

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT #512
COUNTIES OF COOK, KANE, LAKE, AND McHENRY, STATE OF ILLINOIS

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of Wednesday, June 11, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 512 was called to order by Chair Bill Kelley on Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the Wojcik Conference Center, 1200 W. Algonquin Road, Palatine, Illinois.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Diane Hill, Bill Kelley, Eric Knox, James Meyer, Walt Mundt, Pat Stack, and Student Member Adekunbi Aransiola

Absent: Member Nancy Robb

Also present: Mike Barzacchini, Director of Marketing Services; Dr. Dennis Baskin, Associate Provost of Student Affairs; Katie Butera, Manager - Hawks Care Resource Center; Orlando Cabrera, Tech Support Specialist; Scott Cashman, Senior Manager, Community, Career and Corporate Education; Amanda Duval-Norwood, Chief Human Resources Officer; Marcia Frank, Senior Director - Innovation and Development; Rob Galick, EVP Finance and Administrative Services; Bob Grapenthien, Controller; Erika Hartman, Administrative Coordinator; Bob Hayley, Assistant Controller; Dr. Tamara Johnson, Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Jeff Julian, Chief of Staff/Vice President of External Affairs; Dr. Derek Leiter, Dean of Health Careers; Nancy Medina, Executive Director of Facilities Management; Kristyn Meyer, Associate Executive Director Foundation; Steve Petersen, Campus Architect; Gloria Plaza, Director, Business Operations and Security; Colleen Rice, Executive Assistant Board of Trustees; Dr. Jaime Riewerts, Dean Liberal Arts; Darlene Schlenbecker, Vice President of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness; Dr. Michelé Smith, Vice President of Workforce Solutions; Dr. Anna Strati, Director Institutional Research and Analytics; Brian Thomason, Director of Client Systems; Darice Trout, Senior Director of Workforce Solutions and Job Placement; Dr. Roderica Williams, Dean of Student Success and Retention; Riaz Yusuff, Chief Information Officer; Heather Zoldak, Chief Advancement Officer.

Guests: David Yandel, FGM Architects; Steve Brouwer, Pepper Construction; Jim Creath, Pepper Construction; Lance Tritsch, Pepper Construction; Ashley Honore, Student.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

DISCUSSION OF
FOLLOW UP ITEMS

A presentation was given on the FY26 preliminary budget by Bob Grapenthien, Controller. Grapenthien reported a cautious but positive outlook, noting a projected surplus of \$4.7 million. A 1% increase in state funding has been tentatively approved, though funding levels are being treated as flat due to ongoing uncertainty. Summer enrollment increased slightly, which may improve tuition revenue, especially from out-of-district and international students.

The presentation highlighted several financial risks. Rising healthcare costs remain a concern. The college is exploring more cost-effective healthcare options, but any changes would require negotiation with employee unions. Another long-term risk is the possible shift of pension funding responsibility from the state to the college.

Grapenthien then presented on the Budget vs. Financial Plan (Operating Funds). Compared to the January financial plan, the current budget outlook has improved. Projections that Grapenthien covered included: Property Tax; Tuition and Fees; State Funding; Salaries; Benefits; etc.

Next steps are the Approval of the Preliminary Budget for Public Review and the Resolution to Establish Budget Hearing Date at the June 18, 2025 Board Meeting. The Budget will then be made available for public review June through August 2025.

Following the presentation, a discussion was held. Chair Kelley raised a question regarding healthcare options, particularly about the feasibility of moving to a self-insured model. The administration responded that any change must be weighed carefully and negotiated within the framework of existing labor contracts. A risk-sharing model with other institutions is also being considered. Trustee Mundt asked a question addressing property tax assumptions. The administration clarified that they are using a 2.9% CPI increase for 2024 and projecting a 2.4% average in the upcoming years, based on federal and state data. The growth from new property is also being factored into the overall tax base.

The Chair and Trustees expressed appreciation for the clarity and thoroughness of the presentation.

The board received an update on the FY25 Operational Plan and the FY26–29 Strategic Plan by Vice President of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness, Darlene Schlenbecker. Schlenbecker began by explaining that updates to the operational plan are given twice annually, with a final, detailed accountability report scheduled for August. At the close of this fiscal year, 27 of the 32 goals—about 84%—are either completed or on track for completion by the end of the month.

A few goals remain behind schedule. The development of a financial literacy program for students will be partially implemented by the end of the fiscal year, with three workshops scheduled to begin in late June and full implementation set for the fall. Progress on implementing the Business & Industry Leadership Teams (BILT) Advisory Model was slowed due to staffing challenges, although work has begun in areas such as Mass Communications and Electromechanical Technologies. The college continues to build on this model, which integrates employers directly with faculty to identify the skills graduates need to be job-ready.

