

# 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, August 11, 2026

### Call to Order

The Rock Valley College (RVC) Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting convened on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) in the Educational Resource Center (ERC). The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Board Chair Paul Gorski. Due to the absence of Trustee Jenna Goldsmith, Board Chair Gorski named Trustee Kristen Simpson as the secretary pro tempore.

### Roll Call

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

|                           |                                           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Mr. Paul Gorski           | Ms. Kristen Simpson                       |
| Mr. Robert 'Bob' Trojan   | Ms. Sarah Ortiz Espinoza, Student Trustee |
| Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia |                                           |

The following trustees were absent from the roll call: Ms. Crystal Soltow, Mr. John Nelson, and Dr. Jenna Goldsmith.

Also present: Dr. Howard J. Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Cultural Excellence and Belonging; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Vice President of Human Resources; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations; 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 Matthew J. Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

### Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

There were no board members attending by any other means.

### Communications and Petitions

Chair Gorski formally announced that Trustee Jenna Goldsmith submitted her resignation as a Board Trustee of Rock Valley College via email to Chair Gorski, President Spearman, and Director of Employee Relations, Ms. Christine Lott, on August 10, 2026, at 6:52 p.m.

Chair Gorski shared an invitation that Trustee Trojan received and addressed to the Board regarding the "815 Rockin' Eve" dinner event, hosted by the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce on August 13, 2026, from 5:00 P.M. to 8:15 P.M. at the Hard Rock Casino.

- Trustee Trojan noted for the record that he will be attending on his own behalf, not as an official representative of the college.

# Rock Valley College

## Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors to be recognized.

## Review of Minutes

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

## General Presentations

There were no general presentations.

## Teaching, Learning & Communications Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Goldsmith

### **1. Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Enrollment Update**

Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, presented the FY2027 Enrollment Update. Ms. Snider explained that due to the Software as a Service (SaaS) Migration with Ellucian, historical enrollment data had been underreported by excluding students who dropped or withdrew after specific tracking dates.

Ms. Snider stated that enrollment is currently flat compared to last year and that it is at 99% of the budget goal and 95% of the stretch goal for Fall. Across both semesters, enrollment is down 1% year-over-year and at 101% of budget and 97% of the overall goal.

### **2. Engineering Program Update**

Ms. Heather Snider and Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, presented the Engineering Program Update. A detailed historical review, a student-tracking report, and a scholarship breakdown were presented regarding RVC's Engineering Program and the 2+2 Agreement with Northern Illinois University (NIU). Trustee Trojan noted that major capital investments were made to renovate the Woodward Technology Center (WTC), and a community scholarship fundraising drive raised several million dollars specifically for engineering students.

Ms. Snider discussed the student transfers, completion performance, and scholarships. Ms. Snider stated that over \$590,000 has been awarded across all engineering disciplines to 314 unique students over the past eight years. \$500,000 was awarded specifically to 114 students in the 2+2 program. For FY2027, \$146,255 remains available in second-chance scholarship funding (\$133,395 is designated for traditional engineering/mechanical engineering).

**Board Action:** Chair Gorski and Trustee Trojan would like administration to meet with NIU representatives in September 2026 to discuss expanding program options, work with scholarship donors to adjust criteria, widen the eligible applicant pool, expand marketing and recruitment efforts, and provide an updated status report to the Board at the November 2026 meeting.

### **3. \*Informational Only**

#### **a. FY2027 Adult Learner (Ages 25-45) Enrollment**

The information report is included in the board packet.

**Board Action:** A request was made to add total sums at the bottom of the reporting columns in future versions.

# Rock Valley College

## Finance Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Cardenas Cudia

### **1. Cash and Investment Report**

Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance, presented the Cash and Investment Report through July 31, 2026. Total operating cash is \$23,728,628. Total operating cash and investments are \$106,506,075. The operating cash and investments have changed by <\$8,319,312> since June 30, 2026. Total capital funds are \$59,224,991. Since June 30, 2026, the change in capital funds has been \$532,622. Ms. Olson stated that the total operating cash and investment funds were 98.45% of the FY2027 operating budget.

### **2. \*Informational Only**

The Quarterly Purchase Activity Report (purchases between \$10,000 and \$25,000)

### **3. Internal Auditor Discussion**

Discussion initiated on exploring internal audit services to evaluate internal financial controls, processes, and risk management. The key discussion points were:

- External auditor (Sikich) cannot perform internal auditing due to independence/conflict of interest rules.
- IT internal controls are already being systematically reviewed via RVC's virtual Chief Information Officer (vCIO) agreement.
- Options discussed included hiring an internal auditor employee vs. contracting with an independent external firm periodically.
- Comparison cited to City Colleges of Chicago internal audit structure and California community college audit models.

Further discussion will continue at future meetings, focusing on identifying 1-2 core financial control areas to audit.

## Operations Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Trojan

### **1. Downtown West Update**

Vice President of Operations Mr. Rick Jenks stated that the project is entering its completion and move-in phase. Both elevator inspections passed, as did the fire alarm inspections. RVC personnel from the Register Star and the old Stenstrom buildings have successfully moved into the new Downtown West building and are unpacking/serving walk-in community members. Mr. Jenks reminded everyone that the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, August 14, 2026. Mr. Jenks stated that the project contingency fund has approximately \$700,000 remaining.

