
- Provided communication update to faculty and staff
- The bookstore started free shipping for online orders. Follett has done a commendable job, not only here, but across the country, they have gotten aggressive in supporting the efforts of going online

Thursday, March 12, 2020

- Notified that all health clinical sites were cancelled
- The number of COVID-19 cases for the state rises to 12
- The governor closes all K12 schools through April 5, at this point
- Dr. Sawyer began talking to colleagues at Southeast Michigan community colleges to share plans
- Started daily conference calls with crisis team
- Planned for staff to work from home and identify essential staff
- Started encouraging students to call before coming on campus, the campus was not closed at that point, but we were communicating to them to call first
- Europe was added to the travel list
- Canceled all food operations on campus
- Continued to assess the continuation of labs. Some labs just cannot be done online, and we are thinking through if we can hold some and still comply with the guidelines from the feds and the state

Friday, March 13, 2020

- First case of the virus reported in Macomb County
- County Executive Hackel declared a state of emergency
- The governor orders temporary ban of events with over 250 people
- More conferences canceled, including the Higher Learning Commission annual conference, we had eight staff members scheduled to attend
- Participated in another conference call with MCCA and the community college presidents to share everyone's actions and plans. All of us working on the transition to online education. Macomb is in a better position than most because we have great staff and faculty and a strong online learning support system.
- The CTL staff has been phenomenal. They have basically been working around the clock, helping whoever contacts them.

Friday, March 13, 2020 - continued

- Decided to revise our purchasing process and raised credit card limits for L. Argiri, J. Sawyer, and D. Ritzenhein. This is in the event we must buy something in an emergency, we have the credit limit to do that. All those purchases, if any, would still follow board policy and be shared with the board. For example, we need headsets now and are taking every opportunity to buy the hard to find PPEs.
- Contacted by Senator Peters office for help with language to prevent any disruption in GI Bill benefits.
- Put together a survey for students and adjunct faculty to ascertain technology needs – laptops and access to wifi.
- Started reaffirming essential services
- Continue to communicate to staff with daily emails on the decisions being made
- Regularly emailing the students as well, but not every day
- Sharing updates with the board
- Suspended all college travel

Saturday, March 14, 2020

- Faculty continued to work on converting on-ground classes to online
- CTL ran faculty training for Canvas and online instruction - 70 attendees

Sunday, March 15, 2020

- CTL and faculty continued to convert on-ground classes to online
- Macomb County had two more confirmed cases of COVID-19

Monday, March 16, 2020

- Governor closed restaurants, bars, pubs, libraries, exercise facilities and museums. We closed the libraries, Sports and Expo Center, Lorenzo Cultural Center
- Canceled all catering orders
- Made decision to close the college to students and the public effective March 17
- Started to scale back operations and have less staff on campus
- Made decision to delay spring/summer registration by two weeks to April 6. It was scheduled to begin March 23.
- Workforce/Continuing Education registration was scheduled to start today (March 18, 2020) but it was pushed to April 6 also. That decision was based on the rationale that it would be a cleaner process rather than having people register, then the schedule changes and we have to go back to the student and make those adjustments.
- For the few staff that are on campus we are having them spread out and keeping a six-foot distance.
- Continued to monitor the transition to online
- Started to deploy the laptops to the students, adjunct faculty and staff that need them. Here again, the bookstore has been phenomenal. We are deploying the laptops through the center campus bookstore.

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

- Michigan has 65 cases of COVID-19 with 8 of them in Macomb County
- Finalized basic staffing plans for service and operations through April 3
- Set-up drive up wifi outside of center campus N, R, S and UC buildings and at south by C, N, and R buildings – it is less than ideal, but it is a way to provide Internet access for people without them in the building
- We have students who have made it known they have financial issues.
 - Eight students reached out to us to cancel their payment plan because they were unable to make their final payment. We contacted them to find out their commitment to continuing and verified they were close to completion. We are going to cover the final payments for those students. We will figure out how to cover those costs.

Trustee Vitale asked how many people are on the crisis team and who are they. Dr. Sawyer said about a dozen people are on the crisis team and they are his direct reports and administrators from key operational areas of the college. Trustee Vitale asked how many essential staff are currently left? Dr. Sawyer said he does not have an exact number, but it is around 100 and that does not include faculty, adjunct faculty and all the administrators. They continue to work and be involved.

