

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 Closed Session, Wednesday, July 23, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A closed session of the Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 512 was called to order by Chair William Kelley Wednesday, July 23, 2025 at 2:01p.m., in the Wojcik Conference Center, Room 214, 1200 W. Algonquin Road, Palatine, Illinois. The reason for the closed session was pursuant to OMA 2(c)16 Self-evaluation, practices and procedures or professional ethics, when meeting with a representative of a statewide association (ICCTA) of which the public body is a member.

ROLL CALL

Member Stack moved, Member Mundt seconded, moving into closed session.

Upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Members Diane Hill, William Kelley, Eric Knox, James Meyer, Pat Stack, and Walt Mundt

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Also attending: Dr. Yolonda Barnes, Dean of Business and Social Sciences; Lynda Baumgartner, Interim Manager – Fast Track; Nicci Cisarik De Jesus, Director - Student Recruitment and Outreach; Craig Duetsch, EVP Finance and Administrative Services; Dr. Tamara Johnson, Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Jeff Julian, Chief of Staff/Vice President of External Affairs; Bob Parzy, Associate Provost-Enrollment Services; Dr. Avis Proctor, President; Darlene Schlenbecker, Vice President - Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness; Dr. Michelé Smith, Vice President of Workforce Solutions; Darice Trout, Senior Director of Workforce Solutions and Job Placement; Dr. Roderica Williams, Dean of Student Success and Retention; Dr. Sandra Villanueva, Dean - Teaching and Learning; Dr. Ruth Williams, Provost; Heather Zoldak, Chief Advancement Officer.

Guests: Dr. Bradley Ebersole, ACCT Facilitator; Jim Reed, ICCTA Executive Director (by phone from 2:00 p.m. until 2:12 p.m., then in person)

The following items were reviewed in response to the Board's self-evaluation and goal setting.

DISCUSSION

Chair Kelley introduced Dr. Bradley Ebersole as the facilitator of the Board Workshop.

Student Success at Harper: You Matter We Care – Helping Our Students SOAR

Dr. Ruth Williams, Provost, introduced the topic and introduced the presenters: Dr. Yolanda Barnes, Dean of Business and Social Sciences; Lynda Baumgartner, Interim Director of Fast Track; Nicci Cisarik De Jesus, Director of Student Recruitment and Outreach; Bob Parzy, Associate Provost of Enrollment Services; Dr. Roderica Williams, Dean of Student Success and Retention; and Dr. Sandra Villanueva, Dean of Teaching and Learning. The group reviewed the current student success framework: *You Matter We Care SOAR*.

At 2:34p.m., Student Trustee Adekunbi Aranisola arrived.

Trustee Mundt discussed that financial instability for students must also be addressed in student success framework. It is not just about the metrics, but also about the financial support being given. Trustee Hill asked how they have encouraged faculty to become more active in the student success process. Dr. Villanueva explained they are working collaboratively with the faculty to help them engage by using data informed decision making and ACUE (Association of College and University Educators) resources. Trustee Stack asked if Hawks Care will continue to have the bandwidth and capacity to provide support as there continues to be instability with financial support. Dr. Proctor responded that Hawks Care continues to be supported. Trustee Meyer asked for: clarification on 90,000 interactions; what strategies do you have to increase the adult learners; what is the advisor to student ratio; and when do they meet with the advisor for the first time, what do the faculty think of Blackboard? Cisarik De Jesus answered that 90,000 refers to unduplicated student interactions – emails, events, calls, texts, etc. They are working on strategies to increase adult enrollment including a task force, adult specialists in admissions office and recognizing that there are more obstacles/barriers for adult learners and how to market directly to adult learners. There are about 30 advisors to 6,000 students, but administration will get an accurate ratio. Provost Williams also noted that a reorganization of advisors is included in the new student success model that will go before the Board. Regarding Blackboard, faculty reviewed and looked at other vendors in 2022-2023 and made the decision to stay with Blackboard. They are converting to the new Blackboard system that is much more student and user friendly.

At 2:51 p.m. the following attendees left the room: Dr. Yolanda Barnes; Lynda Baumgartner; Nicci Cisarik DeJesus; Bob Parzy; Dr. Roderica Williams; Dr. Sandra Villanueva.

