

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, August 18, 2021 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 6:06 p.m.

2.0 [ROLL CALL](#)

Present:

Katherine Lorenzo, Chairperson
Kristi Dean, Secretary
Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer
Joan Flynn, Trustee
Shelley Vitale, Trustee
Vincent Viviano, Trustee

Absent:

Frank Cusumano, Vice Chairperson

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
Nicole McKee, Director of Government and Institutional Relations
D. Ritzenhein, Provost, VP for the Learning Unit
William Simonson, Executive Director of Facilities and Operations
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel
Jill Thomas-Little, Vice President, Student Services
Denise Williams, Vice President, Human Resources

3.0 [Approval of Agenda](#)

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

ALL IN FAVOR:

AYES: DiMaria, Flynn, Dean, Vitale, Viviano, Lorenzo

NAYS:

ABSENT: Cusumano

MOTION CARRIED.

4.0 [Audience Participation](#)

None.

5.0 [Review of Agenda Items and Materials](#)

None.

6.0 [Issues and Updates](#)

6.1 [President's Report](#)

Dr. Sawyer proudly recognized Trustee Viviano for his five years of service as a trustee and presented him with his service pin from the MCCA. Trustee Viviano thanked Dr. Sawyer and stated that he enjoyed being on the board and working with the trustees and members of the college community.

Closed Session: Dr. Sawyer will request the board to go into closed session at the end of the regular board meeting, rather than the information session. The purpose is to discuss a personnel matter, Dr. Sawyer's annual evaluation.

Return to Campus Update: Dr. Sawyer said since May we have been in the process of returning staff, in phases, to campus. The plan is for all the offices on campus to be open after Labor Day. They will not be fully staffed, as some people will continue to work remotely, but the offices will be open to serve students and staff that are on campus. At this point we are not planning on mandatory vaccinations. Some schools are requiring them, but he doesn't see that recommendation happening at Macomb. We have decided to make masks mandatory inside college buildings effective Monday, August 23. That decision was driven by the recent spike in the Covid Delta variant and Macomb County's current transmission status rate at high. The deadline of Friday, September 17 has been set to re-evaluate that decision. Our goal is to try to move back to encouraging mask wearing but not require it. Again, we will assess the situation and make that determination on September 17. He will keep the board apprised.

Fall Faculty Development Day: Dr. Sawyer said tomorrow (8/19) is Faculty Development Day (FDD), the unofficial launch of the new academic year. It is a day we bring all the faculty and administrators together and share what is new at the college, provide updates and have a speaker. It's an opportunity for department meetings to take place as well. This year, for the first time, we are holding FDD in a hybrid format – there will be people onsite in the recently renovated south campus K building and some people participating virtually. It will be great to have people back on campus.

Enrollment Update: Dr. Sawyer said head count for fall is up 6.7 percent, which is encouraging, and credit hours are up 2.6 percent over fall 2020. As we look around at the rest of the Michigan community colleges, credit hours are up an average of about 4.5 percent and head count is up an average of about 7 percent. We are pretty much inline with what is happening throughout the state. What is a little concerning is if we compare ourselves to 2019, the pre-pandemic term, we are still down in credit hours and headcount about 15 percent. When we went into the Covid shutdown last year, in the fall everything was virtual. We surveyed our students who chose not

to come back to the college and 34 percent of those who responded indicated that when more classes are on ground they will return to the college. We added more on ground classes, we are primarily still virtual, but we are seeing the fill rates of the on ground lower than anticipated. From a capacity perspective, we are still ten percentage points behind in on ground versus online. We are keeping an eye on that and will continue to add on ground classes as warranted. In the winter, we will try to add additional classes, but again it's a matter of meeting the demands and needs of the students which is what is most important.

