

MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES RETREAT

April 9, 2025 – Morey Tech Center-Mt. Pleasant

Present: Jane Zdrojewski, Board Chair; Dr. Michael Jankoviak, Vice Chair; Dr. Karen Moore, Treasurer; Richard S. Allen, Jr., Secretary; Nate Weisenburger, Trustee; George Gilmore, Trustee, Lois Pittsley, Trustee; Tim Hood, President; Dr. Scott Mertes, Provost; Lillian K. Frick, Vice President of Finance & Administration; Dr. Matt Miller, Vice President of Student Services & Advancement; Annette Sturdavant, PT Executive Assistant to the President/Board of Trustees; Sherry L. Kyle, PT Executive Assistant to the President/Board of Trustees

(Sean O'Brien, Information Technology Operations Coordinator, was present throughout the day as needed for technical assistance)

(Shawn Troy, Dean of Workforce & Career Education, provided a tour of the Morey Tech Center, and answered any questions during the tour and presentation of plans and equipment)

(A special thank you to Holle Angellotti, Administrative Specialist-Workforce & Economic Development, for her assistance in any last minute or special needs during the workshop, and her gracious assistance in loading up supplies and equipment after the Retreat had ended.)

The Board Retreat was called to order at 8:15 a.m.

Chair Zdrojewski reviewed the Purpose and Desired Outcomes for the meeting. A hard copy of the information was shared with trustees.

Purpose: This retreat is designed to foster meaningful dialogue among trustees, the college president, and administrators about the institution's future. Through open discussions and shared insights, participants will deepen their understanding of the diverse perspectives that shape decision-making and guide the college's strategic direction.

Desired Outcome: Participants will leave the retreat with a richer appreciation of the college's history, a clearer grasp of the key challenges and opportunities that will influence its trajectory in the coming years, and a deeper awareness of how individual perspectives inform trustee decisions. This shared understanding will strengthen collaboration and enhance strategic alignment for the college's continued success.

President Hood introduced retreat facilitator, Dr. Alan Phillips, and provided an overview of his biography for participants, a copy of which was shared with all participants.

Facilitator Phillips facilitated an Ice Breaker at this point as a segue for the retreat.

President Hood shared a presentation entitled **Enrollment Insights-a Retrospective Summary** which included enrollment data at Mid since 1968, focusing on peak years and periods of decline since 2008 as an introduction to the Retreat's focus.

Facilitator Phillips led a conversation on enrollment, and in what ways we can increase enrollment – where do we do this? How do we do this? What are targets? Who does this? How does the changing economy and lifestyles affect enrollment?

Trustee Pittsley began a conversation concerning the importance of involving parents of dual enrolled students, including their participation in events on campus such as awarding academic achievements to students. It is important that parents and other friends or family members become involved and see our campuses. Trustee Pittsley stated that she feels it is important for Mid to be a tangible college to the parents of students of all ages at an early age. The connection with Mid is very important for the family to become involved and excited about college for their children.

Trustee Weisenburger feels that this is very important for workforce trades students as well. Family involvement with students as young as grades 5-8 assists in their familiarity with the many quality programs offered in many different areas at Mid.

Provost Mertes led a discussion regarding International students and why their numbers have dwindled over the past years, the main reason being trends in Mid Eastern culture. Other attempts to boost the numbers of International students have been made, including recruitment of students in Canada, but not much success has been made in that particular country. Student athletes have also become an important component in recruitment and is very unique in nature.

Trustee Allen led a conversation on the changing demographics of Michigan and how it affects enrollment at colleges. As more of the population and business/industry exits our State, what effects does this have on our enrollment initiatives? Michigan is second only to West Virginia in population decline in the US. A discussion followed on how Michigan has changed in business/industry and the ways in which classes are delivered today.

Facilitator Phillips provided insights into External and Internal forces affecting community college, setting the framework for the remainder of the day's discussion.

External forces that effect enrollment-funding and regulation, economy, unemployment, demographics, size of market, prospective students, center of influence, attitudes, technology (including delivery means), accreditation, regulation, achievement gap.

Internal forces that impact Enrollment: recruitment, incentives, price, quality, product, advertising, marketing, outreach, grades, class standing, activities, workforce development, cost structure all impact retention as well.

President Hood, the Provost and Vice Presidents presented future planning for Mid and the students we serve.

Discussions took place regarding the importance of recruiters in the high schools, Mid's image, advertising, value proposition, course offerings, and differentiation: How do we differ from others?

