KASKASKIA COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES #501
July 1, 2026 – Board Retreat Meeting Minutes
27210 College Road
Centralia, IL 62801

ROLL CALL/ATTENDANCE

Chair Bill Hawley convened the retreat of the Board of Trustees (Board) on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at 9:02 a.m. at The Chop House in Breese, Illinois.

Trustees present at the meeting in person were Bill Hawley, Bryan Holthaus, Louis Kalert, and Linda Stover. Trustee Craig Finke arrived at 10:45 a.m. Trustee Laura Wedekemper arrived at 11:30 a.m. Trustee Jim Beasley was absent. Student Trustee Andolini Gray was present.

College staff members attending in person were George Evans, Michael Christensen, Joy Fitts, Sara Hanks, Chris Holloway, George Kriss, Julie Obermark, Karol Potter, Craig Roper, Jeff Thomas, and Amy Zanton.

No media were present.

RECOGNITION

President George Evans welcomed those in attendance and explained the retreat was designed to share information, reflect on the past, consider the present and future, and gather feedback to support planning for the next three to five years.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ATHLETICS STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

President Evans and Vice President of Students Services Amy Zanton presented information on athletic program marketing efforts and opportunities related to game coverage (post-game summaries, statistics submissions, athletic webpage updating), live broadcast radio coverage, livestream broadcast coverage, athletic branding, video board production and operator, and the potential to develop a future program in sports marketing.

Vice President Zanton presented a recap comparing athletic goals with the 2025-2026 athletic season results along with the status of regional recruitment for each sport which included the number of in-district, out-of-district, in-state, and out-of-state athletes by sport. Data collected from in-district high school athletic directors on current sports offered was presented by sports rankings based on growth potential and participation.

Feasibility studies were conducted on four potential sports offerings: golf, bowling, trap shooting, and E-Sports. The feasibility studies were discussed individually by sport and included how each sport aligns with the strategic plan, in-district high schools offering the sport, transfer schools offering the sport, potential enrollment impact, startup costs, infrastructure needs, staffing needs, potential partnerships with local facilities, and membership organizations. Each study included a 3-year cost projection and recommended implementation plan.

The College is exploring the possibility of offering these sports to demonstrate its commitment to the interests of the in-district communities. The recommendation is to prepare and submit proposals to the Board for approval within the next 12 months to offer three club sports (bowling, trap shooting, and Esports) and one NJCAA sanctioned sport (golf). Offering these additional sports options would attract students who may not be choosing to attend the College because the sport is not currently offered.

TRANSPORTATION AND FLEET OPERATIONS DISCUSSION
A transportation and fleet operations summary was provided for the Board's review. The summary included an inventory of all College-owned vehicles and addressed the risk management of owning and managing this inventory. President Evans discussed the needs identified in the risk analysis and what actions the College is taking to address those needs from an operations standpoint. An integrated policy is being developed which positions the College to effectively manage a large and diverse portfolio of vehicles and equipment through standardized controls, defined responsibilities, vehicle use requirements, and risk-based oversight. This approach reduces the likelihood and severity of incidents, protects institutional assets, and supports a culture of safety and compliance across all operational areas. The policy is in a working draft form, and the Board of Trustees will formally review and approve the policy.

LOW ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS AND HIGH-COST PROGRAMS DISCUSSION
President Evans and Provost & Vice President of Instructional Services Julie Obermark presented information on low enrollment programs, high-cost programs, program return on investment to district communities, and what the College is doing to analyze, report, and meet fiscal responsibility and area industry needs. The data presented was for career and technical education programs from a cost analysis and did not include disciplines in humanities and general education programs as fifty percent of enrollment is transfer students. The data presented was also program-specific, not course-specific.
An overview of program enrollment ranked from highest to lowest enrollment programs for FY25 was presented. Discussion ensued regarding the different issues affecting program enrollment.

The Board was provided an overview of expense by program highlighting the high-cost programs for FY25. Information was provided on a high cost per unit versus low cost per unit basis. Cost per unit is total expenses divided by credit hours and the true cost to educate or train a student for each specific program. Discussion ensued regarding reasons why some program costs are higher due to such things as regulatory requirements and student to faculty ratio requirements.

In addition, data was provided by program showing the return on investment by median salary for high-wage capacity programs versus low wage capacity programs. An analysis was then shared showing low return on investment wage programs compared to high unit cost programs.

