MINUTES OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING

**DISTRICT NO. 537**

**RICHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**February 18, 2025**

# CONVENING OF THE MEETING

Call to Order

The regular meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. Tuesday, February 18, 2025, in the Board Room of Richland Community College by Chairwoman Carr. Chairwoman Carr also recited the College Vision, Mission, and Core Values.

## Roll Call

Trustees Present: Tom Ritter, Dan Diskey, Dale Colee, Ben Andreas, Bishop Wayne Dunning, Vicki Carr, Marcy Rood, and Brayden Thomas

Trustees Absent: None

Also present: Dr. Cris Valdez and other staff members

# MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 21, 2025, had been distributed to the Board prior to this meeting.

Ritter moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 21, 2025. Andreas seconded. Voice vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.

# APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Dr. Valdez and the Board of Trustees welcomed Valerie Wells of the Herald and Review and Brittany Harrison from the Boys and Girls Club.

 **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

##### Personnel Update

**New Employees**

**Name Position Start Date**

Kendra Hentz Administrative Assistant/CEJA Data Coordinator 01/13/2025

Julie Rambo Executive Administrative Assistant 01/13/2025

 Academic and Student Success

Anna Shapland Instructional Technology Specialist 01/13/2025

**Changes**

**Name Position Start Date**

April Ingram EnRich Director of Workforce Equity to 01/02/2025

 Executive Director Workforce

Gina Taylor Director of Essential Skills to 01/02/2025

 Executive Director of EnRich

Elizabeth Weber PT Nursing Adjunct to 01/13/2025

 Temporary FT Practical Nursing Instructor

Jodi Schoen Perkins Coordinator to Grants Coordinator 01/02/2025

**Retirements, Resignations, and Terminations**

**Name Position Last Day**

Gordon Gurley FT FacultyBiology 01/14/2025

# SPECIAL REPORTS

**REPORT OF ICCTA**

Session handouts were shared with the Trustees from the ACCT Legislative Summit that was held in Washington D.C. There was discussion on The Enrollment Picture for Community Colleges and Executive Orders: A Legal Perspective for Community Colleges. Chairwoman Carr encouraged Trustees to attend the next ICCTA meeting in Lisle, IL on March 14-15. 2025

**MONITORING REPORT**

Courtney Carson presented the Monitoring Report - EnRich

**FACULTY REPORT**

None

**REPORT OF STUDENT TRUSTEE**

Student Trustee Brayden Thomas presented the Student Leadership Council Report.

**FOUNDATION REPORT**

Julie Melton reported on top accomplishment, projects in progress and new opportunities on the horizon.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RECOMMENDATION FOR TENURE**

A recommendation was made to the Board of Trustees for faculty members being recommended for Tenure, as presented.

Molly Ploessl, Instructor, Surgical Technology (AAS, Richland Community College). Date of employment in tenure-track position with the College May 2021.

Bradley Curry, Instructor, Engineering Technology, (BS, MS, Eastern Illinois University), Date of employment in tenure-track position with the College August 2022.

Ethan Stephanson, Assistant Professor, English (BA, Eastern Illinois University; MA, University of Northern Colorado; PhD, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale). Date of employment in tenure-track position with the College is August 2022.

Jennifer Bollinger, Instructor, Health Information Technology (BS, MS, Illinois State University). Date of employment in tenure-track with the College is August 2022.

**Diskey moved to approve the recommendation for tenure, as presented. Thomas seconded. Roll call vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.**

**BOARD POLICY 4.6.12 – SECOND READING**

 In compliance with Illinois Public Act 103-871 (effective January 1, 2025), Richland Community College must adopt a policy allowing students serving in the National Guard or Reserve components to submit missed classwork and complete assignments resulting from military obligations, such as required drills or other service commitments.

The attached Board Policy 4.6.12 ensures compliance with state mandates and provides clear procedures for students to notify faculty of their service obligations, adjust deadlines as needed, and maintain flexibility while upholding academic standards. The policy also includes provisions for training faculty and staff to ensure consistent implementation and support across the college.

This initiative reflects Richland’s commitment to supporting our military-affiliated students and their success, recognizing the unique challenges they face. We recommend your review and approval of this policy to ensure our institution is prepared to meet these requirements and maintain alignment with state legislation.

No changes have been made since the first reading.

**RECOMMENDATION TO PURCHASE VR WELDER**

A recommendation was made to the Board of Trustees that would authorize the College Administration to purchase one (1) Vertex 360 Compact VR Welder from Airweld in Decatur, Illinois for a total cost of $31,964.46, as presented.

**Bishop Dunning moved to authorize the College Administration to purchase one (1) Vertex 360 Compact VR Welder from Airweld in Decatur, Illinois for a total cost of $31,964.46, as presented. Andreas seconded. Roll call vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.**

**RECOMMENDATION FOR CONTINUANCE**

A recommendation was made to the Board of Trustees for the following faculty will be entering the second year as tenure-track full-time faculty: Derek Clem, Instructor of Art, Sean Dial, Welding Instructor, William Gubbins, Engineering Technology Instructor, Dr. Jim Jones, Business Professor, Dr. Melissa Scircle, Professor Psychology and Jami Windhorn-Obermeyer, Instructor of Nurse Assistant. In addition, the following faculty will be entering into the third year as tenure-track, full-time faculty: Linday Bridgman, Instructor, Practical Nursing, Laura Philips, Instructor, Mathematics, Georg Strohl, Automotive Technology Instructor, Jennier Thomas, Instructor, English, Schuy Weishaar, Instructor, English, as presented.

