

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, June 18, 2025, 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 Acting Chairperson Vitale at 6:00 p.m.

2.0 [ROLL CALL](#)

Present:

Shelley Vitale, Acting Chairperson

Kristi Dean, Secretary

Frank Cusumano, Trustee, appeared remotely

Joan Flynn, Trustee

Absent:

Katherine Lorenzo, Chairperson

Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer

Vincent Viviano, Trustee

Also present:

James Sawyer, President

Libby Argiri, Executive Vice President, Administration

Kevin Chandler, Vice President, College Advancement & Community Relations

Carrie Jeffers, Vice President, Student Services

Leslie Kellogg, Provost, Vice President of the Learning Unit

William Leavens, Chief of College Police

Deb Mende, Executive Director, Office of the President

Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel

Patsy Tannahill, Executive Assistant to the President and Board of Trustees

Acting Chairperson Vitale stated Trustee Cusumano is attending remotely pursuant to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

3.0 [APPROVAL OF AGENDA](#)

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

ALL IN FAVOR:

AYES: Dean, Flynn, Cusumano, Vitale

NAYS:

ABSENT: DiMaria, Lorenzo, Viviano

MOTION CARRIED.

#### 4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

#### 5.0 REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIALS

Trustee Cusumano stated he will be making a motion during the regular meeting to table agenda items 7.2 and 11.1.

President Sawyer stated the word “tentative” will need to be removed from agenda items 9.3 and 9.4 as the contracts were ratified after the board packet was distributed.

Trustee Cusumano requested clarification on agenda item 11.3C concerning Priority Waste and its acquisition by GFL Environmental. President Sawyer clarified that GFL Environmental still retains its industrial contracts and noted that Trustee Cusumano may have been referring specifically to the acquisition of residential contracts.

#### 6.0 ISSUES AND UPDATES

##### 6.1 President’s Report

##### Closed Session

We do need to have a closed session with the BOT pursuant to MCL 15.268 C - collective bargaining.

##### Collective Bargaining

President Sawyer thanked the union’s and college’s negotiating teams for reaching the collective bargaining agreements being presented tonight.

##### Cancellation of the July Board Meetings

Administration is recommending the July board meetings be canceled due to lack of agenda items.

##### State Budget

President Sawyer shared that the Michigan House had recently passed a budget that included some concerning elements, most notably a proposed 1% decrease in college operations funding. This stood in contrast to the Governor’s recommendation of a 4% increase and the Senate’s proposal of a 3% increase.

He explained that, in addition to the proposed funding reduction, there was discussion around changing the way the state supports Michigan Public School Employees' Retirement System (MPERS). For several years, the state had helped stabilize costs by fixing the employer contribution rate, but proposed changes to that model could result in a roughly \$3.5 million annual impact to the college.

On a more positive note, President Sawyer stated there was continued support for important student-focused programs, such as the Michigan Community College Guarantee, the Michigan Achievement Scholarship, and Michigan Reconnect.

He reminded the Board that none of these decisions were final and that negotiations between the House, Senate, and Governor would continue. While Speaker of the House Matt Hall had committed to having a K–12 education budget finalized by July 1, President Sawyer noted that this did not guarantee

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the higher education budget would be completed on the same timeline. He added that recent speculation suggested the full state budget may not be finalized until September and cautioned that the college may not know where it stands financially for some time.

Federal Budget

President Sawyer stated that at the federal level, there was also concerning budget language under consideration, though nothing had been finalized. He noted proposals to eliminate several student support programs, including some the college does not use, such as TRIO and Adult Basic Education. However, he highlighted the potential loss of future Strengthening Community College Training Grants, though Macomb is in the final stages of its current grant and would not be immediately impacted.

A major concern involves proposed changes to Perkins funding, which may be limited to middle and high schools, eliminating support for postsecondary institutions. This would significantly affect the college, which receives approximately \$1.5 million annually to support faculty, equipment, professional development, and services for special populations.

President Sawyer also noted proposed reductions to Pell Grants and Federal Work-Study, both of which would negatively impact students. He assured the Board that the College, along with the MCCA, continue to advocate on behalf of the college.

Board of Trustee Action Items

President Sawyer presented the annual membership renewals for trustee organizations, including the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) at \$8,379, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), estimated at \$23,517, and the Michigan Community College Association (MCCA) at \$53,550.

