Miles Community College
Board of Trustees
Minutes
September 28, 2026

The Board of Trustees of Miles Community College met in regular session at 5:30 p.m. September 28, in room 106. The following Trustees were present: Jamie Ogolin, Jenna Janshen, Jeff Okerman, and Ryan Jones. The following Trustees were excused: Debbie Morford, Garret McFarland, and Tara Andrews, Also present were President Ron Slinger, Nancy Aaberge, Kylene Phipps, Dimitria Harding, Dirk Schmidt, Chase Tait, Brandi Gibson, Meadow Stainbrook, and Star Reporter Hunter Herbaugh.

Trustee Okerman called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment was given.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: President Slinger introduced Brandi Gibson, Director of Institutional Advancement. The ACEN site visit is scheduled for three days next week. President Slinger said he, along with Trustee Okerman, will be traveling to the ACCT Leadership Congress on October 21. President Slinger will then travel on to Baltimore for the NASBE Conference to represent the state of Montana; therefore, he will need to Zoom into the October Board of Trustees meeting. VP DeShields introduced Meadow Stainbrook, AmeriCorps Vista. Her work will be focusing on civic engagement processes for the college as well as supporting the food bank and student food insecurities.

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 the following updates: There were no updates to the submitted report. VP Niedge thanked everyone for their assistance and patients while the Student Service managed fall enrollment, college fairs, and Jenzabar training.

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: Housing occupancy is currently at 86%, exceeding the budgeted occupancy target of 85%. Several policies are being presented for a first reading today. A bookstore consultant was hired to conduct an audit of bookstore operations. The feedback received was very positive; however, challenges remain regarding textbook requirements and the cost of goods. VP DeShields expressed his pride in the community service efforts and accomplishments of our students. Student Senate is scheduled to attend next month. The results of the Benchwork survey have been received. Dining Services continues to rank among the top programs in the country.

B.a. Athletics: In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Athletic Director Chase Tait provided the following updates: AD Tait discussed the fundraising goals for each sports program.

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: VP Phipps reported that Amber Soloman has been hired for the Learning Center Instructor position. The Dining Services Assistant position remains vacant. A resolution to dispose of a fleet vehicle is being brought forward for consideration tonight. Due to the timing of the October Smith Auction, a waiver of the second reading is being requested. VP Phipps also reported that the institution had accumulated a large quantity of furniture and shelving over the years that was obsolete or outdated and had been fully depreciated on the books. Since these items were not expected to generate revenue if included in an auction, employees were given the opportunity to take items they could use. Some items were also donated to the new community store.

D. Academic Affairs: In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, Vice President of Academic Affairs Dimitria Harding provided additional updates: There were no updates to the submitted report.

E. President's Report: In addition to the written report included in the Board packet, President Ron Slinger provided the following updates: President Slinger congratulated Dr. Harding on the successful grant applications. Miles Community College was the only higher education institution in Montana to receive funding through both grant cycles, totaling $215,000. These grants will provide eligible students with up to 15 credits of tuition-free coursework, helping them begin their

pathway toward a career in education. President Slinger also recognized Dr. DeShields for his work on the September 11 Day of Remembrance. Dr. DeShields and Dr. Harding will also be presenting at national conferences. President Slinger expressed satisfaction with the Montana Chamber of Commerce's Cultivating Careers event, which brought nearly 300 high school students from eastern Montana to campus. Additionally, President Slinger has been reelected as Vice Chair of the Board of Public Education for another term. He also serves as Board Secretary of the RCCA.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Trustee Ogolin moved to approve the consent agendas as presented. Trustee Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. Enrollment Update: VP Niedge reported that current FTE is 438.2, which is 1.5% below the same date last year. Total student headcount is 878, representing a 0.3% decrease compared to this time last year. Resident FTE is 364.1, an increase of 0.5% over last year. Resident student headcount is 781, reflecting a 0.5% increase compared to the same date last year. The overall retention rate is 54%, remaining nearly unchanged from the previous fall.

B. MCC Economic Impact Report Presentation: Light Cast did an Economic Impact Study for us. They presented the findings of that study to the Trustees.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

A. **Chair Report:** Trustee Ogolin reported that the budget status report has been posted and that the institution is in a favorable financial position, with the budget in better shape than it was at this time last year. The committee discussed the mill levy report, enrollment, future grant opportunities, and the impact statement. A resolution to dispose of a fleet vehicle is also being presented, with a request to waive the second reading.

B.

C. Old Business: None

D. New Business:

a. Property Disposal Resolution:

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

Trustee Jones moved to accept the Property Disposal Resolution as presented. Trustee Ogolin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITTEE:

A. Chair Report: Trustee Ogolin reported that current job postings and policies being brought forward were discussed. Trustees will have until the October meeting to review the policies presented for consideration. An update on the Jenzabar system was also provided.

B. Old Business:

C. New Business: VP Phipps discussed the changes to and reasons for these policy changes.

a. 1000 – IT Revised Policy:
b. 600.16 – Emergency Notification Policy:
c. 500.5 – Room & Board Mandatory Residence Policy:
d. 500.6 – Room & Board Policy:
e. 500.8 – Campus Crime & Security Policy:

QUALITY AND ADVOCACY:

A. Chair Report: Trustee Janshen reported that the committee discussed the upcoming legislative session, the current enrollment snapshot, an update on the mill levy report, and long-range facilities planning.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Strategic Updates, ACEN site visit, Updates from employees presenting at conferences

Adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.
The next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Monday, October 26, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in room 106.

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Chair Secretary