

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING MINUTES
KASKASKIA COLLEGE - COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT 501
VANDALIA EDUCATION CENTER
THURSDAY – JULY 25, 2024**

WELCOME

Provost and Vice President of Instructional Services Julie Obermark opened the meeting at 12:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the Community Engagement Meeting.

Kaskaskia College Trustee Linda Stover was in attendance. Kaskaskia College Foundation Trustees in attendance were Ty Bates, Jay Jolliff, and Jack Johnston.

Kaskaskia College employees in attendance included Wendy Blythe, Michael Christensen, Cary Day, Jessica Foster, Terri Freeman, Sara Hanks, Colton Leidner, Julie Obermark, Karol Potter, Lisa Ring, Linda Stover, Dylan Whitten, Nathan Wilkins, Kylee Williams, and Amy Zanton.

Community members in attendance included Charles Barenfanger, Walter Barenfanger, Jessica Barker, Sarah Bauer, Bret Brosman, Heidi Cade, Mark Decker, Christian DiBerardino, Sally Emerick, Benjamin Frazier, Jennifer Garrison, Tara Hall, Jan Johnston, Amy Moore, LaTisha Paslay, Susan Petty, Megan Rose, Matt Rovenstine, Justin Rubin, Sadie Simon, Jill Tarkington, Dale Timmermann, and Marilyn Truit.

Media present at the meeting was Todd Stapleton of Cromwell Media.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Provost Obermark led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTIONS

Those in attendance introduced themselves.

STATE OF KASKASKIA COLLEGE UPDATE

ENROLLMENT UPDATE

Vice President of Student Services Amy Zanton shared the current Enrollment Credit Hour Report. For the same date compared to last year, Summer 2024 semester enrollment is up 8.3% in head count and 15.7% in credit hours. For the same date compared to last year, Fall 2024 enrollment is up 17.7% in head count and 16.4% in credit hours. The College has rebounded from the pandemic and continues to see increases in both head count and credit hours above pre-pandemic enrollment numbers. Two years ago, the College set a goal to reach the pre-pandemic 2019 (2018SU, 2018FA, 2019SP) total credit hours of 68,982. In 2024 (2023SU 2023FA, 2024SP) the College reached 70,554 credit hours surpassing that goal. Last year the College set a goal to increase by 1% the 3-year average of pre-pandemic credit hour totals and the College was able to surpass that average number by 8%.

NEW PROGRAMS UPDATE

Provost Obermark presented information on two recent programs added at the College, the transition of the Paramedicine Program to the Vandalia Education Center, and the addition of the art gallery on the Vandalia campus.

- The Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Technology Certificate program began last year with two students. This certificate was developed not only for students who have already taken several automotive college courses, but also for individuals who are already in the automotive workforce who need training with hybrid and electric vehicles. The program requires prerequisites. With funding assistance provided through the Illinois Green Economy Network, the Workforce Equity Initiative grant, and the Rev Up EV grant, the College has been able to renovate the Automotive Technology lab to a state-of-the-art facility to train students in automotive technology and in hybrid and electric vehicle technology. This new certificate program addresses the need for trained technicians in the workforce to work on electric vehicles owned by individuals in the district.
- The Precision Agriculture Certificate is a new 25-credit hour certificate program that will be offered beginning with the Fall 2025 semester (August 2025). This two-semester certificate was developed in response to identified industry need for skills and training specific to the growing field of precision agriculture. The need for students to be trained in a shorter period of time and available for the workforce was consideration given for the one-year certificate. Students will gain knowledge and skills in computer technology, global navigation satellite systems, agriculture mapping software, precision agriculture equipment, unmanned aerial systems, and agronomy. Students will earn their FFA drone license in the program.
- Dean of Health Sciences Lisa Ring presented information regarding the Paramedicine Program. During the Community Engagement Meeting at the Vandalia Education Center last year, some concerns were expressed regarding bringing programs to the Center. The College sat down and looked at what the College could do to expand offerings at this location. Due to the recognized community need for emergency medical personnel and increasing that workforce in this area, and the opportunity to expand the Paramedicine Program, the decision was made to move the Paramedicine Program to the Vandalia Education Center. The College hired a Paramedicine Program Coordinator in January who began the process of shifting the Paramedicine Program from the main campus to the Vandalia Education Center beginning with the Fall 2024 semester. The program went through an accreditation process and the Vandalia Education Center was approved as an additional site for the Paramedicine Program. There are currently seven active students enrolled in the program who will start full-time in August with the possibility of adding additional students. Provost Obermark added that feedback received during advisory board meetings two years ago identified the need to get these students trained and available for the workforce in a shorter period of time. A student can become a basic Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in eight weeks. A student can become a certified paramedic in one year. As requested by industry partners, the certificate program was reduced from two years to one year with students attending more classes during the day.

