

**METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS'  
MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 2, 2022**

A meeting of the Board of Governors of the Metropolitan Community College Area was called to order at 9:00 a.m. at Sarpy Center, Room 138, 9110 Giles Road, La Vista, NE, 68128.

Chair Uhe asked the Recording Secretary to the Board to call the roll:

**Members Present:**

Erin Feichtinger  
Adam Gotschall  
Steve Grabowski, Treasurer  
Ron Hug, *arrived 9:07 a.m.*  
Phillip Klein  
Linda McDermitt, Secretary  
Maureen Monahan, Assistant Secretary  
Fred Uhe, Chair

**Members Absent:**

Brad Ashby  
Angela Monegain  
Zach Reinhardt, Assistant Vice Chair

**Also Present:** Randy Schmailzl, College President

**1c—Pledge of Allegiance**

Uhe led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Agenda Item 1d—Announcement of Posted Location of Open Meetings Act**

The Chair reported that a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act had been posted on the room doors.

**Agenda Item 1e—Recording of Notice of Public Meeting**

The Chair reported on the Notice of Public Meeting and stated the following:

1. *Proof of Publication, pursuant to Policy 10503 of the Board of Governors, in the form of an affidavit of an employee of the Omaha World-Herald, a newspaper of general circulation within Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties, Nebraska to the effect that notice of this meeting was published in that newspaper on March 23, 2022, and on the Omaha World-Herald website Omaha.com from March 23 – 29, 2022.*

2. *Affidavit of College employee Julie Lanxon, to the effect that a copy of the published Notice of Meeting was transmitted to each member of the Board of Governors, on March 21, 2022, in a manner specified by Policy 10503 of the Board of Governors.*

*The notice of the meeting stated that an agenda for this meeting, kept continually current, was available for public inspection at the principal office of the Board of Governors, Building No. 30, 30th and Fort Streets, Omaha, Nebraska, by making prior arrangements by calling 531-622-2415.*

## **Agenda Item 2—Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## **Agenda Item 3—Discussion**

### **Agenda Item 3a—Pre-planning Process – Stan Horrell, Director of Campus Planning & Sustainability, and Hank Robinson, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness**

Schmailzl reminded the Board that this pre-planning process is an extension of a master planning process used since 2003. The first-generation plan led to the Connector Building on South Omaha Campus and the Institute for the Culinary Arts building on the Fort Omaha Campus. The second-generation plan was led by JJR and resulted in new buildings and redevelopment of the Fort Omaha Campus, purchase of property in Sarpy County, and re-establishment of the trades as a center of excellence at MCC. The College is at a crossroads and ready to plan for the future.

#### **Part A**

Hank Robinson, Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, guided the Board through a slide-by-slide discussion about looking to the future and planning for demand. Part of the planning process is understanding and anticipating the direction that higher education is going and understanding how MCC's enrollments may fluctuate around different programs and different groups of students.

Seat count enrollments since 2016/2017 for credit and noncredit; remote and on-campus  
Robinson pointed out enrollment trends since 2016/17 have stayed relatively consistent and indicated that online and on-campus numbers flipped during COVID. MCC is recovering for-credit course in-person, on-campus enrollment. Key questions were: Have we established a new baseline for credit online enrollments, due to increased capacity, or will the trend reverse because the capacity was not built even though the demand has been demonstrated? What will drive students back to MCC? What will MCC need to do to adjust to the new post-pandemic reality?

Discussion ensued on enrollment trends, factors affecting enrollment, and MCC points of pride. Key words that came out during the discussion were value, affordable, accessible, flexible, and adaptable.

Uhe stated the decisions the Board makes over the next couple of years will impact the College for years to come. Robinson noted the number of high school students graduating in Nebraska is expected to gradually decline in the coming years, but the unknown is how the population growth in Sarpy and Douglas counties will impact high

schools. Feichtinger inquired about the data on people coming back to reskill or upskill given the economy. Gottschall inquired about how K-12 schools promote dual enrollment opportunities and asserted community colleges are not being promoted to students with the same emphasis as four-year institutions. He added there needs to be an emphasis on communication with K-12 schools. Hug raised the issue about K-12 educators being aware of opportunities for students and suggested having educators come spend time on campus to experience the programs and learn about the related careers. Feichtinger shared a story about a family member who will be graduating from the T-Ten program, which created a culture shift for the family, away from exclusive emphasis on four-year institutions. Gottschall added employers often require more education for new hires (i.e., bachelor's degrees) than is needed. Klein underscored MCC's ability to quickly react to community needs with new programs. Grabowski added that MCC's affordability needs to be underscored, tuition rates kept low, and scholarships emphasized.

