

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

February 27, 2024, 5:15 p.m.

Special Meeting - Decennial Committee

A. Call to Order

B. Roll Call

C. Board Member Attendance by Means Other Than Physical Presence

D. Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

E. Approval of Minutes – December 19, 2023

F. Presentation, Review and Approval of Final Report

1. Purpose
2. Committee Members
3. Process, Timeline and Topics Studied
 - a. Review of Illinois Community College (ICCB) Recognition Report
 - b. Review of Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)
 - c. Review of Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Report
4. Survey of Residents
5. Conclusion

G. Recommendation to Board of Trustees to Acknowledge Final Report

H. Recommendation to Submit Report to County Boards in RVC District #511

I. Dissolution of Decennial Committee

J. Date of Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting: February 27, 2024, 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Educational Resource Center (ERC), Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), on the main campus.

K. Adjourn

Gloria Cardenas Cudia, Board Chair

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

**Board of Trustees Special Meeting – Decennial Committee
December 19, 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 0214, known as the Performing Arts Center in the Educational Resource Center, on Tuesday, December 19, 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
Ms. Jessica Jones	Mr. Adrian Vasquez
Student Trustee Juan Noguera	Dr. Howard Spearman
Ms. Heather Snider	Ms. Ellen Olson
Ms. Ann Kerwitz	Ms. Kristen Simpson arrived at 5:30 p.m.

The following members of the committee were absent: Mr. Richard Kennedy, Ms. Crystal Soltow.

Also in attendance: Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President Operations/Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer; Mr. Jim Handley, Vice President Human Resources; Mr. Keith Barnes, Vice President Equity and Inclusion; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President Student Affairs; Ms. Betsy Saucedo, Assistant to the President; Attorney Matthew Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

No public comments were received.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by John Nelson, seconded by Jessica Jones to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2023 meeting.

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

Presentation and Review of Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Institutional Accreditation Comprehensive Review

Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, presented a review of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Institutional Accreditation process. In her report, she also reviewed the legislation and purpose of the Decennial Committee, as well as the schedule of meetings.

Vice President Snider further summarized the five criteria for accreditation and explained the area of concerns.

- **Criterion 1 – Mission.** All core components met. No interim monitoring required.
- **Criterion 2A – Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct.** Area of Concern: 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. The Interim Report due 9/3/2019 was submitted and accepted by HLC.
- **Criterion 3 – Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support.** Area of Concern: Completion of a review of faculty credentials (including all adjunct faculty) ensuring that each individual teaching meets minimum qualifications. The Interim Report due 9/30/2020 was submitted and accepted by HLC.
- **Criterion 4 – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement.** Area of Concern: The comprehensive implementation of its assessment program, including deeper faculty involvement and assessment of academic and cocurricular outcomes. The Interim Report due 9/30/2020 was submitted and accepted by HLC.
- **Criterion 5 – Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning.** Area of Concern: 1) Structure and authority of Curriculum Committee and 2) Development and implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan. The Interim Report due 9/30/2020 was submitted and accepted by HLC.

Vice President Snider noted that no questions were submitted in advance by members of the Decennial Committee. To conclude her presentation, she reviewed the following recommendations of the College administration:

1. The Decennial Committee members shall accept the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Institutional Accreditation Comprehensive Review as evidence of accountability.
2. Faculty, staff and the Board of Trustees shall 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.

Questions and Discussion:

In response to a question from Trustee Nelson, Vice President Snider explained that due to a better relationship with the Curriculum Committee, the Curriculum Council has been reinstated. The College has worked on continual process improvement and has changed how information is prepared and communicated to ensure that the qualifications are met.

Trustee Gorski added that although the charge of the legislation creating the Decennial Committee is to study local efficiencies and accountability, Rock Valley College has little interaction with local county governments. The HLC process is unique, and he commended the College's HLC team for their good work and for meeting the accreditation goals.

Trustee Kristen Simpson arrived at 5:30 p.m.

Survey of Residents in Attendance

Dr. Spearman asked those in the audience to complete the survey, including 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.

He added that the Decennial Committee will receive a draft of the final report at the February 27, 2024 meeting. Following approval, the final report will be sent to all six counties in the College's district.

Date of Next Committee of the Whole Meeting: January 9, 2024, 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Date of Next Board of Trustees Retreat: January 20, 2024, 8:30 a.m. The meeting will be held in Room 1308 of the Woodward Technology Center (WTC) on the main campus.

Date of Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting: January 23, 2024, 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Date of Next Decennial Committee Meeting: February 27, 2024, 5:15 p.m. The meeting will 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 5:35 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Gorski. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted by Ann L. Kerwitz

Ann L. Kerwitz
Decennial Committee Secretary

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

2023-2024 Decennial Committee Report Executive Summary

Decennial Committee Meeting
February 27, 2024

Heather Snider
Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness & Communications

RockValleyCollege.edu

Process

Purpose

Comply with Public Act 102-1008

Committee Members

Board of Trustees, President, two community residents, other members appointed by chairperson

Process

Date	Purpose
June 27, 2023	Adopted process, procedures, and review timeline
August 22, 2023	Reviewed Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Recognition Report
October 24, 2023	Reviewed Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)
December 19, 2023	Reviewed Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Report

Outcomes

Survey of Residents (24 responses)

- 96% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that discussion at the Decennial Committee meetings suggest that Rock Valley College operates in an efficient manner.
- 100% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that Rock Valley College has sufficient accountability measures to govern the institution.

