

Rock Valley College

Community College District No. 511
3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114

FIRST MEETING OF THE NEWLY ORGANIZED BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Immediately following the Reorganization Meeting
April 28, 2026

MINUTES

Call to Order

The first meeting of the newly organized Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 511, Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, McHenry, Ogle, and Stephenson Counties, Illinois, convened in the Performing Arts Room (PAR), Room 0214, in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. Board Chair Paul Gorski called the meeting to order at 6:52 p.m.

Roll Call

The following members of the Board of Trustees were present at roll call:

Mr. Paul Gorski	Mr. Robert (Bob) Trojan
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. John Nelson
Dr. Jenna Goldsmith	Ms. Crystal Soltow
Ms. Kristen Simpson- by phone	Mr. Isiah Blake, Student Trustee

Also in Attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Ellen Olson, Vice President of Finance/Chief Financial Officer; Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Vice President of Human Resources; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President of Career Technical Education and Workforce Development; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Carly Diciolla, Assistant to the President; Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer; Attorney Joe Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

Trustee Nelson made a motion, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to allow Trustee Kristen Simpson to participate in the meeting via teleconference. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. Trustee Simpson entered the meeting via telephone.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

There were no communications, petitions, or public comments.

Recognition of Visitors

Dr. Spearman recognized the media station that was present: WIFR.

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General Presentations

There were no general presentations.

Other Business

1. New Business

A. Trustee Trojan talked about a thank-you letter he received. The student will be graduating from Rock Valley College as the Salutatorian of her Respiratory Care class and with High Honors, after experiencing many hard times in high school. She has accepted a full-time Respiratory Therapist position with a sign-on bonus, pending graduation and board certification.

Trustee Simpson left the meeting at 6:55 p.m., and Trustee Soltow left the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

2. Unfinished Business

A. Dr. Spearman provided an update on the Manufacturing Training Academy Grant that is due April 30, 2026, which includes some potential construction at the RVC Downtown West campus, the Advanced Technology Center (ATC) in Belvidere, and potential remodeling for the Woodward Technology Center (WTC) on the main campus.

B. Rock Valley College hosted a group of legislators at the ATC in Belvidere today, April 28, 2026. The group included House Minority Leader Tony McCombie, Representative Joe Sosnowski, and Representative John Cabello. During the visit, Dr. Stewart's team shared The ATC's and gave everyone a tour.

Trustee Cudia left the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Updates/Reports

1. President's Update

- Dr. Spearman thanked the Board for approving and extending his presidential contract for an additional three years.
- In addition, he talked about frequenting Springfield, IL for several events: testifying at the Senate Appropriations Committee, serving as the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Ambassador at the PTK All-Illinois Academic Team banquet, and Student Lobby Day.
- A team of RVC staff met with one of our healthcare partners, OSF, to discuss potential healthcare career pathways.
- Cabinet attended the Studer Education Quarterly meeting and RVC leaders attended the Studer Leadership Development Institute on the main campus.
- Dr. Spearman is continuing his work with the Rockford Police Department and the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department to complete the RVC Criminal Justice Pathway.
- Dr. Spearman, Dr. Stewart, and Dr. Huntley attended and presented at the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) National Conference in Seattle, Washington.

