

Miles Community College
Board of Trustees
Minutes
February 22, 2021

The Board of Trustees of Miles Community College met in regular session at 5:30 p.m., February 22, 2021, via Zoom/face to face. The following Trustees were present: Ryan Jones, Debbie Morford, Sue Morlock, Tara Andrews, Jeff Okerman, and Jamie Ogolin. The following Trustee was excused: Garret McFarland. Also present were President Ron Slinger, Candy Laney, Sarah Kloewer, Kylene Phipps, Erin Niedge, Nancy Aaberge, Ross Lawrence, Richard DeShields, Don Warner, Elizabeth Patten, James Simon, Garth Sleight, Kim Helmts, Kim Gibbs, Tina Rutledge, Star Reporter Ashley Wise.

Chair Ryan Jones called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

IMPORTANT DATES: President Slinger discussed the following: President Slinger attended the Superintendents meeting with Tracy Baker. She discussed the SBDC and the Educators Conference. Superintendents asked Tracy to send out two different surveys for the Educators Conference, one to superintendents and principals to find out what workshops they would like to see offered and one to all the area school districts' teachers as to what type of sessions they would like to attend.

REPORTS:

- A. Enrollment Services:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Dean of Enrollment Management and Educational Support Services Erin Niedge reported on the following: Marketing – we have signed up to sponsor the virtual FFA convention. Financial aid - today Danielle Dinges received our preliminary cohort default rate information for FY 2018. Our preliminary cohort default rate is 13.1%, which is up slightly from our 2017 cohort default rate. Learning Center – we are planning for an in-person HiSET graduation ceremony this year. Trustee Morford commented on the billboard and using Cassidy from Hinsdale, MT. She also asked what Reach Higher Montana was. Dean Niedge said Reach Higher Montana is affiliated with OCHE and OPI. This took the place of the Students Assistance program, which did financial aid awareness for high school students. We will be the featured college in March on their Facebook page. Trustee Morlock commented on the St. Vincent scholarships that are given to our HiSET graduates. She asked if this was the second year they are doing this. Dean Niedge said this is the first time that they are sponsoring the college tuition and fees. They have been providing scholarships for HiSET fees for students for the last few year. They are really hoping to meet the needs of others in the area by providing tuition and fees for college. We are hopeful that this can grow into something more in the future. They have been a phenomenal partner for the Adult Ed HiSET program. Trustee Okerman asked about moving processes from Banner to Fireworks. Dean Niedge explained that Fireworks is our CRM product. The processes that we are talking about moving are related to communications out to students related to submitting all the items for their admissions file between the time students apply for admission and enroll. We are hoping this move will automate the process.
- B. Student Engagement:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Dean of Student Engagement & Auxiliary Services Richard DeShields reported on the following: We are seeing significant improvement in student engagement and activity. Our enrollment numbers are exactly where they were at the same time last year. The auxiliaries are looking strong for the rest of the year. We are in the process of hiring our RA's and also finalizing some pieces for our long-range facility plan. Dining – in previous meetings I reported our students were spending their money down faster than in previous terms. We added a small drink with the lunch and dinner special, hoping this would help those students running low on their meal plan. We have seen a small change, but nothing significant. We are continuing with our COVID-19 athletic testing. One Health has been gracious in providing us access to resources, so we are going to continue to have our students tested on campus weekly on Mondays. We hosted the District 4 C tournament. Young Farmers and Ranchers club is planning a trip to area ranches. Kim Gibbs is planning the etiquette dinner. On February 25 we are having our Australian

Indigenous Awareness night during the basketball game. During the Speakers Series on March 15, Professor Cindi Kernahan will be speaking about diversity and inclusivity.

- C. ASMCC:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, President of ASMCC James Simon reported on the following: Homecoming and Easter event planning is progressing. Student Senate will be providing 100 t-shirts for the first 100 people who attend the Australian Indigenous Awareness night on March 15 and the inaugural softball game on March 27. Coach Harris asked ASMCC if they would match him in the K-Out Cancer Free Throw Challenge fundraiser for breast cancer awareness on March 24. They have put a \$300 cap on this match.
- D. Administrative Services and HR:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Dean of Administrative Services and HR Kylene Phipps reported on the following: Introduced Tara Hill as the new Accounting Specialist. We were pleased to host part of the District 4 C Tournament in the Centra. IT Director Don Warner worked with the different schools to live stream their games. We are updating the long-range facilities master plan.
- E. Academic Affairs:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, In Vice President of Academic Affairs Rita Kratky's absence, President Slinger reported on the following: President Slinger reported that VP Kratky just finished her term as president of the Miles City Area Economic Development Council. We have submitted our letter to ACEN requesting a fall campus visit.
- F. Athletic Report:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, in Athletic Director Olson's absence, Dean DeShields reported on the following: Dean DeShields said we are very proud of the fall athletic GPAs. All of our sports teams are starting their seasons. We are getting ready for our first softball game on March 27. We will be sending the Trustees invitations for the opening game. This will be a very busy day with baseball, softball, and the rodeo series.
- G. President's Report:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, President Slinger reported on the following: It was an honor to have Representative Rosendale visit the AAC. It was a very positive meeting, with the Custer County Commissioners, BLM staff, and Trustee Morford attending. We received notification of additional COVID-19 funding at the end of January. We will have one year from the date we were notified to spend the funding, which will give us time to be very thoughtful of how to spend these funds. President Slinger has been working on the healthcare environmental scan survey and has received five of the surveys back. There were also a number of these healthcare facilities that would be interested in being clinical sites.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Trustee Andrews moved to approve the November consent agenda. Trustee Okerman seconded the motion with changes made to the attendee list. Motion passed.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- A. Spring Enrollment Update:** Dean Niedege reminded the Trustees that we are funded on end of term enrollment numbers; however, she does not expect the numbers to change much. She said our enrollment has declined a little with 437 FTE, which is 4.2% down from last spring and 683 headcount, which is down just under 6%. Dean Niedege discussed the enrollment data provided to the Trustees. We have lost 20 students in our concurrent enrollment. We did have strong overall fall to spring retention, up slightly with 81.3% retention compared to 80.58% last year. Pleased with first-time full-time numbers at 86%. Part-time was up slightly and retention of those students was up a little. We did have a decline in our Adult Learners to 78% retention, but up in traditional students. Good things are happening in our housing and student activities programs. Our annualized numbers are going to be down slightly and we will need to pay a reversion.
- B. COVID-19 Update:** Dean DeShields said that due to weather the county will not have the Moderna vaccine. We are in the process of reviewing our opening plan after the remainder of this semester. President Slinger discussed MCC's COVID plan for spring semester. He and the Executive Team believe that keeping our current COVID response in place, including the mask mandate, provides us the best opportunity to complete our spring semester with our students on campus, student