- The Alice Hudders Art Gallery opened at the Vandalia Education Center campus on April 30, 2024. Provost Obermark recognized the individuals present who were instrumental in bringing the gallery to fruition. Wendy Blythe, Director of the Vandalia Education Center, advised there have been two exhibitions at the gallery to date with local artists participating in the current exhibition. A new exhibition is planned for September. A traveling show will be making a stop in mid-October. Attendees were invited to walk through the art gallery after the meeting.

REVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Provost Obermark shared highlights from the President's Report to the Community provided to attendees and available on the College website under "From the President."

- The College did exceptional in the mid-cycle review and visit by the Higher Learning Commission, the College's accrediting body. During the 2019 accreditation visit, the College had areas of improvement. The College took action to address those areas. The HLC returned in April of this year and the College received a glowing review.
- The College has been involved in significant renovations on the main campus in the last two years. The contractors have finished Phase 2 of the renovations, and all areas involved in Phase 2 of the renovations will be ready for the start of the Fall semester in August. The renovations included the modernization of classrooms, student gathering areas, and labs along with upgrades to state-of-the-art technology. The improved technology allows the College the ability to offer hybrid classes with an instructor in the room and students participating remotely. New lighting and new HVAC systems have been installed in the renovated areas. The next major project will be the construction of a new Gymnasium. The bids for the project have been issued with the expectation for bids to be awarded in August.
- Through student surveys and informal focus groups, the need for a change in the way students were processed in the student services area was identified. Previously, students would have to go from department to department during the registration process which was inefficient and confusing to the students not familiar with the process. The College took that feedback into consideration when planning the renovations and used the opportunity to not only renovate the space, but to change the student services model all together. Student meeting rooms were constructed as part of the renovations. Now students are assigned to a room and staff from the different departments such as Admissions, Academic Counseling, and Financial Aid come to the student. The College has received very positive feedback from students who have gone through the new process.
- Mental health issues among students have increased substantially since the pandemic. The College received grant funds which allows the College to offer students access to an onsite licensed clinical professional counselor. The College also offers students mental health assistance through TimelyCare, an online platform that provides students with virtual mental health counseling and resources with self-guided tools to help students with mental health issues. The platform also offers students access to peer committees through an online venue.
- The Kaskaskia College Mobile Manufacturing Lab is a mobile trailer that brings education and training to the communities in the College district. The trailer has been equipped with tools and machinery for the trades and will be transported to junior highs and high schools in the district to introduce students to the different vocational

trades such as CNC, carpentry, industrial technology, welding, and HVAC. Industry partners can also use the trailer to train their workforce on skills specific to their industry. The College has employed a full-time facilitator who will collaborate with schools and industry partners in developing programs for using the trailer for their students and workforce.

GRANT SUCCESSES

The College has been successful in receiving over \$16,000,000 in state and federal grants as well as a few private sector grants in the 2023-2024 academic year.

- The Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) Grant is a grant that provides funding to support primarily minority students within the College district to enter short-term (one year or less) certificate programs that equip these individuals with the training needed to enter a career field making a wage 30% above the living wage. The goal of the grant is to transform the student's lifestyle and change generational poverty. The grant has been tremendously successful. Over fifty students have received a certificate under the WEI Grant Program. The College has been awarded approximately \$870,00 for the grant again for FY25 which will be the fifth year for the grant.
- The College has been awarded the Pipeline for the Advancement of Healthcare Workforce (PATH) grant from the State of Illinois for the third year in a row. The goal of the grant is to increase the number of healthcare workers out in the workforce. The College has seen significant improvement in several of our healthcare certificate and degree programs.
- Board of Trustee Chair Bill Hawley was awarded the Ray Hartstein Achievement Award by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association in recognition of his dedication and years of service as a Trustee.
- Provost Obermark recognized members of the Senior Leadership Team who have been able to secure positions at the state level. Provost Obermark has been selected to serve as President Elect of the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators. Vice President of Student Services Amy Zanton has been chosen to serve on the Illinois Community College Diversity Commission and the Higher Education Futures Table, a committee appointed by the Governor, alongside President Evans. Vice President of Institutional Support and Technology George Kriss was selected to serve as an Honorary Commander for the 375th Air Mobility Wing at Scott Air Force Base.