Futures for Frontliners (F4F) and MI Reconnect Programs: Dr. Sawyer said these programs are likely key reasons we are seeing an increase in enrollment. We have 1,600 F4F students and 1,200 MI Reconnect students. That is very positive. If we look at registrations to date, which includes this term, last winter, the summer term and next winter, we are over \$4.4 million. That is pretty significant for the college and more importantly it is significant for thousands of students. It is a very good program and gets them reengaged. There still isn't any direction for those programs going forward and we don't anticipate having a state budget until the October 1 deadline. The hope is there will be some clarity on these two programs at that time. We continue to stay connected with our legislators regarding them.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Assurance Review: Dr. Sawyer said last week he shared with the board the good news that we received very positive feedback from the visiting team from the Higher Learning Commission. We met all the criteria with no monitoring or interim reporting, which is the best outcome you can achieve. He gave a special thanks to Jillian Huot, Director of Accreditation and Program Review. Ms. Huot was here several months ago to explain the HLC process to the board. He also thanked the HLC team chairs and team leads, they played a very important role, as well as a number of people at the college. These things just don't happen, it takes a lot of hard work to position ourselves to have these successful reviews. He thanked everyone for their efforts in making that a reality.

Federal Funds (HEERF II & III) Update: Dr. Sawyer said we have expended \$15.7 million of the HEERF II funds thus far. This summer, \$750,000 was dispersed to 7,700 students to pay their online course fees. That is a direct benefit to our students. We have purchase orders for another \$312,000, leaving about \$2,500 remaining in that fund. As far as the HEERF III funding, we have spent about \$102,000 to date. Another \$760,000 has been committed in purchase orders. There is \$17 million remaining for other purchases and projects, with \$10 million of that already identified and in process. As he has shared with the board in the past, there are very stringent guidelines on how this money can be spent and we are being very conscious of that, focusing on helping our students and serving the college's long-term needs.

Information Items: Dr. Sawyer said with the number of information items on the agenda, he is going to suggest for the board that we discuss the items in this session and answer any questions, then the board can make a single motion to receive and file them at the next meeting.

Three items being paid for with HEERF Funds:

1. The architecture of the HVAC for the Sports and Expo Center
2. A Master Systems Integrator for our HVAC systems

3. Welding booths and ventilation systems to support the temporary engineering and advanced technology programs

These three items focus on proper ventilation and because of the emphasis on ventilation they qualify for HEERF funding. The welding booths have the added benefit of providing social distancing. A side benefit is the HVAC in the Sports and Expo Center. It will provide comfortable relief for the summer programs we offer there.

Three facilities issues that needed to be urgently addressed.

1. The south campus Q building, containing the chiller, was identified as an area that needed to be renovated, but before the renovation could be done the chiller failed. These are critical to provide air conditioning to several of the buildings at south campus, so we needed to put an immediate repair in place. The good news is the money we spend now will reduce the amount we would have to spend on the renovation in the future. It is not extra money, but money being spent sooner than expected.
2. Two weekends ago, on Saturday at 4 a.m., there was an issue with DTE resulting in the loss of power in several buildings at center campus. Thankfully, Mr. B. Simonson and the team literally worked all weekend to get that repaired and with minimal impact on the college. If you will recall these repairs are very expensive, these main lines were installed in the sixties. Hats off to our team for replacing the lines quickly.
3. We have found out that sprinkler systems need to be installed in some of the labs at the temporary facility for the engineering and advanced technology programs. We did not originally fore see this and frankly we questioned whether they are necessary, but the fire marshal decided they are. Time is of the essence, so rather than arguing that point we are proceeding with the installation of the sprinkler systems as a safety measure. In addition, we are actively seeking temporary occupancy for the building.

These were things that needed to be expediently purchased and were done so under the purchasing policy with the approvals of VP Argiri and President Sawyer.

Trustee Flynn asked if there was any flooding at the college? Mr. B. Simonson responded that there was minor flooding at south campus G and J buildings. The outside drains couldn't keep up with the water so about an inch came underneath the doors. Our crews had it cleaned up the same day. Trustee Flynn asked at Warren's drains? Mr. Simonson said the college's drains that connect to Warren's main line.

