

**MOHAWK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
UTICA AND ROME, NEW YORK**

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Mohawk Valley Community College Board of Trustees held in the Stetson Boardroom, Payne Hall, Room 300, Utica, New York was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chair Waters on Wednesday, January 22, 2025.

Members Present

Wendy Waters
Dana Jerrard
William S. Calli, Jr.
Anthony (Tony) Colón
David Mathis
Camille Kahler
Elaine Falvo (remote participation to extraordinary circumstance)
Frank Dubeck, Jr. (remote participation due to extraordinary circumstance)

Members Excused

Anna D'Ambrosio
Student Trustee, Alex Dunckel

Chair Waters announced that the board meeting will be audio and video recorded wherein we have two board members participating remotely due to extraordinary circumstances.

Motion for an executive session to discuss legal matters was made by Trustee William Calli and seconded by Trustee Tony Colón.
Unanimously approved.

The Board of Trustees entered into executive session at 4:02 p.m.

Motion to end executive session and resume the Board meeting was made by Trustee William Calli and seconded by Trustee Camille Kahler.

The meeting reconvened at 4:24 p.m.

2. Chair's Report

Chair Waters began by highlighting several recent achievements and accolades. First, eleven Mechanical Engineering Technology students in Professor Jeff Birt's Lean Six Sigma class collaborated with Human Technologies on projects that provided invaluable real-world experience. These students improved the Value Stream Mapping process for the production of chemical helmet covers and helped optimize the transition of Human Technologies' uniform programs to their new warehouse. This initiative not only showcased our students' skills but also marked a significant milestone in our 15-year partnership with Human Technologies—a testament to the lasting impact of community collaboration.

Second, MVCC has once again demonstrated its academic excellence by achieving the highest team score in the Fall Math League Contest organized by the New York State Mathematics Association of Two-Year Colleges (NYSMATYC). This follows our top-scoring performance

in the 2022 contest and sets a new milestone for the College. MVCC student Carter Poland earned the highest individual score, and Team MVCC outperformed 23 participating two-year colleges across New York State.

And finally, MVCC remains the New York State headquarters for FIRST TECH robotics and recently packed the Jorgensen Fieldhouse with more 250 competitors in grades 6-12 and their families from around the state for a regional qualifier robotics competition. The College will host nearly 400 students and their families later this spring for the state championship to go to the world competition in Houston.

On a somber note, the Board expressed their condolences to faculty, staff, and students for the passing of Sandy Cummings, Coordinator of Student Engagement.

3. Treasurer's Report

Vice President Squires presented the financial reports and noted that the revenue was slightly less than budgeted, but expected to even out by the end of the year due to grants and reimbursements. He also pointed out that expenses were slightly higher than last year, mainly due to increased salaries and a change in the health insurance model. Vice President Squires further went on to report that the auditors have completed the fieldwork on campus and will continue to work on the audit of federal funds and financials. The College is waiting on a few more reports from the retirement system which are needed to complete the audit financials.

4. Student Trustee Report

There was no Student Trustee report.

5. Committee and Affiliation Reports

Academic & Student Success Committee

Committee Chair Trustee Tony Colón reported that the Academic and Student Success Committee met on December 18. The committee reviewed and endorsed several curriculum changes that appear on the January Consent agenda for approval to then be submitted to SUNY. The committee meeting concluded with an update on behavioral intervention teams and teams' work at the college.

Facilities & Campus Safety Committee

Committee Chair Trustee Dana Jerrard reported that the Facilities and Campus Safety Committee met on December 19. The committee reviewed facilities and public safety updates and received an introduction by the new Executive Director of Public Safety, Bryan Coromato. The committee then discussed the land easement between the Utica City School District and the College. Further, current and upcoming capital projects and the master plan update were reviewed. The meeting concluded with a timeline to review and update Board Policy Section V Electronic & Physical Resources as well as a new policy proposal around flag procedures. The flag policy will be further vetted and reviewed by the college's compliance officer, county attorney, and shared governance process.

Foundation

Executive Director Deanna Ferro-Aurience reported the Building Better Futures campaign has

entered its third year, having launched in January 2023 with a goal of raising \$5 million to support campus enhancements, program development, student funding, and other institutional priorities. To date, \$3.31 million has been secured, with the Institutional Advancement team continuing to refine strategies to reach the full campaign goal.

