



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INDIAN HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

November 10, 2025

The regular Board of Trustees meeting and the Annual Board Retreat for Indian Hills Community College was held on November 10, 2025, at the Bridge View Center, Ottumwa, Iowa. Board President Mr. Richard J. Gaumer called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Roll Call**

**Members present:** Ms. Beth Danowsky, Mr. Richard J. Gaumer, Mr. Michael Matthes, Ms. Katie Nichols, Mr. Riley Sheetz, Mr. Alan Wilson, and Ms. Lori Yates.

**Zoom/Phone:**

**Members absent:** Ms. Christine Estle and Mr. Kevin Crall.

**Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Ms. Nichols and seconded by Ms. Yates to approve the board agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the October 13, 2025, Regular Board meeting were reviewed.

**Motion**

It was moved by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Sheetz to approve the minutes from the October 13, 2025, Regular Board meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Monthly Claims**

Board member Ms. Beth Danowsky reviewed bills for the month of October on behalf of the board and reported that all questions were answered by appropriate staff members.

**Motion**

It was moved by Ms. Danowsky and seconded by Ms. Yates to approve the monthly claims for October. The motion carried unanimously.

**FY26 Financial Report**

Ms. Taren Ferguson, Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, presented the Financial Report. **Revenue** was lower by \$247,884. **Tuition & Fees** were up \$607,301 from the previous year. Course fees were higher by \$79,500 due to timing. Winter term registration opened this year on October 13, 2025, and last year it opened October 16, 2024. **State Support** was higher by \$87,915 due to SGA. **Other Income** was down \$1,001,498 due to last year having the \$825,000 GAP pay transfer in the first quarter, timing on receiving Department of Labor administration reimbursement (\$75,000), and lower interest income (\$54,000).

  
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**Expenses** were higher by \$434,551. **Salaries & Fringe** were up by \$311,753, which was more than anticipated as a 3% increase was projected. **Services** remained relatively the same. **Supplies** increased \$130,513 due to testing supplies (\$70,000) and software/licensure increases for DualEnroll, Touchnet, and other subscriptions.

Fund 2 – Levy accounts are performing as anticipated. The first quarter of the year has many expenses due to paying insurance premiums and getting ahead of capital equipment purchases.

### **Motion**

It was moved by Mr. Sheetz and seconded by Ms. Nichols to approve the FY26 Financial Report. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Community Colleges for Iowa Report**

Dr. Matt Thompson presented the Community Colleges for Iowa report. He stated that presidents and trustees had a joint meeting on Thursday, November 6, 2025, and he is proud to have Mr. Kevin Crall as our representative at the table.

There was a discussion about trustee development and whether there would continue to be a summer trustees conference. It was decided that there would be a 2026 conference at Iowa Valley because preparations are underway, but then the conference will be in December at the Community College Convention and Tradeshow. Trustees can still visit other campuses if they desire.

Community Colleges will be celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and they discussed ways to be celebrated and featured throughout the year.

Board members received two handouts. One handout was talking points for Iowans for a Skilled Workforce, and the second handout was the 2026 Legislative priorities. The group discussed that it is unclear what is going to come of the DOGE report, but in the report the 260 program is recommended to end and be replaced in a different way. It would be administered out of Des Moines and there would be a cap on the money. Dr. Thompson has been calling business leaders who have benefited from 260E and 260F programming and is asking them to sign a letter of support to keep the program as it is currently. Dr. Thompson stated that keeping 260E and 260F should be the major priority.

### **Personnel Report**

Mr. Zeke Flick, Director, Human Resources, presented the Personnel Report. He stated that IHCC has 374 full-time employees and thirteen open positions. The turnover rate this month is slightly higher at 17.7%. The average years of service is 8.5.

### **Motion**

It was moved by Ms. Nichols and seconded by Ms. Yates to approve the Personnel Report. The motion carried unanimously.

### **President of the College**

#### **A. Facilities Report**

Mr. Cory Lamb, Chief Operating Officer, presented the facilities report. He stated that construction projects are making good progress.

In Centerville, the Baseball Stadium project is close to being finished with interior finishes being installed.

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The Commercial Driver's License training pad will be completed at the end of this week. All concrete has been poured, and now the concrete will be cut.

