

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, May 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., in Room K315/317 of the John Lewis Conference 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 6:04 p.m.

2.0 ROLL CALL

Present:

Katherine Lorenzo, Chairperson
Frank Cusumano, Vice Chairperson/Acting Secretary
Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer
Joan Flynn, Trustee
Shelley Vitale, Trustee

Absent:

Kristi Dean, Secretary
Vincent Viviano, Trustee

Also present:

James Sawyer, President
Libby Argiri, Executive Vice President, Business
Kevin Chandler, Vice President, College Advancement & Community Relations
Joline Davis, Vice President, Human Resources
Tiffany Goliday, Executive Director, IDEA
Carrie Jeffers, Vice President, Student Services
Leslie Kellogg, Provost, Vice President of the Learning Unit
Sharon Kowal, Executive Assistant to the President & Board of Trustees
William Leavens, Chief of College Police
Gerri Pianko, Director, Budgets and Grants
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel

3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

ALL IN FAVOR:

AYES: DiMaria, Flynn, Cusumano, Vitale, Lorenzo

NAYS:

ABSENT: Dean, Viviano

MOTION CARRIED.

4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

5.0 REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIALS

Trustee Vitale said the write-up for Item 11.3A External Advertising didn't have an explanation or itemization of costs and she would like to know how it is broken down. She asked if there is a budgeted amount for internal advertising, what is the difference between the two and what is included on both sides.

Vice President Kevin Chandler, College Advancement and Community Relations, responded that we went out for a request for proposal (RFP) last year for our buyer and that is why we had more detail and we wanted to make sure we were competitive in the market. We did not go out for an RFP this year, because we have been satisfied with the services that SMZ provides. For this year, the breakout for external advertising is through digital and traditional media. Our director of marketing, Audrey Takacs and from SMZ, Kara Hocking, senior VP/ Group Account Director and Tiffany Sherwood, senior account director are available to explain and answer questions. A. Takacs presented the color-coded media plan outlining the different media packets the college is spending dollars on: Outdoor, billboards and busses; Digital, social media platforms, FaceBook, Instagram; Video ads; Internet radio ads (Spotify) and paid search. We pay to have our website appear at the top of search results. When someone uses a search engine to look for "electronic programs" our website will appear at the top of the page.

Trustee Vitale asked how does that differ from what we do for our internal advertising? A. Takacs said if an area has a new idea for creating awareness about a new offering, Marketing will work with that internal dept. help them write the piece and Graphics will produce whatever deliverable is needed. There is no budget allotted for internal, just time and effort. J. Sawyer added that there isn't a way to break out the spending on internal advertising because that is part of the function of the Marketing Dept.

S Vitale how many years have we had external advertising, is this something new or something we have always done? A. Takacs said at least since 2011 when she started at the college and prior to her arrival there was some external advertising but not as robust.

Trustee Vitale asked if there are metrics of what is working and is what is popping up digitally having the most impact for the young people now? A. Takacs said our target audience consumes a lot of the digital advertising. We track how much we spend against costs per ads we are placing and keep a keen eye on that so we can continue to improve and make our budget as efficient and effective as possible. We target our traditional audience (17 to 24) and their influencers. But we do have the non-traditional market, people up to 40-45, because we know there is a market out there for that audience for the college but we also know the nontraditional high school markets so we have to find other markets to go after.

Trustee Cusumano asked if there are standard reports generated showing the tracking? A. Takacs said yes, the terminology is impression and click through rates. Trustee Cusumano asked if there is a reason why that wasn't included in the board write up to show the value to the taxpayers? VP Chandler said there wasn't a reason, but he can get that information for the board.

Trustee Cusumano asked if there has been any change in the number of impressions? A. Takacs said yes, for fiscal year 2023 we spent \$780,000 and placed over 100 million Macomb ads at a cost of less than a penny each. Now, 65 million of the ads we placed were digital resulting in over 435,000 potential students clicking on them and each of these clicks cost just over a dollar. For this fiscal year, to date, through March, we have already generated over 481,000 clicks costing less than a dollar per click. This means we are now attracting more potential students for less money further increasing the return on our ad stats. SMZ is doing the science behind this but with digital advertising there are ways to find perspective students who are seeking education. We are doing better targeting and refining the media channels upon which these students are consuming. We are changing our media mix and continuously monitoring and maximizing so we can get more and more clicks and use our dollars as wisely as possible.

Trustee Cusumano asked if you can directly link an increase in applications and/or enrollments to the increased number of impressions? A. Takacs thinks for 2022/2023 new applicants were at 13,648 and for 2023/2024 they are close to 16,000, about a 23 percent increase.

