Rock Valley College Board of Trustees
Illinois Community College District No. 511
3301 Mulford Road, Rockford, IL, 61114
Educational Resource Center, Performing Arts Room, Room 0214
Regular Meeting
September 23, 2025, 5:15 p.m.

MINUTES

Call to Order

The Regular meeting of the 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, September 23, 2025. Board Chair Paul Gorski called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Due to the absence of Board Secretary Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Board Chair Gorski appointed Trustee Robert (Bob) Trojan as secretary pro tempore.

Roll Call

Mr. Paul Gorski
Ms. Kristen Simpson
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia
Student Trustee Mr. Isiah Blake
Mr. Robert (Bob) Trojan
Mr. John Nelson arrived at 5:18 p.m.
Ms. Crystal Soltow

The following trustee was absent at roll call: Dr. Jenna Goldsmith

Also in Attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Vice President of Human Resources; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President of Career Technical Education and Workforce Development; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Cultural Excellence; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Carly Huotari, Assistant to the President; Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer; Attorney Matthew Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Members Attendance by Means Other Than Physical Presence

No board members attended by means other than physical presence.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

There were no communications, petitions, or public comments.

Board Chair Paul Gorski announced that the Board has received a letter with information about creating a solar farm on the main campus, which he asked Administration to review and make a recommendation.

Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors to be recognized.

General Presentations

There were no general presentations.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting and the August 26, 2025, Regular meeting.

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

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 5:18 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to adjourn to closed session to discuss the following: 1) Security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property per Section 2 (c) (8); and/or 2) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting per Section 2 (c) (1); and/or 3) The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body per Section 2 (c) (5), all in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Trustee John Nelson arrived at 5:18 p.m.

Reconvene Open Session

At 6:19 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to adjourn the closed session. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote. No action was taken as a result of closed session.

Trustee Kristen Simpson left the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Action Items

1. **BR8312 – Claims Sheet (Check Register – August 2025)**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the claims sheets from the Ellucian check register for the period from August 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025. The total is $7,367,968.27.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve BR8312. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2. BR8313 – 2525-2026 Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding Between Keith Country Day School and Rock Valley College

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding between Rock Valley College and Keith Country Day School, effective August 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026. **Attorney Reviewed**.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve Board Report 8313. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR8314 – 2025-2026 Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding Between Rockford Public Schools District #205 and Rock Valley College

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding between Rock Valley College and the Board of Education of Rockford Public Schools District #205, effective August 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve Board Report 8314. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

4. BR8315 – 2025-2026 Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Rockford Public Schools District #205

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement with Rockford Public Schools District #205, effective as of the date both parties approve and execute the Agreement, for classes beginning Summer 2025, and automatically expiring on June 30, 2026. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve Board Report 8315. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

5. BR83016-A – Purchase Report A – FY2026 Amendments

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the items marked with an asterisk on Purchase Report A – FY2026 Amendments.

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve Board Report 8316-A. No changes have been made since the September 9 Committee of the Whole meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2b. BR8316-B – FY2026 Purchases

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the items marked with an asterisk on Purchase Report A – FY2026 Purchases.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Soltow, to approve Board Report 8016-B. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. **BR8317 – First Reading: Update to Rock Valley College Board Policy Manual, Article 2-Operations**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the updates to Article 2-Operations of the Board Policy Manual. **Attorney Reviewed**.

There was no discussion. Since this is a first reading, a vote was not taken.

Other Business

1. **New Business** – There was no new business to be discussed.
2. **Unfinished Business** – There was no unfinished business to be discussed.

Updates/Reports

1. **President Update**

   Dr. Spearman updated trustees on various topics:

   - The Professional Development Day was well organized and filled with excellent workshops and speakers. He thanked Trustees Goldsmith and Trojan for attending, as well as the planning committee for doing a great job. Trustee Trojan added that he appreciated hearing the personal story of Bing Liu, keynote speaker and RVC graduate.
     - Employees were celebrated for their employment duration, especially Sharla Parsons, research associate in the Institutional Research and Effectiveness Department, for her 40 years of service as an RVC employee.
     - Ryan Russell, former student trustee and current trade grant recruiter, received the Rookie of the Year Award.
     - Rhonda Hutter, academic program specialist, was named Employee of the Year.
     - Brittany Freiberg, RVC Foundation chief development officer, was named Leader of the Year.
     - Professor Martin Quirk commented in a message to Dr. Spearman that in his 27 years, he has seen few semesters that have started this smoothly, and he is very proud to be part of RVC.
   - Rockford Mayor McNamara is leading a series of OpEds in the Rockford Register Star highlighting the community's great progress in education over the past few years. His editorial will be followed by Rockford Public Schools, Rockford University and Rock Valley College.

2. **Leadership Update**

   - Dr. Keith Barnes announced 1) He and Eric Brown, ADA compliance coordinator, became members of the National ADA Trainer Leadership Network (TLN). The ADA TLN is a network of skilled ADA trainers who provide education on disability awareness. 2) Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15-October 15. RVC kicked off the month on September 15 with 180 employees and students attending.
   - Dr. Patrick Peyer announced 1) The High School Counselor Breakfast will be held on September 26; 2) Homecoming Week will be celebrated September 29-October 3; 3) College Night will be held October 1 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Physical Education Center. Over 120 colleges and universities will be on campus. Marketing for the event is done by RVC and the state coordinator group.