Trustee Dean asked if the network has been able to handle the load? Dr. Sawyer said there was a slight hiccup on campus Saturday, but it wasn't very long. Monday will be the test case because that is when all the classes go online.

Trustee Cusumano asked if the governor gave an indication of what developments could extend her executive orders. Dr. Sawyer said she did not give criteria, but she did make it clear that it could be extended. The Federal requirement has been extended to March 31.

Trustee Cusumano asked if Dr. Sawyer had any understanding of how they are calculating the trajectory to make these determinations and how do we make the decision to cancel commencements? Dr. Sawyer said we have discussed that, and many schools have already canceled their commencements. Dr. Sawyer said he wants to wait as long as possible to make that decision because it is an important day. Our drop-dead date to decide is April 17.

Trustee Cusumano said he has recollections of his failed motions to give free cap and gowns to the graduates and thought to himself if they rent or purchase the cap and gown and then it is canceled that would be like a double punch. Is there a possibility of that occurring? Dr. Sawyer said he doesn't think we have started selling caps and gowns yet.

Trustee Cusumano asked if any of the measures that have been taken in response to the crisis are going to affect the budget they voted on? Dr. Sawyer said absolutely, he is not sure how at this point. We are looking at this from a very student-centered perspective. We are forcing students to move online for class, and they didn't sign up for that and may not do well, so we are going to be very accommodating with withdrawals and encourage students to take credit vouchers. We are going to try to avoid refunds, but in some cases, there will be refunds. We also have issues with financial aid that are complicated because of the rules. We are handling those students on a case by case basis. It is fair to say that there will be some financial impact, but it is hard to know until we get beyond this crisis.

Trustee Cusumano asked if Canvas is an online platform. Dr. Sawyer said yes, Canvas is our learning management system that faculty use to store their first day handouts, assignments, discussion boards, etc. Trustee Cusumano asked if the teacher streams the lecture. Dr. Sawyer said that is one option, but there are many options. Dr. Ritzenhein and he met with the faculty leadership, who have been very supportive through all of this, and it is about focusing on what the learning outcomes are. Typically, when we approach online courses and train faculty to use them, it is really about the process. We try to instill the process with the expectation that is going to lead to a quality way to run a course. We want to insure students are going to learn through good pedagogy. That can happen through discussion boards, assignments, it could be taped lectures or additional meeting assignments, there is a whole host of options the faculty can use.

Trustee Cusumano asked if Mr. Zimmerman has conducted any analysis or “what if” scenarios with the increased load that is going to go through the servers. Dr. Ritzenhein said Canvas is a web-based program and does not run off the servers. The company that runs Canvas, have told us they are ramping up and preparing to make sure their capacity, which is cloud based, is increased to accommodate the certain increase in demand. It is different than our systems like payroll that are housed on the college’s servers. Dr. Sawyer said Mr. Zimmerman is optimistic. Ms. Argiri added that where we would see the impact with Canvas is credential authentication and we have the ability to add capacity, if needed, to our bandwidth.

Trustee Cusumano asked Dr. Sawyer if he is comfortable with the college’s crisis response and is there any room for improvement. Dr. Sawyer said there is always room for improvement, but he has been very impressed. Trustee Cusumano said this is a scenario where publicly elected officials are basically telling businesses to shut down their facilities. Are there other scenarios or possibilities that could affect the operation of the college. Dr. Sawyer said when the crisis communication team spoke this morning, we felt we will be in our best position by Friday, but if a shelter in place order is issued, we can continue to run the college. Courses can run online. Ms. Argiri has business office staff deployed. Ms. Willey has human resources staff deployed. Essential functions can run from home. IT can run from home. The only people on site are police officers and select facility management staff to ensure the boilers are working and the water is flowing. Some of the mechanical oversight can be monitored from home too.

Trustee Cusumano said the paychecks go out no matter what. Dr. Sawyer said we made the commitment to staff that they were going to get paid through April 3. That was a very important decision because in this time of turbulence we need to take care of our staff. Trustee DiMaria asked if it is possible that may have to be extended. Dr. Sawyer said we told the staff yesterday and we are telling students tomorrow that when we resume classes online, on March 23, that it is until further notice. Yes, it is very conceivable, and some schools have already decided to stay online until the end of the term. We might have to carry on this way through the summer term, but no one really knows at this point.