**Bishop Dunning moved to approve the continuance of Derek Clem, Instructor of Art, Sean Dial, Welding Instructor, William Gubbins, Engineering Technology Instructor, Dr. Jim Jones, Business Professor, Dr. Melissa Scircle, Professor Psychology and Jami Windhorn-Obermeyer, Instructor of Nurse Assistant, Linday Bridgman, Instructor, Practical Nursing, Laura Philips, Instructor, Mathematics, Georg Strohl, Automotive Technology Instructor, Jennier Thomas, Instructor, English, Schuy Weishaar, Instructor, English, as presented. Rood seconded. Roll call vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.**

**TUITION RECOMMENDATION FOR FY2026**

A recommendation was made to the Board of Trustees to set the Academic Year 2025-2026 tuition per credit hour for the standard in-district tuition rate at $145.00, the in-state out-of-district tuition rate at $346.00, the out-of-state tuition rate at $555.00, the chargeback rate at $376.00, the online tuition rate at $181.00, the variable tuition rate for designated Health Professions classes at $173.00, the standard fee at $14.00 per credit hour, and reauthorize the practice of charging in-district tuition to students who live out of district and are attending an in-district educational institution, as presented.

**Bishop Dunning moved to set the Academic Year 2025-2026 tuition per credit hour for the standard in-district tuition rate at $145.00, the in-state out-of-district tuition rate at $346.00, the out-of-state tuition rate at $555.00, the chargeback rate at $376.00, the online tuition rate at** **$181.00, the variable tuition rate for designated Health Professions classes at $173.00, the standard fee at $14.00 per credit hour, and reauthorize the practice of charging in-district tuition to students who live out of district and are attending an in-district educational institution, as presented. Rood seconded. Roll call vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.**

**FY2026 GENERAL COURSE AND FEES**

A recommendation was made to the Board of Trustees to approve the fee schedule to be applied starting with the Summer 2025 semester, as presented.

**Andreas moved to approve the fee schedule to be applied starting with the Summer 2025 semester, as presented. Bishop Dunning seconded. Roll call vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.**

**RECOMMENDATION FOR PROMOTION**

A recommendation was made to the Board of Trustees for promotions in rank for the following faculty members: Jennifer Bollinger – Instructor to Assistant Professor, Matt Cardinal – Assistant Professor to Associate Professor, Dr. Christopher Merli – Associate Professor to Professor, and Dr. Ethan Stephenson – Assistant Professor to Associate Professor, as presented.

**Thomas moved to approve promotions in rank for the following faculty members: Jennifer Bollinger – Instructor to Assistant Professor, Matt Cardinal – Assistant Professor to Associate Professor, Dr. Christopher Merli – Associate Professor to Professor, and Dr. Ethan Stephenson – Assistant Professor to Associate Professor, as presented. Diskey seconded. Roll call vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.**

FINANCIAL REPORT

BILLS AND TRAVEL EXPENDITURES PAYABLE

The January 2025 Treasurer’s Report and Financial Statement were presented to and discussed with the Board.

A list of bills paid in the amount of $2,464,478.36 for January 2025 was distributed to the Board prior to the meeting.

Bishop Dunning moved to ratify the January bills and travel expenditures paid and approve the Financial Statement subject to audit. Rood seconded. Roll call vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

* President Valdez reported to the Board of Trustees that we are going to direct the Monitoring Reports to encompass the following: Align with the Ends Statements in Board Policy, include an Executive Summary in the Board Packet, and keep the presentations to 5-7 minutes.
* The College received a “Dear Colleague” letter from the Department of Education. That letter advised institutions to: (1) ensure that their policies and actions comply with existing civil rights law; (2) cease all efforts to circumvent prohibitions on the use of race by relying on proxies or other indirect means to accomplish such ends; and (3) cease all reliance on third-party contractors, clearinghouses, or aggregators that are being used by institutions in an effort to circumvent prohibited uses of race. Richland does not feel that they are out of compliance. Other institutions have drafted letters of explanation to their Faculty, Staff, and Students. Dr. Valdez will do the same.

ITEMS FROM THE BOARD

* Ben Andrea congratulated Dr. Chris Merli on his promotion. He also reiterated how proud he is of the work being done at Richland Community College.
* Bishop Dunning requested that Faculty and Staff nominate our colleagues for state and national awards. He also wanted to reiterate that in a climate of uncertainty, that we must be thankful for grants, resources and guidance we receive from out state and federal officials.

 **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Andreas moved to enter into closed session for the purpose of discussing individual employment, as specified in section 2 (c) (1); for the purpose of discussing collective negation matters, as specified in Section 2 (c) (2); for discussion of purchase or lease of real property, as specified n Section 2 (c) (5); for discussion of pending or probable litigation, as specified in Section 2 (c) (16) of the open Meeting Act. Bishop Dunning seconded. Voice vote being all ayes, Chairwoman Carr declared the motion carried.**

Meeting convened into closed session at 6:51 p.m.

Meeting reconvened into open session at 7:31 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Diskey moved and Bishop Dunning seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

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Benjamin Andreas, Secretary