

Miles Community College
Board of Trustees
Minutes
September 22, 2025

The Board of Trustees of Miles Community College met in regular session at 5:30 p.m. September 22, 2025, in room 106. The following Trustees were present: Jeff Okerman, Jenna Janshen, and Ryan Jones. The following Trustees were excused: Garret McFarland, Tara Andrews, Jamie Ogolin, and Debbie Morford. Also present were President Ron Slinger, Candy Laney, Kylene Phipps, Erin Niedge, Richard DeShields, Nancy Aaberge, Jerry Olson, Dirk Schmidt, Ashli Dumolt, Tonya DeCock, Coach Cusimano, and the MCC Volleyball team.

Trustee Okerman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No Public Comment was given.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: President Slinger introduced new employees Ashlie Dumolt, CRRN Sim Instructor, and Tonya DeCock, English Instructor. He will be attending the investiture of the new President at Dickinson State University on September 24.

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: Admissions Counselor Kyleigh Heberle is currently in her third week of attending college fairs. Thanks to her efforts, we have seen an 11% increase in prospective student leads compared to the same period last year. New recruitment publications were distributed to the Trustees. Last week's fee payment went well. Additionally, over \$800,000 in financial aid has been disbursed to students for the fall semester.
- 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: We currently have 172 students residing in the residence hall, representing a 96% occupancy rate. Sedric Blancint has transitioned from the custodial staff into a new role as a Dining Services Assistant. We will be sending out the campus safety report to you next week. Constitution Day was successfully held last week, and preparations are underway for the first Student Senate meeting, scheduled for next week.
- B.a. Athletics:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Athletic Director Jerry Olson provided the following updates: We hosted the Baseball Hall of Fame event on September 6, followed by the Athletic Hall of Fame on September 13. Both events were well-attended and celebrated key contributors to our athletic legacy. Looking ahead, Pioneer Palooza will take place on October 18 in the Centra. Volleyball has a home game tomorrow night. The team is currently managing some injuries. Rodeo has competed in three rodeos so far this season and will travel to Dillon next week. The team is also navigating a few injuries. Baseball and softball will both be competing this weekend.
- 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: The search process for the Vice President of Academic Affairs is progressing well. She recognized Ross Lawrence for his 20 years of dedicated service to MCC. He will retire at the end of October. One of our current campus improvement projects is the gazebo in the courtyard which will serve as a welcoming space for students and staff. She also gave an update on the Jenzabar implementation.
- D. Academic Affairs:** In Vice President of Academic Affairs Rita Kratky's absence, there were no updates given.
- E. President's Report:** In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, President Ron Slinger provided the following updates: The Coal Board did not approve our recent request for funding to purchase a new engine for our older CDL semi. However, they provided Ron with contact information for potential partners who may be able to assist with this need. Ron was re-elected as Vice Chair of the Montana Board of Public Education (MBPE) for another year, continuing his leadership and service at the state level. He also attended the Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA) Conference last week, where he was once again elected to serve on the RCCA Board of Directors for another three years.

CONSENT AGENDA: With there not being a quorum, MCC Trustees will approve the September Consent agenda in October.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- A. Enrollment Update:** Vice President Niedge provided an update on enrollment figures. As of Day 15, the institution is reporting a 6.97% year-over-year increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment, reaching a total of 444 students. Headcount has risen by 17.22%, with 878 students currently enrolled. As of today, Montana resident annualized enrollment stands at 361 students. Vice President Niedge noted that enrollment numbers are expected to increase slightly in the coming days.
- B. Accelerating Credentials:** Vice President Niedge shared that this initiative has been in development over the past several months with the goal of expanding access to industry-recognized credentials for high school students while they are still in school. The effort is centered around the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) programs, in partnership with Custer County District High School (CCDHS) and other high schools across Montana. Grant funding has been secured to cover out-of-pocket expenses for high school students participating in the CDL program. This initiative also aligns with our funding formula. Over the past five years, there has been a 670% increase in the number of CTE (Career and Technical Education) credits earned by dual enrollment students.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

- A. Chair Report:** President Slinger reported that the committee reviewed the budget and noted that the general fund is currently up by \$600,000 compared to the same time last year. While some of this increase is due to timing, a significant portion is attributed to higher enrollment numbers.
- B. Old Business:** None
- C. New Business:** None

HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITTEE:

- A. Chair Report:** Trustee Okerman reported that the committee received updates on staffing and ongoing personnel searches. Due to the lack of a quorum, the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention policy updated language, and the Academic Calendar action items have been deferred to next month. The committee also discussed progress on the Jenzabar implementation.
- B. Old Business:** None
- C. New Business:**
 - a. **2027/28 Academic Calendar (first ready)**
 - b. **Policy 600.15 Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention (first reading)**

QUALITY AND ADVOCACY:

- A. Chair Report:** Trustee Jones reported that the committee received an update on the recent Coal Board decision, as well as a briefing on the RCCA Conference. President Slinger attended in conjunction with VP DeShields and Dolly Ferris, the Director of Institutional Advancement. The committee also received an update on the ongoing relationship-building efforts with state legislators.

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 6:36 p.m.

The next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Monday, October 27, at 5:30 p.m. in room 106.

Chair

Secretary