athletes competing, and most importantly keeping our face-to-face instruction continuing. It is his goal, that if the current downturn continues, we will reevaluate the COVID protocols, including the mask mandate, at the end of the spring semester. That seems to be the perfect time for such a transition to occur, as during our summer session most of our courses are offered online, an overwhelming majority of our students are no longer living in the residence halls, and the number of our faculty and staff on campus is significantly less. At this time, President Slinger said he would like the Trustees input as to how we best proceed. There are two potential paths: first we continue with our current direction with the daily response still resting with the President and the Executive Team, or the other option is the Board could request staff to pursue process of creating Board policy in regards to the COVID response, specifically the mask mandate and what the Board would like to see. President Slinger was looking for input from the Trustees regarding how to move forward. This will be helpful as we move forward.

Trustee Andrews said she would like to see it stay as is because some of the responses the college needs to implement may have a time sensitive element to them at a time when the Board may not be able to get a quorum. We don't know what the new strains of the virus will be like; therefore, being able to make decisions quickly will be important.

Trustee Morlock said she would not be in favor of a board policy. Board policies are something that are going to be permanent and long term. That being said a Board policy is not something she would be in favor of regarding anything with COVID.

Trustee Ogolin said he agreed with leaving the decision making with the President and Executive Team. He is comfortable with continuing as the college has been doing.

Trustee Morford said the thing she feels is important as a trustee as related to COVID is the college response. She appreciates the comments made at the meeting. When the Governor decided to rescind the mask mandate it really gave the college an opportunity to take pause and see where we were with the goal of keeping our students, faculty, and staff safe, and providing as much face to face instruction and support possible. She thinks that is really the goal and appreciates that effort as well. She also expressed appreciation for the President and Executive Teams perspective for going forward. She was happy with the stance because she felt the previous "thou shalt" approach was a bit heavy-handed. She felt that considering everything that the President and Executive Team were looking at was important and she expressed her support for the President and Executive Team if they continued with the mask mandate. She added however that she thought the way the mask mandate was communicated would be very important. She concluded by stating that as a Trustee she felt it was really important to be respectful and thoughtful of everyone's positions regarding mask mandates. She felt that element was missing. She appreciated the President and Executive Team listening and she would support them.

Trustee Okerman said he was really pleased that MCC has been ahead of the curve and able to maintain face-to-face classes and athletics. He really supported the college leadership and what has gotten the college to this point. He said he wanted the day to day decisions to continue coming from the President and Executive Team. He felt the college had a great goal and timeline and thought it was important.

Trustee Jones said that he was the first one that would like to throw the masks away, as everyone would. Based on the response was from the President and Executive Team, the ability to stay nimble and respond has been very important in maintaining our leadership role in the MUS system and region in responding to COVID. He said the day to day details from the President and Executive Team is what the college needed. With that said, he would still like to see the end game for the college and have it communicated.

President Slinger said he thought it was important to give people hope.

Trustee Morlock said one thing that was encouraging is that the COVID numbers have stayed down. She noted that prior to the Eastern Montana Fair Custer County had 5 cases and then we went up to 140, so it is still important be very careful.

- C. Meat Processing Program:** Tina Rutledge and Kim Gibbs gave Trustees a presentation about the history and progress of the Meat Processing program.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

- A. Chair Report:** Trustee Ogolin reported the committee discussed the budget. Budget is trending as it should be. The committee reviewed CARES funding and COVID response – talked about the protocol.
- B. Old Business:**
- C. New Business:**
 - a. Property Disposal Resolution: Dean Phipps discussed the resolution presented to Trustees. This is a process that we go through every spring. We are not requesting a waive of second reading, however if the Trustees would like to waive the second reading we would be able to get the items on the auction site sooner.

Trustee Morlock moved to waive the second reading. Trustee Morford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Trustee Okerman moved to accept the resolution for property disposal. Trustee Morford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITTEE:

- A. Chair Report:** Trustee Okerman reported the committee was updated on job searches, COVID 19 response, faculty negotiation, and the election. The Policy Committee is beginning to review section 300. The HR committee was also given an accreditation update. The documentation for the accreditation process is due on March 1.
- B. Old Business:**
- C. New Business:**

QUALITY AND ADVOCACY:

- A. Chair Report:** Trustee Morford reported the committee was given updates on the COVID response, on Healthcare, and legislative issues.

Trustee Jones adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- A. Athletic Department Strategic Master Plan
- B. MCC Strategic Plan
- C. Anne Anderson – Learning Center
- D. VA
- E. AAC Update from Foundation
- F. Student Conduct Process & BIT
- G. Presentation by Coaches

The next regular Board of Trustee meeting will be held on Monday, March 22, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in room 106 and/or Zoom.

Chair

Secretary