Academic Programs and Workforce Alignment

At 2:52 p.m., the following guests joined the meeting: Sirena Arnaout, Zurich North America; Edgar Candelas, Barrington Bank & Trust

Dr. Michelé Smith, Vice President of Workforce Solutions and Darice Trout, Senior Director of Workforce Solutions and Job Placement, gave an update on Harper's Academic Programs and the connection to Workforce alignment. Arnaout and Candelas gave firsthand accounts of working with Harper students through the Harper apprenticeship program. Trustee Hill asked about the program once students enroll – Trout explained that they work to build a schedule where they can go to school and work. The students are paid as full-time employees and the employment partners pay for tuition, books, school costs, etc. White glove service provided to work with the employer. Trustee Knox asked if there is a target number of employee partners and where do you find these companies to partner with. The goal is to be the preferred provider for all companies in Harper's district. The Trustees were complimentary of the program.

At 3:15 p.m., the following attendees left the room: Darice Trout; Sirena Arnaout; Edgar Candelas.

Harper Technology Strategy and Financial Updates

At 3:23 p.m., the following attendees joined the meeting: Riaz Yusuff; Gloria Plaza; Brian Thomason; Regan Myers

Riaz Yusuff, Chief Information Officer, and Gloria Plaza, Director of Business Operations and Security, outlined Harper College's technology strategy, student focused technologies and the Huron status. They also gave a financial update and a security update.

Chair Kelley inquired about the origin of the \$20 million IT figure referenced in the Huron report. In response, Craig Duetsch shared that he had met with Huron the previous week to clarify this. Huron explained that the \$20 million figure had been provided by Harper College and that they had assumed it was an estimate. However, they did not receive any supporting documentation detailing how the number was calculated. Duetsch noted that the actual IT spend reflected in the College's financials was \$16.3 million. Trustee Meyer raised several concerns, including the College's spending on technology—specifically citing that Harper appears to be spending \$10 million more than what would be expected based on Educause standards. He also questioned the continued use of Oracle, and the extended timeframes for certain IT projects. In response, Trustee Hill suggested that Trustee Meyer refocus his line of inquiry on strategic-level questions about technology, rather than operational details.

Trustee Knox shifted the discussion toward ongoing evaluation, asking how the IT program assesses whether it is meeting the evolving needs of both the College and its students. He also asked about plans for right-sizing IT spending and ensuring that the technologies provided are appropriate and effective for students. He emphasized the importance of balancing innovation with fiscal responsibility and expressed a desire to see IT spending optimized—

highlighting the need to eliminate technical debt, stay current, and focus on essential technologies. In response, Craig Duetsch stated that as he begins his role, he will undertake a comprehensive assessment of IT spending, strategy, alignment, and processes. He underscored his commitment to ensuring that the College continues to meet its technology needs—both in and out of the classroom—through regular evaluation and alignment with institutional goals. Duetsch also shared that during his discussion with Huron, the consulting firm did not express concern over IT overspending. Instead, they commented that Harper College is advanced for a community college, and that such advancement naturally comes with associated costs. Trustee Meyer commented on his disappointment of technology at Harper.

Dr. Proctor reiterated the importance of continuous improvement and affirmed that regular assessments are part of Harper's institutional approach. She encouraged trustees to submit their feedback so the administration can review and respond appropriately.

At 4:00 p.m., the following attendees left the room: Riaz Yusuff; Gloria Plaza; Brian Thomason; and Regan Myers.

FY2025 Surplus Recommendations and Financial Reserves Update

At 4:03 p.m., the following attendee joined the meeting: Bob Grapenthien, Controller.

Bob Grapenthien began the presentation by explaining that this is Harper's annual Financial Reserves summary, which is separate from the operational funds recently discussed during the Committee of the Whole meetings. This presentation focuses specifically on the Financial Reserves, which include the Tax-Capped Fund Balance (from surplus), Capital Reserves (from surplus, bond proceeds, student fees, or the State of Illinois), and Strategic Initiatives (funded from surplus).

Since around 2020, when Dr. Proctor arrived, Harper has intentionally set aside funds to support strategic initiatives. The goal for today is to ensure accountability to the Board—clearly showing what has been set aside, what has been spent, and what remains. For the current year, Harper has a surplus of \$10.9 million. Of that, \$3.2 million from the FY25 surplus will flow into the Fund Balance, while \$7.7 million is allocated to support Strategic Initiatives.

