An open information session of the Board of Trustees of the Community College District of the County of Macomb was held Wednesday, August 17, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., in Room 109 of the 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 6:00 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 (arrived at 7:00 p.m.)

Absent:

Also present:
James Sawyer, President
Elizabeth Argiri, Executive Vice President, Business
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
Deb Mende, Executive Director, Office of the President
Leslie Kellogg, Provost, Vice President of Learning Unit
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel – remote via Teams
Jill Thomas-Little, Vice President, Student Services

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTION by Cusumano, supported by Flynn, to approve the agenda as presented.

ALL IN FAVOR:

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

ABSENT: Viviano

NAYS:

MOTION CARRIED.

4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION
None.
5.0 REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIALS

Trustee Cusumano stated that he has been involved in debunking election conspiracies and he believes that if leaders in the community of Macomb County don’t actively participate in debunking spurious and baseless conspiracy theories about the sanctity of our elections and the validity of that process, he has real concerns about the future of, not only our democracy of the United States, but also at a local level of government. He watched the film, *2000 Mules*, and if you are not asking second and third questions about what they are proposing is fact, then you can be seriously misled down a primrose path. While he was driving here, he was going to make the statement that we should be screaming from the rooftops that these are inaccurate statements that are being made. He has no doubt in his heart, looking at the number of mailings he gets, and the amounts of money that are spent, that these elections are going pretty much as they have always gone, the person who spends the most amount of money or bangs on the most doors, has the most organized campaign, wins. He has found no evidence to support any irregularities in the election process. He wants to mention this because he thinks by silence, we are encouraging the continuation of what has been described as the “big lie.”

6.0 ISSUES AND UPDATES

6.1 President’s Report

Dr. Sawyer noted that Trustee Viviano contacted him right before the meeting that he will be late. Also, General Counsel Steele is joining the meeting remotely and is available to answer any questions or concerns.

*Closed Session* – Dr. Sawyer said we do need to go into closed session to discuss his evaluation pursuant to MCL 15.268(e)

*Start of Semester* – Dr. Sawyer said classes start on Monday, August 22, 2022. This is an exciting time of year for us with all the activities taking place on campus. On Monday, August 15, we held the first session of the 22/23 Faculty Academy with twelve new faculty, the biggest class we have had in a while and great to see. Tuesday, August 16 we had about 40 to 50 people attend a work session on our IDEA strategy. VP Thomas-Little will provide an update on that a little later. It’s an exciting time and good to have people back.

Dr. Sawyer continued that Student Life and Leadership will be celebrating “Welcome Week” for students. There are 80 people who will be volunteering to help guide/direct students on campus. He thanked Chairperson Lorenzo for signing up to volunteer. As part of the welcome back festivities there will be free food and many activities, for example at south campus there will be a trackless train and at center, inflatable axe throwing. Both campuses will have information tables from different college departments and the UC partners, just a way to indoctrinate our new students to campus. It creates a buzz that is only captured at the beginning of the year, which is really nice.

*Enrollment Update* – Dr. Sawyer shared that enrollment is down about 9 percent in credit hours and about 8 percent in head count (measured fall to fall). As we look to comparable community colleges, the average enrollment is down about 5 percent for the bigger colleges. Our numbers are a little higher than others, but most are seeing a decline. As expected, the enrollment in the
Future for Frontliners program, the initiative funded by the governor for frontline workers when the pandemic began, continues to decline, we are down to 671 students. But there is good news, we have 1,300 students in the Michigan Reconnect program and we hope to see that number continue to grow. We have had over 4,000 students in Michigan Reconnect since the summer of 2021, which is fantastic.

**MCCA Summer Conference** – Dr. Sawyer thanked Trustees Dean, Vitale and Chairperson Lorenzo for attending the MCCA Summer Conference. He also congratulated Chairperson Lorenzo on being the recipient of the 2022 MCCA Outstanding Alumnus award. He thought the conference was good. They had good speakers and topics included communication, federal policy update and the MCCA strategic plan. A nice addition to the conference was the integration of stories from the community colleges themselves. He had the opportunity to share about our workforce program, in particular the stories of some of our students.

**Personnel Hires** – Dr. Sawyer said there are three new hires being recommended – an IT faculty, a Director of the Fire Training Center and a Director for K-12 Relations.

**Purchases** – Dr. Sawyer said the purchase authorizations are for the annual library purchases, the last large purchase of phones, as we are near the completion of the installation of new phones, a three-year contract for the subscription renewal for our wireless network management software, a three-year maintenance contract on our air compressors and pumps and a three-year contract for the content management system on our website.

Trustee Cusumano asked if the maintenance for the vacuum pumps is covered under warranty or is that cost on the purchaser? Bill Simonson, executive director of facilities and operations replied that the cost is all on the college now. Most of the equipment was replaced over the last few years as buildings were renovated and have all come out of their manufacturer’s warranty and service therefore maintenance is our responsibility.

