



## **MIRACOSTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 11, 2025**  
*(Approved October 16, 2025)*

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Trustees of the MiraCosta Community College District met in open session on Thursday, September 11, 2025, in the Boardroom (1068) on the Oceanside 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

Federico Caion Demaestri (student trustee)

Administrators present:

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 August 21, 2025**

##### **B. Regular Business Meeting of August 21, 2025**

By motion of Trustee Conklin, seconded by Trustee Merchat, the board approved the minutes of the special meeting/closed session and the regular business meeting of August 21, 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**

None.

#### **V. CHANGES IN AGENDA ORDER**

None.

## **VI. PRESENTATIONS**

### **A. Associated Student Government (ASG) Introductions**

The 2025/26 ASG student leaders were introduced.

### **B. Online Education Update**

Faculty Coordinator of Online Education Dr. Jim Julius provided an update on distance education (DE), including an update on last year's online course offerings, an update on Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) improvements, course success, and retention disaggregation by ethnicity, as well as highlights and upcoming innovations to support online student learning based on student surveys and feedback. Julius reviewed key terms used by the college, as well as the vision, mission, and the distance education (DE) participation in MiraCosta programs.

Julius noted the college is now at 71.4 percent of FTES enrolled in DE courses, as compared to 37.4 percent in 2019/20 (pre-Covid). In addition to adult learners preferring online options, there are also significant online options for non-credit students, although some disciplines, such as mathematics, are especially eager to have students attend class in person. Retention rates and success rates have continued to increase since Covid, and DE equity gaps are continuing to narrow, as success rates for disproportionately impacted student groups continue to increase.

A survey has been added to the signup for Julius's Student Online Academic Readiness workshop for students. Approximately one third (320 students) who responded reported having no prior experience with online learning. Notably, students with prior online experience reported significantly better experience at MiraCosta than elsewhere. Feedback was provided regarding key challenges and barriers to online learning, which can inform enhancements in online instruction and the many available resources for online students to succeed.

Hyflex offerings have stabilized, with non-credit hyflex courses increasing in usage.

ZTC materials are now available in more than 40 percent of course sections at MiraCosta. The college has received more than \$2M in state grant funds to expand ZTC offerings and, as of fall 2025, 24 programs offer at least one ZTC option for every course. Development of 13 additional ZTC program pathways continues and will launch fall 2026. Notably, retention and success rates in ZTC courses are about one percent higher than non-ZTC courses.

## **VII. CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. Ratify Recommendations of Superintendent/President in Approving Personnel Actions**
- B. Ratify Memorandum of Understanding 25-04 with the Academic Associate Faculty (Juntos Podemos)**
- C. Ratify Memorandum of Understanding 25-05 with the Academic Associate Faculty (Counselor Institute)**
- D. Ratify Memorandum of Understanding 25-06 with the Academic Associate Faculty (Honors Contracts)**
- E. Approve 2026/27 Academic Calendar**
- F. Approve Reorganization of the Letters and ESL Departments**
- G. Approval of Travel to Florence, Italy, October 26-30, 2025, for Site Visit to the AIFS Study Center**

**H. Approve Purchase of Student Financial Success Software from Ellucian Company LP**

**I. Ratify and Approve Contracts and Purchase Orders**

Consent Item E was pulled for discussion.

By motion of Trustee Clendening, seconded by Trustee Merchat, consent items A-D and F-I were approved.

Vote: 7/0/0

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

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

By motion of Trustee Clendening, seconded by Trustee Pedroza, consent item E was approved.

Vote: 7/0/0

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

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

The Board expressed interest in how the “dangling Monday” flex day at the very end of the fall semester will be utilized. The Board directed Dr. Cooke to report back to them about how that day will be utilized, and then afterwards evaluate the effectiveness of having a flex day at that time of the semester, including what flex activities were offered, how many faculty participated, what went well, and what needs improvement. The intent of the measuring is to refine future academic calendars, if needed, as the Board reviews and approves an academic calendar each year.