Chair Zdrojewski shared that many of these topics can be used for future board workshop topics. The conversation continued focusing on demographics, programs, 60/40 ratio of women/men at Mid. Trustee Allen suggested a weekly article in local papers – in whatever venue currently is popular – focusing on Mid events/student success/other news to keep in the public eye and share good news with the surrounding communities. Trustee Pittsley stated that although local newspapers are a thing of the past there are other social platforms in use that are ever changing. Folks have very limited time to look at the information. It must be concise and compact.

Vice Chair Jankoviak requested information concerning the current percentage of part-time instructors teaching courses. Provost Mertes has this information and will share it. He added that more full-time instructors are taking on overload contracts whenever possible to assist.

Chair Zdrojewski shared that we need to look at the Board's *Enduring Goals* and determine if these are all inclusive.

A conversation focused on employees at Mid took place, in areas of full-time/part-time ratio, quality, qualifications, and satisfaction of students as related to meeting student and faculty needs. President Hood shared that on the horizon are initiatives to keep employees better informed about what is happening in many areas of the College.

The enrollment conversations did not reflect an employee component because typically most employees are not directly associated with the enrollment plan. There is an enrollment focused team that includes employees who serve in that capacity.

The Vice Presidents and Provost shared with Trustees that they look very thoroughly at topics brought to the Trustees before the Board reviews them, whether informational or action. Nothing is presented without being discussed and tweaked at great length.

Vice Chair Jankoviak stated that he feels we need to be better prepared regarding succession planning. It is an important part of the strategic planning process within the college to ensure continuity of critical roles when current leaders exit the institution. How do we train/groom a replacement? There are some critical positions that we will soon need to be ready to address.

Facilitator Phillips interjected that “everything done impacts everything else” – this is very important to remember.

Trustee Pittsley shared that she would like to take some time today to further address the administrative salary discussion that took place as an informational item at the last board meeting on April 1, 2025. Another fine example of how everything done affects everything else.

Vice President Miller reviewed information concerning the STEM planning – strategic enrollment management plan. Provost Mertes added that in the past a “top down” process had been implemented. The process has become much more inclusive, which leads to gleaning more input.

A discussion took place concerning Mentoring at Mid. Trustee Pittsley led a conversation which looked at mentors and mentees, and how this can be expanded to be more helpful and more readily available for student use. Would it be possible to use more “community” mentors? Training would need to be provided for this to work best – but there are folks in business and industry, as well as many local retirees who may find this to be a very rewarding experience. It would be a good experience for the students as well.

Chair Zdrojewski also stated that “reverse mentorship” may be useful in many ways – especially in technology.

Provost Mertes shared that advisors and mentors currently in use in many areas have this role built into programs and services. The WAVE program (Workforce and Academic Vision for Empowerment) involves regular review by the Curriculum Committee, which discusses ways for improvement, and recommendations for change and action. A community component could be possible.

Trustee Moore added that she feels proper training in mentoring will be vitally important, as well as oversight and constant review.

President Hood stated that the strategic enrollment management initiatives are also closely related to this strategy. Vice President Miller added that every initiative has its champions and committee, with each reporting back regularly to the overall committee.

Chair Zdrojewski asked if there are any other items we want to add for discussion today, and that discussions can continue during lunch, and we can possibly use a portion of time designated for the tour, as need be. A full tour cannot be provided to Trustees today, due to the manufacturing area being closed while the new floor is being installed, thus shortening the time allowed on the agenda.

President Hood added that Mid has many partners we work with regularly in all these aspects. Making time for new partnerships is an ongoing task. Some of this is very time intensive – for instance partnerships with the RESDs. Mid has worked with the Clare-Gladwin and Gratiot-Isabella RESDs since it was established in 1965. These relationships and programs continue to grow and are bigger and better than ever, serving the needs of students to the best of our ability.

At this time lunch was served, followed by a tour of the Morey Tech Center. Participants will meet back in the room to regroup and proceed with the discussions.

Facilitator Dr. Phillips led a discussion on “*Levers and Drivers*”. He asked that everyone review the information contained in the handout and we will add to the lists anything we feel is missing. Discussion took place concerning issues that are focused in Lansing in regard to funding, politicians, etc. Input can be provided – but there may not necessarily be a controlled outcome. Use of lobbyists was discussed. Keeping bad ideas out is equally as important as good ideas we let in. Political advocacy was discussed, as well as a focus on DEI.