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2. Leadership Team Update

- Dr. Barnes announced that the Cultural Excellence and Belonging Office hosted its 4th Annual Eagles Scholar Community Learning Project Spring 2026 Student Symposium on Friday, April 10, 2026, in the Student Center Atrium. The 5th Annual Eagle Awards for Cultural Excellence and Belonging were presented on Friday, April 24, 2026, in the Student Center Atrium. This annual ceremony recognizes individuals and organizations that champion cultural excellence and belonging across our campus and community. Rock Valley College is hosting the Rock Valley Culture of Belonging 2026 Summer Conference. Trustees are invited to join a dynamic experience as we examine the theme "Belonging in Action: From Intent to Impact." The purpose of the conference is to examine the challenges and best practices to achieve Cultural Excellence and Belonging: Creating healthy, inclusive, and accessible work and learning environments.
- Dr. Peyer reminded trustees to contact the President's Office regarding their attendance at the Certificate Ceremony and the two Commencement Ceremonies. On May 6, the Office of Student Life will hold its annual Leadership Banquet honoring the accomplishments of our Student Government Association and all of our Student Clubs and Organizations. The event will be held from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Stenstrom Student Center Atrium. Dr. Peyer also gave an update on Spring athletics.
- Dr. Huntley asked trustees to submit their Winnebago County Statement of Economic Interest forms by May 1, 2026, and also reminded them of the Retirement Celebration being held Wednesday, May 20, in the Stenstrom Student Center Atrium from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Dr. Huntley extended thanks to the Professional Development team for their collaborative leadership, organization, and expertise during the Spring Professional Development Day on April 2.
- Vice President Snider updated the Board with the enrollment update. Registration is open for Summer I, Summer II, and Fall. Since summer overlaps two fiscal years, VP Snider had updates for both FY26 and FY27. As of this week, Summer I enrollment is 3% behind last year, 1% ahead of budget, and 97% to the stretch goal. FY26 year-to-date credit-hour enrollment is 3% ahead of last year, 7% ahead of budget, and 3% ahead of the stretch goal. FY27 begins with Summer II. Summer II enrollment is 1% behind last year, 4% ahead of budget, and the stretch goal has been met. Fall enrollment is 4% ahead of last year, 55% to budget, and 53% to the stretch goal. Ms. Snider shared an update from our lobbyist, Dr. Litesa Wallace. Some of the updates included: 1) supporting engagement around HB 5319 (the Community College Baccalaureate); 2) strengthening Dr. Spearman's visibility with key higher education stakeholders; and 3) ensuring RVC's presence at major events in Springfield. Lastly, VP Snider announced that the Marketing Department won two awards through the 2025 Collegiate Ad Awards.
- Dr. Stewart announced that CTE & Workforce Development received \$100,000 from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) for the Access and Equity in Dual Credit project.
- Vice President Jenks provided an update regarding campus projects, which included: 1) the beginning of site work for the Fire Science Training Center in

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Loves Park; 2) the completion of the bridge turret; 3) the announcement of RVC's newest project manager, Tim Tuestad, who started on April 20, 2026.

- Vice President Olson reminded trustees that RVC is moving into its preliminary audit season; the process has changed this year. Not all trustees will complete a questionnaire; at least two Board members will be interviewed instead. In June, the final budget will be presented to the Board and the budget hearing will take place on June 23, 2026.
- Dr. Amanda Smith congratulated RVC's Faculty of the Year Awardee, Dr. Dan Blumlo, who wrote a historical account of Rock Valley College with *The Campus History Series*. Dr. Smith also commended Dr. Katie Pryal who was the Spring Professional Development Day speaker. Dr. Pryal spoke about serving a neurodiverse community.

3. Student Trustee Update

- Student Trustee Isiah Blake announced that this would be his last formal report as Student Trustee. He updated the Board on the following items: 1) Student Government Association's (SGA) proposal for tuition waivers; 2) April 16 was Student Lobby Day in Springfield, IL, where students met with Illinois legislators and learned about student advocacy.

4. RVC Liaison Report

- Trustee Bob Trojan reminded everyone about the CEO Challenge being hosted by the RVC Foundation on Thursday, April 30. Donations gathered so far are around \$75,000. Jacob Urbelis has joined the Foundation staff.

5. ICCTA Report

- Trustee John Nelson announced that ICCTA will be meeting on May 5 and 6. He encourages RVC to maintain a strong presence at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) National Conference in October 2026, to be held in Chicago.

6. Trustee Comments

- Trustee Bob Trojan congratulated Dr. Spearman on the renewal of his contract.
- Trustee Goldsmith attended the first Tuesday lecture with Dr. Erin Fischer and was impressed with her presentation on mental health.
- Board Chair Gorski thanked Dr. Spearman for his work on the contract, the Board for accepting their nominations, and wished Student Trustee Isiah Blake good luck on his future.

7. Personnel Report (BR8380)- Information only; the Personnel Report was accepted as presented with no questions.

8. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report- Information only; the FOIA was accepted as presented with no questions.

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Next Meetings

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held on May 12, 2026, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

The next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on May 26, 2026, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Adjourn

At 7:35 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to adjourn the First Meeting of the Newly Organized Board. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Carly A. Diciolla



Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Secretary



Paul Gorski, Board Chair

