

**Rock Valley College Board of Trustees  
Community College District No. 511  
3301 N. Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114  
Educational Resource Center (ERC), Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR)**

**December 19, 2023, 5:15 p.m.**

**Special Meeting - Decennial Committee**

- A. Call to Order**
- B. Roll Call**
- C. Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)**
- D. Approval of Minutes – October 24, 2023**
- E. Presentation and Review of Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Report**
- F. Survey of Residents in Attendance**
- G. Date of Next Committee of the Whole Meeting:** January 9, 2024, 5:15 p.m. Meeting to be held in the Educational Resource Center (ERC), Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), on the main campus.
- H. Date of Next Board of Trustees Retreat:** January 20, 2024, 8:30 a.m., Meeting to be held in the Woodward Technology Center (WTC), Room 1308, on the main campus.
- I. Date of Next Regular Meeting:** January 23, 2024, 5:15 p.m. Meeting to be held in the Educational Resource Center (ERC), Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), on the main campus.
- J. Date of Next Decennial Committee Meeting:** February 27, 2024, 5:15 p.m., Educational Resource Center (ERC), Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), on the main campus.
- K. Adjourn**

Gloria Cardenas Cudia, Board Chair

Following the meeting, please complete the community survey. Scan the QR code below or click on this link [https://rvc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3xEAlMkqjIDAnhY](https://rvc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3xEAlMkqjIDAnhY)



**Illinois Community College District #511  
Rock Valley College  
3301 North Mulford Road  
Rockford, IL 61114**

**Board of Trustees Special Meeting – Decennial Committee  
October 24, 2023, 5:15 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

The Special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 511, Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, McHenry, Ogle, and Stephenson Counties, Illinois, convened in Room 1300 of the Advanced Technology Center, 1400 Big Thunder Blvd., Belvidere, IL on Tuesday, October 24, 2023. Rock Valley College President Dr. Howard Spearman, co-chair of the Decennial Committee, called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

**Roll Call**

The following members of the committee were present:

Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. Bob Trojan
Mr. Paul Gorski	Mr. John Nelson
Student Trustee Juan Noguera	Ms. Jessica Jones
Dr. Howard Spearman	Ms. Heather Snider
Ms. Ellen Olson	Ms. Ann Kerwitz

The following members of the committee was absent: Mr. Richard Kennedy, Ms. Kristen Simpson, Ms. Crystal Soltow, Mr. Adrian Vasquez.

Also in attendance: Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President Operations/Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President Liberal Arts and Adult Education/Chief Academic Officer; Mr. Jim Handley, Vice President Human Resources; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President Student Affairs; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President Industry Partnerships and Community Engagement; Ms. Betsy Saucedo, Assistant to the President; Attorney Joseph Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

**Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)**

No public comments were received.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Ms. Jessica Jones, to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2023 meeting.

There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

### **Presentation and Review of Annual Comprehensive Financial Report**

Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance/chief financial officer, presented a review of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). In her report, she reviewed the legislation and purpose of the Decennial Committee, as well as the schedule for future meetings.

She further explained that the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Financial Management Manual requires an external audit in compliance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 33/34 with minimal requirements. Rock Valley College participates in the Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement in Excellence in Financial Reporting.

The GFOA Certificate of Achievement (COA) encourages and assists state and local government to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) to prepare annual comprehensive reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure. The goal of this program is that users of the financial information have the ability to access the financial health themselves.

Ms. Olson reviewed the GFOA review process, noting that GFOA reviewers are never selected from the same state as the report being prepared or from the same firm that prepared the independent audit. Rock Valley College has received this award for 16 consecutive years.

Ms. Olson also reviewed the information covered in the individual sections of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report including the Introductory Section, Financial Section, Statistical Section and Special Reports section.

Ms. Olson also noted that the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) is available for public consumption on the RVC website, and pursuant to Section 3-22.2 of the Illinois Public Community College Act, the College is required to publish a financial statement annually at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the district. The annual audit and associated reports are due for submission to the ICCB by December 30 of each year; documentation of the publication is required by ICCB no later than January 15 of each year.