**Upcoming Purchases - September or October** – Dr. Sawyer said before presenting large purchases to the board he likes to give notice of what is coming.

**IT Purchases** - We anticipate a proposal for IT coming forward in September or October, particularly for projects around security standards, application and development integration and overall management of the IT portfolio. In addition, there is a three-year agreement for IT Security Managed Services.

**Audit Services** - At the October meeting we need to get approval to move forward with our auditor for next year. It was our intention to put that out for bid, but we had two major bids this year for food services and housekeeping and that really taxed us. We are going to recommend a one-year extension and a five percent increase with Rehmann. We think that is fair. We will issue an RFP for auditing services next year.

**Budget Software** - We have been working on and analyzing the purchase of budget software. Currently the budgeting process is manual with many Excel spreadsheets. We have been looking
for a system wide software that will ease the work in the business office and impact the entire organization when doing budgets. The final recommendation has not been determined yet. The software can be costly. The bids we received range from $90,000 to $475,000.

Trustee Cusumano asked if the software will be fully integrated into the business software system of the college? EVP Argiri said that is the goal. The lowest bid of $90,000 is not fully integrated. We will be looking for a three-year agreement for the software licensing and complete integration is critical.

Trustee Dean asked if the software has all the bells and whistles the college needs or will it have to be customized? EVP Argiri said we are looking at the solution that will meet our needs and give us some additional features that will help us not only with the budgeting process but the forecasting and predicting. As Dr. Sawyer mentioned, it is currently a manual process, all Excel spreadsheets. An important aspect from the user perspective is that the end user will be able to retrieve historical information, prior budget submissions as well as reporting that is not currently available today. We are looking for the bells and whistles but within range. We want to be sure we are getting the best return on our investment for the college. Trustee Dean asked if it is open source or is it proprietary where we’d have to hire them to do any coding changes? EVP Argiri said it will be a hosted solution so they will be required to maintain caches and the system on our behalf.

Trustee Flynn asked if the bids were put out to companies in Michigan? EVP Argiri said she doesn’t think any of the bidders are from Michigan. We did put out an RFP and the proposals have been received and honestly for an institution our size it’s not like QuickBooks or something off the shelf, the solution needs to be integrated with our ERP system and those vendors are not located in Michigan.

**Personal Leave Request** – Dr. Sawyer said a faculty member has requested a personal leave which is appropriate per their contract.

**Legislative Update** – Dr. Sawyer said the Michigan Community College Association is leading two initiatives that we will be involved in.

1) Nursing 3 + 1 Agreement - Associate degree in nursing to a bachelor’s in nursing, a 3+1 agreement. Dr. Sawyer said he has shared with the board previously the college pursuing the right to offer bachelor’s degrees in nursing. That has been very contentious with universities and is never going to happen, a solution was brokered where we can go forward in partnerships – 3 + 1 - three years at Macomb and one year at the university. The university would be obligated to host some of their courses on the college’s campus. There are a variety of legislative requirements built into this that we have to work through. However, as a general statement that recently has become a problem because every time there has been funding, the legislature has started to add in a lot of stipulations, additional hurdles that we have to satisfy.

2) Academic Catchup Program – The legislature allocated some money, based on the theory there has been some learning loss during the pandemic and students transitioning to higher education may benefit from additional remediation. The legislation is written specifically for
high school graduates to give them additional help to prepare for entry level college classes. More information to follow.

Debt-Forgiveness – Dr. Sawyer said we did implement the debt forgiveness program recommended by our financial services staff. We received 928 applications, a 47 percent response rate. Forgave $672,000 of debt using HEERF funds. The impact on our students was immediate – 117 enrolled for this fall; 36 more enrolled for winter and 28 enrolled for both semesters. Also, 648 students expressed interest in returning to Macomb.

Detroit Drives Degrees Community College Collaborative (D3C3) Grant – Dr. Sawyer stated the D3C3 grant is run by the Detroit Regional Chamber but funded by the Wilson and Ballmer Foundations. We have a team of about 20 people from across the institution that have been working on the proposal. Our team prepared an ambitious three-year plan, as requested. We received feedback a couple times and hope we the last feedback from a couple weeks ago is final because we have a deadline for the end of August. If we are successful, we estimate a grant of $3 - 4 million. He mentions this because it is a key part of Strategy 2 which is focused on the business process review the board approved for revamping our student service success area as well as our K-12 relations. We are excited and optimistic. He commended the people working on this grant because it has been a heavy lift. Also, Dr. Sawyer said we were charged to do a piece around mobility that they are now repositioning, and he’s not sure how it is going to come together at this point.