Trustee Vitale asked what the Expo Center did for cooling before? Dr. Sawyer said they use very large fans to circulate the air.

Trustee Flynn asked what is going on in the front of the college? Dr. Sawyer responded that is the renovation of D building. The outside is impacted because they are moving things in and out of the building. The inside is being completely renovated.

Purchases: Dr. Sawyer said there are two IT purchases on the agenda. 1) software for IT students recommended by a faculty member and 2) additional programming support.

MCCA Summer Conference: Dr. Sawyer said again this year the Michigan Community College Association Summer Conference, which all trustees are invited to, was held virtually. He thanked Chairperson Lorenzo and Trustee Flynn and several of the staff who participated. Overall it was a pretty good session, it arguably was not as good as when it is in person, but the speakers were good and timely and the MCCA did a nice job of organizing it.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant Project Update: Dr. Sawyer said nine consultants submitted proposals. The prices ranged from \$32,000 to \$127,000. We had a cross functional committee of staff who reduced the list to four potential candidates. A couple weeks ago, a committee of representatives from the IDEA Council as well as President's Council interviewed the four candidates and one candidate rose to the top. We are currently in the process of conducting reference checks. The candidate's quote was below the board threshold, so the board technically won't have to approve the contract. At some point in time the board will have the opportunity to interact and engage with the consultant as we move ahead. He will keep the board apprised.

Detroit Zoo – Great Lakes Nature Center: Dr. Sawyer said in June he informed the board about the Zoo's potential interest in property at the college. We have since hosted them on campus twice. The first time was with the zoo team and the second they brought their architect to walk the property. We are still very much under consideration. They are preparing drawings and renderings and making sure this is something they want to pursue. If this does move forward, he anticipates that at some point the zoo team will attend a board meeting for introductions and a presentation.

Trustee Viviano asked if the center was going to be an aquarium? Dr. Sawyer responded that it is going to have a Great Lakes focus but it won't be an aquarium. There may be small aquariums as part of it, but it will be more of a cross between a museum and a nature center focused on education.

Trustee Flynn asked if the college has a representative on the zoo board? Dr. Sawyer said that he serves on the zoo board, but he serves there as the chair of the Macomb County Zoo Authority, not as a member of the college. He envisions that as a part of the deal we will ask to have a seat on the board for a college representative and he sees them welcoming that. Trustee Flynn said she knows the county has representatives. Dr. Sawyer said he represents the county as does Diane Banks. Candace Miller is also on the board from the county. Trustee Flynn asked if Sue Rocca was? Dr. Sawyer said he did not believe so.

Collective Bargaining Agreements: Dr. Sawyer said VP Williams is close to a tentative agreement with the STA (supervisory/technical) union. We discussed trying to get one-year extensions for all the unions and we have done that with two, as well as, negotiating a new two-year deal with full time faculty. VP Williams is in the process of working with the other unions now. The STA union is the farthest along in the process, so we are hopeful there will be a TA for the board to approve in September.

Chief Matheney Retirement: Dr. Sawyer shared the news that Chief Matheney has submitted his intention to retire. Chief Matheney has been with the college since 2018. He has done a fabulous job for us and we are very sorry to see him go. He and his wife are building a place in Arizona and will be relocating there permanently. We appreciate Chief giving us ample notice, he is going to

be with us through November. We thank him and wish him all the best as he moves on to retirement again.

Presentation on Developmental Education Update: Dr. Sawyer said Provost Ritzenhein is going to give an update on our developmental education program. Our faculty has been working diligently to make some changes that will be beneficial to our students and result in less of them being placed into a developmental education sequence. We are also doing this so we can comply with some new requirements in the Michigan Reconnect program.