Trustee Flynn stated that the website is excellent.

Chair Lorenzo asked how the college's click through rate compares to other comparable institutions and what their budget is for marketing? K. Hocking said unfortunately there is no direct ability to compare to competitors. What we look at when measuring success of any campaign is the historical performance by the college. In the instances that we have for fiscal year 2023/2024 and even for the complete year of 2022/2023, we are overachieving against the benchmarks in upwards of 100 percent. We have the data on the click through rate for all the channels, year over year comparisons, as well as month over month comparisons. It is hypervigilance in monitoring the campaigns because we are only as successful as the changes you keep making.

Chair Lorenzo asked if there is a standard benchmark across all media? K. Hocking said there are standards of performance across each channel, so between the banner ads we buy, the video ads we place, and paid search, the individual media channels have their own industry standard benchmarks. However, in our experience, the best measure is how well we achieved previously on a given campaign. Not every campaign is the same, but we try to keep it as close as possible, so we compare apples to apples.

A. Takacs added that when we started with SMZ we didn't have any benchmarks and had to use benchmarks from higher ed for banner ads and click rates. We started with that and continue trying to optimize and exceed that as much as we can.

A. Takacs said we also use SMZ to place ads for our conference and events services area for rentals. To date for this fiscal year, we spent \$15,500 to advertise our rentals and net sales are at about \$110,000. The advertising SMZ is doing for this part of the college is really a strong return on investment (ROI).

Trustee Vitale asked if the Instagram ads with the students are done in-house or by SMZ? A. Takacs said those are done in-house. This market is very much about the authenticity of the brand and peer to peer, so our whole advertising campaign features students and alums and showcasing how Macomb has changed their lives. The stories are just beautiful, and it is such a great way to get that message out to the market. T. Sherwood, SMZ, said that is part of the reason we have been so successful year after year, because of the improvements made on the creative, it has to be impactful and powerful in order to get people engaged, it all works together and is all part of the successes we have been able to achieve together.

Trustee Cusumano asked at what percentage or dollar amount is it anticipated of the \$800,000 to be spent on the University Center partners? Are there any cost sharing agreements or is generally presenting University Center partners in a light favorable to the college? A. Takacs responded that for a fiscal year, we spend \$35,000 for the University Center partners. Provost Kellogg added that the university partners are charged fees, but she can't say specifically how much they pay for advertising. Trustee Cusumano said but they do make a contribution, can that be incorporated into the additional material please.

6.0 ISSUES AND UPDATES

6.1 President's Report

Dr. Sawyer provided the following updates:

Enrollment Update

As of May 15, 2024, spring/summer 2024 credit hours are up 9.6 percent and headcount is up 7.5 percent.

- Macomb Tuition Advantage Program – 411
- MI Reconnect – 1,034
- Michigan Achievement Scholarship – 28

Personnel

One new hire, Patricia Leonard, replacement for the Director of Labor and Employee Relations.

Tentative Agreement with Administrative Support Personnel (ASP)

Dr. Sawyer is pleased to report there is a tentative agreement with our Administrative Support Personnel that meets the board's guidelines. Dr. Sawyer thanked the ASP leadership and college negotiation teams for working together to reach that tentative agreement.

Administrative – Information Items

10.1 Update Workforce and Continuing Education (WCE) Registration System – contract renewal – There was an error in the WCE registration system contract renewal at the April meeting. The cost for the first year should have been \$75,941.30, an increase of \$2,920.82.

Purchases

11.3A External Advertising – This is an authorization to purchase external advertising through SMZ, Inc. for the 2024-25 fiscal year. Previously discussed.

7.3A Property Tax Resolution

The property tax resolution is on the agenda because the college must send the resolution and tax form to municipalities by June 1 for the collection of summer taxes. The college's operating levy was subject to another millage reduction fraction/Headlee rollback of .0095 mills resulting in a levy of 1.3982. This rate is a permanent reduction to the college's operating levy and remains for the balance of the millage, unless there is another rollback, but it will never grow.

IDEA Update

On June 19 we will be holding a Juneteenth celebration from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Lorenzo Cultural Center patio. This celebration is open to all Macomb students, employees and the board of trustees are welcome to attend. On June 17 we will have a virtual webinar with storyteller, Mama D'Jatu from the Charles H. Wright African American Museum in partnership with Henry Ford College and Oakland Community College and is available to our respective college communities.

Institutional Development Day (IDD)

On Tuesday, May 7 we held the college's annual Institutional Development Day, the one day we gather the entire college community together. Attendance was great and generally received positive feedback. The professional development workshops offered had more people than we could accommodate indicating the topics were of interest.