Alliance for Innovation and Transformation (AFIT) Conference – Dr. Sawyer said the leadership team attended the AFIT conference. It just so happened that Provost Kellogg had already planned on being there so we were able to connect with her and she was able to meet with the leadership team in an informal setting, which was great. The conference focused on the workforce. Some of the topics were about developing strategies for multi-generational and diverse workforces, discussing the challenges everyone is undergoing related to recruiting and retaining workers and trying to create a culture of happiness and the positive returns that come along with having a workforce that is positive and feels they are being supported. AFIT tends to bring in speakers from different types of businesses to talk about how they do things so we can learn from them as well. All in all, it was a worthwhile trip.

IDEA Update – Dr. Sawyer said we had a great session working on IDEA and he along with VP Thomas-Little will present a brief update on that shortly.

Related Party Disclosure – Dr. Sawyer said we have a new audit requirement this year. Our auditors are asking the board members and the executive leadership team to complete a form which is basically for a potential conflict of interest. If the board is willing, we’d like you to sign the form tonight, but if not, we can do this by mail, if that is okay with you.

70th Anniversary Book – Dr. Sawyer said as previously mentioned we will be celebrating the college’s 70th anniversary in 2024. One of the big pieces of that anniversary is the book we talked about publishing. The board is invited to the work session on August 31, 1 p.m. at the UC.

Reinstitutioning Celebrations – Dr. Sawyer said he spoke earlier about coming back to campus, which is exciting, and one of the things that comes along with that is returning to some of the celebrations we haven’t been able to have for several years. This year we will be recognizing our
staff who are receiving their 20-, 21-, and 22-year service awards (we are two years behind because of pandemic). We like to hold a celebration for those employees who have been with the college for 20 years. VP Davis is arranging two lunches. We have so many recipients we had to divide them into groups. It is a nice, relaxed atmosphere and this year we have a quartet lined up. This is just one small way we can recognize those people who have invested their career at the college, which we appreciate.

Human Simulation Training Lab Story on WDIV, Channel 4 – Dr. Sawyer appreciated the good work of our communications department and health and public services staff for the great story on WDIV. Nick Monicelli, a Channel 4 reporter, came to campus and did a great story on our human simulation training lab.

6.2 Provost Introduction – Dr. Leslie Kellogg
Macomb Community College’s recently hired provost and vice president of the learning unit, Dr. Leslie Kellogg, introduced herself.

Trustee Flynn asked when the parking lot at south campus will be finished? Dr. Sawyer responded October 3. Trustee Flynn was concerned about school being open by then and Dr. Sawyer reassured her that there will not be an issue with capacity.

Trustee Flynn asked if we still require people to have Covid testing before they enroll? Dr. Sawyer said no, we have never required that.

6.3 Diversity Presentation – Dr. Sawyer and VP Thomas-Little
Dr. Sawyer said when we met in June for the work session on the diversity statement, we committed to give you an update on our progress. Today, VP Thomas-Little is going to recap the findings of Kennedy & Co. and share where we are going for next step perspectives. You provided fantastic input during the work session and were very engaged in the process. We appreciate that. Many of your recommendations are reflected in the most current draft of the statement. To give you a quick refresher, this statement was developed using input from our students, faculty, staff and the board of trustees. It is a comprehensive document from an input perspective, but we do need to finalize it. Dr. Sawyer asked the trustees to look at the statement one more time and if they have additional recommendations to let him know by Friday, September 2. While it is not a policy, we believe there is validation that goes with the board approving the statement that is very important to the institution. It is our intent to bring the statement to the September board meeting for your approval.

VP Thomas-Little provided an update.

Trustee Vitale said what she is interested in is the real-life application of how this plays out. She’s thinking in terms of teachers, if they are having a problem with something just being handed a packet isn’t going to help as far as individual processes that take place to help with that right on the spot. They need something easy, something simple, they are already overwhelmed with the teaching. In HR it’s the same, there has to be something right in place, to just do it easily and it works as opposed to being handed a packet telling them this is how you do what you have to do. Dr. Sawyer said that is how we develop the objectives and action plans - how does that play out, how does it get implemented. Dr. Sawyer said as VP Thomas-Little has shared this came out of
our strategic planning process and professional development is a huge component of this, to get
people acclimated and up to speed so it is not so overwhelming. Trustee Vitale said yes, there is
supposed to be an ease to it, so it becomes an automatic instantly. It doesn’t have to be an
embroiled process, one more thing that people have to wrap their heads around. She is curious
to see how it plays out.

Trustee Flynn added that she thought it was a great presentation, short and sweet. Will there be
any more work sessions or are you moving ahead with this? Dr. Sawyer said we don’t anticipate
any more sessions with the board. We need to work on developing the objectives and action
plans and we’ll keep the board apprised as we move ahead with those.

7.0 CLOSED SESSION
A closed session was called pursuant to MCL 15.268(c) to discuss President Sawyer’s annual
evaluation.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT
MOTION by Cusumano, supported by DiMaria, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Secretary