Appointments to the 2025–2026 MCCA Board of Directors as previously determined by the Board of Trustees, the Board Chair will serve as the MCCA representative, with the Vice Chair serving as the alternate for the 2025–2026 term.

Enrollment Update

President Sawyer reported that as of Monday, Spring/Summer 2025 credit hours were up 10.4% compared to the same time last year, and headcount had increased by 4.2%.

Personnel

- Lynette Chandler, Director of Business, Information Technology (BIT) IT Grant Program, NASF
- Nicole Emery, Assistant Director, Grants, NBU
- Dana Jackson, Assistant Director, College Budgets, NBU
- Amy Jury, Director of Apprentice and Business Partnerships for Health and Public Services, NASF
- Andrew McKinney, Full Time Faculty – Anthropology, MCCFO
- Katrina Newsom, Full Time Faculty – English, MCCFO
- Danielle Rachilla, Full Time Faculty - Surgical Technology Program and Program Director, MCCFO
- Elizabeth Santamaria, Full Time Faculty - Respiratory Therapy Faculty and Director of Clinical Education (DCE), MCCFO
- Steve Tremper, Full Time Faculty – Electrician, MCCFO

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- Tentative Agreement with the Police Officers Labor Council ("POLC")
- Tentative Agreement with American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 2172.16 AFL-CIO – Part Time Support Staff
- Tentative Agreement with Macomb County Community College Operational Personnel Association (MCCCOPA)

List of Collective Bargaining Agreements

In response to Trustee Vitale's request, a list of all collective bargaining agreements, including their contract end dates, has been provided to the Board.

Administrative – Information Items

President Sawyer reported that the MCPA ticketing system will be changing its credit card processor from Authorize.net to Spektrix Pay through an amended agreement. This change will be implemented for the 2025–2026 season and is expected to offer improved service and security, along with support for PIN readers, Apple Pay, and Google Pay. Annual costs are expected to remain the same.

Trustee Dean asked what prompted the change in credit card processors, noting the stated benefits of improved speed and efficiency, and inquiring if there was a specific trigger for reevaluating the system.

Kevin Chandler, Vice President of College Advancement & Community Relations, responded that several factors influenced the decision. These included legislative developments related to ticketing, the overall shift toward more efficient platforms, and the added benefits of enhanced security features, PIN reader capability, and the ability to accept Apple Pay and Google Pay. He noted that Spektrix offers a more modern and robust solution aligned with the college's technological goals.

Trustee Dean followed up by asking whether delays in processing refunds were also part of the motivation for the change.

William Wood, Director of Cultural Affairs, confirmed that refund limitations were a contributing factor. He explained that the new Spektrix pay module had recently become available and was specifically designed for the performing arts. The previous system limited refunds to within three months of purchase, whereas the new platform allows for unlimited refund windows. Additionally, it offers enhanced fraud protection and improves the college's ability to manage customer service issues more effectively, particularly in the case of refunds.

Purchases

- 11.3A Gasoline and diesel fuel purchases for college operations.

Trustee Dean asked how the average price per gallon for the gas purchase was determined.

William Simonson, Executive Director of Facilities, explained that the rate is calculated using the average of the last 12 months' wholesale prices, plus a fixed delivery fee.

Trustee Dean then asked if the price is locked in or if it changes when fuel prices fluctuate.

Simonson clarified that the price does fluctuate based on the wholesale rack price, both up and down, and is not a flat rate.

Trustee Dean confirmed, "So it's a rolling 12," to which Simonson agreed.

- 11.3B Annual HVAC inspection and service agreement with Miller-Bolt.
- 11.3C Waste removal services, previously discussed in response to Trustee Cusumano's question.
- 11.3D Macomb Connect magazine, published three times per year and distributed to all households in Macomb County, which continues to receive strong community feedback.
- 11.3E Westlaw Precision Research Package, an upgrade that enhances resources available to legal assistant students.

Trustee Dean asked what Westlaw Precision Research provides.

Jörg Waltje, Dean of Learning Resources, explained that Westlaw is a legal research database. The paralegal program needs to meet accreditation standards and move away from outdated print resources. Westlaw Precision offers modern, AI-supported search tools, better preparing students for the digital tools used in today's legal workplaces.

