



SPRING PLANNING SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jackson College

Central Campus, Potter Center, Boardroom
04.30.26

The Spring Planning Session of the Board of Trustees of Jackson College was held on Thursday, 04.30.26, 8:30A, at the Central Campus of Jackson College, Potter Center, Boardroom.

Board Members Present: Vice Chairman Matt Heins, Trustee Philip Hoffman, Chairwoman Donna Lake, Trustee Danielle Mackey, Trustee George Page, Trustee Christopher Simpson, and Trustee Teshna Thomas

Board Member Absence: Trustee Mackey and Trustee Simpson left the meeting at 1:26P.

Others Present Include: Dr. Daniel Phelan, Keith Everett Book, Ashley Van Heest, Dr. Benjamin Valdez, and Dr. Alytrice Brown

Chairwoman Lake called the meeting to order at 8:30A Eastern Standard Time.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest expressed by Trustees for items appearing on the agenda for the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no public comment.

BOARD GOVERNANCE

POLICY GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

Rose Mercier, the Board's Policy Governance Coach from The Governance Coach (and which now stewards the international trademark of Policy Governance), joined the Board's Spring Planning Session from roughly 8:30A to 12:00P, conducting a Policy Governance workshop regarding:

- *VALUE PROPOSITION OF POLICY GOVERNANCE*
- *REPRESENTING THE OWNERS*
- *OWNERSHIP LINKAGE*
- *MONITORING WITH DISCIPLINE*

- *STAYING IN GOVERNANCE LANES*
- *BOARD CASE STUDIES*

The focus of the morning session was a review (for some) and refresh (for new members) of the Policy Governance® system of governance.

Rose began by looking at our new framework of exemplary governance and then looking at the ten principles and key concepts that are the foundation of Policy Governance®, a governance system that supports the Board in achieving role clarity, risk protection and future focus.

The Board considered how Policy Governance enables a board direct and control of the organization without being intimately involved in the details of day-to-day operations, focusing on two important principles/processes – ownership linkage and monitoring.

Three short readings were shared to stimulate thinking about Policy Governance in advance of the meeting. The first article, “Why Use Policy Governance®?” is by colleague and senior consultant, Richard Stringham. The second and third articles are blogs that Rose authored following webinars focused on the same topic, “ Have You Heard This One? Common Misconceptions about Policy Governance®, and “Responding to Common Misconceptions about Policy Governance®-Part 2”. The fourth article was another blog titled, “Embracing Complexity”.

Regarding Ownership Linkage, Trustees discussed working toward a stronger commitment to applying Owner feedback to ENDS, communicating back to Owners, and regularly evaluating and updating their Ownership Linkage 5-year plan.

Going forward, monitoring report assessing guides will be provided for Trustees to aid in their practices of assessing monthly monitoring reports.

The Board took recesses from 9:47A-10:00A and again 11:02A-11:14A.

CEO Phelan described leadership wayfinding, the leadership discipline of navigating without a fixed map....reading changing conditions, recognizing patterns, and helping the institution move forward with purpose. The work is less about controlling every variable and more about reading signals, seeing patterns, making wise judgments, and keeping the college grounded in mission, purpose, and values.

He also provided a summary of the [Stronger Workforce for America Act](#), its impacts on higher education, and described hope that our Capital Outlay Project may be funded this year.

Regarding the State of Michigan FY '27 budget proposals, the May Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference will ultimately finalize budget targets. Ongoing funding for community college operations remains flat. The Michigan Achievement Scholarship

to 21, including the Community College Guarantee, seems likely. ITEMS Funding seems dead at this point.

Vice Chairman Heins requested continued futuristic literature and resources from CEO Phelan, for which Trustee Thomas also expressed appreciation in CEO Phelan's current practices of doing so. Rose Mercier helped the Board develop strategic foresight capacity and sustainability practices.

MCCA & ACCT GLI CONFERENCE RECAPS / BYLAWS AMENDMENT DISCUSSION

Chairwoman Lake, Vice Chairman Heins, and CEO Phelan discussed takeaways from the MCCA & ACCT GLI Conference (attended in December 2025) that possibly suggested changes needed to the Board's Bylaws. Changes to consider will be brought back to the 05.11.26 Board meeting for further consideration.

BOARD'S FY '27 CALENDAR / WORK PLAN REVIEW

The Board reviewed their FY '27 Calendar / Work Plan, making the additions of the CEO's evaluation and VEBA Consideration to the August 2026 Regular Board meeting, removing attendance in February 2027 at the ACCT National Legislative Summer, and confirming attendance in March 2027 at the Association of Governing Boards National Conference on Trusteeship.

BOARD'S GUIDE TO SUCCESSION PLANNING

Following a discussion with Chairwoman Lake, Vice Chairman Heins, and Trustee Thomas at the 03.09.26 policy pre-review meeting, the Board considered a statement of practice for the Board's CEO succession planning. This guide will be brought back to the 05.11.26 Board meeting for further consideration.

MILLAGE CONSIDERATION & CAMPAIGN DISCUSSION

CEO Phelan proposed how the Board might consider a millage campaign for the November 2026 ballot.

For November 2026, the proposal deadline is 4:00P on 08.11.26.

Trustee Mackey and Chairwoman Lake described what might be the Board's contribution to a campaign. This will be brought back to the 05.11.26 Board meeting for further consideration.