Additional points made:

- The new calendar is 16 weeks in class versus a 17.5 week semester, as we currently have.
- All other SDICCCA colleges have already moved to a compressed calendar. Therefore, associate faculty who teach elsewhere have a lot of experience with this model of calendar.
- Will measure outcomes, retention, and success with the compressed calendars.
- Title 5 requires an approved academic calendar (no pilot calendars). Each year, the board will see and approve an academic calendar. Chancellor’s Office also has to review, which has already occurred for this 2026/27 calendar.
- Allows for a winter intercession.

The work of the calendar taskforce took all of this into consideration and have been transparent with the information available to all on the website.

**VIII. SECOND READING – BOARD POLICIES**

**A. Board Policy 2305 – Annual Organizational Meeting**

By motion of Trustee Clendening, seconded by Trustee Crosbie, the board adopted Board Policy 2305.

Vote: 7/0/0

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

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

## **B. Board Policy 3820 – Gifts**

By motion of Trustee Merchat, seconded by Trustee Conklin, the board adopted Board Policy 3820.

Vote: 7/0/0

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

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

## **IX. FIRST READING – BOARD POLICIES**

### **A. Board Policy 3501 – Campus Security and Access**

Proposed edits to Board Policy 3501 were reviewed and discussed, and the policy will be placed on a future agenda for adoption by the board.

## **X. ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Adopt Fiscal Year 2025/26 Final Budget**

By motion of Trustee Pedroza, seconded by Trustee Merchat, the board adopted the fiscal year 2025/26 final budget.

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 Crosbie, seconded by Trustee Merchat, the board approved the appointment of Eleanor Evans for a second two-year term as a member of the Independent Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee.

Vote: 7/0/0

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

Abstentions: None

Absent: None

## **XI. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. Public Hearing 4:00 p.m. FY2024/25 Final Budget**

The public hearing was opened at 5:16 p.m. No comments were received from the public, and the hearing was closed at 5:17 p.m.

### **B. MiraCosta Community College District Irrevocable Trust Investment Board Report**

The MiraCosta Community College District Irrevocable Trust Investment Board Report was provided as information.

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

The college is finalizing costs for the repair, and an update was provided for information.

## **XII. COLLEGE-RELATED REPORTS**

### **A. Trustees Activities**

Trustees Merchat and Crosbie attended the Carlsbad State of the City address, where Dr. Sunny Cooke served on a workforce development panel.

Trustee Merchat also completed training through the Community College League of California and attended the San Diego Alliance for Drug Free Youth, which convened a well-run program with the San Dieguito Union High School District and the City of Encinitas. Approximately 30 attendees, demonstrating service across the entire MiraCosta College District, were in attendance.

Trustee Pedroza completed the districtwide book read, *Dear America*, and expressed appreciation to the district for selecting such a timely and important book that invites reflection. Trustees continued supporting community leaders on issues unfolding locally and nationally and, in light of the recent arrest near an Encinitas school, with extended thanks to educators who continued teaching despite the circumstances and to community members who assisted, underscoring the importance of supporting every student who walks through our doors.

Trustee Conklin met with the student trustee, served as a panelist on a student trustee forum, and attended community meetings as well as a family-and-educator training regarding ICE in schools, noting updated guidance.

Trustee Clendening attended the MiraCosta College Foundation Board meeting and shared how the Foundation is working diligently to understand major initiatives and grant funded work and to align support, including stepping up fundraising for student support and district support.

President Cassar presented at All College Day and recently toured the U.S. Capitol provided a tour.

### **B. Student Trustee**

Student Trustee Federico Caion Demaestri shared how the Oceanside and San Elijo campuses hosted Club Rush events, with approximately 30 clubs active or in the process of becoming active for the fall semester. The Legislative Affairs Work Group partnered with the League of Women Voters to prepare for National Voter Registration Day later in the semester. MiraCosta also plans to send 11 students, including eight funded participants, to the Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC) Advocacy Academy in Riverside in December.

Students actively participated in the food services stakeholder meeting and open forums related to dining services at the college.