### **2. Change Orders**

#### **• Athletic Field Turf Project Update**

Mr. Jenks stated that the baseball field turf installation is complete, and that the softball field turf is currently being laid. The soccer field turf installation is to follow immediately, with targeted completion by mid-August 2026. Mr. Jenks said that minor change orders were approved for concrete leveling and sightline adjustments for the visiting spectator section at the soccer field.

### **3. 2027 Calling Election for Members of the Board of Trustees**

Ms. Olson stated that there will be an upcoming consolidated election on April 6, 2027. The petition circulation begins August 25, 2026, and the petition filing window is from

# Rock Valley College

November 16, 2026, through November 23, 2026. Ms. Olson said that there are three (3) seats up for election at RVC. Two (2) are six-year terms and one (1) is a four-year term.

## 4. Board Policy Manual Update: Article 4-Students / First Reading

Dr. Terrica Huntley, vice president of human resources, presented the first reading of comprehensive revisions to Board Policy Article 4-Students, facilitated by legal counsel, Robbins Schwartz, and campus leadership. A summary of the changes is:

- Updates to legal statutes, title alignments, and administrative procedures (37 procedures created or updated).
- Cross-alignment between the Board Policy and the Student Handbook.
- Four policies are being recommended for deletion from the Student Section:
  - Non-Discrimination
  - Prohibiting Sex-Based Misconduct
  - Cultural Excellence and Belonging
  - Service and Other Animals

The above sections are recommended for removal from Article 4 because they are being elevated to campus-wide Operations policies that apply to all students, staff, and visitors.

**Board Action:** Second reading and potential approval will be scheduled following the appointment of a replacement trustee to fill the board vacancy.

## 5. Personnel Report

There are four placeholders on the August 2026 Personnel Report: a Nursing Faculty member, an English Faculty member, a Welding Faculty member, and a Director of Career Services. Heidi Penney, Nursing Faculty, departed on August 3, 2026.

## 6. Rock Valley College Events Calendar

Key Calendar Events & Reminders:

- First Week of Classes: Classes commence next week. Trustees are invited to serve as Welcome Greeters on Monday, August 17, and Tuesday, August 18. Volunteer shifts range from one (1) hour to full days between 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM. Interested trustees should contact Ann Kerwitz.
- Welcome Week (Week 2): Features various student engagement events, club involvement fairs, games, and activities.
  - Clarified that the "Welcome Week Goose Chase" scheduled for August 17 is a student scavenger hunt.
- Downtown West Campus Tours: Trustees planning to attend scheduled tours (10:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM, or 2:00 PM) who have not RSVP'd should inform Ann Kerwitz to balance attendance (target of two trustees per slot).
- Ribbon Cutting Event: Scheduled for Friday, August 14 at 10:00 AM. Over 230 attendees are expected, and Chair Gorski will be speaking. Trustees are requested to RSVP to Jennifer Thompson.

## New Business/Unfinished Business

### Unfinished Business

- **Aviation Program Update:** A request was made for an update/report on expanding the aviation program at the airport, to be presented no earlier than the November Committee of the Whole meeting.

# Rock Valley College

- **Board Retreat:** Reminder that the Board Retreat is scheduled for Saturday, January 23, 2027. Agenda planning between Chair Gorski and leadership is underway.
- **Holiday Schedule Notice:** Board members were advised that meeting dates in November and December may shift due to holiday schedules; official dates are posted on the RVC website.
- **Recording Secretary Vacancy:** Filling the vacancy for Recording Secretary (with a recommendation for Kristen Simpson) will be added as an action item for the next regular board meeting.
- **Board Trustee Vacancy:** Following Jenna Goldsmith's resignation, the Board must fill the open seat within 60 days in accordance with RVC Board Policy 1:10.020(Section 5) and the Illinois Public Community College Act.
  - Preference was expressed to appoint a qualified candidate willing to serve as an interim trustee until spring elections without seeking election for the full term. A closed session will be held at the next meeting to discuss candidates/process.

## New Business

- **Restricted Donor Endowments Policy Discussion:** Discussion was raised regarding a news article on higher education institutions improperly tapping into restricted donor endowment funds for operational expenses. Staff confirmed that RVC does not have direct access to RVC Foundation funds; funds are transferred solely via formal fund transfer requests approved by the Foundation and signed off by the president and CFO.
- **Policy Review:** It was discussed that existing auditing standards (external and potential internal auditor functions) and board fiduciary duties prevent unauthorized usage of restricted funds.
- **Growth Dimensions Economic Development Annual Reception:** Scheduled for **Wednesday, September 2, 2026**, starting at 5:00 PM at the Community Building Complex of Boone County.
  - Keynote speaker: Robert Lieske (Walmart Distribution Center).
  - The college has purchased a table; interested trustees (Trustee Trojan currently registered) should RSVP via Ms. Ann Kerwitz.

## Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

The next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 25, 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, September 8, 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 to Closed Session

At 6:42 p.m., Trustee Trojan made a motion, seconded by Trustee Cardenas Cudia, to adjourn to closed session to discuss: 1) 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), in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

# Rock Valley College

The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

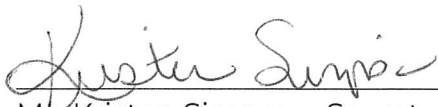
## **Reconvene Open Session**

At 6:58 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Cardenas Cudia, seconded by Trustee Trojan, 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.

## **Adjourn**

At 7:01 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cardenas Cudia, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by: Tracy L. Luethje.



MS. Kristen Simpson, Secretary Pro Tempore



Paul Gorski, Board Chairman