CEO HEALTHCARE / VEBA DISCUSSION

The Board discussed aspects of the CEO's contract pertaining to the CEO's healthcare and VEBA contributions. Brendon Beer provided counsel and a historical review. Joe Miller of Miller Financial will provide more in-depth counsel during or prior to the 05.11.26 Board meeting for further consideration.

COLLEGE UPDATES

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IMPERATIVE (SAI) – CEO Phelan / Dr. Valdez / Dr. Brown
Dr. Benjamin Valdez (VP, Student Achievement & Academics), Dr. Alytrice Brown (VP, Student Achievement and Student Support), and CEO Phelan presented anticipated impacts of the SAI on areas of Academics and Student Support.

CEO Phelan described an intentional emphasis on improved student academic achievement, followed by Dr. Valdez's outline of faculty focus and assessment, assuring that every program is contributing to meaningful student outcomes, using data as evidence to improve student achievement.

Dr. Brown described a more intentional approach to completion by supporting students with a customer relationship management system (CRM) to provide time for Student Achievement Navigators to have more meaningful conversations with students. Additional engagement with dual enrolled and home-schooled students is also underway. To Vice Chairman Heins' point of keeping students on course, Dr. Brown described an academic plan from the start and more support along the way targeting a shorter pathway to completion.

STRATEGIC AGENDA UPDATE / SAI IMPLICATIONS – Ashley Van Heest

Ashley Van Heest (Chief of Strategy) compared the strategic agenda (the College's guide for operational outcomes) to Policy Governance (the Board's guide for institutional outcomes). She outlined the updated strategic agenda, a sampling of tactics that codify outcomes into practice. Strategic use of ROCI (Responsible, Ownership, Consulted, and Informed) charts in the College's work together enhances collaboration, ownership, and tracking. She also described data-driven next steps.

For FY '26 Q4, we are finishing up 4 tactics in the strategic agenda, including program map reviews, realigning advising practices to ensure all students have an educational plan, and establishing Maroon and Gold surveys (like systems checks), integrating Maroon and Gold Standards into daily practice. For FY '27 Q1, there are 6 tactics on deck, including developing part-time completion tracks, CRM configuration and implementation, strategic review and assessment of current committees and charters, and updates to employee performance reviews to incorporate the Student Achievement Imperative.

Ashley Van Heest described how nicely the Strategic Agenda metrics now feed into the evidence of the Board's monitoring reports.

Trustee Thomas emphasized the importance of the 'why' being repeatedly communicated to employees.

BUDGET ALIGNMENT & ACCOUNTING

CEO shared that the Board's budget approval will be sought at the Board's Regular June 2026 meeting and highlighted a recently adopted College [Expenditure policy](#),

prioritizing general funds for operations. Doing so provides greater clarity to observers as to the sources and uses of revenues to Jackson College.

CLOSED SESSION: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS

As provided by Public Act 15.268, Section 8, Sub-section (c) for strategy and negotiation sessions connected with the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement, CEO Phelan requested a closed hearing at this time for the above purpose as it relates to the contract negotiations with the staff union.

MOTION BY VICE CHAIRMAN HEINS TO GO INTO A CLOSED HEARING. TRUSTEES VOTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO GO INTO A CLOSED HEARING AS IT RELATES TO THE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE STAFF UNION: TRUSTEES HEINS, HOFFMAN, LAKE, PAGE, AND THOMAS VOTING AYE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Board went into a closed session at 2:00PM.

MOTION BY TRUSTEE PAGE TO ADJOURN THE CLOSED HEARING. TRUSTEES VOTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO ADJOURN THE CLOSED HEARING: TRUSTEES HEINS, HOFFMAN, LAKE, PAGE, AND THOMAS VOTING AYE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Board adjourned the closed hearing at 2:16PM and returned to the Spring Planning Session at 2:17PM.

PLUS / DELTAS & NEXT BOARD MEETING TOPICS

Strong appreciation for Rose Mercier's Policy Governance workshop was widely shared, with a desire to have similar sessions on an annual basis. CEO Phelan impressed upon the Trustees the importance of full attendance in mutual learning. Traveling for a future retreat was discussed.

In addition to providing feedback on the quality of the content provided during this Board meeting, the Board also considered anticipated topics for their next regular meeting (05.11.26). Below are currently anticipated topics.

- Excellence Minutes: TBD
- Policy Review: EL-11 Mission Support & Entrepreneurial Activity
- Policy Review: BCD-05 CEO Succession
- Policy Review: GP-03 Board Planning Cycle & Agenda Control
- Policy Review: GP-12 Board Linkage with External Organizations
- Evidence Review: EL-05 Asset Protection
- Evidence Review: EL-06 Investments
- Interpretations Assessment: EL-10 Access to Education
- Bylaws Consideration
- Board's Guide to Succession Planning Consideration
- Millage Consideration & Campaign Discussion

- CEO Healthcare / VEBA Discussion
- Pre-Audit
- CEO Monitoring Compliance Schedule & Summary
- College Feature: JC / JAMA Articulation Agreement – Albert Rossner
- Next Board Meeting Topic

ADJOURN

MOTION BY TRUSTEE HOFFMAN “To adjourn.”

TRUSTEES VOTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE: TRUSTEES HEINS, HOFFMAN, LAKE, PAGE, AND THOMAS VOTING AYE. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meeting adjourned at 2:23pm ET.

The foregoing minutes for the Spring Planning Session of the Board of Trustees held on Thursday, April 30, 2026 were approved at the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees on Monday, May 11, 2026.



Chairwoman