BOARD OF TRUSTEES
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING MINUTES
KASKASKIA COLLEGE - COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT 501
GREENVILLE EDUCATION CENTER
JULY 8, 2026

WELCOME

President George Evans opened a community meeting at 11:55 a.m. on Wednesday, July 8, 2026 at the Greenville Education Center. Trustees Craig Finke and Louis Kalert were present. Student Trustee Andolini Gray was present.

Kaskaskia College employees in attendance included President George Evans, Alan Boerngen, Michael Christensen, Cary Day, Carrie Hancock, Sara Hanks, Chris Hottes, Sandi Laurent, Todd Lewis, Julie Obermark, Staci Palm, Karol Potter, Sarah Rattermann, and Kelsey Tate.

Community members in attendance included Teresa Cornelius, Kayla Curry, Meagan Eyman, Tim Eiserle, Jill Franks, Daniel Glynn, Kara Harris, Amanda Hustedde, Lauren Koch, Elain McNamarak, Tyler Morse, Jerry Moyer, Molly Rench, Susan Rudolph, Jerry Sauerwein, and Kurt Vonder Haar.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Evans led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTIONS

Those in attendance introduced themselves.

STATE OF KASKASKIA COLLEGE UPDATE

ENROLLMENT UPDATE

President Evans presented an update on enrollment based on reimbursable credit hours for the last six academic years. Enrollment continues trending in a positive direction. Compared to same day as term last year enrollment is up 3.5% in headcount and 13.4% in credit hours for the Fall 2026 semester.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING

President Evans presented information on the operating budget for Fiscal Year 2026. The budget is funded by 40% tuition & fees, 33% state government, 23% local government (property taxes), and 4% other. Based on the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Funding Act of 1965, the budget should be funded by 1/3 state government, 1/3 local government, and 1/3 tuition and fees. Due to discrepancies in the community college funding formula and the lack of state funds, the College is not funded at these levels. President Evans shared data from the ICCB Fiscal Year 2027 Funding Formula showing the actual funding the College receives versus what the College should be receiving. The

College should be funded $274.72 per Credit Hour Rate, however, with the State Adjustment of $215.02, the College is only receiving an Effective Credit Hour Rate of $59.70. Representatives from community colleges continue to meet with legislators to draw attention to rightsizing the funding model to reduce the financial burden on taxpayers and students.

President Evans shared that the College is one of three community colleges out of forty-five in Illinois where the majority of the operating budget does not come from property taxes. Community colleges in northern Illinois are funded between 50% to 51% by property taxes. The College does take into strong consideration the impact on tax bills.

President Evans discussed the following cost savings initiatives for the College:
1) Continuous and aggressive pursuit of right-sizing the community college funding formula, 2) health insurance revisions, 3) smarter scheduling driven by student demand, 4) continued pursuit of federal and state grants, 5) re-aligning of College programs and resource management, and 6) continued focus on student retention.

DISCUSSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION CHANGES

President Evans advised that although the Illinois Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) has not yet passed legislation or become law, it remains a topic of discussion. President Evans shared information on HB 5319 and SB 4034 which amend the Public Community College Act to permit community college districts in Illinois to offer bachelor's degree programs if certain conditions are met.

The Illinois Dual Credit Quality Control Act was signed into law June 30, 2025. The Act helps streamline dual credit offerings between high schools and community colleges and forces collaboration between high schools and community colleges. The Act ensures dual credit offerings awarded in Illinois are meeting quality standards as determined by the Illinois Community College Board and the respective community college accrediting agency.

On the federal side, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act signed into law on July 4, 2025 included a provision granting Pell Grant eligibility to certain short-term, career-focused certificate programs. The Workforce Pell Grant will become effective July 1, 2026 and provides Pell grant eligibility for eligible workforce programs which are determined by the State of Illinois to have a high demand in that field, require a high skill level, and provide a living wage. Pell grants provide college students with federal funds to attend college without having to pay back those funds. These funds were previously limited to students enrolled in programs of 16-hour or more credit. With the new provision, students enrolled in eligible workforce certificate programs between 4 and 15 credit hours that are completed in less than one semester (between 8 and 14 weeks) are now eligible for PELL grant funds. The College's current program offerings that will now be eligible under Workforce Pell include the Certified Nursing Assistant Program and the Emergency Medical Technician Program.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

A community member asked if there was a Culinary Arts program. President Evans advised that 18 months ago the faculty member resigned. At the time of his resignation, the College took the opportunity to review the Culinary Arts program and the feasibility of students continuing to spend money on a degree or certificate that is not required in the industry in the College district and does not provide a favorable return on investment for the student. One of the requirements for programs to be approved by the State, the wage must be at least higher than the minimum wage when earning that certificate or degree credential. Local and regional data for the restaurant and fast-food business showed the demand for a culinary workforce with a degree or certificate was not there nor did the wage analysis meet requirements. The College chose to discontinue the program for those reasons. If the demand increases in the future and the wage analysis shows an acceptable return on investment for students, the College would consider offering a Culinary Arts program again in the future.