Conclusion

- The Rock Valley College Decennial Committee is not recommending any additional accountability or efficiency to the county boards in its district.
- While counties and other governmental units may benefit from additional accountability and efficiency measures, community colleges receive sufficient budgetary and governmental oversight from their Board of Trustees, the Illinois Community College Board, and regional accreditors such as the Higher Learning Commission.
- Several internal recommendations are included in the full report.

Rock Valley College

2023-2024 Decennial Committee Report

Purpose

In response to Public Act 102-1008, Rock Valley College established a Decennial Committee to “study local efficiencies and report recommendations regarding efficiencies and increased accountability to the county board in which the governmental unit is located.” The College is submitting this report to the county boards in each county covered, either in whole or in part, by Community College District 511 (Rock Valley College). These counties include Boone, Winnebago, Ogle, Stephenson, McHenry, and DeKalb.

Committee Members

Table 1 lists the RVC Decennial Committee members and their relationship to the College.

Table 1: Rock Valley College 2023-2024 Decennial Committee Members

Member Name	Role
Dr. Howard J. Spearman, Co-Chair	President
Ms. Crystal Soltow, Co-chair	Trustee
Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Secretary	Assistant to the President
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Board Chair
Mr. Paul Gorski	Board Vice Chair
Mr. Bob Trojan	Board Secretary
Mr. Richard Kennedy	Trustee
Mr. John Nelson	Trustee
Ms. Kristen Simpson	Trustee
Mr. Juan Noguera	Student Trustee
Ms. Jessica Jones	Community Resident
Mr. Adrian Vasquez	Community Resident
Ms. Ellen Olson	Vice President of Finance, CFO
Ms. Heather Snider	Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness & Communications

Process

The RVC Decennial Committee met four times and studied three topics related to efficiency and accountability. At its first meeting, the timeline and review topics were approved. Table 2 outlines the timeline and topics.

Table 2: Rock Valley College 2023-2024 Decennial Committee Timeline and Topics Studied

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.	Appoint and welcome members. Adopt the process, procedures, and review timeline. Vote on administration’s recommendation of topics to be reviewed by the Committee.
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 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR).
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.

Review of Illinois Community College (ICCB) Recognition Report

Purpose: Recognition is a statutory term describing the status of a community college district that meets instructional, administrative, financial, facility, and equipment standards as established by ICCB. A favorable recognition status is a condition of state funding eligibility.

Outcome: During FY22, the ICCB conducted a recognition evaluation of Rock Valley College. As there were zero (0) compliance findings, the ICCB staff issued a result of Recognition Continued.

Efficiencies and Accountability: Meeting ICCB standards is an indication of accountability to the state of Illinois. Moreover, these standards provide a blueprint for efficient College operations.

Recommendation: College administration recommends that the committee members accept the ICCB Recognition Report as evidence of efficiencies and accountability.

Review of Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)

Purpose: The ICCB Financial Management Manual requires an external audit in compliance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 33/34 with minimal requirements. The annual audit and associated reports are due for submission to ICCB by December 30th each year. Additionally, each district is required to publish a financial statement annually, at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the district.

RVC also participates in the Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement in Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Outcome: RVC makes the ACFR available for public consumption on the website and publishes a financial statement in at least one newspaper, pursuant to Section 3- 22.2 of the Public Community College Act.

The College also has received the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for 16 consecutive years.

Efficiencies and Accountability: The GFOA Certificate of Achievement (COA) encourages and assists state and local governments 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.

Recommendations: College administration recommends that the committee members accept the ACFR as evidence of efficiencies and accountability. Additional recommendations include:

- The Board of Trustees considers engaging an independent auditor/compliance officer biennially to review accountability across campus for compliance and adherence to policies and procedures at an estimated cost of \$70,000 to \$80,000
- The Board of Trustees updates Board Policy 5:10.120 to require that expenditures in excess to \$25,000, rather than \$10,000, be approved by the Board of Trustees

Review of Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Report

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 the Interim Reports accepted by HLC in 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.

Recommendations: College administration recommends that the committee members accept the HLC Report 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 HLC. 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 RVC Decennial Committee meeting, a survey of residents was conducted to garner input on matters discussed at the meeting. Throughout the course of the decennial committee process, RVC received 24 survey responses. Most respondents (96%) somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that discussion at the Decennial Committee meetings suggest that Rock Valley College operates in an efficient manner. All respondents (100%) somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that Rock Valley College has sufficient accountability measures to govern the institution.

Conclusion

The Rock Valley College Decennial Committee is not recommending any additional accountability or efficiency to the county boards in its district. While counties and other governmental units may benefit from additional accountability and efficiency measures, community colleges receive sufficient budgetary and governmental oversight from their Board of Trustees, the Illinois Community College Board, and regional accreditors such as the Higher Learning Commission.

Internal recommendations resulting from the Decennial Committee process include:

- Maintaining the current community college districts with oversight from the Illinois Community College Board
- Engaging an independent auditor/compliance officer biennially to review accountability across campus for compliance and adherence to policies and procedures
- Updating Board Policy 5:10.120 to require that expenditures in excess of \$25,000, rather than \$10,000, be approved by the Board of Trustees
- Preparing faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees for the 2024 visit from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

The Rock Valley College Decennial Committee will reconvene in ten years. In the meantime, the Board of Trustees and college administration will continue to operate in an efficient manner and remain accountable to ICCB, HLC, and the public.