Trustee Vitale asked if there has been any discussion of another round of the virus in the fall. Dr. Sawyer said he has heard that possibility on phone calls and press briefings, but when our courses are available online, we have done the heavy lifting.

Trustee Dean asked if all the classes with students enrolled have been converted. Dr. Sawyer said either converted or at some stage in the process. Tonight, we are doing an assessment of where faculty are in the process. There will be some classes that just don't make it, but he expects them to be very few and we will deal with them accordingly.

Trustee Viviano asked if some students will get passed without finishing their course online. Dr. Sawyer said we talked about going to a pass/fail system, but that is not our preference. We want to maintain the letter grade. The grades matter, that is how we determine students getting into the selective admissions programs. Also, there could be an impact on transfer, we really don't know. It would be disheartening to have a student get a "P" and come to find out they can't transfer a course because their university of choice won't accept it. Trustee Viviano said he would think these universities are going through this too, so it is a learning curve for everybody.

Trustee Cusumano asked Dr. Sawyer to walk him through the culinary program, the welding courses, etc. Dr. Ritzenhein said the culinary faculty have determined that they can proceed with distance teaching and learning. Their students have equipment at home, so their plan is to go online and give their lectures, in similar fashion to the Food Network, albeit slower. At the end of the semester they would like to have each student come in, in Oxford University style, and have them demonstrate something so they can show their understanding. But we will have to wait and see. They have thought this through very carefully and are prepared to continue online starting Monday.

Dr. Sawyer continued the discussion with how classes like welding would be conducted. He said we had hoped to find a way to run some of those classes, but it is dependent on the latest guidance. Dean Hutchison will be under very strict guidelines on how the labs are run and still comply with the guidelines. We continue to work through that process and hope to run some of those classes.

Dr. Sawyer said on the health care side, we can do the classroom training online and simulations instead of clinicals, but we have to figure a way to deal with the hands-on learning. Trustee Cusumano asked if there is any potential for a waiver to bring in small batches of students for that. Dr. Sawyer said the number of people in a group is only a recommendation, and he is not aware of a waiver process for an executive order. Mr. Steele added that we could challenge the executive order and argue there is no constitutional authority for that, but he does not see us going in that direction. Dr. Sawyer said we will push the boundary to some extent but most important is the health and safety of our students.

Trustee Cusumano said we have an obligation because this disease can be rampant and who knows who can be afflicted with it, but we also have to balance that with our business model to some extent. Dr. Sawyer said the business model, but even more important is the student's educational progression. We need to keep a focus on that because they are with us for a distinct period of time as a part of their larger plan and we need to do everything we can to provide to those students, who want to put forth an effort, a quality avenue to finish this semester. It is key and that does help our financial model as well.

Dr. Sawyer said everyone has been remarkable, particularly the people in this room, and we are learning a lot through this process and will be better next time it happens.

3. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Sawyer said we were making very good progress on the strategic plan before the COVID-19 crisis. Just to remind you the big drivers for that is the disruption going on in higher education, we know we need to change our model.

Dr. Sawyer held four Town Hall Meetings, two at south campus and two at center campus. In total about 250-300 staff attended. At each meeting he walked through the process we followed and the roles of CampusWorks, the strategic planning work teams, and the board. He went into detail about the mission and vision and how we arrived at the words we chose. He then proceeded to talk about the specific strategic priorities.

Dr. Sawyer said there have not been many questions and the feedback received has been positive regarding the college doing this. As a reminder, the faculty and staff engagement survey and all the work on strategic planning, the consistent issue that we need to work on is communication. These Town Hall Meetings are only one method of improving our communication and they seem to be well received. Other sources we are using to share information are articles in our internal newsletter, *emphasis*, which goes out every two weeks, stationing large banners around campus with the values listed for people to familiarize themselves with them.

Dr. Sawyer stated that, in all fairness, we have not worked on strategic planning in the past week and a half, we had a work session planned with Kevin David but had to cancel it.

Dr. Sawyer said his plan for the fall is to periodically share with the board the status of our five strategies. We will not have time in a single board meeting to go through all five, but we could schedule one strategy per month while being cognizant of the agenda and the time.

7.0 Closed Session

It was determined that there was no need to go into closed session.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Secretary