### Trends in higher education

Robinson led a discussion on environmental factors affecting MCC services and enrollments.

The rest of the world is grooming people to expect instantaneous content on demand with little cost. "Sage on stage" instructional delivery is no longer attractive for today's learners. People expect asynchronous learning at low cost. Education is not one and done; it is now lifelong. MCC is positioned well to support students on a lifelong continuum. The Path Forward initiative allows MCC to look at students across their life span and develop a plan to help students get to the next phase. The T-Ten program is an example of students coming here from other parts of the country. Uhe stated that education and employment are changing lots of things and MCC needs to figure out how to attract students. McDermitt feels that the development of Sarpy and Elkhorn are important to MCC's growth. Grabowski added that paying competitive wages is important and educating employers on this issue may be needed. Monahan said that MCC provides an education that takes a person from minimum wage to a liveable wage. Gottschall added that MCC's accessibility and flexibility with the class schedule and availability of online classes made a difference for him as a non-traditional student. Robinson noted that research shows that schools that saw enrollment increases in the fall of 2020 had begun investing in online education ten years earlier. Monahan mentioned talking to students earlier on in their K-12 education and those in the foster care system. Path Forward is working on expanding supports and career exploration opportunities. Feichtinger stated MCC is uniquely positioned to offer supports and respond to community needs. The 180RAP (re-entry assistance) program is an excellent example of MCC being responsive to a community's needs and providing supports.

### Making the case for on-campus education

Robinson asked how MCC makes the case for in-person, on-site education. The reasons he shared were:

1. Connects students to equipment that is not available at home
2. An environment like the one that students will work in
3. Offers simulation systems for students to practice with

4. Reintroduces professional social interaction
5. Peer support
6. Accustoms students to socializing in an uncomfortable environment

Board members offered additional reasons:

- Allows students to connect with other people and learn compassion and empathy
- Provides credibility for students when engaging with employers
- Name recognition and how MCC continues to build relationships with businesses
- Students appreciate and benefit from sharing physical space and time together
- Reinforces the importance of personal relationships in opening job opportunities

Feichtinger asked if MCC has data on the number of people outside of the four-county area taking MCC courses. Robinson said the data is currently being pulled and reviewed.

Robinson led a brief discussion on synchronous learning versus asynchronous learning and the barriers students can face with in-person classes. Feichtinger noted that we need to make it worthwhile for students and make them feel respected, that space and equipment is for their success. Robinson added the challenge is to meet goals for the community. Grabowski noted that MCC has planned strategically for new systems and facilities that have allowed a lot to be done, citing the wide area network and the Fort Omaha Campus central utility plant as examples.

#### Hints of the future for MCC enrollments

Robinson shared hints of the future for MCC enrollment. Schmailzl is hopeful to gather \$15 million over three years through new state funding for dual enrollment programming for high school aged students. When added to already allocated funds, the new funding would provide about \$8 million a year to cover dual enrollment tuition across the state. MCC sees this as an opportunity to ensure all students can benefit from this excellent program, without concerns for cost; we expect dual enrollments to increase as students and their parents take advantage of the wide array of options to take MCC classes while in high school. The biggest concern is the availability of faculty and equipment, so Academic Affairs personnel are already preparing in case the legislature passes the bill.

#### **Part B**

Stan Horrell, Director of Campus Planning and Sustainability, provided an overview of the pre-planning progress that will result in a report for Schmailzl this summer, which will begin a series of discussions on strategies. The report will focus on resiliency and will study the past to figure out how to move MCC forward. Horrell echoed Grabowski's earlier comment that investing in wide area fiber optics was extremely important and is an example of the kinds of investments and planning the Board is talking about today.

The pre-planning process focuses on infrastructure, data, internal planning, and input from all of MCC's stakeholders. While all MCC locations will be considered, Horrell shared images of the MCC locations that will receive focused review during the process.

At the Applied Technology Center (ATC), automotive technology has moved to South Omaha Campus and fire science has moved inside of ATC. Approximately fifty parking spots will be added to the north so students can avoid walking through the building to get to their outside classes. The parking lot bid will come to the Board in a month or two.

Elkhorn Valley Campus (EVC) is having access control added as part of the SAFE program. Transportation continues to be an issue. There is great potential to partner with high schools at this location. Opportunities for expansion exist.

The Fremont location is a three-story building with classrooms and laboratories, and MCC is looking at how this location might factor into dual enrollment. The community just passed a bond issue for the Fremont High school, which will open possibilities for MCC participation in career and technical education (CTE) training.

