



MIRACOSTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

OCTOBER 16, 2025
(APPROVED NOVEMBER 20, 2025)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Trustees of the MiraCosta Community College District met in open session on Thursday, October 16, 2025, in Room 1131 on the San Elijo Campus. President Cassar called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

II. FLAG SALUTE / ROLL CALL

Board members present:

Rick Cassar

Raye Clendening

Heather Conklin

Ann Crosbie

Frank Merchat

Anna Pedroza

Jackie Simon

Board members absent:

Federico Caion Demaestri (student trustee)

Administrators present:

Superintendent/President Sunny Cooke

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Elba Gomez

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Denée Pescarmona

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Hayley Schwartzkopf

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Alketa Wojcik

III. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

A. Board Workshop of September 4, 2025

B. Special Meeting/Closed Session of September 11, 2025

C. Regular Business Meeting of September 11, 2025

By motion of Trustee Clendening, seconded by Trustee Simon, the board approved the minutes of the board workshop of September 4, 2025, and the special meeting/closed session and the regular business meeting of September 11, 2025.

Vote: 7/0/0

Aye: Cassar, Clendening, Conklin, Crosbie, Merchat, Pedroza, Simon

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS ON AND NOT ON THE AGENDA

Dr. Al Taccone, Dean of the School of Career Education and San Elijo Campus Administrator, welcomed everyone to the San Elijo Campus and highlighted the exciting activities taking place on site.

Dr. Wendy Stewart, Associate Vice President, Chief Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Officer, provided an update on the Equity Plan, which is presented to the board as a second read after minor changes since the board's first read. The plan has evolved to include equity in online education.

V. CHANGES IN AGENDA ORDER

None.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. Technology Plan Progress Update

Associate Vice President/Chief Information Systems Officer Anthony Maciel, Ed.D., provided an update on the Technology Plan, including the contributors, highlights, Futures signals, legislative mandates, IT rate of change, and next steps. The Technology Plan, adopted in November 2022, focuses on technology support strategies developed in alignment with data and trends related to the College's four institutional goals. The plan is designed to be revised annually over the next five years to assess progress toward achieving its outlined strategies and initiatives, to improve efficiencies.

It was noted that AI is one of the most disruptive technologies we've experienced. On this note, Dr. Cooke recognized Jim Sullivan and Curry Mitchell who, as part of the Academic Senate, created an AI Resolution that aligns with the college's mission, vision, and values.

The college has deployed technologies that enhance collaboration, increase communication, assist with IT cybersecurity risk mitigation, and integrate with other systems. Students and community patrons assisted in the open computer labs increased by 52 percent this last academic year. We will remain flexible, informed and responsive.

An ITS audit will take place that will reveal our strengths and areas needing improvement. Additionally, trustees hope to learn from the audit what systems we have automated versus other colleges, how many employees we have versus other colleges, and what are the challenges we face versus other colleges.

VII. CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Ratify Recommendations of Superintendent/President in Approving Personnel Actions**
- B. Approve Employment Contract for Professional Expert**
- C. Ratify Memorandum of Understanding 25-07 with Academic Associate Faculty (Instructional Faculty Liaisons)**
- D. Ratify Memorandum of Understanding 25-08 with Faculty Assembly (Strong Workforce Counselor Institute)**
- E. Ratify Memorandum of Understanding 25-09 with Faculty Assembly (MH Coordinator)**
- F. Approve Reorganization of Admissions and Records**
- G. Approve Increase to Hourly Pay Rates Effective January 1, 2026**
- H. Approve Release Time for Classified Staff Recognition**
- I. Approve Revised 2026-2027 Academic Calendar**
- J. Approve 2025-2028 Student Equity Plan**
- K. Approve Purchase for Network Equipment for Communication Hub, Equity Village and Student Center Project (3000 Series Buildings)**
- L. Approve Request to Destroy Records Marked for Destruction**

M. Ratify and Approve Contracts and Purchase Orders

Consent Item F was pulled for discussion.

By motion of Trustee Pedroza, seconded by Trustee Simon, consent items A-E and G-M were approved.

