

Rock Valley College

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING 5:15 p.m. Tuesday, May 12, 2026

Call to Order

The Rock Valley College (RVC) Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting convened on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) in the Educational Resource Center (ERC). The meeting was called to order at 5:19 p.m. by Board Chair Paul Gorski. Due to the absence of Trustee Goldsmith, Board Chair Gorski named Trustee Robert "Bob" Trojan as the secretary pro tempore.

Roll Call

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

Mr. Paul Gorski	Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia
Mr. John Nelson	Mr. Isiah Blake, Student Trustee
Ms. Kristen Simpson	
Mr. Robert 'Bob' Trojan	

The following Trustees were absent from the roll call: Ms. Crystal Soltow and Dr. Jenna Goldsmith.

Also present: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Cultural Excellence and Belonging; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Vice President of Human Resources; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President of Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President of Finance; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Carly Diciolla, Assistant to the President; Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Operations, Attorney Joseph Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz; Attorney Elizabeth Becker, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

There were no board members attending by any other means.

Communications and Petitions

There were no public comments, communications, and/or petitions.

Recognition of Visitors

Dr. Spearman, president of RVC, acknowledged Mr. Greg Kladar, vice president for pre-construction at Ringland Johnson Construction; Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, introduced the RVC student trustee-elect, Ms. Sarah Ortiz Espinosa; and Dr. Spearman introduced Attorney Elizabeth Becker, who was attending with Attorney Joseph Perkoski from Robbins Schwartz.

Rock Valley College

Review of Minutes

There were no comments on the minutes from the April 14, 2026, Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting.

General Presentations

1. Studer Education Quarterly Update

Dr. Julie Kunselman presented the Studer Education Quarterly Update. The quarterly update focused on operational and leadership consistency, alignment with the RVC mission, and organizational capacity building, driven largely by results from this year's employee culture and engagement surveys. Under the "Community" category, Dr. Kunselman highlighted successes with Business Enterprise Partners under RVC Board Policy 5:10.140 (Diverse Vendor Enterprise Use, adopted in 2021). The college has successfully met its "super stretch goal" of awarding at least 20% of contracts to minority-, female-, and disabled-owned business enterprises.

Trustee Trojan questioned why the "Leadership Trust" metric was highlighted in yellow if progress had been made. Dr. Kunselman explained that the metric actually increased from 3.00 to 3.20 but remains yellow (a measure of concern) because the ultimate organizational target is 4.0. Trust-building initiatives continue to be integrated into professional and leadership development programs.

Trustee Nelson requested clarification on a feedback exercise regarding RVC core values, noting that Public Trust resonated at 62%, Mutual Respect at 79%, Learner-Centered Community at 69%, Excellence at 45%, Collaboration/Diversity at 38%, and Innovation at a low 24%. Vice President Heather Snider clarified that the survey asked participants to select up to four core values that resonated most with them, effectively serving as a ranking exercise rather than a single negative rating of the less-chosen options. The purpose of this exercise was to establish a benchmark of employee sentiment before launching the upcoming Strategic Plan Refresh. Board members noted that "innovation" may need a clearer definition to help staff avoid fear of job reductions or bargaining-unit issues, emphasizing process improvements and workload reductions instead. Survey participation was slightly lower than in the previous cycle but remained well above standard response-rate benchmarks.

Dr. Kunselman stated that the current Strategic Plan is nearing its conclusion. Additionally, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) recommendations have highlighted a need for updated, measurable institutional targets. Core foundational pillars will remain intact, but specific targets are being refreshed. She said that staff gathered feedback during the spring Professional Development Day. An executive cabinet retreat is scheduled for this summer to finalize goals and targets for a scorecard first draft. The final Refreshed Strategic Plan draft is targeted for a Board presentation by the end of the calendar year, with a formal rollout in Spring 2027.

Dr. Kunselman said that to address the historically lower-scoring culture survey items on professional growth and development, RVC is piloting a "Leader 360 Assessment" through the Golden Eagles Academy. The pilot carries no additional cost. Leaders will self-assess while receiving multi-directional feedback from their direct supervisors, colleagues, and peers from external units. Dr. Spearman has volunteered to undergo the 360 Assessment process this summer alongside the Board and Cabinet to model leadership by example. Trustees expressed long-standing support for this kind of evaluation, noting it achieves a Board goal.