ASG also met with Deputy Mayor Eric Joyce to discuss tenant protection ordinances, unanimously supporting the effort, and delivered public comment at an Oceanside City Council meeting to advocate for renters, who make up the majority of MiraCosta's student body.

Demaestri joined a statewide webinar that provided perspectives on effective leadership. In addition, representatives participated in a fiscal advisory work group hosted by the Chancellor's Office, with opportunities to collaborate on data projects

### **C. Classified Employees**

Classified Senate (CS) President Carl Banks reported the CS is launching its leadership program, designed to develop future CS leaders and ensure long-term sustainability. The application deadline is Friday, with the new cohort to be announced at the upcoming Classified Senate meeting on September 23.

A major focus for September is the Caring Campus initiative. On September 18, the Senate will host a joint session with campus leadership in collaboration with the Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC). This session follows two summer coaching workshops that prepared classified professionals to share their perspectives and recommendations on Caring Campus. The goal is to build momentum, secure leadership buy-in, and establish a joint working group of classified professionals and campus leadership dedicated to advancing the program. The initiative places strong emphasis on student belonging and support. Plans include developing intentional measures of success to evaluate the effectiveness of Caring Campus practices. The CS expressed appreciation for Dr. Cooke's support in advancing this important initiative.

### **D. Faculty**

Academic Senate (AS) President Curry Mitchell reported several new professional development opportunities were launched this fall, including a regular series of workshops on accessibility and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These workshops are designed to prepare faculty and staff for new federal regulations taking effect in 2026, while emphasizing the broader goal of creating inclusive and engaging learning environments.

In addition, MiraCosta continued to provide dedicated spaces for professional development in artificial intelligence (AI). Jim Julius, Rick White, and Jim Sullivan facilitated multiple opportunities, including the Discovery Lab and new evening "Play Lab" sessions where faculty can explore generative content creation and interactive AI tools. Starting next week, Julius will also lead two new communities of practice—one open to all and focused on the model of "30 minutes of reading, 30 minutes of practice, 30 minutes of reflection," and another faculty-centered group exploring innovative approaches to student assessment in the era of AI.

Within the AS, leadership prepared for a series of "arc of knowledge" discussions with institutional partners to strengthen understanding of student access and success, particularly in relation to class scheduling, instructional modalities, and long-term planning. Subcommittee chairs also met to review business items, including curriculum, administrative procedures, hiring prioritization, sabbatical approvals, salary advancement, and professional development planning under the new academic calendar.

Faculty leaders are reflecting on the importance of classrooms as safe and stable spaces for students amid broader challenges in society. With week four concluding and week five beginning, many eight-week students are already approaching midterms, underscoring the need to protect classroom environments where students feel a sense of belonging and support.

## **E. Assistant Superintendents/Vice Presidents**

### **1. Instructional Services**

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Pescarmona reported steady enrollment growth, with overall headcount and FTES up four percent. In response to student demand, deans and department chairs added nearly 20 courses over the past two weeks to ensure students could access the classes they needed.

On September 22, the college plans to launch a new pre-engineering pathway in partnership with Cal State San Marcos. The program includes the development of a curriculum for electrical engineering and other engineering pathways, with the launch event scheduled at the Little Theatre (Room 3601).

Next month, the Board will be presented with two new requests for transfer partnerships. Agreements with National University and Arizona State University will guarantee reduced tuition and scholarships for MiraCosta students. National University offered a 46 percent tuition reduction for students transferring with an associate's degree, along with scholarships for MiraCosta employees pursuing bachelor's, master's, or doctoral programs. Arizona State University is offering a 22 percent tuition reduction for students completing the "MyPath" program with a minimum 2.5 GPA. Last year, 285 MiraCosta students transferred to ASU.

The college launched HSI Week early with a series of well-attended events coordinated by Dr. Maria-Isabel Rocha-Duarte. More than 200 participants attended the opening celebration, which featured food and financial aid resources. Activities included a startup business workshop, Latinx Tech programming, Latinx Hours on the Lawn, and a "Foods and Medicine" event designed to engage Latinx students in STEM pathways.