Levers and Drivers that are enrollment driven included:

- Recruiters
- Incentives
- Price
- Quality
- Product
- Advertising/Marketing/Outreach

Things we can control (Levers):

- Recruiters (number and location)
- Advertising, Marketing and Outreach (social media/advertising dollars – image/differentiation/value-proposition)
- Incentives (scholarships, grants, financial aid)
- Quality (test scores-ACT and SAT, grades/class standing, waivers)
- Product-Programs/Activities/Environment (location and access)
- Price-tuition & fees (cost structure, instruction/research/service)

Things we cannot control (Drivers)

- State Funding/Regulation
- Economy-unemployment rates
- Demographics (declining HS population, increasing minority population, increasing # of non-traditional students)
- Competition (CC/NFP/FP, out of state/on-line, industry/corporate universities)
- Size of the Market-Applicant Pool
- Prospect and COI Attitudes
- Propensity
- Technology-on-line/MOOCs(Massive Open Online Courses)/competency based
- Changing Nature of Students
- Accreditation/Regulation
- Achievement Gap

What’s Missing from what we have discussed?

- Political Advocacy
- Supporters from the community that benefit from Mid
- Federal Impact (ICE/DEI – Immigration/Customs Enforcement & Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)
- Tariffs (Funding?)
- Prevailing Wage
- Employee Availability
- Keeping up with Change
- Availability of Jobs and Job Growth
- Cyber Wars

- AI (Artificial Intelligence)
- Perceived Quality

Reorganization of the Department of Education will be an additional factor over which we have no control. Funding may be affected.

Prevailing wage and how it relates to jobs such as Robotics and etc.

How curriculum fits training – employment – availability of jobs and job growth (online, stop-outs, drop-outs)

Large online schools such as Southern New Hampshire and massive open online courses (MOOC)

Applicant Pool – students – all come for different reasons. All are different age groups with unique needs.

Propensity-getting prospective students and parent on campus.

What are community leaders saying about us?

Cyber wars:

AI-(Artificial Intelligence) how does it help? How does it hurt? Changing nature of students – prior learning credit – interfacing with prospective students. Recruit for sports – invitations to visit our campuses. Two different campus cultures between Harrison and Mt. Pleasant.

Trustee Moore stated that she was very impressed with the Morey Tech Center tour and the many exciting new programs. We have to remember that we don't want *everyone* – we just don't have room. We want those who want what we offer.

Facilitator Phillips shared that there is no real definition of what a traditional student is. But we still need to market and develop programs that are needed and/or desired.

CAMPUS CULTURE

Board:

- Community Representatives
- Governance
- Financial Support
- Foundation Board
- Capital Campaign Role -Trustee Pittsley asked – “*what is the board's role to Mid? Do Trustees make personal financial commitment? Do trustees meet with potential donors? Are trustees expected to contribute to the College Foundation?*” There are different ways this can be addressed that would be comfortable to each individual's preference. A discussion took place concerning various ways commitment can take place depending on each person's comfort level.
- Move Capital Campaign Forward
- Administrative Salary Issue/Budget
- Succession Planning
- Sustainability
- Executive Oversight

Facilitator Phillips added that the Board of Trustees is an outside connection/representation. The President and the administration are inside connections/representations.

President Hood stated that every employee at Mid needs to be an advocate for the college. Talking Points are being developed for use when presenting to groups throughout the communities so that a consistent message and correct information is shared with the different groups.

A conversation took place regarding DEI and the Board and how this relates to policy.

We need to move the capital campaign forward.

Facilitator Phillips stated that in his opinion, the Board's role is to advise and consent – the actual work is done by the President and his team. Let the experts handle the actual work. He believes the college's Board and Administrative staff work well together.

Trustee Pittsley asked if there was any information available as to if there was a grievance filed, or any additional action taken by the ESPA after the conversation that took place at the April 1, 2025 board meeting in reference to administrative salaries.

Chair Zdrojewski requested that any future discussions pertaining to administrative salaries be placed on the board agenda to be addressed in regular open session.

Facilitator Dr. Phillips stated that it is time for the Board to consider what it wants to take on...and what they don't want to take on. He shared that he feels there is a good relationship between board members and the administration of Mid. Administrative wages and benefits need to be reviewed. Information from peer institutions can be gathered for comparison and a recommendation developed and presented to the trustees at a later date.

President Hood shared that there are some good discussions concerning many of today's topics through the MCCA President's Meetings. Many other community colleges in the State have very similar issues currently going on and under review. Information sharing between colleges is very helpful and useful.

Trustee Jankoviak suggested that we all look at things that bring upon us dread. What keeps you up at night? Are there topics in this arena that need our immediate attention?

Provost Mertes stressed the importance of the sustainability of the Strategic Plan, Enrollment Management, and other plans in place to keep up to date and changing as needed – but this is not a problem associated with the board – the administration tends to these issues. He also feels that the administrative salary issue is concerning. We need to have competitive salaries or we will continue to lose good employees, as well as attract the right pool of applicants

Chair Zdrojewski feels one of the most important roles of the trustees is to monitor the President's performance and the job he is doing, and continue to monitor metrics.