The Wellness Center is on schedule and when it is enclosed the floor will be poured.

### **Board of Trustees Retreat**

#### **Payment Plan Update and Data**

Ms. Taren Ferguson gave board members a payment plan update.

What was the intended goal?

To help manage the institution's cash flow, be proactive in reducing bad debt write-offs, and to set students up for success.

2025 Fall term 317 students enrolled in a payment plan compared to 174 in 2024 fall term. Of those 317 students, only eighteen students were delinquent on their last payment at the end of September, 5.7%.

Student Receivable

23/FA - \$586,273

24/FA - \$602,318

25/FA - \$103,003, which is an 82.4% decrease.

This means students are paying up front and IHCC has less funds outstanding that are due or owed to the college from students after the Financial Aid transmission.

### **WINS**

Increased collaboration across campuses.

Filling a realistic need for students – helped to create a sense of urgency.

Conversations are changing and the outlook is helping students plan better and make better long-term decisions.

No students will have a balance going into winter term.

Less late charges being assessed to students.

### **CHALLENGES**

Admissions focus was on students who were dropped and trying to re-enroll them rather than recruiting new students

Outside scholarships are difficult to track and to receive the money in a timely manner.

Tracking points are students enrolled in a payment plan, number of students taking out loans and the dollar amount of loans students are taking out, Last Dollar Scholarships and how many students are taking advantage of that program.

### **Fraudulent Student Activity Prevention**

Ms. Ranae Molkenthin, Dean, Enrollment Services presented a PowerPoint on fraud detection and Element updates.

#### **Purpose:**

Outline procedures for identifying and responding to potential fraudulent student activity.

Ensure consistent communication and coordination between departments.

#### **Key Goals:**

Protect institutional integrity.

Safeguard student financial aid funds.

Maintain accurate and secure student records.

Current processes for fraud detection are to review all applications. Some red flags are geographic clusters, street addresses, unusual ages, similar or suspicious email addresses, timestamps, invalid or sequential phone numbers, inconsistent DOB/grad years, identity misuse, and fake transcripts.

When any of the previous red flags occur, the next step is Ms. Sadie Rule, Director, Student Communications & Retention, begins calling the list of people with suspected fraud. More than 50% of phone numbers are invalid or belong to a business. If there is no response a text and voicemail are left and if Ms. Rule doesn't hear back the number is marked as fraudulent. Legitimate students answer the phone or call back, and the application continues through the process.

If fraud is identified Financial Aid adds an institutional verification, recommended by Federal Student Aid (in-person ID check and signature of identity statement, transcript submission. Advising requires an ID verification during an in-person meeting or Zoom, but the camera must be on. If the student stops responding, the application is cancelled and IT flags the account.

After awarding financial aid, but before disbursement, a questionable student must complete verification before aid is released, aid is held until verification is completed, and if no response, the application is cancelled, and the account is flagged.

#### **Element 451-Student Communication and AI Capabilities**

Element can indicate low, medium, or high-risk applications. High risks will be filtered into a separate segment for Admissions to review. Element will indicate if phone numbers, addresses, and emails are valid.

Element identifies false phone numbers, IP addresses, completion time for an application to be filled out, email address validation, and mailing addresses that are invalid. Element helps streamline communication with multi-channel campaigns-automated texting, editing is available in the CRM vs. Mailchimp to Sparkpost import, and user preferred open times. Element also has a Chatbot to help answer student questions. (PowerPoint attached)

#### **Human Resources Discussion**

Mr. Zeke Flick, Director, reported that faculty's base pay has not been increased since 2013. Arts and Sciences faculty are required to have a masters in their discipline, so the base pay would be \$42,396 - \$46,551 for a 3-term contract. A person who has 13 years of experience and a master's degree, hired at IHCC, would be offered \$46,551 for a position and in Iowa the minimum starting salary is \$47,500 for K12 teachers with only a bachelor's degree required..

When the Benefits Modernization changes were implemented, professional staff had 12 days added to their calendars, so full-time employees went from working 191 days to working 203 days. Wages were increased to compensate for the additional days. For the last two years IHCC has been working on the Benefits Modernization and other classifications that were affected by the changes and now Dr. Thompson, Ms. Ferguson, and Mr. Flick are rounding back to faculty and base wages.