Vote: 7/0/0

Aye: Cassar, Clendening, Conklin, Crosbie, Merchat, Pedroza, Simon

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

By motion of Trustee Pedroza, seconded by Trustee Simon, consent item F was approved.

Vote: 7/0/0

Aye: Cassar, Clendening, Conklin, Crosbie, Merchat, Pedroza, Simon

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Adopt Resolution No. 4–25/26 Delegate Superintendent/President to Declare Emergency and Take Emergency Actions in Response to Elevator Repair at the Oceanside Campus Building 14 Student Services

By motion of Trustee Clendening, seconded by Trustee Conklin, the board adopted Resolution No. 4–25/26 to delegate superintendent/president to declare emergency and take emergency actions in response to elevator repair at the Oceanside Campus Building 14, Student Services.

Vote: 7/0/0

Aye: Cassar, Clendening, Conklin, Crosbie, Merchat, Pedroza, Simon

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

IX. SECOND READING – BOARD POLICIES (Action Required)

A. Board Policy 3501 – Campus Security and Access

By motion of Trustee Merchat, seconded by Trustee Simon, the board adopted Board Policy 3501.

Vote: 7/0/0

Aye: Cassar, Clendening, Conklin, Crosbie, Merchat, Pedroza, Simon

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

X. PERIODIC REVIEW – BOARD POLICIES (Action Required)

A. Board Policy 3710 – Securing of Copyright

By motion of Trustee Merchat, seconded by Trustee Clendening, the board adopted Board Policy 3710.

Vote: 7/0/0

Aye: Cassar, Clendening, Conklin, Crosbie, Merchat, Pedroza, Simon

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

XI. FIRST READING – BOARD POLICIES

A. Board Policy 3725 – Information and Communications Technology Accessibility and Acceptable Use

B. Board Policy 5035 – Withholding of Student Records

New Board Policy 3725 and proposed edits to Board Policy 5035 were reviewed and discussed, and the policies will be placed on a future agenda for adoption by the board.

XII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Report Update of Emergency Declaration and Emergency Actions for Sinkhole at the San Elijo Campus Main Roadway

All repairs have now been completed, restoring full roadway access. The total project cost was \$224,996.28, less than half of the original \$500,000 estimate.

B. 2025 Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) Annual Report

The 2025 Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) Annual Report was provided as information.

C. Superintendent/President Search Update

Trustee Cassar provided an update regarding the status of the superintendent/president search. Board President Cassar and Board Vice President Raye Clendening recommended that the board briefly hit the “pause button” on the search. That will allow the board to start the hiring process strong after legal training has been completed on ethics, conflict of interest, and open meetings and open records laws. All board members involved in the search will undergo the legally required hiring committee training as well. As this was an information item, no formal action could be taken during the meeting.

XIII. COLLEGE-RELATED REPORTS

A. Trustees Activities

Trustee Merchat attended the recent All District Webinar, and described it as a fantastic way to communicate across the campus.

Trustee Pedroza attended the women’s volleyball game and enjoyed reconnecting with former Trustee George McNeil. Following the last board meeting, she reviewed Board Policy 2510 on local decision-making and the role of the Academic Senate.

Trustees Cassar and Simon attended *The Play That Goes Wrong* at the MiraCosta Theatre and praised the outstanding performance.

Trustee Simon, along with Trustee Clendening, attended the *Gentleman’s Gourmet* event, noting it as an amazing experience, including the award of \$15,000 in scholarships, the raising of an additional \$50,000, and an annual event that will be attended in future years.

Trustee Clendening attended the CSU San Marcos Advisory Committee, and she also connected with a former doctoral student, which was gratifying.

Trustees Clendening and Conklin attended the Heroes of Oceanside event and congratulated the college staff who were recognized.

Trustee Conklin shared what a privilege it was to serve as the keynote speaker at the Phi Theta Kappa Induction Ceremony, noting she is a proud PTK member.

Trustees Conklin and Crosbie attended the North County LGBTQ Resource Center Gala, describing it as a joyful and lighthearted event.