The federal government announced it would discontinue MiraCosta's Title V grants, totaling \$6 million. While disappointing, the college is analyzing options to sustain progress, including the use of "no-cost extensions" to spend remaining funds over the next year.

MiraCosta will remain firmly committed to its role as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, continuing to foster student belonging and success through collaboration across Student Services, IDEA, and Instruction.

### **2. Student Services**

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Wojcik shared plans, in collaboration with Dr. Wendy Stewart, to host a presentation at the Community Learning Center focused on supporting undocumented students. The session will address available programs, the college's responsibilities, and campus policies and procedures should federal immigration enforcement (ICE) appear on campus. Conversations have been held with departments across the college about the distinction between private and public spaces and how best to support students in such circumstances.

The division also reported that 36 percent of MiraCosta students currently have at least one basic need, most commonly access to technology, followed by housing, food insecurity, or transportation. Efforts to meet these needs are ongoing. Since the start of the semester, campus food pantries have been accessed more than 10,293 times by 3,635 students in just three weeks, underscoring the scope of student demand. MiraCosta has also partnered with

TrueCare, which now offers on-campus appointments every Tuesday and every other Thursday to assist students with CalFresh and Medi-Cal applications.

On October 3, the approximately 170 staff members in the Student Services division, including folks from Student Equity and the Office of IDEA, will participate in a day-long equity retreat. Using *Equity Talk to Equity Walk* as a framework, the division will review student equity data and discuss department-level changes needed to better serve disproportionately impacted and historically marginalized students.

### **3. Administrative Services**

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Gomez submitted a written report. She added Administrative Services shared several updates not listed on the report. An emergency declaration regarding the elevator in the Student Services Building is expected next month following an incident in which students became trapped. The fire department was called to force the door open, resulting in damage. Repairs and warranty coverage are being assessed, and staff is working to minimize the impact on student accessibility in the building.

Open forums on food services are underway at the Oceanside and San Elijo campuses, providing opportunities for students, employees, and community members to give feedback on current operations and future improvements.

With the budget cycle completed, attention has shifted toward technology programs. The district plans to engage a consultant to review software management, service to departments, and overall efficiency, with an emphasis on ensuring strong security practices.

Finally, VP Gomez shared that she, along with Facilities and Civic Center Events Coordinator Carrie Everts plan to attend the Community College Facility Coalition (CCFC) Module 3 training in Sacramento on October 1.

### **4. Human Resources**

Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Schwartzkopf reported MiraCosta's Human Resources team announced the launch of a new jobs page at [jobs.miracosta.edu](https://jobs.miracosta.edu). The redesigned site offers an engaging and informative platform for applicants interested in career opportunities at the college.

The EEO Advisory Committee met recently and continues to seek a community representative to support equitable hiring practices. Any community members who are interested in serving on the EEOAC should contact Hayley via [email](#).

The Operations team focused on updates related to student workers, collaborating with campus partners to revise administrative procedures aimed at strengthening support systems and enhancing the student employee experience.

Open enrollment for employee benefits was successfully completed, with coverage beginning October 1. For the first time, benefited retirees were able to complete open enrollment through Workday, with nearly 50 percent utilizing the system.



Human Resources also initiated work on a classification and compensation study. The scope of work for the Request for Proposals (RFP) is currently being developed, with a goal of presenting the RFP to the Board for approval in February.

Following a comprehensive review of the inaugural Leadership Academy, feedback from participants and facilitators is being used to refine the program. The second cohort is anticipated to formally launch in spring 2026.

Finally, over the summer, the district's insurance company and Risk Manager Justin Crast reviewed our chemical hygiene plan and conducted districtwide safety walks. Reports indicated no major concerns, providing assurance that MiraCosta's labs and facilities remain safe learning and working environments.

**F. Superintendent/President**

Superintendent/President Cooke was unable to attend the board meeting.

**XIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Clendening acknowledged first responders and those who lost their lives 24 years ago on 9/11.

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:**

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Rick Cassar  
President

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Alketa Wojcik, Ph.D.  
Assistant Superintendent/Vice President