



MIRACOSTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

MARCH 12, 2026
(APPROVED APRIL 16, 2026)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Trustees of the MiraCosta Community College District met in open session on Thursday, March 12, 2026, in the Room 1131 on the San Elijo Campus. President Merchat called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

II. FLAG SALUTE / ROLL CALL

Board members present:

Rick Cassar	Frank Merchat
Raye Clendening	Anna Pedroza
Heather Conklin	Jackie Simon
Ann Crosbie	

Administrators present:

Superintendent/President Sunita 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. Special Meeting/Closed Session of February 19, 2026

B. Regular Business Meeting of February 19, 2026

By motion of Trustee Simon, seconded by Trustee Clendening, the Board approved the minutes of the special meeting/closed session and regular business meeting of February 19, 2026.

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

Associated Student Government (ASG) President Diego Padilla provided public comment about ASG-related activities and invited all to attend an ASG meeting.

Associate Faculty and President of the Academic Associate Faculty Union Krista Warren provided an update about the important role of associate faculty at the college.

Instructional Dean Lauren Halsted welcomed the Board to the San Elijo Campus and shared some upcoming events and activities (Donuts with the Dean and Director to meet students, Cookies with Cooke, a College and Career Fair with an expected 2,500 students, and a scheduling party once the Summer and Fall Class Schedule is released).

V. CHANGES IN AGENDA ORDER

None.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. 2025 Annual District and Measure MM Audit Presentation

Highlights from the 2025 annual district and Measure MM audit report were provided by Rick Alonzo from Eide and Bailly.

The general audit provided three opinions: on the financial statements, on federal compliance and on state compliance. The district received unmodified opinions in all areas, indicating that the financial statements are fairly stated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, federal awards requirements were met, and state compliance standards were satisfied. No audit adjustments, findings, or recommendations were noted.

A financial and performance audit was also conducted for Measure MM. The audit received an unmodified opinion with no audit adjustments and confirmed all expenditures were appropriately spent on voter-approved projects. No findings or recommendations were noted for the Measure MM audit; it was a clean unmodified opinion with no audit adjustments.

B. Sabbatical Report

Dr. Robert Kelley, Psychology Department faculty member, presented on accessibility and equity in teaching with a focus on increasing student engagement in behavioral statistics. He described transforming a 450-page workbook to be fully accessible for all learners, including those using assistive technology, which is now integrated into his coursework. The workbook is available in print, on mobile devices and computers, and as an audiobook with built-in AI support and translation to over 180 languages.

All resources are publicly available on the college website. Dr. Kelley emphasized the importance of accessibility, equity, and effective use of AI in learning, and he expressed gratitude for the opportunity to enhance student learning through his sabbatical project.

VII. CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Ratify Recommendations of Superintendent/President in Approving Personnel Actions**
- B. Approve Increase to Hourly Pay Rates for College for Kids Counselors**
- C. Approve Reorganization of Admissions and Student Support**
- D. Approve Out-of-Country Travel – Adrea Gonzalez-Karlsson**
- E. Approve FF&E Purchase of Outdoor Furniture from Corporate Spaces Inc. DBA Parron Hall for 3000 Series Building Project Oceanside Campus**
- F. Approve Transfer of Measure MM Bond Funds to Projects**
- G. Approve Oceanside Emergency Responder Radio Coverage Project Budget**
- H. Approve FF&E Purchase for Oceanside Communications Hub, Equity Village, and Student Center**

I. Ratify and Approve Contracts and Purchase Orders

Consent Item A was pulled for discussion.

By motion of Trustee Simon, seconded by Trustee Clendening, consent items B through I 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 Clendening, consent item A was approved.

Vote: 6/0/1

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

Abstentions: Pedroza

Absent: None

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Consider and Approve Appointment of Board Parliamentarian

By motion of Trustee Clendening, seconded by Trustee Simon, the Board discussed the appointment of a Board Parliamentarian. It was noted as a best practice and a way to share leadership in a process-driven manner.

Trustee Conklin, seconded by Trustee Clendening, amended the motion by specifying a pilot of the appointment of a Board Parliamentarian through December 2026, at which time the Board can assess the future need for the position.

Vote: 7/0/0

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

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

By motion of Trustee Conklin, seconded by Trustee Clendening, Trustee Cassar was nominated to serve as the Board Parliamentarian through December 2026. The nomination was accepted.