Chair Kelley expressed his hope that a greater portion of the surplus funds would be allocated to Student Success Initiatives. Trustee Knox inquired about the amount allocated for IT spending, and Trustee Meyer echoed Chair Kelley's sentiment—supporting a shift toward more funding for Student Success Initiatives and suggesting a reduction in IT expenditures. Craig Duetsch shared that a detailed

analysis of the surplus funds will be conducted. Trustee Mundt raised a question on the amount set for Risk Management.

Dr. Proctor clarified that this presentation reflects a preliminary assessment. Trustee Stack stated that the funds are flexible and can be reallocated between categories during the year if necessary. Dr. Proctor also mentioned that a memo with additional details will be sent to the Board, with formal action on the surplus funds scheduled for the August Board meeting. Trustee Stack concluded by commending the Administration for successfully ending the year with a surplus.

At 4:25 p.m., the following attendee left the room: Bob Grapenthien.

FY26 President's Priorities/Board Goals

Dr. Proctor reviewed priorities for the upcoming academic year, outlining the key goals that will guide both the President's focus and the Board's oversight. The President's priorities and the Board's goals are parallel. The related exhibits will be presented for a vote at the August Board meeting.

Trustee Meyer inquired about the timeliness of the data related to post-college employment. Darlene Schlenbecker explained that this data typically lags and is reported in arrears. Schlenbecker will present the Accountability Report at the August Committee of the Whole meeting, and the most up-to-date data will be made available online once it has been presented to the Board. Trustee Meyer raised a concern about how the President's performance can be evaluated when the data is outdated. In response, Dr. Proctor clarified that the evaluation should focus on how effectively strategies, tools, and programs are being deployed to support pathways to living-wage employment. Trustee Stack added that these priorities are meant to be multi-year goals.

Regarding Goal 3, Student Trustee Aransiola asked for clarification on the definition of "sustainability." Dr. Proctor responded that it refers to environmental sustainability, and Trustee Stack added that achieving LEED Silver certification is the goal for all current construction projects. Regarding Goal 4, Trustee Mundt questioned whether it was more operational than strategic. Dr. Proctor explained that the focus is on ensuring projects are completed on time, on budget, or under budget. Trustee Hill emphasized the importance of considering the planning aspect of the President's role in this context. Trustee Stack noted the high level of community visibility related to construction and stressed the importance of reporting back to the community, particularly in light of the referendum. Trustee Mundt agreed, emphasizing the importance of tying the goal back to the community and the commitments made through the referendum. Kelley would like to see Goal 4 remain because of the major impact of these construction projects.

Trustee Knox noted that he likes the beginning of Goal 3 in terms of establishing measures. He would like to see similar verbiage for goal 5, in terms of how the Board will assess and measure success. In response, Dr. Proctor explained that evaluation for Goal 5 could include policy updates and degree implementation, rather than simply tracking the number of employees adopting AI tools. Trustee Knox recommended that, over the course of the year, specific metrics be developed to track progress moving forward.

Chair Kelley moved onto discussion of the Board goals. Student Trustee Aransiola emphasized the importance of maintaining Goal 3's relevance in comparison to the other goals and suggested clarifying its language. Trustee Mundt proposed the idea of including curriculum as part of Goal 3.

Regarding Goal 2, Student Trustee Aransiola highlighted that diversity encompasses more than just race and ethnicity. He emphasized that it should also include financial background, disability, mental health, and other aspects of identity that contribute to individual differences and recommended broadening the language of the goal to reflect a more inclusive definition of diversity. In response, Dr. Proctor suggested considering a metric beyond the existing IEM framework. Trustee Stack asked whether students and employees who use ADS (Accessibility and Disability Services) are included in Harper's diversity demographics. Dr. Proctor responded that they are not currently counted from the standpoint of IEMs.

At 5:00 p.m., the following attendees left the room: Craig Duetsch, Dr. Tamara Johnson, Darlene Schlenbecker, Dr. Michelé Smith, Dr. Ruth Williams, Heather Zoldak. The Board took a meal break.

Governance/Operational discussion and training

Dr. Brad Ebersole facilitated a session with the Board focused on identifying the traits of a mature and effective board. Through guided exercises, he helped trustees reflect on current strengths and potential areas for improvement; individual and collective Board of Trustee principles; and the partnership between the Board and the President.