Facilitator Phillips feels that executive struggles and the budget are also ongoing topics that need to be monitored.

Trustee Pittsley said she would like additional information on how the role of the board is related to administrative salaries – is it a budget approval role only?

Chair Zdrojewski stated that after a roadmap is prepared with the relative data, the board can make various decisions on how to proceed with this topic.

Vice President Frick explained that all three employee groups have different packages in vacation time, healthcare, etc.

Chair Zdrojewski added that the President's compensation package is unique – housing, cell phone, employee benefit package and etc. There is no comparison at Mid except to past president's compensation.

Trustee Gilmore added that the surrounding counties had surveyed compensation packages and brought those positions that had lagged behind in compensation as compared to peer groups "up to speed" over time to make up for inequities. The same may be possible at Mid – in increments vs "all at once".

Vice President Frick asked if the board would like to see other community college packages for comparison to those at Mid. Similar sized and peer group colleges – to see if we are “in the ballpark”. The board felt this would be helpful information in making a decision.

A discussion took place concerning the board agenda and who should receive it in advance of meetings. Where and how is it posted and to whom? What is posted prior to meetings, and what is posted after? Chair Zdrojewski feels strongly that only the agenda for upcoming meetings is posted – followed by the minutes after they are approved or corrected as requested at the meeting. Any of this material can be accessed by FOIA – but that is something we can deal with as it may occur.

Chair Zdrojewski requested that the Vice Presidents and Provost develop a recommendation on administrative salaries and President Hood can present the recommendation at the May Board Mtg. Trustees who participate can add input up to the meeting via zoom – if needed. A competitive analysis will be presented by the President at the May Board Mtg.

Provost Mertes added that this is not purely administrative in nature and is a multi-year topic.

Trustee Pittsley informed the group that she will be traveling and unavailable from April 15 through May 2.

Chair Zdrojewski reminded everyone that the new start time for board meetings begins with the May 6, 2025 meeting. Workshop begins at 5:00 p.m., followed by the regular meeting scheduled to start at 5:30.

Vice President Frick shared that preliminary budget information will be presented at the May 6 regular meeting in preparation for approval of the budget at the second board meeting. The regular June board meeting is on June 3, and the “Truth in Taxation” meeting takes place on June 17th. This meeting takes the place of the regular July meeting and begins at the new start times – 5pm for the workshop-5:30 for the board meeting. Both are in the Esther C. Conference Room on the Harrison Campus. The August 5 regular meeting takes place in Mt. Pleasant in the Community Room.

Chair Zdrojewski shared that “Succession Planning” will be a topic at an upcoming workshop - relative to the position of President and other Administrative staff. The board would have an initial meeting to discuss this information before proceeding to take any action.

Trustee Pittsley, Vice President Miller and Alexa Carey, Executive Director of the Mid Michigan College Foundation, will meet soon to discuss how Trustees can assist to further support Mid’s Foundation in any manner that they are comfortable with. This will include an initial discussion on identifying potential donors – then the Foundation can proceed with their usual protocol. President Hood previewed an upcoming internal campaign for funds – including the Board of Trustees at their own comfort level. The President takes intermediary steps with donors, eases into discussions regarding their interests for support. Then any decisions on financial support is left completely to each individual donor.

Some trustees shared that they are not comfortable having discussions with individuals about making a donation, especially when other local fundraising campaigns are taking place. Trustee Weisenburger shared that he would be more than happy to make connections with potential donors but there is the need to stay within his own level of comfort in how involved he is personally. President Hood assured the Board that the administration is not recommending that Trustees take on roles of asking for donations.

It was decided that other ideas can be brought to the table on how individuals, including the Board, can contribute to the good of the college. Everyone can opt to participate or not – this is every individual’s own choice. Trustee Pittsley added that she does not feel an additional pre-meeting is necessary-the information brought forth and discussed today should be left as is.

Facilitator Phillips provided a recap of the day and again shared that he feels the Trustees, Administrators and President have a good working relationship. Many institutions he has worked with do not have this good base to build upon. The past of any institution is as relevant as the tasks ahead.

Everyone thanked Dr. Phillips for a most rewarding retreat, and feel the information gathered and plans made for the good of the college and the students we serve was time well spent. Much was learned by everyone who participated.

Chair Zdrojewski adjourned the workshop at 3:51 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Sherry L. Kyle

PT Exec. Asst. to the President/Board of Trustees

Jane Zdrojewski, Board Chair

Richard S. Allen, Jr., Secretary