Vote: 7/0/0

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

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

B. Appoint Independent Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee Members

By motion of Trustee Clendening, seconded by Trustee Conklin, the Board approved the appointment of Amy McNamara-Hornsten, the support organization representative on the ICBOC, for a second term.

Vote: 7/0/0

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

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

C. Approve Submission of 2025 California Community Colleges Trustee Board Election Ballot

By motion of Trustee Cassar, seconded by Trustee Pedroza, the Board approved the submission of the 2025 California Community Colleges Trustee Board Election Ballot.

Vote: 7/0/0
Aye: Cassar, Clendening, Conklin, Crosbie, Merchat, Pedroza, Simon
Abstentions: None
Absent: None

IX. INFORMATION

A. Final Report Update of Emergency Declaration and Emergency Actions to Elevator Repair at the Oceanside Campus Building 14 Student Services

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Gomez reported the elevator in the Student Services Building, which had been inoperable since an incident that occurred on September 8, 2025, is now repaired and operating with no issues. The final cost was \$52,789.40.

B. Annual District and Bond Measure MM Audit Services for FY2026/27

The annual district and Bond Measure MM audit services for FY2026/27 were provided as information.

C. Superintendent/President Search Update

Trustee Merchat shared that recruitment for the next superintendent/president is currently underway. AGB Search is conducting outreach and receiving nominations for prospective candidates. Individuals whose qualifications match the desired profile are encouraged to submit applications by April 10. Information can be found on our main MiraCosta College website. The screening and interview committee, along with the full Board, just completed anti-bias and hiring committee training to ensure a fair and equitable review process.

X. COLLEGE-RELATED REPORTS

A. Trustees Activities

Trustee Pedroza plans to take her granddaughter to the MiraCosta Theatre production of *Cinderella* this weekend.

Trustee Conklin attended the Women's Caucus event at Fullerton College, with panels on supporting women leaders, particularly women of color, and the impacts of immigration policies on undocumented students. Trustee Conklin, along with the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District Trustee Julie Schorr, accepted the California's Women Caucus Legacy Award on behalf of Dr. Cooke. She participated in the Coffee and Convos: Careers in Social Sciences event, engaging with students. She also attended the Reproductive Justice Conference at the North County LGBTQ Resource Center and hopes to take her niece to the MiraCosta showing of *Cinderella*.

Vice President Clendening attended the play *Beyond the Bus: Jo Ann Robinson and the Real Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* at the Oceanside Public Library and a presentation titled *Echoes of Harlem* at the Carlsbad Library. She participated in a MiraCosta Foundation Board meeting, which reported raising \$2.7 million for students and is planning transition activities for Dr. Cooke, including onboarding new Board members and leadership. Vice President Clendening also attended the Foundation Scholarship Awards, noting that students feel connected, supported, and well-prepared. Additionally, she participated in an Oceanside Museum of Art expansion campaign event and the Generational Black Pioneers salute honoring 10 women in Oceanside who contributed to educational opportunities.

Trustee Simon attended the first Sunday event at the Oceanside Museum of Art, where MiraCosta College students were actively participating and were well represented in

printmaking activities. She noted it was enjoyable to see the exhibits and families attending the event, as well as former San Elijo Dean Dana Smith, who was volunteering.

Trustee Cassar attended two MiraCosta women's basketball games and participated in the Palomar Showcase, where MiraCosta was recognized. He also noted that the Cardiff Farmers Market, held at the San Elijo Campus, will celebrate its third anniversary this Saturday.

Trustee Crosbie attended events supporting candidates running for school board positions early in their campaigns, noting that down-ballot races are currently underway.

President Merchat has been working with AGB Search, and he expressed appreciation to Denée Pescarmona and Hayley Schwartzkopf for their time and commitment to the presidential search process. He also attended the Cardiff Farmers Market and a MiraCosta women's basketball playoff game.

B. Student Trustee

No report given.

C. Classified Employees

Classified Senate (CS) President Carl Banks reported on the importance of collegiality, and he expressed appreciation for strong working relationships. Work continues with the district and AAC on holiday closures reflected in the Academic Calendar to align with Classified Senate agreements. Appreciation was expressed for the recent update and collaboration on professional development (AP 7160). Classified Senate elections and nominations are open, with committee appointments in progress. A classified staff survey is being developed by classified professionals, with the help of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE).

D. Faculty

Academic Senate (AS) President Curry Mitchell shared how ongoing support continues for accessibility and Universal Design for Learning through bimonthly workshops, which include topical sessions and Q&A/application segments covering both broad accessibility concepts and strategies for creating inclusive learning spaces. This work requires continued support, and he expressed appreciation for the dedicated faculty and staff who contribute.