IHCC has approximately one hundred faculty, and approximately fifty of those are new, 5 years or less. How does IHCC correct these individuals because if the college starts increasing pay in any capacity employees that have been here for 3-5 years will be making less than those who are hired.

A committee will be reviewing all these issues in the next few weeks. IHCC has been looking at issues in terms of where we could start as a base to utilize the same calculation. Health Sciences and Advanced Technology employees may not be required to have a master's degree; they may only need an AA with 6,000 hours of work experience.

The goal for this discussion is where do we get to and what can we feasibly do from a financial standpoint that addresses multiple factors and becomes more attractive to faculty and teachers IHCC may be losing to K12 and for IHCC to be competitive

Dr. Thompson stated that he discussed with Ms. Ferguson and Mr. Flick to have base wages between \$50,000-\$53,000, but the college is unable to financially do that at this time. Dr. Thompson, Ms. Ferguson, and Mr. Flick will meet again for more discussion on what financially can be offered and how to adjust with compression for faculty that have been here quite a few years. The timeline for this is February or March 2026.

### **Strategic Planning Work Session**

Dr. Thompson thought about things that have been successful since he has become president. The bond referendum, many faculty and staff engaged in the process, and in December 2019 IHCC hosted the Higher Learning Commission Comprehensive team and employees from all campuses engaged in preparing for the visit. Whereas in the past the Leadership Team had control of the plan and what would be on it. Dr. Thompson sent out an email to staff asking if people would be interested in helping with the Strategic Plan and 100+ people volunteered to be a part of four different committees.

Committee Chairs were chosen for each committee, and they were individuals that may be interested in moving into middle management or wanting to be more involved at the college and members consist of employees from our different campuses.

Committees that were formed are:

Advance Student Outcomes

Dr. Ashleigh Richmond, Chair and Mr. Felix Grygorcewicz, Vice Chair

Building Workforce

Ms. Becky Zesiger, Chair and Ms. Jennifer Erdmann, Vice Chair

Ignite IHCC

Ms. Maggie Horan, Chair and Ms. Alice Shepard, Vice Chair

Powering Progress

Ms. Sarah Diaz, Chair and Mr. Brydon Kaster, Vice Chair

Dr. Thompson stated that committees meet once a month and on November 1, 2025, each committee shared two projects/action steps to work on this year.

### **Goals and Board Discussion**

Dr. Thompson presented his goals

- Implement new faculty base wage increase
- Establish an effective mentoring program
- Create a process to evaluate and implement Community College bachelor's degree programs
- Navigate evolving political and budget climate

Dr. Thompson stated that implementing new faculty base wages was discussed and he will keep the board informed on decisions that are made.

Dr. Thompson stated a mentoring program would be a benefit for IHCC, long term, by sharing communication, knowledge, and having a go-to-person. Dr. Thompson will work with the Grants Committee to submit a Bright Ideas grant during the next grant cycle to ask for support to get the mentoring program started.

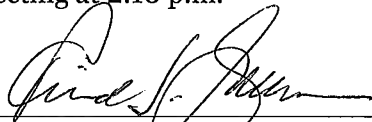
Dr. Thompson reported that offering bachelor's degrees for IHCC has a potential for raising the bar for our local people and improving the work base educationally. He has been talking to businesses about offering a bachelor's degree and he will make strategic decisions on the specialty these degrees will be in.

It was discussed about the political climate and how Ms. Darcie Woodruff has been looking at grants and applying if they match IHCC's priorities. Political changes are happening daily, and Dr. Thompson is making calls pertaining to job losses, eliminated programs, and funding.

Dr. Thompson reported that he received a call asking if IHCC was interested in buying the property owned by the Boy Scouts. He informed the gentleman that he would be meeting with his board, and he would discuss the property. It is sixty acres with a small cabin, and they want \$300,000. This property adjoins IHCC and if IHCC doesn't buy it, who may be our campus neighbors?

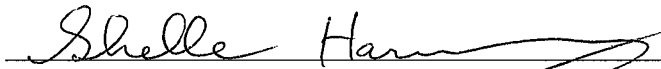
### **Adjournment**

Board member Ms. Yates moved that the meeting be adjourned. Hearing no objections Mr. Gaumer adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.



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BOARD PRESIDENT



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BOARD SECRETARY