Presentation on Upcoming Renovations and Building Projects: Dr. Sawyer said VP Argiri and Mr. B. Simonson will provide an overview of projects we see on the horizon and some of the great things we have accomplished. A key agenda item before the board tonight is the extension of our contract with Barton Malow. They have been our construction manager for many years and do a fabulous job. We've got some major projects that are time sensitive that they continue to work on. We are choosing to go with Barton Malow again because of their demonstrated commitment to the college. Through this pandemic we have had several major projects and they were able to manage those projects and remain on time and within budget. They have done a great job. They have been very instrumental in helping us design our future as well, playing a role this past year helping us to successfully obtain our capital outlay project. The program announcement for the dental program is in September, so the board will have a chance to see that facility. He toured it on Friday and it is very impressive, the clinic looks fantastic. Hats off to our team, our construction team Barton Malow and our program faculty in the dental area who were involved in the design of that facility. It looks great. He spent some time yesterday looking around the recently renovated south campus K building. The October board meeting will be held there so you will see that facility soon. He can't speak highly enough about the good work Barton Malow has done and hence our recommendation that we continue with them as our construction manager.

6.2 [Update on Developmental Education](#)

Dr. Ritzenhein updated the board on developmental education.

Questions:

Trustee Flynn asked whether placement tests are required? Dr. Ritzenhein said placement tests will no longer be required, we will now use the student's self-reported GPA. Dr. Ritzenhein said we will have a conversation with the student, ask about a grade point average (if the student has it), and now there are other ways that have been demonstrated statistically to help predict whether a student should take some developmental work as part of their college credit. Trustee Flynn asked if students right out of high school are tested? Dr. Ritzenhein said we won't be doing placement testing. Trustee Flynn asked not at all? Dr. Ritzenhein said he wouldn't say "at all" because there is conversation that has to take place. Right now, our faculty have agreed that a grade point average is a sufficient predictor and the research demonstrates that. We haven't had time to research our own experience, but we will, we have a whole year of experience without giving the placement test and to see whether or not the students that were placed in college classes succeeded.

Chairperson Lorenzo said on page nine of your presentation Macomb's English implementation is the four-credit class and the co-requisite combined, so it is only four credits? Or is it additional credits? Dr. Ritzenhein responded it is additional credits. If a student scores 1.9 or below then they would take a co-requisite class and there would be additional hours added to the four-credit class. Faculty are working on

that now, sometimes those are one credit, sometimes two credits, but since it is already a four-credit class, he would guess only two more credits would be added, but they would take them at the same time.

Trustee Vitale asked as far as the screening goes with the GPA why do you say it is self-reported? Can't that be found on a transcript? Dr. Ritzenheim said we do get those grade point averages through the transcript system, so we can check that, but the research shows if a student is asked what their high school grade point average is and they say 2.4 or 2.5, then knowing that they can be placed in a college-level course and would do just as well as if they had taken some type of test.

6.3 [Update on Renovations](#)

VP Argiri opened the presentation and Mr. Simonson provided more detailed information.

Questions:

Trustee Flynn asked how many people operate and maintain the heating and air conditioning equipment? Mr. Simonson said our HVAC maintenance staff is six people and two console operators. Trustee Flynn asked if they work night and day? Mr. Simonson said they do not work around the clock, but we do have two shifts, five days a week, day and afternoon shifts. Trustee Flynn asked where the equipment is located at south campus? Mr. Simonson said the largest equipment is housed in A building and Q building. We have two 250 million BTU boilers; 1,100 tons of cooling being produced out of two absorbers and one chiller in Q building. In A building, similarly, we have millions of tons of BTUs in heating, four boilers in A and three in Q.

Trustee Vitale asked when the board is presented with the replacements for this equipment, will there be an anticipated or guaranteed lifespan provided for them? Mr. Simonson said yes, we design to what is called the hundred-year plan, so we design a building that is supposed to last a hundred years. Realistically you will get a half-life out of that, so the equipment will be specified to last approximately fifty years. The ancillary equipment, the pumps, drives, fan motors, etc. have a life range of five to fifteen years, but the large items are thirty to fifty years.

7.0 [Closed Session](#)

It was determined that a closed session will be held at the Regular Meeting.

8.0 [Adjournment](#)

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

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Secretary