MCC needs to figure out how the existing Sarpy Center factors into dual enrollment and the new Sarpy land.

The new Sarpy property is 168 acres. Horrell presented three preliminary development options to help the Board start thinking about the land. The land value cannot be estimated until it is platted, which is in process. The City of Papillion has authority on this property. Horrell stressed this is a preliminary study to position MCC for decision making.

Grabowski inquired where the main access points would be. Access points from Hwy 50 and Hwy 370 were determined by the state and are already cut in. Schmailzl added the stoplights and entryways are complete.

Gottschall asked about the future planning for fire science and utility line programs. Schmailzl said MCC has been in discussions with the property owners north of ATC, along with trying to find a place for a small equipment training program to operate.

Gottschall asked how much space EVC has for expansion? Schmailzl stated there is room to expand. This location has potential to house needed programs such as horticulture, artistic welding, turf science, veterinary assistance, and animal care, not as a site for big buildings. Schmailzl added that 5000 students attend classes at EVC, so MCC is there to stay.

Feichtinger asked what the community is saying their needs are in Sarpy County. Uhe replied that the key to this property is ownership. When one looks at what is happening around the land, there is Amazon Robotics Center, Google, Facebook/Meta, and more development happening in the area. A new college campus has not been built in Nebraska in 50 years. Feichtinger asked how long it would take to develop a campus and what the projected growth is for the area. Uhe stated that workforce development will be the key component to grow the area and meet the demand. Grabowski stated a sewer line being put in will be key and make Sarpy County grow and increase the ability for MCC to attract people from surrounding communities. Horrell said this property is strategically placed in the service area and halfway between Omaha and Lincoln, giving

MCC the opportunity to revive a regional transportation scenario and be a player in conversations around regional transportation. Program possibilities for this site could include advanced diesel, autonomous vehicle technology, and EMT training for help in emergency rooms. The sky is the limit.

Schmailzl turned the conversation to things no one else in the state of Nebraska is doing.

- What will a college campus look like in 25 years?
- What about residential housing on the backside?
- What about a working hotel that could serve as a hospitality training center and is built on a partnership?
- What about being a lease owner of amenities such as a convenience store?
- What national partnerships exist that could be at this location?
- What about the concept of gaming or virtual reality training as it fits within business or manufacturing?

Monahan asked Schmailzl if the community will support MCC and whether people with funding can assist. Schmailzl provided several ideas for potential partnerships.

Gottschall suggested MCC focus on the business management aspect of training – i.e., make the entrepreneur program a marquee program where training is not just about how to be a good employee, but also about how to be a good employer.

### **Agenda Item 3b—2022-23 Budget Development Process**

Brenda Schumacher, College Business Officer, presented an overview of the annual budget process and a breakdown of the finances. The auxiliary and federal budgeted expenditures increased in FY22 because contingencies were built up. Schmailzl reviewed the College's property tax history. He noted that in 1999-2000 and 2000/2001 MCC negotiated a temporary "buy-back" of property tax, which lowered the College levy and replaced lost revenue with excess funds from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Schumacher said non-resident tuition has always been calculated at 50% more than the resident rate. Budget input is an online process and has opened for FY23. All requests are tied back to internal planning, so the budget team knows the reason for the ask.

Feichtinger asked when the best time is for Board members to engage with the administration on the budget. Grabowski suggested the best time is when the budget book comes out. He said to read it, digest it, and contact Schmailzl right away with any questions. If he cannot answer he will connect the Board member with someone who can. Feichtinger asked if MCC is transparent with taxpayers, which Schmailzl affirmed.

Uhe mentioned that Ashby has expressed interest in pursuing a property tax cut, but he was not able attend today to discuss the topic. Uhe added he thought personnel expenditures would need to increase over the next several years.

Gottschall stated he asked the Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom to scrutinize last year's budget, noting that he disagrees with their findings. He said when asked about the College budget he explains MCC's value. He asked Schmailzl if MCC is ready for

another housing bubble. He explained that MCC has worked hard to keep taxes low when they could have been raised, but the best has been made of it. MCC's tax limit is 11.25 cents. Each penny generates approximately \$7-8 million. If MCC had increased taxes years ago we would be better situated. As a result, MCC uses the general fund reserve to fill the gap. Donors respond positively when MCC can show them the reserve as assurance that MCC is good for our portion of any partnership.

Klein stressed the important relationship the College has with the donor community. Feichtinger concurred. McDermitt emphasized the importance of public relations.