This analysis identified those areas where the College needs to reduce the unit cost for programs. Discussion ensued regarding the steps being taken to reduce those costs and how the College plans to address low enrollment programs moving into the future as well as meet the needs of the communities served while remaining fiscally responsible.

EDUCATION CENTERS OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION

The services provided by the Kaskaskia College Education Centers have and will continue to be essential components to the mission and strategic planning of Kaskaskia College. The College operates under a service model and is not measured on revenue production, but on fiscal responsibility.

While the College's commitment is to provide high quality services to its students and communities while remaining a fiscally responsible institution and community partner in the region, the method of providing wraparound services and the academic delivery model have become much more flexible since the pandemic. This flexibility, coupled with the advances of technology, has presented the opportunity for the College to analyze infrastructure deferred maintenance needs and financial relief.

A financial summary of all satellite locations was presented outlining the total revenue, total expenditures (costs to operate each of the location), and the Net Profit/Loss for each location. In addition, future capital requests for each location were reviewed and cost escalated to January 2028. Discussion ensued regarding the information provided, the increased costs associated with operating these locations, and declining population trends. Based on the data and financial analysis, discussion followed regarding the future operations of each Education Center and the long-term vision for each location.

CRISP MANUFACTURING AND TRADES CENTER UPDATE AND FUTURE PLAN

The Harry L. Crisp Manufacturing & Trades Center is the satellite location which produces the most credit hours. The Center hosts several different standalone programs. Each of these programs continues to grow each year with the increasing demand in the College district for workforce trained in the trades. Manufacturing continues to be the top employer in the district. The facility was purchased as a Pepsi Company warehouse and retrofitted to the needs of vocational trades. The facility was not built specifically for the vocational trades or for the purposes it is currently being used. The facility itself is at capacity and there is no room for expansion at the current location. The expected deferred maintenance costs at the facility over the next twenty years are expected to exceed the cost of building a new facility.

The possibility of building a new building for the vocational trades was presented. A rendering of the proposed Manufacturing Academy was shared. The proposed location for the Manufacturing Academy would be on the College's main campus on the northwest side of the Nursing Building. The College already owns the land with water and sewer already available. The building could be built to the needs of the vocational trades and labs while classrooms and computer labs on main campus could easily be used. In addition, the proximity to the main campus would be a vast improvement from a maintenance and operations standpoint.

A total of six funding options were presented and discussed in detail. The most favorable option is the College is hopeful it will be awarded a Manufacturing Academy grant of $6 million which would be used to construct the new Manufacturing Academy.

This information was presented for visionary planning long term.

FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE AND LINEMAN SCHOOL POTENTIAL
Information was presented for consideration in long-term planning related to the expected growth of the Agriculture Program. Due to the introduction of the Precision Agriculture program, there is a need for additional land for test plot programming as well as future land needs for nutrient management and sustainable agriculture programming. A need has also been identified for space to house agriculture and College equipment.

Discussions ensued regarding potential growth related to the Southern Illinois University - Carbondale partnership and additional external partners or sponsors to collaborate with the College for the Agriculture Programs. Opportunities exist for grant opportunities through the United States Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and State and Congressional funding.

In addition to the Agriculture Program land needs, the College has been presented with the opportunity to provide utility lineman training through partnerships with American, IBEW 309, Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, and Poettker Construction. The opportunity to offer this program would require land for the outdoor training portion of the program for pole installation training, pole climbing training, and utility truck operation. A proposed layout for the indoor facility needs for the electrician training portion of the program was shared. A map of the IBEW boundaries in the State of Illinois was reviewed. A feasibility study for this program is currently being conducted. This is only the first step in the approval process for a new program.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for the College to purchase land for both the Agriculture Program and the potential Utility Lineman Training Program. Possible locations for future land purchases, and the need to position the College financially to be able to make these purchases were also discussed.

SUCCESSION PLANNING DISCUSSION/2026 PRESIDENTIAL CALENDAR
President Evans introduced the need to begin succession planning as he approaches the end of his career in the next several years. Timeframes for beginning recruitment efforts for the next College president were discussed for purposes of future planning.

President Evans noted that FY27 will be a very busy year for both him and the College, as he serves as President of the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents and continues his appointment to the Illinois Community College Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Bryan Holthaus to adjourn. All members voted yes by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Board of Trustees Kaskaskia College	Secretary, Board of Trustees Kaskaskia College

Approved 07/27/26