With the upcoming Science and Technology building, efforts will focus on securing naming opportunities and sponsorships. The team will actively engage Foundation Board members in cultivating and stewarding relationships with local businesses, alumni, and community leaders. Upcoming events, including hospitality program luncheons, alumni panels, and a Comets game suite event, will serve as opportunities to strengthen donor engagement.

Increasing Foundation Board involvement remains a priority, with further discussion planned at the next Board meeting. Additionally, the team is enhancing alumni engagement through social media, email outreach, and targeted donor research. This fiscal year, the annual fund campaign has welcomed 20 first-time alumni donors, contributing a total of \$2,080.

Executive Director Ferro-Aurience concluded her report with a Foundation financial update stating that the Foundation has approximately \$10,207,154 in the Strategic Financial Services portfolio. Upcoming Foundation meetings include:

- MVCC Foundation Executive Committee – January 23
- Alumni Awards Luncheon – January 23
- MVCC Foundation Board – January 30

ACCT/NYCCT

Trustee Colón provided an update on recent national developments impacting community colleges through ACCT:

- The House passed a bill restricting transgender athletes from participating in women's sports.
- The Biden Administration's Title IX rule protecting LGBTQ+ students was declared unconstitutional, which will have significant implications on how colleges handle sexual misconduct cases and institutional policies.
- Initial reports of declining enrollment were inaccurate—freshman enrollment is actually increasing.
- The Biden Administration has forgiven over \$183 billion in student loans, benefiting more than 5 million borrowers.
- The Community College Workforce Alliance has partnered with several institutions to support workforce training initiatives.
- Department of Energy grants have assisted community colleges in installing solar panels and upgrading lighting, improving energy efficiency and student learning environments.
- The new House and Senate education committees have been announced, influencing future legislation relevant to community colleges.
- The ACCT National Legislative Summit will be held February 9-12 in Washington, D.C.

Chair Waters then provided an update on NYCCT activities:

- NYCCT will launch another AI Agility Challenge with Todd McLees, beginning Monday, January 27.

- President VanWagoner and several trustees attended the NYCCT Legislative Reception in Albany, where productive discussions took place with legislative representatives. Speakers included the SUNY Chancellor and Steve Acquario from the Association of Counties. The new Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee also attended and spoke.
- Senator Joe Griffo is now the ranking member of the Senate Higher Education Committee, and NYCCT looks forward to working with him in this role.
- The Governor's Executive Budget was released yesterday. Prior to its release, the SUNY Chancellor indicated that the proposed \$30 million for high-need workforce upskilling would be included; however, the final budget only contains funding for free tuition, fees, and books for students ages 25-55. NYCCT is further reviewing this development.
- The NYCCT Executive Team recently met with Maria Hernandez (Deputy Secretary of Education) and Danielle McMullen (Assistant Secretary of Education) to discuss the free tuition, fees, and books, with an official summary expected by the end of the week.
- NYCCT is exploring a strategic partnership with CUNY leadership to position SUNY and CUNY community colleges as leaders in AI education for businesses and community partners statewide. This initiative aligns with the Governor's New York State Emerging Technology Report on AI literacy, released last March.

SUNY/NYCCAP

President VanWagoner reported that the \$30 million request to SUNY for operating support for high-demand programs appears to have been incorporated into the Governor's Free Community College proposal, announced in the State of the State Address. However, it remains unclear whether this initiative will provide direct operating support for institutions or follow a scholarship model similar to Excelsior.

Further guidance from SUNY is expected in the coming days, clarifying the impact of various Executive Orders and their implications for community colleges.

6. President's Report

President VanWagoner recognized Professor Aaron Fried for his leadership and hard work in organizing this year's Data Summit.

He also provided an update on MVCC's ON RAMP application, which was recently submitted. The long-term goal is to secure \$20 million in capital funding and \$20 million in operating funds over three years. The initial application submitted seeks to obtain the ON RAMP designation, which would award \$300,000 for planning. This designation is expected to be announced within the next month, along with three additional awards. The proposal envisions MVCC as the ON RAMP training center for Semiconductor and Advanced Manufacturing, utilizing the existing Science and Technology Building on the Utica Campus once the new Science and Technology building opens.

Additionally, MVCC has been selected as one of eight colleges to participate in the Achieving the Dream Racial Equity Leadership Academy, furthering the college's commitment to student success.