Harper College also continues its work through a consortium supported by the EPIIC Grant, focused on sharing lessons and developing curriculum in emerging technologies. While Year 1 goals have been partially met, full implementation will extend into the upcoming year. Another project—the development of new transfer agreements with Historically Black Colleges and Universities—has led to two finalized agreements with Governors State University and Florida A&M University, and discussions for a third are ongoing. One initiative, the bookstore RFP process, was postponed to allow for broader campus discussion and will return in the next operational plan cycle.

Attention then shifted to the strategic planning process. The college's new FY26–29 Strategic Plan was developed through a comprehensive shared governance process and recently received final approval by the President. It is now included in the board's materials for approval at the June Board Meeting. The plan includes three broad institutional goals centered around what the college does, who it serves, and how it operates. These include providing innovative and responsive education, cultivating an inclusive and supportive community, and achieving organizational excellence. These goals will guide the development of new programs, promote mental health and equity initiatives, and support improvements in infrastructure, sustainability, and innovation. Metrics and performance targets aligned to the strategic plan will be finalized in the fall.

During discussion, Trustee Mundt inquired about the BILT Advisory Model and its implementation. It was explained that this approach goes beyond traditional advisory committees by having employers collaborate directly with faculty to shape curriculum based on workforce needs. The model has already been used successfully in programs such as Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence.

Student Trustee Aransiola also asked about the financial literacy program, which is being developed as a series of workshops. Some financial literacy content is also available in existing first-year seminar classes. Clarification was provided on the data visuals shared in the operational plan presentation, ensuring that progress across goal categories is understood correctly.

The board expressed strong support for the strategic planning process and praised the inclusive, collaborative effort behind it. Trustees noted the importance of continuing to monitor student success metrics, particularly persistence, advancement, and transfer rates. While the college did not fully meet its 3% target increase in early success milestones, the initiative showed promising results, and complete data will be provided in the August report.

In closing, the board commended the work done across departments to align the operational and strategic planning efforts. Leadership reaffirmed their commitment to tracking institutional effectiveness and ensuring that student outcomes remain central to planning and evaluation.

The board received an update on the student Lyft Pass Program. Initially launched as a pilot in 2022 following data from the Trellis Survey which identified transportation as a significant barrier to student success, Harper College responded by introducing the Lyft program to provide students with subsidized transportation to and from approved college-related locations.

Katie Butera, Manager of the Hawks Care Resource Center, led this presentation. The program has proven impactful, with anecdotal and data-driven evidence showing increased student engagement, persistence, and academic performance. One featured student, Carissa, shared that she had delayed returning to college for nearly ten years due to lack of transportation. When she learned about the Lyft program, it removed a major barrier and allowed her to return, complete her program, and graduate this past May 2025. Her story is representative of how the program provides students with increased agency and opportunity.

The program operates as a discount model, where eligible students receive up to \$10 off each ride, with the college covering that portion and the student paying the remainder. Students may receive up to eight discounted rides per month. Eligible groups include degree-seeking students, adult education participants, English as a Second Language (ESL) students, apprentices, and dual credit students aged 18 and older. Approved destinations include the main campus, Learning and Career Center in Prospect Heights (LLC), clinical sites, and select special events, including commencement and strategic planning meetings.

Since inception, the program has shown consistent growth. In FY23, there were approximately 580 unique riders. That number has grown significantly in FY24. Notably, students using the Lyft program tend to have higher GPAs and carry more credit hours, which suggests that access to transportation is positively influencing student outcomes. Additionally, the percentage of students using the Lyft program who

persist from fall to spring semesters outpaces that of students not participating in the program.

As usage has increased, so has the financial commitment. The original board-approved budget was \$500,000. The college is now requesting an additional \$306,000 to continue the program into next year, with a revised total budget of \$806,000.

The college plans to refine the program structure to remain within budget. While initially offered universally to all eligible students, data will now be used to better identify high-need and high-usage students for targeted support. This shift aims to balance equity with sustainability, especially as new students enroll without prior usage history.

Trustees Knox and Meyer inquired about the ability to distinguish between academic and non-academic trips. Staff confirmed that ride data—including pickup and drop-off coordinates—can be used to evaluate purpose and location. All rides must begin or end at an approved college site.