B. Student Trustee

Student Trustee Federico Caion Demaestri was not in attendance, so no report was provided.

C. Classified Employees

Classified Senate (CS) President Carl Banks thanked the board for approving the release time for classified professionals to attend the year-end celebration.

Classified Senate has been supporting the College Council Governance Survey to engage classified professionals, providing opportunities for involvement and feedback in the shared governance process.

Banks expressed excitement about the Educational Futures Plan, and he has enjoyed contributing to those discussions.

Banks shared that a vacated senator position has recently been filled by Dulce Gangani from the Library.

In November, the Classified Senate will be releasing a survey to gauge the perspectives of classified professionals across the district.

Work continues to update Gold Circle membership and ensuring everyone knows how to access their benefits.

D. Faculty

Academic Senate (AS) President Curry Mitchell reported on September 26, multiple committees, including the Online Educators, Diversity, Equity & Cultural Competency, and Professional Development Committees, and Professional Development Committees, collaborated to host a full day of Flex workshops via Zoom with a strong turnout. It featured panel discussions, hands-on workshops, and student voices on topics such as online learning and artificial intelligence. The day centered on growth in teaching, learning, and collegiality, and it showed the value of offering continuous Flex opportunities, and not just during flex week.

On October 10, faculty members Zulema Diaz, Israel Pastrana, and Ronda Welch-Scalo, in collaboration with multiple departments and the Office of IDEA, hosted the Indigenous Peoples Day Symposium. The event focused on storytelling through diverse linguistic and cultural mediums, moving beyond traditional land acknowledgments to build community with local Indigenous peoples.

Both events, organized outside of formally designated Flex days, demonstrated the value of sustaining professional development throughout the semester. The Academic Senate continues to work with the administration to seek clarity from the Chancellor's Office on integrating Flex activities into the academic calendar.

In ongoing work, the Academic Senate is focusing on student-centered scheduling practices. At the upcoming meeting, Jim Julius will lead a discussion on effective online class design and student feedback. Upcoming senate meetings will also include review

of full-time faculty hiring requests, salary advancement applications, and curriculum packets.

Looking ahead, a MiraCosta team will attend the ASCCC Fall Plenary Conference in La Jolla in early November.

As the semester reaches Week 9, faculty are emphasizing learning as a process—encouraging students to focus not just on productivity, but on practices that support sustained growth, reflection, and understanding.

E. Assistant Superintendents/Vice Presidents

1. Instructional Services

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Pescarmona reported spring schedule went live in SURF, with registration opening on November 3.

Enrollment is up 5 percent in headcount and 3.5 percent in FTES for the fall semester, with particularly strong enrollments in the second 8-week classes.

The Educational Planning Taskforce hosted its first campus forum to engage the community around key themes identified through taskforce discussions and input gathered during All College Day. The next forum is scheduled for October 30.

On October 13, MiraCosta celebrated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with National University, expanding access and affordability for students and employees alike. The partnership offers tuition rebates for MiraCosta transfer students and tuition reductions for employees pursuing advanced degrees. A similar partnership agreement with Arizona State University (ASU) is also forthcoming, allowing students completing the ASU MyPath Transfer plan to qualify for in-state tuition rates at ASU.

Computer Studies Instructor Rick White and Vice President Pescarmona will co-present at the Chief Instructional Officers Conference, focusing on leading and utilizing artificial intelligence in ethical and equity-minded ways.

Finally, the BioScience Hub was awarded two National Science Foundation grants totaling just under \$2 million to support professional development and student internships in biotechnology

2. Student Services

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Wojcik submitted a written report. Additionally, an important update was shared about the Student Services Division Retreat held on October 3, which involved more than 150 participants from every Student Services department. The retreat centered on the book *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk*—adapted locally as *From Equity Talk to Equity in Action*. The focus was on understanding that race and racism are endemic to higher education and addressing these issues directly to close equity gaps.

Each department was tasked with identifying specific actions to address racial inequities and remove barriers affecting students. The retreat marked the beginning of an ongoing process; departments will continue refining their action plans throughout the semester through follow-up discussions and collaborative work.

