

**Miles Community College**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**Minutes**  
**January 27, 2025**

The Board of Trustees of Miles Community College met in regular session at 5:30 p.m., January 27, 2025, in room 106. The following Trustees were present: Tara Andrews, Jamie Ogolin, Garret McFarland, Ryan Jones, Jeff Okerman, Jenna Janshen, and Debbie Morford. The following Trustees were excused: None. Also present were President Ron Slinger via Zoom, Candy Laney, Kylene Phipps, Erin Niedge, Richard DeShields, Nancy Aaberge, Jerry Olson, Bill Heth, Susan Taylor, Mike Taylor, Cody Marshall, Sam Giordanengo, Silvan La Cross, the Softball team, Softball Coach Erica O'Connell, Assistant Coach Ashlin Hiller, the Baseball team, Coach Mike O'Connell, Assistant Coach Caleb Frare, and Assistant Coach Nate Bloxham.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Sam Giordanengo, Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning, discussed the Montana History Day to be hosted at Miles Community College on February 8.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The Softball team and Baseball team were introduced to the Trustees. Susan Taylor, the new Learning Center Instructor, was introduced by VP Niedge. William Heth, our new Maintenance Technician, and Cody Marshal, our new Custodian, were introduced to the Trustees by VP Phipps. President Slinger provided the following updates: He is in Helena this week attending the Joint Budget committee meetings. The Chamber Banquet is scheduled for February 6, where President Slinger will be receiving the Harvey Wolke Award. He will be traveling to Washington DC for the ACCT National Legislative Summit meeting February 7 - 13.

**REPORTS:**

- A. Enrollment Services:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Vice President of Enrollment and Educational Support Services Erin Niedge reported on the following: In December, we awarded 17 certificates and degrees. We extend our appreciation to the Director of Financial Aid and Admissions, Danielle Dinges, for successfully meeting the January 15 deadline for Compliance with Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment reporting, a newly implemented federal mandate. Notably, many of our peers at larger institutions with more extensive staff resources were unable to meet this deadline.
- B. Student Engagement:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Vice President of Student Engagement & Auxiliary Services Richard DeShields reported on the following: Housing and dining enrollment has increased compared to the same period last year. Over the break, the team collaborated with facilities to install new carpet and flooring. Additionally, the annual Benchwork survey was launched and has already achieved a return rate of over 25%. Operational updates include the replacement of the large industrial freezer in the Café. Plans are underway to implement a healthy lifestyle survey next month. The team worked with the IT department to replace the sound system in the Centra and is in the process of updating the AAC sound system. In community support efforts, Reynolds Grocery Store and Town Pump have incorporated the Pioneer Pantry into their donation cycle, further strengthening resources for students in need.
- B. a. Athletics:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Athletic Director Olson reported on the following: He provided an update on the basketball team's records. The softball team is set to compete in Minot on February 8 and 9. The Rodeo teams' annual fundraiser, the Buckaroo Bash, is scheduled for February 15, with tickets currently on sale. They will travel to Bozeman for competition from April 10 to 13, and our own rodeo event is planned for April 24 to 27. Additionally, he shared a fundraising update and highlighted the athletes' outstanding commitment to community service, with excellent participation in service hours.
- C. Administrative Services and HR:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Vice President of Administrative Services and HR Kylene Phipps reported on the following: She recognized the maintenance team for their outstanding work in keeping our facilities well maintained, despite being short-staffed. She also commended the IT staff for their dedication in managing ongoing changes, addressing inquiries, and staying current with Jenzabar training.
- D. Academic Affairs:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Vice President Kratky reported on the following: She expressed appreciation to Associate Dean of Instruction and eLearning, Sam Giordanengo, and Library Director and Institutional Effectiveness Coordinator, Jerusha Shipstead, for the valuable training they provided during faculty and staff days. Additionally, she announced that faculty member Daigo Yamamura will be traveling to Washington, D.C., to join MSU Billings, which we have partnered with, as part of the International Studies Program.

**E. President's Report:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, President Ron Slinger reported on the following: He expressed gratitude to Trustee Morford and the Morford family for their generous gift to the Foundation in honor of Wayne Morford. He also extended appreciation to the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation for their generous annual donation of \$25,000 in support of the Opportunity Realized Program. Additionally, he noted the upcoming mid-cycle visit from NWCCU. To ensure employees and Trustees feel prepared, monthly training sessions will be provided leading up to the NWCCU Accreditation Team's campus visit.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

*Trustee McFarland moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Trustee Okerman seconded the motion.*

*Motion passed.*

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

**A. Nursing Program NCLEX Update:** President Slinger reported that the most recent graduating class achieved a pass rate of 83.3%. To remain in good standing with the State Board of Nursing, one criterion is programs must be within 10 percentage points of the national NCLEX pass rate, a requirement that we currently meet. Additionally, our nursing program remains in good standing with both the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and the State Board of Nursing.

**B. Spring Enrollment Update:** VP Niedge provided an update on FTE, headcount, and overall enrollment numbers. For the spring semester, FTE stands at 500, an increase from 441 at this time last year. Growth in dual and concurrent enrollment has contributed positively to this increase. The institution is still awaiting enrollment numbers for the Personal Finance class from Bozeman High School. As of today, total headcount for spring is 972, with 873 resident students. VP Niedge also offered a preview of annualized and unduplicated headcount figures, noting that we have exceeded the FTE projection submitted to OCHE. Additionally, she highlighted the institution's strong retention rates, which remain above 80% from fall to spring.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

**A. Chair Report:** Trustee Morford provided Trustees with the budget information. Our fund balances are very strong. She discussed the audit, which began in November and will be done by March. The Vision 2028 document was also covered.

**B. Old Business:** None

**C. New Business:**

**a. 2025 Duralite Goose Neck Stock Combo Trailer Resolution:** Coach La Cross discussed the purpose of purchasing the trailer. Funds in their account with the foundation, along with donations from supporters, will be used to purchase the trailer.

*Trustee Janshen moved to waive the second reading. Trustee Okerman seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

*Trustee McFarland moved to accept the resolution as presented. Trustee Janshen seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

**HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITTEE:**

**A. Chair Report:** Trustee Okerman provided the following report: The committee was briefed on staffing requirements and changes, staff and faculty days, and Jenzabar implementation. They were also briefed on the accreditation visit.

**B. Old Business:** None

**C. New Business:**

**a. Resolution Calling for an Election:**

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

*Trustee McFarland moved to accept the resolution calling for an election as presented. Trustee Ogolin seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

**QUALITY AND ADVOCACY:**

A. **Chair Report:** Trustee Okerman provided the following report: The committee discussed the legislative agenda and strategies.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

A. **NWCCU Accreditation Cycle:**

Adjourned the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

The next regular Board of Trustee meeting will be held on Monday, February 24, at 5:30 p.m. in room 106.

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Chair

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Secretary