Trustee Meyer asked if there is a cap set within the Lyft program or maximum number of students that can enroll, especially if it grows in popularity and is offered to every student. Dr. Proctor emphasized that the program will continue to operate within board-approved funding and parameters and will be adjusted accordingly. Dr. Proctor also stated that there will be a greater focus on need-based student support going forward.

In closing, the board acknowledged the Lyft program as a meaningful example of the college's commitment to removing barriers to student success. The update affirmed the program's alignment with strategic goals, particularly around equity and persistence. Trustee Hill acknowledged this is part of our strategy to remove barriers to success for students.

Chair Bill Kelley and President Proctor jointly presented an update on Board of Trustees and President's shared goals and priorities for 2025. This was the second formal update of the year, reflecting continued progress on several multi-year objectives. The first and primary goal remains centered on student success. The President reported that the college is monitoring key academic indicators, including student persistence rates and credit accumulation. While fall-to-spring persistence is in the target range, fall-to-fall persistence remains just under the goal of 85–86%. Nonetheless, both full-time and part-time students are exceeding targets for credit accumulation. These outcomes, visible through the college's public Institutional Effectiveness dashboard, provide accountability and guide planning efforts.

Beyond academic progress, the college is focused on student outcomes after graduation. Nearly 80% of credential earners report stable employment one year after leaving, and three out of four are earning a living wage. This data has prompted a review of the academic portfolio to ensure that all programs provide pathways to sustainable employment.

The second goal centers on diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly in recruiting and retaining a more diverse faculty and staff. Progress is evident, with 50% of recent hires identifying as from underrepresented backgrounds. Faculty retention remains strong—94% for diverse faculty and 93% overall. Programs such as the Lead Faculty Fellow initiative are helping develop and elevate future full-time instructors. Additionally, new hires are being connected to affinity groups, including those for immigrant and refugee employees, to help foster belonging and community on campus.

Risk management was the third focus area. President Proctor outlined a comprehensive approach that includes emergency preparedness, cybersecurity, and strategic enrollment management. Emergency readiness has been significantly enhanced through collaboration with local municipalities and regional emergency agencies. A full-scale reunification drill with a local school district and emergency responders was conducted on campus, strengthening real-world coordination. Meanwhile, the college voluntarily completed a cybersecurity risk assessment, which generated 38 recommendations—only five of which remain to be implemented. Tabletop exercises and cyberattack simulations have been conducted to ensure leadership and IT teams are prepared for potential disruptions.

In terms of enrollment management, the college continues to respond to shifting demographics and post-pandemic challenges. A revised strategic enrollment plan includes expanded dual credit programs, new first-year seminars for adult learners, targeted support for academically underprepared students, and exploratory use of AI recruiting tools. These efforts are supported by a growing set of dashboards to track outcomes and ensure resources align with student needs.

The fourth goal relates to executing the college's long-term capital improvement plan. Thanks to strong voter support from the 2018 referendum, the college has broken ground on three major buildings within a single academic year. These include the new Student Center/University Center, the Business and Social Sciences Center, and the Emergency Services Training Center. Construction progress is steady, and significant funds have been allocated to ensure timelines and budgets remain on track.

Finally, the Board and President continue to drive the college's strategic planning efforts. Updates were provided on the framework and timeline for plan development, with Board workshops and leadership sessions helping guide future direction. The plan remains deeply connected to institutional goals—particularly student success and equitable access.

In closing, Trustees expressed appreciation for the transparency and thoughtful alignment between data, strategic priorities, and resource allocation. They emphasized the importance of continuing to reduce barriers to success for all students and ensuring the college's future remains student-centered and mission-aligned.

Jeff Julian reviewed the Board Packet.

FORMAL ACTIONS

Member Stack motioned, Vice Chair Mundt seconded to enter closed session to discuss OMA section 2(c)(1): The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body... and Per OMA section 2(c)(16): Self evaluation, practices and procedures or professional ethics, when meeting with a representative of an association of which the public body is a member...at 6:22 p.m. In a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Closed session began at 6:23 p.m. Attending via phone, Jim Reed, ICCTA Executive Director, and Colleen Allen, ACCT Director of Retreats and Evaluation Services. Present: Members Diane Hill, Bill Kelley, Eric Knox, Walt Mundt, Pat Stack, and Student Member Adekunbi Aransiola. Absent: Members James Meyer and Nancy Robb.

Member Knox motioned; Member Hill seconded to adjourn the closed session and re-enter the regular meeting at 6:55 p.m. In a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Hill moved, Member Stack seconded, adjournment at 6:55 p.m.

In a voice vote, motion carried.


Chair
Secretary