Rock Valley College

2. Software as a Service (SaaS) Presentation (Colleague/Ellucian)

Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, stated that Rock Valley College is transitioning its Ellucian Colleague Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to a "Software as a Service" (SaaS) cloud environment. This migration, approved in May 2024, is the culmination of an 18-24-month project. The current system will go offline starting May 22, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., and will undergo internal testing by Information Technology (IT) staff for approximately 5 days. The new environment is scheduled to go live on June 1, 2026, at 5:00 a.m. Access to "Self-Service" (used for grades, registration, financial aid, and employee time/budget management) will be unavailable during this window. The Canvas learning management system will remain operational during the migration, allowing students in summer one classes to continue their coursework. While confident in the process, the Administration acknowledged the possibility of minor errors in the post-migration reports. IT staff and selected testers will verify the system before the campus-wide relaunch. Dr. Peyer explained that to ensure graduation needs are met, internal deadlines for grade processing have been adjusted. Final grades must be posted by midnight on May 18, 2026. Student worker time tracking for the migration period will be handled via manual (pen-and-paper) logs, to be entered by supervisors upon the system's return on June 1, 2026. Discussion ensued.

Teaching, Learning & Communications Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Goldsmith

1. Highway Construction Careers Training Program Intergovernmental Agreement

Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of career technical education and workforce development, presented the Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP) Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). Dr. Stewart stated that RVC's attorneys have reviewed the agreement and that the only change is the move from an annual renewal to a three-year renewal.

Early College Items: As an introduction to the Early College items on the agenda, Dr. Stewart provided an overview of the Dual and Articulated Credit, Running Start, and Senior Semester programs and agreements with the area high school districts. Discussion ensued.

To provide consistency across school districts and align with the Dual Credit Quality Act, RVC developed the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that offers dual credit for high school courses. These dual-credit courses are taught by qualified high school instructors and are designed to allow eligible students to earn college credit in high school.

Running Start is a formal program that allows qualified students to attend RVC during their junior and senior years of high school. Students may enroll in a two-year degree completion program that takes courses that meet the requirements for both a high school diploma and an RVC associate degree, or a one-year program that meets the requirements for both a high school diploma and one year of RVC credit courses. The Running Start program will be administered through the Early College office at RVC in conjunction with the high schools enrolled in the program.

The Senior Semester Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) allows qualified district students to attend RVC for their final senior year high school semester. Students take dual-credit courses that satisfy the requirements for both a high school diploma and one semester of RVC credit.

Rock Valley College

2. **Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**
 - a. **Belvidere Community Unit School District #100**
 - b. **Christian Life Schools**
 - c. **Harlem Unit School District #122**
 - d. **Hononegah Community High School District #207**
 - e. **Keith Country Day School**
 - f. **Meridian Community Unit School District #223**
 - g. **North Boone Community Unit School District #200**
 - h. **Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321**
 - i. **Rockford Christian High School**
 - j. **South Beloit Community Unit School District #320**
3. **Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)**
 - a. **Belvidere Community Unit School District #100**
 - b. **Durand Community Unit School District #322**
 - c. **Harlem Unit School District #122**
 - d. **North Boone Community Unit School District #200**
 - e. **Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321**
 - f. **South Beloit Community Unit School District #320**
4. **Senior Semester Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)**
 - a. **North Boone Community Unit School District #200**

5. **Technology Bus Update**

Dr. Stewart presented two options regarding the aging Technology Bus, noting that the institution has reached a critical inflection point regarding the vehicle's future. The Tech Bus has reached the end of its life, has already incurred \$27,000 in repair costs, and faces a pending \$34,000 transmission replacement. On May 1, 2026, the bus developed a fuel line leak at the connection between the generator and the gas tank. A quote received on May 4, 2026, estimated the repair cost at approximately \$6,000 and required removing the generator and underlying components. The estimated market value of the tech bus is \$10,000, provided no further repairs are needed to reach that valuation. The Tech Bus was originally launched by a now-retired professor to visit regional schools and engage prospective students. It operated purely as a community engagement tool with zero revenue generation, and all dedicated donor dollars for its operation have been depleted. Any current mechanical breakdowns directly drain operational dollars. The Board was presented with two potential pathways forward:

Option 1: Repair the Existing Tech Bus

- This option involves investing an additional \$6,000 for the fuel line leak alongside the pending \$34,000 transmission replacement.
- Dr. Stewart noted that the repair shop is only 80% certain that the transmission replacement will fully rectify the primary mechanical issue.