The election cycle for the Academic Senate has concluded – Afifa Zaman will serve as vice president, and Jim Sullivan as president. Two new senators have been appointed, and four have been re-elected. Committee leads and members are currently being assigned. The spring plenary is upcoming, with a five-member team attending, including Krista Warren, associate faculty member, as the delegate for resolution and election voting, and Tacey Hosley, articulation officer.

E. Assistant Superintendents/Vice Presidents

1. Instructional Services

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Pescarmona reported The North County Higher Education Alliance (NCHEA) is hosting the *Instruction with Imagination and Intelligence AI Summit* on Saturday, March 14, at the Palomar College Rancho Bernardo Education Center. Speakers will represent Cal State Fullerton, Cal State San Marcos, San Diego District, Palomar College, and MiraCosta College.

2. Student Services

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Wojcik submitted a written report. Commencement will be held at Frontwave Arena. As of this morning, 294 students and 2,100 guests have RSVP'd. Each attendee must have a ticket to enter on the day of the event. Each graduate is eligible to receive 8 tickets for family and friends. The women's basketball team won in the playoffs and now is in the final four.

3. Administrative Services

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Gomez reported Fiscal Services has begun budget meetings to review the FY2027 budget. Facilities is creating a list of projects to complete with Measure MM fund savings. The sustainability work group will meet next week to discuss single-use plastics and related initiatives. The TCI lease review and negotiations are complete and may go to the City of Carlsbad in April. ITS is advancing the CivicPlus agenda and meeting management project and planned training, and they will soon begin the cloud migration project with a consultant.

An RFP for the classification and compensation study has been completed, and a Food Service RFP is in process, with tastings this week and vendor interviews on March 23.

The College Police Department will conduct tabletop exercises for emergency preparedness next week.

4. Human Resources

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Schwartzkopf reported final interviews for full-time faculty recruitment will be conducted over the next several weeks, beginning after spring break. A joint Academic Freedom presentation with the Academic Senate, Faculty Assembly, Academic Associate Faculty, Dr. Luke Lara, Dr. Wendy Stewart, and Vice President Hayley Schwartzkopf was held this morning, with part two scheduled for April 24 featuring scenario-based discussions for faculty, in response to the current political climate and a tentative agreement on changes to the Academic Freedom policy.

Rather than investing funds into the high cost of replacing inoperable microfiche equipment, aging microfiche files are being digitized, which is an enormous task and may delay Human Resources (HR) from responding to certain records requests.

Eleven vendors submitted proposals for the Classification and Compensation Study; three were interviewed, a vendor has been selected, and with the contract process underway, a request for Board approval is anticipated in April.

The semi-annual Workday update is scheduled for next week, with HR and ITS staff recognized, including Bonnie McFadden for her work in implementing changes and analyzing impacts. Registration for the six-week Bloom Wellness Challenge is open through March 30, with 91 employees forming 13 teams so far. HR recruitment and operations teams are merging to create HR business partners for divisions and departments, with staff training continuing next week during spring break; senior HR technicians were thanked for their dedication in managing training alongside their existing workload.

F. Office of the President

Superintendent/President Cooke wished all a nice spring break, noting that many will remain on campus next week to continue work.

She provided updates on several recent and upcoming activities. A large-scale food distribution event was successfully held at the Oceanside Campus yesterday, while the Learning Centers continue to experience high volume as they support student needs. A comprehensive survey of the governance structure is now underway, with councils and committees conducting self-assessments over the coming months. Dean Chris Tarman and the RPIE team will compile findings to be discussed further by College Council.

Superintendent/President Cooke also shared plans to attend the Carlsbad Chamber's Awards Event and expressed appreciation to the City of Carlsbad for its continued support of the Technology Career Institute, including ongoing contract negotiations. Dr. Cooke will attend the MiraCosta Theatre production of *Cinderella* and, on Saturday, will participate in an event taking place at Point Loma Nazarene University. This event was hosted by Assembly Member Tasha Boehner to recognize women in leadership.

Additionally, she announced that the MiraCosta Foundation has now raised more than \$3 million in support of students in FY2025/26. The Office of Advancement team was recognized for its strong efforts and will continue to receive support during its current staffing transition. She also extended gratitude to Trustees and Foundation Board members for their commitment to attending numerous end-of-year events.

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

Frank Merchat
President

Sunita V. Cooke
Superintendent/President