

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING MINUTES
KASKASKIA COLLEGE - COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT 501
SALEM EDUCATION CENTER
JUNE 25, 2026**

WELCOME

President George Evans opened a community meeting at 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2026 at the Salem Education Center. Trustees present were Bill Hawley, Louis Kalert, and Linda Stover. Student Trustee Andolini Gray was present.

Kaskaskia College employees in attendance included President George Evans, Alan Boerngen, Mike Christensen, Cary Day, George Evans, Joy Fitts, Chris Halloway, Carrie Hancock, Sara Hanks, Kellie Henegar, Tommy Henegar, Laura Huge, Traci Massu, Julie Obermark, Staci Palm, Karol Potter, Sarah Ratermann, Andrea Shipley, Kelsey Tate, Alexis Tate, Jeff Thomas, and Kylee Williams.

Community members in attendance included Elizabeth Barlock, Connie Cavaletto, Representative John Cavaletto (Retired), Mallory Crouse, Leah Dellicarpini, Diana Hawley, Marie Headlee, Kerry Herdes, Angie Hieman, Clint Holkenbrink, Siertha Howe, Melanie Johnson, Ian King, Jennifer Kinsey, Kari Linder, Joe Mayoral, Tabitha Meador, Stephanie Moore, Lisa Peck, Tyler Rose, Sara Rose, Christonia Saddler, Madison Sarver, Jim Timpe, Jodi Trinkle, Marcy Wallace, Nancy Wesling, and Jillian Wilkins.

Media present was Bruce Kropp from WJBD/WSIQ.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Evans led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTIONS

President Evans recognized the Trustees and Student Trustee present. 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 referenced discussions occurring on social media related to the preparedness of high school students and asked if the College is having to reteach high school students. President Evans advised there will always be some students who struggle when they enter college because the structure is much less rigid than high school or junior high. In college, students must manage their own schedules which can be a wake-up call, especially for those taking online or limited on-campus classes. He did not see this as alarming overall. Instead, he said students need to mature into the college environment. The College addresses concerns early through retention alerts and other support systems. Faculty also provide one-on-one help, especially for students who may not have support at home.

A community member asked whether the College would consider a pathway for students to graduate high school as LPNs and possibly continue toward RN licensure online while working. Provost Obermark advised the College has not received that request before but is open to exploring ideas. She noted that for the first time ever five students entered the RN program during the last eight weeks of their senior year in the 2025-2026 academic year. Age restrictions do apply as students under eighteen are not currently accepted because of insurance and clinical-hour concerns. Provost Obermark will follow-up with that community member directly.

A community member shared that her daughter finished high school with thirty-five dual credit hours, which helped lower costs and decrease the number of college courses she still had left to complete.

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

President Evans 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. President Evans shared highlights of the information provided in the report which was provided to attendees. The highlights included information on how Kaskaskia College leads beyond District 501; the College's 85th anniversary celebration; the ICCB's 60th anniversary; the upcoming decline in the high school graduate population and what the College is doing to address that expected decline; how the College is creating community through the Arts program; the College's continued commitment to the

vocational trades; the impact of the 16 grants awarded to the College in the amount of \$3,440,325; a summary of FY25 financials; and the annual By the Numbers information.

President Evans highlighted the historic agreement with Southern Illinois University - Carbondale (SIUC) that allows students to enroll in a bachelor's degree program at SIUC that is offered at Kaskaskia College eliminating transportation and housing costs.

In addition, the impact of community colleges in the State of Illinois was discussed. Community colleges served 550,000 students in 2024-2025 compared to 223,000 served by the twelve universities within the State. Dual credit enrollment has increased 20% in Illinois; and the number of students seeking an associate degree has increased by 23%.

KC FOUNDATION UPDATE

The Kaskaskia College Foundation continues to support students in the district through scholarships. The Foundation awarded students \$407,450 via 384 scholarships in the 2025-26 year.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Chair, Board of Trustees
Kaskaskia College

Secretary, Board of Trustees
Kaskaskia College