Commencement and Ceremonies

The last couple of weeks have been busy but exciting. We celebrated our main commencements on May 3, 2024, with approximately 600 graduates participating. That is the largest number of students to participate in a very long time. Our student speakers, as always, did an outstanding job.

Other ceremonies from the past two weeks include:

- Dental Hygiene Pinning
- Surgical Tech Pinning – thank you Trustee DiMaria for attending
- Nursing Pinning
- Culinary Graduation
- Fire Academy Graduation
- Police Academy Graduation

Early College of Macomb Graduation

On May 9 we hosted the Early College of Macomb (ECM) graduation for the first time. This event was slated to be held at Jimmy John's Field but on Tuesday of that week we received a phone call from the MISD inquiring if the college could accommodate their graduation because the weather forecast for May 9 did not look good. There were about 200 students that participated and about 1,800 attendees. Dr. Sawyer thanked the staff for a phenomenal job. They deserve recognition for pulling this all together, because on Wednesday we hosted the Special Olympics, so the gym was empty, and they set up and were ready for graduation on Thursday afternoon and then had to tear that down to get set up for the Science Olympiad on Saturday. The graduation was not on our schedule but they pulled it together and we really appreciate their hard work.

Discover Macomb

The last Discover Macomb event for the term is Thursday, May 16 and will be focused on police, fire, paramedic and emergency medical technician programs and held at east campus. This is an opportunity for potential students, their families and other influencers to learn more about the programs, tour the facility and see equipment demonstrations.

Wayne State Transfer Agreement

The college has signed a new transfer agreement with Wayne State University. This agreement is unique because 20 programs are involved and the full associate degree is accepted, so the student transfers at a junior level. We have had a long partnership with Wayne State, they were one of the first University Center partners and in 2014 they built the facility across from us on 12 Mile in recognition of the partnership we have enjoyed over the years and to be better connected to our programs. Dr. Sawyer views this partnership as another extension of a deep, rich relationship. During her remarks, WSU's provost noted that Macomb is the largest transfer destination for them (40% of their students are transfer students and Macomb Community College is the biggest provider of them.)

Walsh Transfer Agreement

Macomb also signed a new transfer agreement with Walsh College. Walsh is an important partner particularly for our business and IT programs. These agreements include up to 70 plus credits that will transfer in a variety of business and IT programs. We also have a transfer agreement with Walsh for our new Digital Marketing program.

Success of Athletic Programs Go Monarchs!

The college's baseball and softball teams have had very successful seasons. The baseball team won the MCCA Eastern Conference Championship. They shared the championship in 1995 but this is the first time since 1987 they won the championship. They move on to the next round of games. The softball team won the Great Lakes A District Championship and have earned a spot in the NJCAA Division II World Series in Spartanburg, South Carolina. This is the first time they have been to World Series since 2015. Congratulations to our student athletes but also to their coaches and staff who helped them be successful.

Jazz Band Spring Concert

The Macomb Community College Jazz Band directed by Nick Backos and Todd Moses performed their spring concert on April 16, 2024, at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts to a sold-out crowd. Dr. Sawyer recognized T. Moses because at this time of year the Macombers are kind of omnipresent. They participate in many events and seem to be everywhere. We appreciate all that T. Moses and the Macombers do.

Staff Recognition – Louisa Krause

Dr. Sawyer recognized Louisa Krause, Director of Instructional Technology, she received the first-ever Distinguished Executive of the Year Award from The Alliance for Excellence in Online Education. We have participated in that group for a number of years, and it is focused on online education back before online education was popular. They were like a think-tank for talking about best practices and sharing that information. Congratulations to Louisa Krause.

Academic Boost and Learning Experiences (ABLE) Program

The college is once again offering the ABLE program this summer. This is the academic catchup program we held last summer and had so much success with it. This is a program designed specifically to help students improve their English and math skills. We are also including student success services. We already have 86 inquiries. There are two sessions that will run June 4 – June 27 and July 16 – August 8. This will be a hybrid model – some on-ground, some online. Anything we can do to help our students be successful before they enter the college.

June Board Meeting

The agenda for the June board meeting is anticipated to be lengthy.

Purchase items include:

- EMS Licensing Renewal
- Ellucian Colleague SaaS readiness
- HR Document Imaging
- Microsoft Power Platform Consultant
- Course Evaluation software
- Ellucian Colleague and Business Intelligence contracted programmers
- Codio licensing renewal

Also:

- NBU contracts, risk-management insurance, and Connect Magazine

As discussed, we are not following our traditional process for renovations this year because we are in the midst of the facilities utilization study but there are some infrastructure core issues that need to be addressed. Some deferred maintenance type items that we have held off on will be presented. These are renovations that will impact facilities we know are going to continue to exist or infrastructure we have at the college on grounds. This is a deviation from our typical summer renovation program.

