

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 Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., in Room 152 of the Public Service Institute, East Campus, 21901 Dunham, 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
Joan Flynn, Trustee
Shelley Vitale, Trustee
Vincent Viviano, Trustee

Absent: None

Also present:

James Sawyer, President
Kevin Chandler, Vice President, College Advancement & Community Relations
Joline Davis, Vice President, Human Resources
Sharon Kowal, Assistant to the President
William Leavens, Chief of College Police
Michael Lopez, Director, Public Service Institute
Deb Mende, Executive Director, Office of the President
Nara Mirijanian, Dean, Health and Public Services
Kathleen Poindexter, Interim Associate Vice President, Business
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel
Jill Thomas-Little, Vice President, Student Services

3.0 [APPROVAL OF AGENDA](#)

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

ALL IN FAVOR:

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

NAYS:

MOTION CARRIED.

4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

5.0 REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIALS

Trustee Cusumano questioned the transfer of public funds to the Trustee Endowment Fund which to his understanding is part of the Foundation, a non-profit corporation, 501(c)3 and is separate from the public institution. This is no reflection on Trustee Bolanowski, his concern is that the transfer of funds from the public fund to a private corporation is a violation of the prohibition found in the Michigan Constitution of public funds for private credit. Mr. Steele clarified that the Foundation is not for a private concern, it is for a public benefit because the Foundation was established to support the public college.

Trustee Cusumano stated that the rationale in the board write-up says this has become a tradition. He is willing to write a \$142 check right now as a contribution towards an honorable recognition of Connie Bolanowski. He does not think it is a proper transfer and will be voting “no” on that item. He did vote “yes” on the donation in recognition of Denise Williams, but he has since reassessed his position.

Trustee Flynn shared that it is a good idea to recognize past trustees. When her sister passed many people asked where they could donate money and she thought the Foundation would be a good place. This is a great idea, and she will be voting “yes.”

Trustee Cusumano responded that the question is whether as stewards of the public trust and gatekeeper of the public treasury if we are allowed to in the Michigan Constitution. This is different than tuition waivers, this is ensconced in the Michigan Constitution and is one of the allegations against Eric Smith, former county prosecutor, when he transferred funds to churches and other non-profits outside the uniform budgeting in the county act and that is the reason, it is the principle.

Trustee Cusumano continued that he is aware that this has been a tradition but why can't we recognize past trustees while they are still alive? What triggers this recognition? Dr. Sawyer answered that we are following a past practice that has been done for many years but if the board wanted to recognize former trustees while they are still living that is up to the board's discretion.

Again, Trustee Cusumano said he has no disrespect to those who have been honored with this memorial, but it is just whether he is acting consistently with his oath of office and upholding the United States and Michigan Constitutions. In this case the Michigan Constitution.

Trustee Vitale asked if this can't be more straightforward, and we find out if it is allowable? Mr. Steele said he investigated this issue when it came up with Ms. Williams and his general memory is the college can spend money to support itself, the college can spend money to do things in the college's interest and he believes that donating to the Foundation is a donation that is in the college's interest. It isn't a donation to a third-party or something external that the college doesn't benefit from. It is a donation to the Foundation and it is the Foundation's goal and mission to support the college and he believes it is allowable.

Trustee Cusumano said it is his understanding that the Foundation will be awarding it by way of scholarship or endowment to individual students. Dr. Sawyer agreed that is typically how it is awarded

but it may also be awarded for other student financial needs. Mr. Steele said the Foundation has a great deal of discretion on how it uses its money as long as it benefits the college. Trustee Cusumano said his concern is when the student or the student's family benefits from subsidies through the awarding of scholarships and that is taking money from the stream of revenue from state funding because this is coming from the operating funds – state funding, tuition, any tuition increases and the county wide millage that is being used to benefit that particular family of the student or that individual student and he found that to be problematic. He has been unable to reconcile that with his duties as a trustee in his oath of office, he doesn't think it is appropriate. He understands and appreciates General Counsel's opinion, but he disagrees with it.

6.0 ISSUES AND UPDATES

6.1 President's Report

Dr. Sawyer thanked Mike Lopez, Nara Mirijanian and the staff at east campus for hosting tonight's board meetings.

Dr. Sawyer welcomed Joline Davis, the college's new vice president for human resources. Ms. Davis started on Monday, and we are glad she is here.

