

Miles Community College
Board of Trustees
Minutes
July 28, 2025

The Board of Trustees of Miles Community College met in regular session at 5:30 p.m. July 28, 2025, in room 106. The following Trustees were present: Tara Andrews, Garret McFarland, Jeff Okerman, Jamie Ogolin, Jenna Janshen, and Debbie Morford via telephone. The following Trustee was excused: None. Also present were President Ron Slinger, Kylene Phipps, Erin Niedge, Richard DeShields, Rita Kratky, Nancy Aaberge, and Dirk Schmidt.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: No Public Comment was given.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: President Slinger said that they are ramping up for the school year. He highlighted the upcoming events. The Executive Team will be holding a retreat next month, Pioneer Scramble will take place on August 23. The volleyball team will be moving in on Sunday, August 3. He thanked Holy Rosary Hospital for donating meals for the team until our Dining Services reopens, and all the staff and faculty who also volunteered to provide meals for them.

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 provided additional updates: As of today, our full-time equivalent (FTE) count stands at 311, representing a 9% increase compared to the same time last year. Our total headcount has reached 538, reflecting a 19% year-over-year increase. Additionally, we have two remaining SOAR sessions scheduled.
- B. Student Engagement:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Vice President of Student Engagement & Auxiliary Services Richard DeShields provided the following updates: Due to the increase in enrollment, we currently have only one bed available in Pioneer Hall. We continue to closely monitor housing availability. In collaboration with the Facilities Department, we are addressing identified trip hazards around the residence hall to ensure a safe living environment for our students. Additionally, we are developing new reporting tools to support the work of the Safety Committee. Work is also underway on the new Hazing Prevention website, which will serve as a resource for education and reporting. Finally, we are in the process of procuring *Read&Write*, a new accessibility tool that integrates with Canvas to support students by providing text-to-speech functionality.
- B.a. Athletics:** In Athletic Director Jerry Olson's absence, VP DeShields provided the following updates: Volleyball team is moving in on August 3, the Pioneer Golf Scramble will be held on August 23. The Pioneer Hall of Fame banquet will be held on September 3 at the Town & Country Club. The Baseball Hall of Fame weekend is scheduled for September 6.
- 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 provided the following updates: Math instructor Stan Taylor is retiring. We will fill his role with adjunct instructors this fall. We will open the position for a full-time math instructor this fall with a spring semester start. The Café sewer project is progressing and on schedule.
- D. Academic Affairs:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Vice President of Academic Affairs Rita Kratky provided the following updates: With enrollment up, we are monitoring space in classes for the fall semester.
- E. President's Report:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, President Ron Slinger provided the following updates: We were recently awarded the Future at Work Grant to support our CDL program. Combined with the previously awarded Community Impact Grant, we now have a total of \$100,000 in Scholarship funds available for our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. On July 17, our team participated in the first session of the AI for all Initiative training series, which is being offered through a partnership between Microsoft and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). We are proud to be the only college in Montana selected to participate in this initiative. Additionally, we were pleased to host the field representative from Congressman Downing's office during a recent campus visit. She conveyed the Congressman's strong support for our institution and its initiatives.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

Motion passed.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- A. Enrollment Update:** Vice President Niedge provided an update on fall enrollment during her Enrollment Services report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

- A. Chair Report:** Trustee Ogolin reported that the committee discussed the FY26 budget proposal. We will have the second reading of the FY2026 budget this evening. We will also be asking Trustees to waive the second reading for the purchase of a new semi for the CDL program.
- B. Old Business:**
- a. FY2026 Budget (second reading): President Slinger provided an overview of the minor adjustments made to the proposed FY2026 budget since its first reading last month.

Trustee Ogolin moved to accept the FY2026 budget as presented. Trustee Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed.

C. New Business:

- a. Resolution to purchase a new Semi for the CDL program: President Slinger explained the need for acquiring a new semi-truck to support the CDL program. Earlier today, a grant request was submitted to the Coal Board for \$48,100 to fund a new engine for the existing semi. In addition, we have received a \$50,000 contribution from NextEra to support the purchase of a new semi. The total purchase price for the new semi is \$165,000.

Trustee Jeff Okerman moved to waive the second reading of this resolution. Trustee McFarland seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Trustee Janshen moved to accept the resolution to purchase a new semi for the CDL program. Trustee McFarland seconded the motion. Motion passed.

HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITTEE:

- A. Chair Report:** Trustee Okerman reported that the committee reviewed current staffing and received several key updates. The New Employee Orientation is scheduled for August 21, and staff and faculty professional development days will take place on August 26 & 27. Vice President Phipps shared that the summer TGIF sessions were well-received and successful. The committee also received an update on the ongoing Jenzabar implementation. There is one action item requiring a vote, and the committee is requesting to waive the second reading so that the necessary changes can be implemented in time for the August pay period. They were informed that the New Employee Orientation will take place on August 21. Staff and faculty professional development days will be held on August 26 & 27. VP Phipps also told them the TGIF sessions this summer went very well. They were also updated on the Jenzabar implementation. We do have one action item that we need to vote on, and we are asking to waive the second reading so the changes can be made for the August pay period.

B. Old Business:

C. New Business:

- a. President's Contract Adjustment:

Trustee McFarland moved to waive the second reading. Trustee Ogolin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Trustee Okerman moved to accept the adjustment to the President's contract as presented. Trustee Ogolin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

QUALITY AND ADVOCACY:

- A. Chair Report:** Trustee Jones shared that the committee discussed several topics that were highlighted in tonight's meeting, including various grant requests.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- A. Nursing Program Update – NCLEX Scores**

- B. NWCCU Mid-Cycle Visit**
- C. Introduction of the MCC Volleyball Team - September**

Adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

The next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Monday, August 28, at 5:30 p.m. in room 106.

Chair

Secretary