Option 2: Transform into a Dual-Function Mobile Training Center

- This option proposes acquiring a new mobile unit (configured as a retrofitted semi-trailer) designed to serve a dual purpose: meeting workforce training needs for regional manufacturers and continuing community outreach.
- Regional Demand: There are currently 20,000 vacant manufacturing jobs in Illinois. Staff surveyed 19 regional industry partners; 13 responded, expressing interest in using a mobile unit for on-site training.

Rock Valley College

The Board reached a consensus to discontinue further repairs/investment in the current bus and directed the administration to explore potential revenue-generating models for future mobile training units. Discussion ensued.

6. Enrollment Update

Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, presented the Enrollment Update for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 and FY2027. Ms. Snider stated that the Summer One-Term (FY2026) enrollment is currently trending 2% ahead of budget and is at 97% to goal. Because the term does not formally begin until Monday, May 18, 2026, additional registrations are anticipated before the numbers are finalized. Overall, FY2026 to date enrollment is 7% ahead of budget and 3% ahead of the stretch goal. Total credit hours are tracking 3.4% higher than at this time last year (an increase of nearly 4,000 credit hours). Total student enrollment has grown by approximately 703 headcounts ahead of last year. Ms. Snider said that while the headcount numbers are unduplicated within individual terms, minor duplication exists when looking across multiple terms.

Fiscal Year 2027 (FY2027), Summer Two-Term registration is underway and is currently tracking 12% ahead of budget and 8% ahead of the stretch goal. Early Fall Term registration has launched and is outperforming last year's figures by approximately 2%.

7. Lobbying Update

Vice President Snider provided the lobbying update. She stated that the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) Advocacy Day was well attended. Trustees Simpson, Nelson, and Cardenas Cudia, alongside Dr. Spearman and Jennifer Thompson, traveled to Springfield last week to attend the event. Guest speakers included addresses from House Minority Leader Representative Tony McCombie, Senator Mike Hastings, and Representative Tracy Katz Muhl (the primary House leader championing the Community College Baccalaureate bill).

The college delegation conducted targeted meetings with Representatives Maurice West and Dave Vella, as well as Senator Dave Syverson. Senator Syverson reaffirmed his strong, bipartisan support for the community college model, noting its effectiveness in the public interest compared to the steep challenges currently facing several state universities. The delegation emphasized that their lobbying outreach was balanced across both sides of the aisle, engaging actively with both Republican and Democratic representatives. The Republican leader representing DeKalb canceled her meeting due to scheduling conflicts, but sent confirmation of her continued alignment with and support for the college's initiatives.

The Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) Legislation team remains highly optimistic about advancing the CCB legislation to the House floor for a definitive vote before the current session concludes later this month. The measure maintains strong, resilient bipartisan support, and stakeholders anticipate immediate passage once officially called to the floor by the Speaker of the House.

Finance Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Cardenas Cudia

1. Purchase Reports

Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance, presented the purchase reports.

Rock Valley College

Purchase Report A – FY2026 Amendments

A. Contractual Services – (Other Contractual Services – Purchasing Card)

1.	UMB Card Services	Kansas City, MO	\$ 60,000.00*(1)
			Not to Exceed

B. Moving Rigging and Storage Services – (Other Contractual Services – Downtown Campus)

2.	Arco Machinery Movers	Rockford, IL	\$ 10,725.00*(2)
			Not to Exceed

C. Software – (Financial Services – Administrative Software)

3.	Prophix Software, Inc.	Ontario, Canada	\$ 2,000.00*(3)
			Not to Exceed

Purchase Report B – FY2026 Purchases

A. Lobbying Services – (Consultant Services – Professional/Technical – President’s Office)

1.	LITE Strategies, LLC	Rockford, IL	\$ 49,500.00*(1)
			Not to Exceed

B. System Installation – (Remodeling – Security System Upgrades)

2.	Schneider Electric	Rockford, IL	\$ 40,881.50*(2)
			Not to Exceed

C. Software – (Financial Services – Administrative Software)

3.	Canusla, Inc.	Manlius, NY	\$ 25,000.00*(3)
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D. Electric Vehicle – (Capital Instructional Equipment/Furniture – Rev Up EV Grant)