Dr. Sawyer shared that Dr. Ritzenhein has decided to retire effective August 31. We are very appreciative for Dr. Ritzenhein stepping in when he did and staying on longer than he had expected.

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

Dr. Sawyer said our Covid protocols remain the same and there aren't any plans to make changes at this time.

Enrollment Update – Dr. Sawyer shared that our spring/summer enrollment credit hours are down 9.7 percent, which is relatively consistent with what we experienced with winter enrollment.

Change Date of July Board Meetings – Dr. Sawyer said he is looking for a consensus from the trustees to move the July 20th board meetings to July 12. The Executive Leadership Team is participating in a professional development session which conflicts with the July 20 meeting. We picked July 12 because it does not interfere with either of the Macomb or Shelby Township board meetings that Trustees Cusumano and Viviano are trustees of. It is unlikely that we can cancel the July meeting because we have four bargaining agreements that expire on June 30, and he expects that some of those contracts will be presented to the board for approval in July. He also anticipates having a recommendation for provost. He appreciates the board considering the change. Trustee Vitale said she would have to check her schedule. No other concerns. The requested date change will be on the May 18 board agenda for their consideration and approval.

Information Items – As he mentioned last month, Dr. Sawyer said we did have to proceed with the expenditure from the Perkins Grant for eighteen (18) welders because of the lead time and the required onsite deadline of June 30, 2022. Additionally, a HEERF Grant purchase was made for fourteen (14) hospital suites that will provide our students a realistic in-hospital setting. The

suites will be used in our human patient simulation lab, nursing program and other health-related courses.

Purchases

- Dental Equipment: Dr. Sawyer said our intent is to start the Dental Hygiene program this fall and he is pleased to tell the trustees that the purchase of dental equipment to support the program is on the agenda.
- Housekeeping Contract: Dr. Sawyer said we contracted with Core America, the same consultant we used previously, to guide the college-wide committee through the complicated review of RFP's. After going through the process and interviewing other companies we are recommending continuing our relationship with ABM who was also the lowest bidder.
- Gasoline and Diesel 3-year contract
- Foundation Office's database program, Blackbaud, 3-year renewal
- Contract for Business Process Review Services: Dr. Sawyer said this review is aligned with our strategic plan, specifically Strategy 3 with a tie over to Strategy 2. We are recommending a contract with DoctumsGlobal to perform evaluations on two areas identified by the Strategy 3 work team: student experience from recruiting through the registration process and applicant to the offering process in HR. We can certainly improve in these two areas they both reflect highly on the college and are critical to recruiting students and onboarding employees.
- Contract for Temporary IT Infrastructure Staffing: Dr. Sawyer said this is due to the unexpected resignation of a key staff member in IT. This contract will fill that position until a replacement can be hired.

Personnel Requests – Dr. Sawyer said he has been sharing with the board over the past several months that there were several positions in the midst of the hiring process. We have worked through the process and are presenting six new hires this evening.

Administrative Items – Dr. Sawyer said the administrative items are for the major renovations that Mr. Bill Simonson presented to the board several months ago; CJ (science building), south campus boiler/powerhouse and the center campus data center HVAC replacement. At this time, we are requesting approval as we move ahead with the bidding process and in order to meet the deadlines we've established.

College Scorecard Data – Dr. Sawyer said on April 4 the trustees received a communication from a member of the public who raised a concern that the cost of our tuition reported on the College Scorecard seemed incorrect. He became aware of the issue the week before at the MCCA Board of Directors meeting when a member pointed out the discrepancy of tuition costs at different colleges. Upon investigation the error seems to be related to the room and board category. We are working to resolve this and have consistency across the state but the change to our tuition costs will not be reflected in the scorecard until next year.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Update – Dr. Sawyer stated that the workshop with Kennedy & Co. was held on March 28. He thanked Trustees Lorenzo and Vitale for attending. Kennedy & Co. did a great job presenting the materials. We sent that information the next day to the trustees who were unable to join us. As we reflected on that session, we thought it was important that we present the information to the majority of trustees. Ms. J. Thomas-Little will be presenting the material to the board tonight and give you an opportunity to react and ask questions. This information is critical to the next stage, which is ultimately developing a diversity

statement for the college. The board plays a fundamental role in that, so this background is essential to give you the information to do that most effectively.