Trustee Cusumano asked what phase is the facilities utilization study in right now? Dr. Sawyer said we are at the very beginning and in the process of assembling our internal team. There have been some preliminary discussions with Plante & Moran RealPoint and we are nearly done in supplying them with a lot of the data they need to do the analysis. EVP Argiri added that the kickoff meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday, May 22.

December 2024 Board Meeting

At the April board meeting Trustee Cusumano made an inquiry to move the December 18 board meeting due to a schedule conflict. A couple trustees indicated support of the change, but we'd like to know if the remaining trustees also support. We would move the meeting to Thursday, December 19. Please let S. Kowal know if you support the change.

Fraudulent Activity Related to Student Accounts

The college continues to work on the fraudulent activity of student accounts. The numbers Dr. Sawyer reported last month are the same – 165 cases at \$281,314. We have made the decision to hire Plante & Moran to do a forensic audit. When embarking on a forensic audit it is unknown what is going to be found. But the whole point is to have someone dig in deep to see what sort of issues there are and hopefully offer some advice on how to address and prevent these things from happening. We made a conscious decision not to use Rehmann for the forensic audit because we wanted to stay away from our

regular college auditor. We are familiar with Plante and Moran. We don't know what to expect but will keep the board apprised as that moves ahead.

Trustee Cusumano asked if there is an amount associated with the Plante & Moran forensic audit or is it an hourly basis? Executive Vice President Libby Argiri stated that we have not received the engagement letter, but it is estimated based on their projected scope of work to be between \$23,000 and \$28,000.

Selfridge Air Show Open House

The board is invited to the Selfridge Air Show on Saturday, June 8. The college is sponsoring a chalet along with Macomb County and the Macomb County Chamber, but we need to know by Friday, May 17, if you and a guest will attend, please let S. Kowal know. The chalet opens at 10 a.m. and the air show begins at 11 a.m.

Trustee Request for Information

Dr. Sawyer stated that Trustee Cusumano had two investment related inquiries over the past month and EVP Argiri and Director Poindexter did a tremendous amount of work addressing those questions. Dr. Sawyer provided the responses to the board through an email on Monday, May 13. If further questions arise, please let him know.

6.2 2024-2025 Initial General Fund Budget

Gerri Pianko, director of Budgets and Grants presented Agenda Item 7.3C Initial General Fund Budget for 2024-2025. She was pleased to present to the board a balanced budget.

Questions:

Trustee Vitale said about the D3C3 sustainability, the funders gave us money and now we have to put money away from where to keep that going? Dr. Sawyer responded that the point of the grant was to provide seed money to help us implement some changes that we thought were going to be beneficial both in terms of student success and enrollment. We have talked over the past couple of meetings about dual enrollment and the huge increases we've seen and that is directly related to the K-12 staff we are talking about. We would not have seen those increases without them. The enrollment increases are generating additional revenue, and that revenue is going to pay for the positions in the K-12 Relations department. That is the reallocation of the sustainability plan that will take place.

Trustee Cusumano addressed the enrollment numbers reported by Dr. Sawyer in his remarks. He stated the numbers Dr. Sawyer just reported are the same numbers reported last month, is that accurate?

Correction: The numbers are as follows:

As of May 13, spring/summer 2024 credit hours are up 10.7 percent and headcount is up 9.3 percent.

Dr. Sawyer said he just received the updated the community college comparison table from Aimee Adamski, director of Enrollment Services and her colleagues and Macomb is right in the middle of the pack in terms of the increase. All but one college is seeing an increase, Southwest Michigan CC is down for some reason. As far as percentages we are in the middle, some of the very small colleges have high percentage increases but they have 250 students, so it is a little misleading from a percentage perspective.

Trustee Cusumano commented that is counter to the cycle he has been conditioned to when the job market is good the enrollment is supposed to decline and when it is bad enrollment will increase. Dr. Sawyer said that is the old paradigm, that is the way it was, but it no longer applies, that has started to shift. The job outlooks are different, the pandemic played a role in that. He's spoken a number of times about the decrease in high school graduates and that is where he sees the strategy to grow dual enrollment being so key. Not only are we exposing those students to college and lending them to be successful and undoubtedly they will have a great experience here and hopefully stay and begin their academic career here, where they may have gone elsewhere. There is a long-term strategy around dual enrollment while the initial impact is great there should be an ongoing impact as well.

7.0 CLOSED SESSION

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by Flynn, to move into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(a) to discuss personnel matters.


8.0 ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES


Secretary