General Counsel Steele added that Westlaw Classic is no longer supported, and Precision is now the industry standard. It offers access to broader legal databases, including administrative opinions, and reflects how law firms are increasingly using AI in legal research. He also noted he would benefit from the upgrade through enhanced research capabilities.

- 11.3F Merit Internet service renewal, a service the college has subscribed to since its inception as a founding member.

Trustee Dean asked if the Merit Internet service provides internet for the entire college. President Sawyer confirmed.

Trustee Dean then asked whether Michigan State University (MSU) provides any financial support for internet costs.

Libby Argiri, Executive Vice President of Administration, explained that under the lease agreement with MSU, the college receives a per-square-foot payment to cover utility costs, which increases annually with inflation. However, this does not include internet costs.

Mark Johnson, Enterprise Network Director, added that Macomb serves as a hub for Merit, providing internet access to others at the site, including MSU. However, each institution pays its own Merit internet bill separately.

- 11.3 G Strategic project services, which support both IT initiatives and management of ongoing business process reviews across the college.

Trustee Dean asked whether the strategic project management services would focus on improvements within the college's existing systems or if they would require new software or hardware investments.

President Sawyer responded that it would likely be a combination of all those elements. Each business process review assesses the current state of operations, which may lead to

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recommendations for new software, or support the implementation of already selected IT solutions. While not all outcomes involve technology, some will require tech upgrades or changes.

Trustee Dean followed up by asking if there is a cost-benefit analysis, questioning whether the solution cost might exceed the issue being addressed.

President Sawyer confirmed that a value analysis is always considered. He emphasized that the greatest benefit often comes from process improvements, particularly those that better serve students and employees. While the cost of a new system may be higher or lower, the priority is improving the efficiency and effectiveness of college operations, reducing errors, and saving time. These benefits may be difficult to quantify but are highly impactful.

- 11.3H Supplemental contract program for hard-to-fill positions, particularly those requiring expertise in older systems such as Ellucian and Colleague.
- 11.3I Emergency messaging system renewal (RAVE), which remains a vital tool for communicating with students and staff during emergencies. President Sawyer noted the system had just been used earlier that day in response to a local tornado warning.

Trustee Flynn asked why the college continues using RAVE, an out-of-state provider, when there are emergency alert systems based in Michigan.

President Sawyer responded that the college conducted a thorough search before selecting RAVE and has been using it for several years. He stated the system has performed well and continues to meet the college's needs.

Trustee Flynn asked if the college goes out for bid when it becomes comfortable with a vendor. President Sawyer explained that while the college does periodically review services, it does not go out for bid every year. If a system is working well, provides good value, and remains competitively priced, the college may choose to continue with the same provider. He added that changing systems frequently is not practical, and decisions are made based on the best overall value, not necessarily the lowest price.

Administrative – Action Items

President Sawyer shared two naming rights recognitions with the Board:

- The Gene Haas CNC Lab at M-TEC, named in recognition of a \$1 million donation from the Gene Haas Foundation.
- The Glass Terrace at Center Campus, which will be part of The Monarque, the college's student-run restaurant. This is in honor of Professor Shirley Glass's \$3.1 million donation to the college.

He also noted an extension of the college's contract with IDS, the firm providing architectural and engineering services for renovation projects.

Juneteenth

President Sawyer noted that the college will be closed for the first time in observance of Juneteenth, following last year's decision to recognize the federal holiday.

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To commemorate the occasion, the college hosted a “Discover Juneteenth” event, attended by several hundred employees. The event featured keynote speaker Cornelius Godfrey and a storytelling session led by Tracy Jones and Deborah Jones, sharing personal family experiences related to Juneteenth.

President Sawyer said the event was well-received and supports staff interest in more community-building activities.

Strategic Planning Retreat

President Sawyer reported that the President’s Council met on June 12–13 to review accomplishments under the current strategic plan. He noted there were many significant achievements. The group also discussed objectives for the upcoming year, which will be finalized in the coming months.

Award Recognition – Mental Health and Well-Being

President Sawyer announced that Macomb has received the inaugural Excellence in Mental Health and Well-Being Award from Insight into Academia (formerly Insight into Diversity).

The award honors institutions that foster a culture of mental wellness and belonging by offering innovative, accessible support for the emotional well-being of students, faculty, and staff. It recognizes efforts in emotional resilience, stress management, and psychological well-being across the campus community.