The conversation opened with Trustee Mundt acknowledging the need for continuous improvement, a sentiment echoed by Trustee Hill. Trustee Knox shared his perspective as a newer Trustee, acknowledging uncertainty about asking the "right" questions, while Trustee Stack observed that though meetings are information-rich, more time for reflection and decision-making may be needed.

Trustee Meyer questioned how Board members are fully engaging with meeting materials. The Board affirmed they were. Trustee Meyer noted that few questions are voiced publicly, other than from him,

using the Huron report as an example of something that should have been examined. Dr. Ebersole asked how Trustee Meyer might raise such concerns in the future.

Trustee Stack suggested that Board members reach out to one another directly for clarity. Trustee Meyer responded that he was trying to follow protocol by sending questions through the President and Board Chair. If a response is not received within 48 hours, he will put in a FOIA request. Trustees Stack and Hill clarified that contacting a single Trustee for context does not violate the Open Meetings Act. Trustee Stack also highlighted the mentorship she received from Trustee Hill in learning to frame questions and distinguish between strategic and operational concerns.

Trustee Hill encouraged prioritizing questions that align with the Board's strategic role. Trustee Knox expressed general confidence in the administration's diligence. Trustee Stack reminded the group that the Board hired Dr. Proctor to provide leadership and oversight and emphasized that the President is accountable to the Board as a collective. Trustee Hill reinforced that individual Trustees hold no authority outside of official Board actions as a group.

Dr. Ebersole asked how Dr. Proctor communicates with the Board. Dr. Proctor outlined the various ways she communicates with Trustees, including her President's Reports and scheduled Trustee engagement meetings. Chair Kelley added that, ideally, Trustees would route their questions through him so that Dr. Proctor could provide responses with appropriate timing and context. Trustee Hill emphasized the importance of prioritizing requests based on their urgency, especially if they are related to upcoming Board decisions. Trustee Meyer stated that the main concerns voiced by his constituents during his campaign were efficiency and use of property taxes. In response, Trustee Hill suggested using a "parking lot" strategy to organize and prioritize issues for future discussion.

Dr. Ebersole then shared an article from Bridges on high-impact boards. Trustee Hill recommended integrating some of the outlined practices into the Board's annual self-assessment. Trustee Mundt expressed the importance of having a president who is both capable and recognized on a national level. Trustee Mundt emphasize not limiting the President. Trustee Meyer inquired whether Dr. Proctor had the administrative support necessary to be successful. Dr. Proctor responded by outlining her approach to growing revenue through grants; also limiting full-time equivalent (FTE) hires. She noted that enrollment is trending positively and emphasized the college's entrepreneurial efforts to diversify revenue sources.

Trustee Meyer expressed his preference for technology-related funds to be directed toward student success initiatives and stated that he did not expect Dr. Proctor to spend time responding to his questions

regarding the IT budget. Dr. Ebersole reminded the group that the President maintains oversight across all areas.

Trustee Meyer proposed attending the Educause conference instead of the ACCT Leadership Congress. Trustee Hill recommended a broader discussion about Board travel policy and budget. Trustee Stack voiced concern that Educause may frame topics too narrowly from an IT perspective rather than a strategic governance, but Trustee Meyer clarified that it is a higher education conference. The Chair maintained that ACCT remains the most appropriate venue for Trustee attendance. Trustee Knox emphasized that the Board needs more information, such as a list of sessions, cost, and how attending Educause would directly benefit Harper College.

Dr. Ebersole concluded the workshop by reviewing the functions of a high-performing board. He asked the Board to go around and share their takeaways from the day.

FORMAL ACTIONS

There were no formal actions

ADJOURNMENT OF
CLOSED SESSION

Trustee Meyer left the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Member Mundt moved, Member Stack seconded, adjournment at 6:40 p.m.

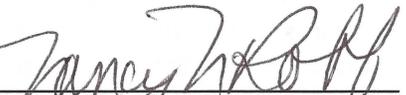
Upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Members Diane Hill, William Kelley, Eric Knox, Pat Stack, Walt Mundt, and Student Trustee Adekunbi Aransiola

Nays: None

Motion carried.


Chair


Secretary