4.	TBD	TBD	\$ 32,000.00*(4)
			Not to Exceed

E. Automotive Equipment – (Capital Instructional Equipment – Downtown West Project)

5.	TBD	TBD	\$ TBD*(5)
			Not to Exceed

Purchase Report C – FY2027 Purchases

A. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

1.	TBD	New York, NY	\$ 25,000.00*(1)
			Not to Exceed

B. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

2.	TBD	New York, NY	\$ 25,000.00*(2)
			Not to Exceed

Rock Valley College

C. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

3.	TBD	New York, NY	\$ 25,000.00*(3)
			Not to Exceed

D. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

4.	TBD	TBD	\$ 25,000.00*(4)
			Not to Exceed

E. Production Contract – (Other Contractual Services – Starlight Theatre)

5.	TBD	TBD	\$ 25,000.00*(5)
			Not to Exceed

F. Subscriptions – (Publications and Subscriptions – Library)

6.	EBSCO Subscription Services	Birmingham, AL	\$ 110,000.00*(6)
			Not to Exceed

G. Pro Spot Equipment – (Capital Instructional Equipment – Downtown West Project)

7.	Pro Spot Illinois	Carlsbad, CA	\$ 92,591.00*(7)
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H. Roofing Services – (Maintenance Services Buildings – Plant Operations and Maintenance)

8.	Distinctive Roofing, Inc.	TBD	\$ 53,952.00*(8)
			Not to Exceed

2. Fiscal Year 2026 Third Quarter Vital Signs

Ms. Olson stated that year-to-date revenue for Operating Funds 1 and 2 was reported at \$47.5 million as of March 31, 2026. This represents 68.56% of the budget, or 82.7% when excluding the SURS on behalf. Remaining local government revenue (local real estate taxes) is scheduled to be recognized in the fourth quarter as the college begins receiving the 2025 levy-year receipts. State government funding is running behind budget expectations, with data apportionments anticipated to fall short by approximately \$1.6 million. "Other sources" continue to exceed budget projections. This includes a \$3.8 million employee retention credit received unbudgeted in August. Year-to-date operating expenses stood at \$35.8 million (54.67% of the total budget, or 66.76% excluding the SURS on behalf). Expenses are projected to finish the fiscal year at or below budget, leaving the \$3.8 million budget contingency intact. Ms. Olson stated that there are no anticipated financial surprises expected for the remainder of the fourth quarter.

The Auxiliary Enterprises Fund (Fund 5), which covers the Center for Learning and Retirement (CLR), Community Education, Workforce Development, Athletics, and the Starlight Theatre, recorded a net expense of \$327,000 at the end of March. The FY2026 budget accounts for a total net deficit of \$1,428,000 for Fund 5. Expenses are expected to scale up in the fourth quarter due to athletic tournament travel and the start of the Starlight Theatre season. Ms. Olson confirmed that the budgeted \$1.4 million deficit is fully covered through existing fund balances.

Rock Valley College

Year-to-date payroll is running under budget and remains nearly identical to FY2025 figures. This stable trend is expected to continue through the end of FY2026. The group medical costs are significantly over budget expectations. Year-to-date costs are \$88,000 (13.2%) ahead of budget and \$1.2 million (21.5%) ahead of FY25 actuals. Ms. Olson stated that the cost overruns are driven by the high cost of medical services, high costs for both specialty and non-specialty prescription drugs, an increase in stop-loss claims, and overall higher utilization. She stated that the healthcare costs per participating employee have increased by nearly 5% compared to last year. Discussion ensued.

3. Cash and Investment Report

Vice President Olson presented the Cash and Investment Report through April 30, 2026. Total operating cash is \$15,686,370. Total operating cash and investments are \$97,562,068. The operating cash and investments have changed by <\$994,962> since March 31, 2026. Total capital funds are \$61,832,007. Since March 31, 2026, the change in capital funds has been \$61,832,007. Ms. Olson stated that the total operating cash and investment funds were 90.81% of the FY2026 operating budget.

4. *Informational Only

The Quarterly Purchase Activity Report for the 4th Quarter of FY2026 for items between \$10,000 to \$25,000 was included in the May 12, 2026, Committee of the Whole packet.