May 3, 2022 – First Town Hall Meeting – Dr. Sawyer is excited about the first Town Hall meeting on May 3. These meetings are coming out of our strategic planning process and other employee engagement work that we have done. The Town Hall is different from a typical presentation because it is more of a discussion and an engagement. The point of the Town Hall is to start a conversation – J. Thomas-Little and Dr. Sawyer will engage in the first one on inclusion, diversity, equity and access and share what the college is doing. The entire college community was invited to attend. This is our first time doing this and we're anxious to try it out. We are committed to it and want to create that opportunity for all staff to engage with college leadership on relevant topics of the time.

May 10, 2022 – Institutional Development Day (IDD) – Dr. Sawyer explained that IDD is an annual event for the entire college community. A draft agenda for the day is in your packet. Tentatively the State of the College address is slated for 8:45 a.m. The trustees are welcome to attend in person but there will also be an option to watch the address remotely. In addition to the State of the College, we will be recognizing our retirees, 25-year service award employees, having a session focused on campus safety and in the afternoon a wide variety of workshops will be available.

May 19, 2022 - Dental Science Cultivation Event – Dr. Sawyer said this event is a reception for the dental community with the intent of cultivating relationships and generating philanthropic support for the dental program.

MCCA Summer Conference – July 27-29, 2022 – Dr. Sawyer said if you are planning to attend the MCCA Summer Conference please let Ms. Kowal know. Ms. Kowal needs some additional registration information from you. There is a form in your packet to complete and return to her as soon as possible.

May Meeting – Dr. Sawyer said the May agenda will include requests of approval for the 2022/2023 initial budget, the property tax resolution and the NBU contracts.

Two presentations - Mr. Mike Lopez will be presenting an overview of east campus and the exciting things happening in the police/fire academies, etc. Mr. Lopez will be giving a tour of the facility after the regular meeting. The second presentation will be given by Ms. Jill Thomas-Little on the diversity, equity, inclusion report from Kennedy & Co.

6.2 [Overview of East Campus](#)

Mr. Mike Lopez, director of the Public Service Institute welcomed the board and thanked them for having their meetings at east campus. Mr. Lopez presented an overview of the campus and the many public service programs offered by Macomb Community College.

6.3 [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access Presentation](#)

Ms. Jill Thomas-Little, vice president of student services, presented an overview of the report from Kennedy & Co. on the strategic planning for Strategy 6 inclusion, diversity, equity and access.

Trustee Flynn commented that a lot of work went into that report. How many people were interviewed and how? In person or virtual? Ms. Thomas-Little responded that 66 students were interviewed, and she apologizes but she doesn't have the number of staff interviewed. Dr. Sawyer said we will get that number for you. But we attempted to touch upon a wide cross section of the college. Ms. Thomas-Little said we went through the union leadership and invited their members to participate. She said that most of the interviews were virtual through Zoom/Teams. They were onsite for a day and a half in February for in person sessions with multiple groups during the day and an evening session with students. Dr. Sawyer added that they were here in March presenting to several groups.

Dr. Sawyer said we are ultimately developing a diversity statement for the college that will guide our work in this area. Next steps start in April when Kennedy & Co. works with our IDEA Council, led by Ms. Thomas-Little and made up of different staff across the college having a particular interest in this type of work. On May 24 we have a strategic planning session with President's Council, and we are devoting part of that session to work with Kennedy & Co. Our intent is to develop drafts of diversity statements and share them with the trustees for input and guidance on either June 28 or June 29. Ms. Kowal will be reaching out to determine which date works best. This will be an on-ground session with Ms. Sara Nehar and Ms. Kendra Grinnage, from Kennedy & Co. They will have already worked with President's Council and the IDEA Council on synthesizing this data and developing draft diversity statements for you to react too and consider.

Trustee Flynn shared that Ms. Thomas-Little did a good job. Dr. Sawyer concurred, he recognized her for her leadership in this effort, she has done a great job of assembling and working with the IDEA council and playing a pivotal role as we launch Strategy 6.

Dr. Sawyer said if there are any questions that you have later, please contact him or Ms. Kowal and we will get the answers.

7.0 CLOSED SESSION

It was determined that a closed session was not necessary.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Secretary