President VanWagoner then presented this month's Key Performance Indicator (KPI), focusing on MVCC's commitment to student success:

- **Graduation Rates:** The three-year graduation rate increased from 33% to 35% in 2022, with preliminary 2024 data from the SUNY Data Warehouse indicating a rise to 38%.
- **Persistence Momentum:** Fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall persistence trends continue to be monitored.
- **Credit Hours at Graduation:** The average number of credit hours at graduation has remained steady over the past year.

MVCC is also seeking funding through Jobs for the Future to collaborate with Burning Glass Institute on developing a framework to track post-completion success for non-traditional and Free Fast Track students.

College Senate

Senate Chair Christine Miller reported that Senate Advisory has broken into temporary taskforce groups to improve workflows in the following areas: committees and councils, senate by-laws, and development of a Senator survey assessment. College Senate will hold its first meeting of the spring semester on February 4.

7. Vice President Reports

The Board had no questions regarding the written reports submitted by the Vice Presidents. Administrative Services was spotlighted with an update provided by Information Technology's Mary Jane Parry and Chuck Hendricks along with the Director of Compliance, Anne Nolan around the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA). GLBA requires that appropriate safeguards are created to address risks identified in the annual Risk Assessment, in which MVCC controls are evaluated against the National Institute of Standards and Technology cyber security standards. The presentation reviewed the Risk Assessment with the Board, what the College has done to test and identify risk, how risks are being prevented and anticipated, and future initiatives Information Technology will be implementing to further mitigate and anticipate risk.

8. Discussion Items

February Board Retreat Agenda

The Board reviewed the tentative agenda and discussed possible retreat locations.

Special Counsel Resolution

Chair Waters provided background into Consent Agenda Item 9d. Special Counsel: Ingerman Smith, LLP. On November 12, 2024 the SUNY Board of Trustees adopted a resolution regarding "Strengthening the Community College Presidential Search Process and Ensuring Transparency and Accountability" amending the SUNY Guidelines for Presidential Searches for Community Colleges which infringes on the authority and autonomy of community college boards of trustees. To keep local control of community colleges, it was recommended that each community college adopt a resolution allowing the retainment of special counsel to be able to enforce, defend, and possibly litigate matters to protect the local control against the SUNY resolution. The retainment of special counsel will

be paid for out of NYCCT dues and result in no additional cost to colleges. As NYCCT is an association, there may be an issue with legal standing in court as NYCCT does not conduct presidential searches nor does it get engaged in employee contracts with individual presidents. Thereby, it is important to have each community college sign on individually as plaintiffs. To date, eight community colleges have passed a resolution to retain special counsel. There is no cost to Mohawk Valley Community College other than the current dues we pay to NYCCT. Further, in the retainer agreement there is a clause that if at any point or for any reason we don't feel comfortable with the path for which this is leading, we can pull out of the agreement and go out of the suit. There was no further discussion.

9. **Consent Agenda**

Attachment a. Minutes of December 16, 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting

Attachment b. Treasurer's Report

Attachment c. Board Policy Revision: 1001. Members of the Board

Attachment d. Special Counsel: Ingerman Smith, LLP

Attachment e. Amend Strategic Framework: Improve Operational Excellence

Attachment f. School of Art Microcredentials

Attachment g. School of Business & Hospitality Microcredentials

Attachment h. Excluded Administrative Staff Appointments

Attachment i. Amend Staffing Plan: Andrea Alban, Instructor School of Art

Attachment j. Tennille Knoop, Instructor School of Art

Attachment k. Brett LaSalle, Assistant Director of Facilities and Operations

Attachment l. Fengjiao Liu, Payroll Analyst

Attachment m. Maureen Murphy, Director of Community & Workforce Development

Attachment n. Amend Staffing Plan: Kasey Penoyer, Assistant Dean of the School of Health Sciences and Director of Dental Hygiene

Attachment o. Amend Staffing Plan: Carrie Putelo, Coordinator – Center for Accelerated Pathways

Attachment p. Board Policy Revision: 3015. Title IX

Motion to approve Consent Agenda Items 9a-9p was made by Trustee William Calli and seconded by Trustee Camille Kahler and approved by the following vote:

Ayes 8, Nay 0, Absent 2

Wendy Waters – Aye

Dana Jerrard – Aye

Frank Dubeck (remote participation) – Aye

Anthony (Tony) Colón – Aye

David Mathis – Aye

Elaine Falvo (remote participation) – Aye

William S. Calli – Aye

Camille Kahler - Aye

10. **Adjournment**

Motion was made by Trustee Tony Colón and seconded by Trustee William Calli to adjourn the meeting at 5:48 p.m. Unanimously approved.