Operations Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Trojan

1. Classroom Building II (CLII) Update

Due to the absence of Chief Operations Officer Rick Jenks, Dr. Terrica Huntley, vice president of human resources, provided an update on the Classroom Building II project, emphasizing its significant impact on student access within a safe, accessible environment. The Bailey Edwards architecture firm released a draft schedule following the completion of negotiations with the Capital Development Board (CDB). The project is currently in the design development phase after completing the schematic design phase. The design and construction document phase will continue through early 2027. Project bidding is scheduled for the second quarter of 2027. The completion date has been officially moved from July 2028 to December 2028 after evaluation by the architect and CDB. The RVC team will coordinate the internal timeline to ensure the move back into the building occurs immediately after the Fall 2028 semester concludes.

The upcoming months will include a designated feedback period with the internal team and CDB. A final design and development proposal meeting will be held before the final CDB review and approval. The schedule remains subject to change during this stage. The design team is currently focusing on specific space allocations, equipment placement (including scale models for musical instruments, art tables, and kilns), and monitoring potential costs. Architects are actively selecting all mechanical, electrical, and plumbing equipment.

2. Personnel Report

Dr. Huntley stated that there are currently two full-time faculty placeholders with searches anticipated to conclude soon.

Rock Valley College

3. Rock Valley College Events Calendar

Dr. Huntley discussed the May 2026 RVC Events Calendar, mentioning finals week and completion ceremonies, Heritage Month, the RVC Retiree Celebration, the Golden Eagles Breakfast, and the Stateline Strides for Stroke Walk.

Dr. Peyer, vice president of student affairs, gave an Athletics Update.

- **Softball:** Ranked #3 nationally in the NJCAA Division 2. They won the Region 4 tournament and are competing in the national tournament in Spartanburg, South Carolina (May 19th–24th).
- **Baseball:** Ranked #23 in Division 2. They are competing in the Region 4 tournament at Madison College, with the potential to advance to the national tournament the final week of May.
- **Women's Golf:** The team qualified for the national tournament in Jamestown, New York (June 2nd–5th).
- **Men's Golf:** Individual golfer Dietrich Bethge qualified for the national tournament in Jamestown, New York (June 2nd–5th).

4. *Information Only

- a. Quarterly Employee Personnel Update
- b. Field Turf Update
- c. Downtown West Update/Change Orders
- d. Change Orders Update

New Business/Unfinished Business

Unfinished Business

Ms. Ann Kerwitz, assistant to the president, provided logistical information for the upcoming commencement ceremonies:

- Trustees participating on Friday received a packet containing tickets for the 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. ceremonies, as well as a VIP parking pass.
- Attendees must enter campus off of Mulford Road to access the VIP parking near Starlight Theater. Entry via Spring Brook is restricted as campus police are managing over 1,000 vehicles.
- Trustees must show their tickets at the doors to ensure smooth entry.

Ms. Kerwitz stated that the ICCTA Annual Conference will take place June 5th and June 6th, 2026, in Lombard, IL. RVC is slated to receive a diversity award at the event. Additionally, a trustee is due to receive an award for attending 15 ICCTA seminars. Trustee Nelson will be absent due to an RSO fundraiser tour in New York. Trustee Cardenas Cudia volunteered to attend the conference as the Board Representative to ensure RVC's presence. RVC will coordinate travel for the college constituents attending.

New Business

Dr. Spearman stated that discussions are underway regarding a proposal to earmark \$100,000 to kick-start academic programming at the Downtown West campus. The funding will be directed toward launching Human Services and Early Childhood Education programs. Other programmatic areas are currently stable due to separate, existing grant dollars. The cost will be fully covered using funds from the Employee Retention Credit. This item was presented as an informational preview and will officially be brought to the June Committee of the Whole and the Regular meeting for a formal board vote.

Rock Valley College

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 7:36 p.m., Student Trustee Blake made a motion, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to adjourn to closed session to discuss: 1) 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 2) Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees per Section 2 (c) (2), all in accordance with the Illinois Open meetings Act.

The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Reconvene Open Session

At 8:31 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Cardenas Cudia, to adjourn the closed session and return to open session. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. No action was taken as a result of the closed session.

Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

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

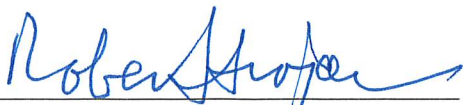
Next Committee of the Whole Meeting

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 5:15 p.m., in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) of the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Adjourn

At 8:32 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Cardenas Cudia, seconded by Student Trustee Blake, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by: Tracy L. Luethje.



Robert "Bob" Trojan, Secretary Pro Tempore



Paul Gorski, Board Chairman