- Dr. Terrica Huntley described how the HR Roadshow is meeting with employee groups to increase communication and explain the various functions of the Human Resources Department and how they support employees. The team will meet with 15 departmental groups this fall and then offer the same opportunity to other groups next year.
- Heather Snider announced that enrollment is mostly secure. As of this week, enrollment for fall is 4% ahead of last year, 5% ahead of budget, and 1% ahead of the stretch goal. When combined with summer II, FY2026 credit-hour enrollment is 6% ahead of last year, 7% ahead of budget, and 3% ahead of the stretch goal.
- Dr. Hansen Stewart invited trustees to attend the Manufacturing Day celebration to be held from 8:00-1:00 at the Advanced Technology Center (ATC) on October 9. Approximately 325 to 400 students from 12 area high school districts are expected to attend. RVC is hosting the event in conjunction with CEANCI and area manufacturers who will provide exhibits. CEANCI is handling the marketing, while RVC is coordinating the morning press conference.
- Rick Jenks provided updates on several projects. 1) The renovations to the Health Sciences Center are nearing completion and items on the final punch list with the construction contractor are minor. The move-in date is expected the end of October or early November. The elevator shaft is under construction, and the elevator is on site. The project should be completed before the Christmas break 2) The Classroom Building II (CLII) architects are meeting with departments for program review. The project completion is scheduled for July 2028. 3) Repair of the turret on the Stenstrom Student Center (SCC) bridge is out for bid with a deadline of October 3. The estimated cost is $160,000 - $210,000. 4) Parts to complete the HVAC repairs in the Jacobs Center for Science and Math (JCSM) are expected October 20, and the College is working on date for installation. 5) The new boiler is expected to arrive mid-October, with final demo and installation in November.
- Dr. Amanda Smith reported that the Dental Hygiene program recently had its site visit from the Commission on Dental Accreditation. Two peer reviewers visited campus to meet with faculty and students and to explore the program. They were especially impressed with the Dental Hygiene Clinic facility. She also thanked Dr. Marie Navickis, the program chair, for her preparatory work related to the visit.

3. Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) Report

Trustee Nelson did not have a report, however, he announced that RVC will be hosting a meeting of the ICCTA Northwest Region on November 6 at the Aviation Career Education Center (ACEC). The agenda will feature the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Executive Director Brian Durham, ICCTA Executive Director Jim Reed, and a cyber security presentation by RVC Board Chair Paul Gorski. Dr. Spearman added that tours of the AAR facility will be available at 4:00 p.m., with the meeting and dinner to begin at 5:00 p.m.

4. **Student Trustee Report**

Student Trustee Isiah Blake provided an update on recent student activities including Welcome Week, Student Government Association, What's the Tea Tuesday, InterVarsity, Black Student Union (BSU), and his overall student engagement observations. He added that Dr. Spearman, Dr. Hansen Stewart, and Dr. Terrica Huntley attend the BSU cookout that included black students from the community. On September 19, he attended the Illinois Community College Student Activities Association (ICCSAA) meeting held at Lake Land College, where he met with other student trustees about how they serve in their roles as student trustee. He ran for and was elected secretary for the group.

5. **Trustee Comments**
   - Board Chair Paul Gorski reminded everyone that the October 14 Committee of the Whole meeting will be held at the Advanced Technology Center in Belvidere.
   - Trustee Crystal Soltow had no comments.
   - Trustee Gloria Cardenas Cudia questioned why the Board meetings are not on the events calendar that is distributed with the Committee of the Whole packets. Staff confirmed that the events calendar is not a complete listing of events, and the Board meeting schedule is posted for the public on the RVC website.
   - Trustee Bob Trojan commented that Rockford Public Schools #205 is almost ready to open their College and Career Education Center at the former RVC Samuelson Road location in late October or early November. He thought the College should request an invitation, as this may be a pathway for RVC future students. He also asked if the Board received an invitation to the RPS Superintendent Search community input session scheduled for September 30 or October 1.
   - Trustee John Nelson described his recent motorcycle trip on the Great River Road last week. He stopped in Nelson, Wisconsin and bought a T-shirt.
   - Board Chair Paul Gorski thanked the estimated 50-60 people who watch on live stream and for being part of the larger RVC community.

6. **RVC Foundation Report**

   Trustee Trojan provided an update on the RVC Foundation.
   - The Foundation has secured commitments for $2.5 million for the Downtown West fundraising effort.
   - The Foundation Board has approved $500,000 for naming rights to the three athletic fields being converted to artificial turf.
   - Of the $874,900 available for scholarships, $700,000 was awarded to 405 applicants. Nearly $170,000 was not awarded due to lack of applicants or not meeting award criteria.
   - The Golden Eagles Family Breakfast will be held on Thursday, October 16 at 8:00 a.m. in the Stenstrom Student Center Atrium. The theme is centered around RVC Foundation scholarships and the impact those funds have on students.
   - The Scholarship Recipient Luncheon will be held November 7 at the Radisson Conference Center. Trustees encouraged to attend.
   - The second CEO Challenge has been scheduled for April 2026. The fundraising goal will be $100,000.

Board Chair Gorski requested a report on why all scholarship funds are not given away and what is done to advertise the availability of scholarship funds. Trustee Trojan responded that some scholarships have specific requirements such as GPA. Dr. Spearman added that he and Brittany Freiberg, chief development officer, are working with some donors to adjust the required GPA for the scholarships and that Ms. Freiberg will address this in a presentation at the October Committee of the Whole.

7. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report**
   The FOIA report was accepted as presented.

Next Meeting

The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on October 14, 2025, in Room 1300 of the Advanced Technology Center, 1400 Big Thunder Blvd, Belvidere, IL. *Location is for this meeting only.*

The next Regular Meeting will be held on October 28, 2025, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Adjournment

At 7:10 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to adjourn the Regular meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Ann L. Kerwitz

Robert (Bob) Trojan Secretary Pro Tempore

Paul Gorski, Board Chair