To conclude her presentation, Vice President Olson reviewed the following recommendations of the College administration:

1. The Decennial Committee members shall accept the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report as evidence of accountability.
2. Consider engaging an independent auditor/compliance officer biennially to review accountability across the College for compliance and adherence to policies and procedures. The estimated cost is \$70,000 to \$80,000.
3. Update Board Policy 5:10.120, Purchasing, to increase the expenditure amount requiring approval by the Board of Trustees from \$10,000 to \$25,000. The \$10,000 limit has been in place since 1999. Increasing the amount will create efficiencies in conducting purchasing transactions with vendors by permitting a quicker turnaround time, especially on quotes that are good only 30 days and often expire before approval gets to the Board. A survey of Illinois community colleges indicates that Rock Valley College is the only responder that requires approval of the Board of Trustees for expenditures less than \$25,000.

### **Questions and Discussion:**

In response to a question from Trustee Trojan, Ms. Olson indicated she will check college records to determine the number and the nature of expenditures that would fall into the categories of under \$10,000, between \$10,000 and \$25,000, and over \$25,000.

In response to a question from Trustee Trojan, Ms. Olson indicated she is not aware of any requests from the public for a copy of the College's audit.

In response to a question from Trustee Gorski, Dr. Spearman confirmed that there are no items requiring action by the Decennial Committee. Items requiring action will be brought to the Board of Trustees at a Committee of the Whole meeting for discussion, then to a Regular meeting for final approval.

**Survey of Residents in Attendance**

Dr. Spearman asked those in the audience to complete the survey, emphasizing RVC employees who live within District #511, by using the QR code on the agenda and on the screen or by completing the printed copies available near the entrance of the room. He added that these surveys are anonymous and meet the requirements of the legislation. All survey data will be compiled and included in the final report.

**Date of Next Committee of the Whole Meeting:** November 7, 2023, 5:15 p.m. Meeting to be held in Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

**Date of Next Regular Meeting:** November 21, 2023, 5:15 p.m. Meeting to be held in Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

**Date of Next Decennial Committee Meeting:** December 19, 2023, 5:15 p.m. Meeting to be held in Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Decennial Committee, at 5:30 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Cudia. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted by Ann L. Kerwitz

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Ann L. Kerwitz  
Decennial Committee Secretary

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Howard J. Spearman, Ph.D.  
Committee Co-Chair



# Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Institutional Accreditation Comprehensive Review

Decennial Committee Meeting  
December 19, 2023

Heather Snider  
Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness & Communications

**RockValleyCollege.edu**

# Public Act 102-1008

## Decennial Committees and Local Government Efficiencies Act

“Within one year after the effective date of this Act and at least once every 10 years thereafter, each governmental unit must form a committee to study local efficiencies and report recommendations regarding efficiencies and increased accountability to the county board in which the governmental unit is located.”

# Review Plan

Date	Meeting	Purpose
June 27, 2023	Special Meeting-First Meeting of the Decennial Committee. Begin at 5:15 p.m. followed by the FY2024 Budget Hearing and regular Board meeting.	<p>Appoint and welcome members. Adopt the process, procedures, and review timeline. Vote on administration's recommendation of topics to be reviewed by the Committee.</p> <p>Note: The administration's recommendation was approved.</p>
August 22, 2023	Special Meeting-Second Meeting of the Decennial Committee. Begin at 5:15 p.m. followed by the regular Board meeting.	Review Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Recognition Report.
October 24, 2023	Special Meeting-Third meeting of the Decennial Committee. Begin at 5:15 p.m. followed by the regular Board meeting.	Review Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).
December 19, 2023	Special Meeting-Fourth meeting of the Decennial Committee. Begin at 5:15 p.m. followed by the regular Board meeting.	Review Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Report.

# Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Institutional Accreditation

**Purpose:** Institutional accreditation validates the quality of an institution's academic programs and evaluates the institution as a whole, including the soundness of its governance and administration, adherence to mission, sustainability of its finances, and sufficiency of its resources. Maintaining institutional accreditation ensures that credits and credentials are recognized by other institutions of higher education and employers and that the college can offer financial aid options for students.