INTRODUCTION OF MIKE CHRISTENSEN – KC FOUNDATION UPDATE

Provost Obermark introduced Executive Director of Development Michael Christensen who provided an update on the Kaskaskia College Foundation.

- In calendar year 2023, the Foundation raised a record \$2,073,000 in support of Kaskaskia College students which allowed the Foundation to offer \$50,000 more in scholarships than previous years. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the Foundation awarded 384 individual scholarships totaling over \$361,000 to Kaskaskia College students. The Foundation partners with the College in support of the KC Now Program by covering 50% of tuition costs for students in this program. The Foundation offers wraparound support for students to address financial barriers they may encounter and provides funding to the college for vital equipment needed in the classrooms to train students to enter the workforce of local employers.

- The annual Gala hosted by the Foundation is scheduled for November 16, 2024, on the main campus.

KC NOW PROGRAM AND AIM PROGRAM

Provost Obermark explained the difference between dual credit and dual enrollment. Dual credit is a course taught at the high school by a high school teacher who has been credentialed and meets the requirements to teach the college-level course. Students earn college credit while in a dual credit class. Dual enrollment is when a high school does not offer a course, does not have the equipment to offer a course, or does not have a teacher who is credentialed to teach a college-level course in which case the student can take those courses with a college faculty member.

- The KC Now Program involves dual enrollment courses that high school students can enroll in now for courses that are not offered by their high school. The KC Now Program started with the 2021 academic year with four students and two schools participating in the Residential and Commercial Electricity Program offered at the Trenton Education Center. This Fall that program is at capacity with twenty-five students from nine different schools learning how to become a residential and commercial electrician. While in that program, students will finish their first year. When the students graduate from high school, the students can come back and finish one more year or some students are choosing to go right into the workforce in apprenticeship programs with local unions.
- Due to the success of the program and the needs identified with district high schools, the College has expanded the KC Now dual enrollment opportunities and now offers courses in electrical wiring, HVAC, childcare, criminal justice, nursing assistant, automotive, cosmetology, and business management. Students can only take those courses and programs if they do not have it in their high school. The College serves seventeen high schools in the district and does not want to discriminate students from different learning opportunities based on the area in which they live. This Fall sixty-five students from ten high schools will be participating in the KC Now Program.
- In advisory board meetings and meetings with manufacturers, local industry partners expressed concern over the availability of workers and the lack of interest of high school students to enter careers in manufacturing. Industry partners asked the College for help in addressing this concern. Manufacturers employ not only line workers, but also different career paths such as engineers, computer software specialists, and safety and quality manager experts. In response to this request, the College developed the Aspirations in Manufacturing (AIM) Program which is a one-year certificate program which introduces high school students to the trades. At the end of the program the students are issued a manufacturing technology certificate and earn their OSHA 10 certification. Students in the program tour local manufacturing facilities and receive mentoring from manufacturing representatives. The AIM Program began last year with four students and enrollment has doubled with eight students enrolled in the program for the Fall semester.

KC REGIONAL IMPACT AND REVIEW OF 2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

Provost Obermark presented highlights of the Economic Impact Study recently completed on FY2022-2023 data by Lightcast, a third-party entity. A copy of the Economic Impact Study was provided to attendees and is available on the College website.

- From an investment point of view, for every \$1.00 invested in the College, the taxpayer received a return on investment of \$1.10 in added tax revenue and public sector savings. Rarely is there a positive net return on an investment for a publicly funded education.
- The College supports 2,062 jobs accounting for one out of every twenty-nine jobs in the district being supported by the activities of the College.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Provost Obermark opened the floor to the attendees to ask any questions and to provide feedback on issues related to the College.

- A guest asked, “What does the College see as the future of the facility?”
Provost Obermark answered that the College is excited to see the Paramedicine Program grow at the Vandalia campus. Enrollment in the program has already increased over previous years. The College will continue to monitor the needs of the area. The College offers CNA courses, art classes, and general education courses at the Vandalia campus. Vandalia Education Center Director Wendy Blythe advised that enough students have enrolled for the Fall semester that all classes offered will be moving forward; no classes will be dropped due to low enrollment.
- A local artist in attendance expressed how proud the local artists in the community are of the Alice Hudders Art Gallery. The guest shared information regarding murals that will be displayed on buildings in the City of Vandalia in the coming months. A question asked regarding available funds for future art projects in Vandalia was referred to the individuals managing the estate for the donor of the art gallery.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. Attendees were offered a tour of the Alice Hudders Art Gallery upon adjournment.

Chair, Board of Trustees
Kaskaskia College

Secretary, Board of Trustees
Kaskaskia College