### **Agenda Item 3c—2022 Legislative Update**

LB873 began as a priority bill designed to remove community colleges' property taxing authority. The bill has subsequently been gutted and transformed into a new bill known as, "amended 2022 tax bill". The amended bill is being modeled after the K-12 school tax credit system which was passed in 2021. This approach returns a portion of property taxes paid via state income tax credits. It provides mechanisms to lower property taxes via state tax credits, which will increase over the next five years.

Schmailzl stated that we have been working hard to help legislators understand MCC needs more state money to keep property tax rates low. The funding formula is not fair to MCC and does not provide an appropriate portion of statewide aid. The amended bill would provide local taxpayers dollar-for-dollar relief.

Using a dynamic pivot table, Schmailzl demonstrated the gradual tax savings local taxpayers would experience if LB873 passes. In year one (2022), LB873 would send \$50 million of property tax relief statewide to people who pay community college taxes. In year five (2026), the maximum amount will be \$195 million. At that point, the net effect would be that local taxpayers could recover eight cents of MCC's current 9.5-cent tax levy on their state income tax return, while the full 9.5 cents in revenue would stay in the four-county area under local control. The bill is currently under-enrollment and review.

Uhe noted this is a way to offer tax relief. A suggestion was made to make sure the local taxpayers know about this tremendous value, if LB873 passes. Monahan reminded the group that legislatures can do what they want, so we need to proceed with caution. Schmailzl stated he hopes this plan will stay in place through 2027 as written.

LB1014 is the ARPA (federal COVID relief funding) bill and includes dual enrollment. Schmailzl anticipates some roadblocks, including possible vetoes. Funding would be awarded based on actual enrollments. Whether MCC would participate in the north and south Omaha workforce training ARPA funding remains to be seen.

LB1112 will require high school students to complete at least one five-credit high school course in computer science and technology prior to graduation. MCC has hired one faculty member to work with high schools. MCC will benefit from dual enrollment funding to support IT training requirements in high schools.

State Budget – Schmailzl presented a chart that showed the increase in state funding and dual enrollment funding for the biennium budget.

**Agenda Item 3d—District Snapshot Data – Hank Robinson, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness**

Board members received a breakdown of data by districts in the board packet. Contact Hank Robinson with questions.

**Agenda Item 3e—Nebraska Educational Attainment Goal**

For the past five years Schmailzl and other education leaders statewide have been quietly trying to help the state understand that it will be difficult to improve numbers and quality education if there is not a goal. Approximately 53% of Nebraskans between the ages of 24 and 34 have an educational credential. Nebraska’s goal by 2030 is to have 70% of residents with educational credentials. Educational credentials would include any competency certificates and non-credit and credit certificates awarded by a community college that qualify people for jobs. This is a no-cost proposal but helps MCC have leverage with the legislature regarding education. The goal is to get as many people an education credential as possible, in order to position them for workforce success.

**Agenda Item 3f—Board Member Topics of Interest**

Uhe stated that if a person has a topic for a future board meeting to email him.

Monahan asked the Board if anyone would be interested in attending and presenting at ACCT in New York City this October. McDermitt stated this is a good thing to do if we have a pertinent topic. Grabowski concurred, adding it needs to be a timely topic and not a topic ACCT wants done. Schmailzl added there are lots of topics, such as Path Forward and other projects the College is working on that can presented on.

**Agenda Item 4—Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Gottchall moved to adjourn the meeting; McDermitt seconded the motion.

Feichtinger, yes  
Gotschall, yes  
Grabowski, yes  
Klein, yes  
McDermitt, yes  
Monahan, yes  
Uhe, yes

Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.







Date: March 23, 2022

**Affidavit of Publication**

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
PO BOX 3777  
OMAHA, NE 68103

Date	Category	Description	Ad Size	Total Cost
03/29/2022	Legal Notices	NOTICE OF MEETING Notice is hereby given that	1 x 0 L	169.25

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Governors of the Metropolitan Community College Area will hold a Workshop on Saturday, April 2, 2022, commencing at 9:00 o'clock A.M. at Sarpy Center, Room 138, 9110 Giles Road, La Vista, Sarpy County, Nebraska, which meeting will be open to the public. An agenda for such meeting, kept continually current, is readily available for public inspection at the principal office of said Board of Governors, 30th & Fort Streets, Building #30, Omaha, Nebraska, during normal business hours. To make arrangements for public inspection call 531-622-2415.

Fred Uhe  
Chair, Board of Governors  
ZNEZ

**Publisher of the  
World Herald**

I, (the undersigned) an authorized representative of the World Herald, a daily newspaper published in Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska; do certify that the annexed notice NOTICE OF MEETING Notice was published in said newspapers on the following dates:

03/23/2022

The First insertion being given ... 03/23/2022

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My Commission expires \_\_\_\_\_

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