3. Administrative Services

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Gomez reported the mid-year budget review will focus on aligning expenditures with institutional priorities. The Fiscal Services Department will request that all departments evaluate their current spending to identify potential cost savings as planning begins for the next fiscal year. In addition, staff are developing multi-year budget projections to support long-term financial planning.

Facilities updates indicate that the solar energy projects remain on schedule, with anticipated completion by December and full operational readiness expected by spring 2026. Construction of the new Building 3000 is also proceeding on time, with the structure beginning to take shape.

For professional development, staff will participate in the ACBO (Association of Chief Business Officials) conference to deepen their understanding of community college fiscal operations and cost management. Later in October, representatives will also attend the EDUCAUSE Conference in Nashville to explore innovations in higher education technology and bring forward best practices and new ideas.

College Police has joined the New Student Orientation and Onboarding Program, with Chief Valencia Saadat participating and sharing insights about the department's role and support services, helping new students become familiar with campus safety resources

4. Human Resources

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Schwartzkopf welcomed Regina Nicholas, who joined the team as a Senior Human Resources Technician and is currently backfilling for Holly Walker, who is serving as Interim HR Supervisor.

The division continued progress on the Classification and Compensation Study, with the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) in development and anticipated to go before the Board of Trustees in March 2026.

The Walktober Challenge is well underway, creating lively engagement and friendly competition across departments. Employees have been enthusiastically comparing step counts and celebrating progress toward wellness goals.

A special thanks was extended to the Benefits Team, led by Briana Schaeffer, for launching the new Benefits Hub. This beautifully designed resource provides employees with accessible, tailored benefits information and demonstrates the team's dedication to employee well-being and communication.

Currently, 34 active recruitments and 16 pending recruitments are underway, not including the upcoming full-time faculty searches. The HR team continues to note evolving trends in recruitment, particularly around the use of AI, while addressing ongoing challenges such as incomplete application submissions.

The division also advanced its "Deadnaming Project" in Workday, ensuring that employees' chosen names are reflected throughout the system. This initiative was extended to other platforms, including PageUp and the People Admin applicant tracking system for recruitment, reinforcing the district's commitment to inclusion and respect.

Schwartzkopf noted the draft of the RFP for the class and comp study is being developed and will come to the board for approval at a future meeting.

F. Superintendent/President

Superintendent/President Cooke shared how it was inspiring to watch Trustee Conklin speak at the Phi Theta Kappa Induction Ceremony and share her story as a former regional governor—thank you for reminding us of the lasting impact of the PTK pillars, scholarship, leadership, service, and fellowship.

At the Heroes of Oceanside event, Dr. Tina Ngo Bartel and Dr. Yvette Duncan were recognized for their outstanding contributions. Dr. Ngo Bartel was honored for her exceptional work leading the Center for Labor Market Excellence (COE) for our region, with Dr. Duncan honored for her leadership in addressing the regional nursing shortage. MiraCosta College was also named Partner of the Year, a testament to the College's continued community impact.

Dr. Cooke gave a huge thanks to the Advancement Team for preparing for tomorrow's Community Leaders Breakfast, a dynamic event focused on strengthening community partnerships.

During the Administrator's Retreat, Carissa Chavez was celebrated for her work in ensuring graduates at TCI receive vital resources and support. Carissa embodies the spirit of Caring Campus.

Additional acts of care stood out this month: College Police Intern Ella Wargo, who quickly alerted College Police when she noticed a man in distress, Sergeant Bobby Sterling, who provided assistance to the individual, and faculty member Jim Sullivan, who assisted an individual to Health Services. The President acknowledged this is an important reminder of how small acts of care make a big difference.

Earlier this week, the Administrators Committee held a retreat focused on [Resilient by Design](#), exploring topics such as conflict resolution, change management, and maintaining morale. Panelists shared insights and strategies, and Vice Pescarmona Denée Pescarmona led an engaging, hands-on session on the use of AI to address challenges and build innovative solutions.

XIV. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

Rick Cassar
President

Sunita V. Cooke, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President