Student Recognition/Award

President Sawyer shared that student Ava Kaszewski was selected as the Diamond Core Tools Sponsor Award Winner at the Michigan Ceramic Artist Association’s biennial “Michigan Mud” conference held at Wayne State University.

This year’s exhibition included over 50 student works from across the state, and Ava was the only community college student to receive an award.

Athletics

President Sawyer announced that Vincent Cowdrey (baseball) was named an Honorable Mention All-American, marking Macomb’s first baseball All-American since 2012.

He also shared that the entire 2024–25 starting five men’s basketball team will be transferring to NCAA Division I or Division II schools in fall 2025, reflecting the strength and success of the program.

Study Abroad Trips

President Sawyer reported that from May 7–16, Business full-time faculty John Chirco, Monique Beauchamp-Doll, and Joseph Rice led a study abroad trip to Germany and the Czech Republic with 30 students and faculty.

Additionally, from May 14–23, the Culinary Institute hosted its annual study abroad experience, taking 40 students, employees, alumni, and family members to Spain, France, and Italy.

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Jimmy Johns Ball Game

President Sawyer shared that the Jimmy John's ball game on June 13 had a great turnout, with over 300 staff, donors, and retirees in attendance.

He extended a special thank you to Trustee Dean for attending and noted it was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate her mother's birthday.

Wayne State MEC Building on Hall Road

President Sawyer informed the Board that Wayne State University has approached Macomb County expressing a desire to exit their lease. The college is currently awaiting a proposal from Macomb County so the college can consider purchasing the building.

Families Against Narcotics (FAN) 5K Run at Center Campus

President Sawyer shared that for the first time, the College will be hosting the Families Against Narcotics (FAN) annual 5K run at Center Campus this Saturday.

This event has historically been held at Fraser High School and is expected to draw between 2,000 and 3,000 participants. President Sawyer emphasized that this is a great opportunity to showcase the campus while supporting a vital community organization that provides resources and support to individuals and families affected by addiction. The College is pleased to serve as the new venue for this important event.

Organizational Changes, effective July 1

President Sawyer announced that beginning Tuesday, July 1, the College will implement several organizational changes aimed at improving efficiency, aligning related functions, and ensuring employees have better access to support and resources.

The following changes will take effect:

- Conference and Event Services will move to the College Advancement and Community Relations Unit, with Carey Wellhausen, Director, now reporting to Kevin Chandler, Vice President. This shift brings most event spaces—including the John Lewis Student Community Center, Sports & Expo Center, Lorenzo Cultural Center, and Macomb Center for the Performing Arts—under a single unit. Food and audiovisual services will also be included. The University Center will remain separate due to its unique focus on university partnerships. The college bookstores will continue under the Business Office.
- The Print Shop will move to the Marketing Department, aligning the production and printing of materials. John Sternicki, Manager of the Print Shop and Copy Centers, will report to Audrey Takacs, Director of Marketing.
- Archives and Records Management (ARM) will move to the Business Office, with April Conant, Coordinator, reporting to Kathi Poindexter, Associate Vice President. This reflects a broader institutional commitment to document retention, especially given the growing volume of digital files, and will elevate the visibility and role of ARM.
- Compliance and Title IX will move to the Office of General Counsel, with Zia Felder, Director, now reporting to Jeff Steele, General Counsel. This formalizes the existing collaborative relationship between the two areas.



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August Board Meeting

President Sawyer provided a preview of purchases that will likely appear on the August Board agenda, including:

- Web hosting services
- The Ellucian SaaS project
- Adobe site licensing
- Document Classification Architect software

He also noted that due to the timing of purchases and grant deadlines, the following grant-funded items will be brought forward as information items at the August meeting:

- A Mobile Medical Unit
- A consultant to support the Strengthening Community Colleges training grant

6.2 Presentation

President Sawyer presented the Employee Engagement Survey results.

7.0 CLOSED SESSION

MOTION by Flynn, supported by Dean, to go into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268 C to discuss collective bargaining.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Flynn, Dean, Cusumano, Vitale

NAYS:

ABSENT: DiMaria, Lorenzo, Viviano

MOTION CARRIED.


8.0 ADJOURNMENT

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

MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

  
Secretary