**Outcome:** During FY19, HLC conducted a mid-cycle comprehensive evaluation of Rock Valley College. As a result of this evaluation, HLC issued a result of Continued Accreditation with Monitoring. Monitoring issues were addressed in Interim Reports of August 2019 and December 2020.

**Efficiencies and Accountability:** Meeting HLC criteria for accreditation, assumed practices, obligations of membership, and federal compliance requirements is an indication of accountability. Moreover, these standards provide a blueprint for efficient College operations.



# Criteria for Accreditation

Criteria	Rating	Interim Monitoring (if applicable)
1. Mission	1.A Met 1.B Met 1.C Met 1.D Met	1.A None 1.B None 1.C None 1.D None
2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	2.A Met with Concerns 2.B Met 2.C Met 2.D Met 2.E Met	2.A. Interim Monitoring* 2.B None 2.C None 2.D None 2.E None
3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Supporting	3.A Met 3.B Met 3.C Met with Concerns 3.D Met 3.E Met	3.A Met 3.B Met 3.C Met with Concerns** 3.D Met 3.E Met
4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	4.A Met 4.B Met with Concerns 4.C Met	4.A Met 4.B Met with Concerns** 4.C Met
5. Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	5.A Met 5.B Met with Concerns 5.C Met with Concerns 5.D Met	5.A Met 5.B Met with Concerns** 5.C Met with Concerns** 5.D Met

\* Interim Report due 7/1/2019; \*\* Interim Report due 9/30/2020

# Criterion 1: Mission

Criterion Core Component	Rating	Interim Monitoring
1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.	Met	None
1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.	Met	None
1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.	Met	None
1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.	Met	None

**Mission Statement: Rock Valley College empowers students and community through lifelong learning.**

# Criterion 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

Criterion Core Component	Rating	Interim Monitoring
2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.	Met with Concerns: Rock Valley College and its Board must come into full compliance with its Conflict of Interest policy and its requirement of a signature by all Board members.	Interim Report due 9/3/2019 was submitted and accepted by HLC.
2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.	Met	None
2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.	Met	None
2.D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.	Met	None
2.E. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.	Met	None

# Criterion 3: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

Criterion Core Component	Rating	Interim Monitoring
3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.	Met	None
3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.	Met	None
3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality program and student services.	Met with Concerns: Completion of a review of faculty credentials (including all adjunct faculty) ensuring that each individual teaching meets minimum qualifications.	Interim Report due 9/30/2020 was submitted and accepted by HLC.
3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.	Met	None
3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.	Met	None

# Criterion 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

Criterion Core Component	Rating	Interim Monitoring (if applicable)
4.A.The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.	Met	None
4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.	Met with Concerns: the comprehensive implementation of its assessment program, including deeper faculty involvement and assessment of academic and cocurricular outcomes	Interim Report due 9/30/2020 was submitted and accepted by HLC.
4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.	Met	None

# Criterion 5: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

Criterion Core Component	Rating	Interim Monitoring
5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.	Met	None
5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structure promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.	Met with Concerns: structure and authority of Curriculum Committee	Interim Monitoring was recommended by the peer review team but not required by the Institutional Actions Council of the HLC.
5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.	Met with Concerns: development and implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan	Interim Report due 9/30/2020 was submitted and accepted by HLC.
5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.	Met	None

# Questions and Recommendation

The Decennial Committee members did not submit any questions to administrators prior to the December 19, 2023 Decennial Committee Meeting.

College administration recommends that the committee members accept the HLC comprehensive review as evidence of efficiencies and accountability.

College administration also recommends that faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees receive adequate preparation prior to the October 2024 visit from the Higher Learning Commission. Board preparation could include a mock visit during a regularly scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting or Special Meeting.

# Survey of Residents

At the conclusion of each meeting, the committee shall conduct a survey of residents who attended asking for input on the matters discussed at the meeting.



[https://rvc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3xEAIMkqjIDAnhY](https://rvc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3xEAIMkqjIDAnhY)