A community member referenced the expected declining number of high school graduates in the State of Illinois and what the top two or three things the College is going to do to combat that trend and survive the threat. President Evans advised the College will continue to focus on the College's market share versus the actual student census. The College's market share of graduating seniors coming to the College is roughly 30-33% and the College will focus on maintaining that percentage or increase it a couple of percentage points. In addition, the College will continue to focus on retention. It is important for the College to pay attention to students from the minute they are interested in the College, not just from the day they enter the building for classes. The College will continue to promote the institution and share the opportunities students have to be successful in a certificate or degree program thus increasing their income capacities in the future at an affordable cost. The College must continue to tell that story.

A community member asked if there was an opportunity for students who are homeschooled to receive dual credit. The Illinois Community College Board must approve dual credit offerings. For a course to be approved for dual credit, the parent or individual who is homeschooling the student must meet the same credentialing criteria as teachers in a high school setting. Homeschool students are eligible to participate in the Jump Start program and qualify for KC Now.

A community member expressed gratitude to the College for its continued collaboration when reserving rooms at the College to host events.

One of the high school superintendents present expressed deep gratitude to the College for the numerous ways the College helps their students through the Jump Start and KC Now programs, by hosting 8th Grade Career Nights, and in providing financial assistance planning and academic advising for college. The College is always available to assist students with furthering their education and is an asset to the district.

Attendees from the correctional center also expressed gratitude to the College for their continued interest in the population served at their facility.

ENROLLMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

DUAL CREDIT ENROLLMENT

Provost & Vice President of Instructional Services Julie Obermark presented an update on dual credit offerings for the 2025-2026 academic year. A total of 137 high school instructors were credentialed; a total of 2,768 students took dual credit courses; a total of 299 dual credit courses were offered; and a total of 21,241 dual credit hours were earned. Tuition for dual credit courses is 100% waived providing great financial benefit to students and parents. Students earn high school and college credit at the same time while taking the course at their high school. Students are introduced to college-level coursework through dual credit offerings.

KC NOW - HIGHLIGHT AREAS OF GROWTH

KC Now is a program developed in 2020 which allows high school students to take a college course not offered at their high school. High school students can take the course at the College's main campus, at one of the Education Centers, or online. The number of dual credit courses offered at the seventeen high schools within the College district vary widely with some districts offering limited dual credit courses. The KC Now program removes barriers to disadvantaged students who reside in districts that do not offer many dual credit courses. A variety of areas of study are available to students with new areas being introduced each year. In the 2026-2027 academic year, courses in agriculture, construction project management, and education will be introduced. College staff collaborate with high schools to develop a schedule which meets the students' needs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENTS AND FISCAL SAVINGS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The KC Now program has grown from two schools with four students in 2020 to 13 schools with 148 students in the 2025-2026 academic year. For students in the KC Now program, the matriculation rate to the College post high school graduation averages 64%. Some students have graduated high school with an earned college certificate and are entering the workforce upon high school graduation.

KC Now courses are offered at a 50% discount on tuition and fees with an additional 25% discount for students with financial need through the support of the Kaskaskia College Foundation. The KC Now program offers an outstanding value to parents and students as well as school districts as there is no cost charged to the high school.

8TH GRADE CAREER NIGHT OPPORTUNITIES

Provost Obermark provided information on 8th Grade Career Night opportunities available to junior high schools in the district. College staff come to the school and meet with students and parents. Students complete a brief survey to see what their interests are potentially as a career and are introduced to different career opportunities and career pathway options. College staff assist parents and students in creating a roadmap of what courses they can take through their high school career taking advantage of the financial opportunities available to them through the Jump Start and KC Now programs. Information is also presented on the types of jobs available in the district, the wages for those jobs, and the labor demand in the district.

REVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

The President's Report to the Community is the annual report card of what the College has done in the past year. A copy of the report was provided to all attendees. President Evans encouraged attendees to review the report to see the impact the College has both district and state-wide.

KC FOUNDATION UPDATE

Michael Christensen thanked attendees for their continued support of the College and its students through their transformational giving which changes students' lives. The Foundation awarded students $407,450 via 384 scholarships in the 2025-26 year.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

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

Approved 07/27/26