

Mt. Hood Community College

2023-24 Hearing Minutes

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

Mt. Hood Community College Campus

2600 SE Stark Steet.

Gresham, Oregon

6:30 pm

Present:

TSCC:

Chair Harmony Quiroz, Commissioner James Ofsink, Commissioner Mark Wubbold, Commissioner Margo Norton, Commissioner Matt Donahue, Executive Director Allegra Willhite, and ~~But~~ Analyst Tunie Betschart

Absent: None

Mt. Hood Community College:

Board of Directors: Chair Andrew Speer, Diane McKeel, Kenney Polson, Annette Mattson and Diane Noriega

Staff: College President Dr. Lisa Skari, Vice President of Finance and Administration Jennifer DeMent, Vice President of Student Development John Hamlin, Associate Vice President of Information Technology Sergey Shepelov, Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Traci Simons, and Vice President of Instruction Al McQuarters

Chair Harmony Quiroz opened the public hearing by welcoming everyone to the hearing and briefly describing the duties and responsibilities of the TSCC. She reviewed the hearing process and stated the hearing was to engage the district leadership and provide an opportunity for the public to comment before Mt. Hood Community College adopts its budget. She asked TSCC Commissioners and staff to introduce themselves and state if they have business relationships with the college that could be perceived as a conflict of interest. Each commissioner and staff member introduced themselves and said they had no conflict of interest with the college. She asked the college to introduce the board members and staff present.

Following introductions, Chair Quiroz acknowledged the district's receipt of the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the 2021-22 fiscal year Adopted Budget. She congratulated the college on receiving this award for the second consecutive year. Then, she asked Dr. Liza Skari if she wanted to make brief introductory remarks about the budget. Following Dr. Skari's introductory remarks, testimony from the public would be taken.

Dr. Skari gave a brief overview of the budget, saying enrollment is increasing just under four percent for the year. The state allocations for community colleges are increasing. The college is investing in the student onboarding process, investing in technology and equipment, and creating an apprenticeship Student Coordinator position. The budget process aligns with the new strategic plan, goals, and objectives. This year was exciting with the investments made in the dental lab, which is nearly complete.

Dr. Skari said the board members and staff welcome the conversation around the college's budget.

Chair Quiroz asked if anyone signed up to give public comment, stating each who wished to comment would be limited to three minutes. Executive Director Willhite reported that no one was signed up to speak at this hearing, and no written comments were received.

With that, the commissioners started their questions.

TSCC Questions:

Commissioner Wubbold asked the following questions:

This question is for the board members in attendance. In July 2022, the Board of Education approved a new strategic plan for the college. Can you share some examples of how this strategic plan is incorporated into the coming year's budget?

Board Chair Andrew Speer responded by saying at a high level, it guided the goal setting for each department in the college. These goals have an impact on the budget. He gave a few examples that tie back to the goals:

- Purchase of simulators for health-related programs ~ Goal A
- Expanded apprenticeship partnerships and staffing to support these students in obtaining degrees ~ Goal B
- Implementation of enrollment management strategies, including financial literacy and student employment ~ Goals B and E
- Additional funds will be allocated to Student Basic Needs to stabilize funding as startup grants expire and staff training in Trauma Informed Care and conflict resolution, as well as conflict resolution services (Goal C)

Additionally, through the planning and budgeting process, existing resources are tied to hundreds of tactics designed to achieve the objectives and goals in the strategic plan.

Did the strategic plan utilize an equity lens to consider projects through?

They use a decision-making framework that is an equity lens to identify outcomes to guide expenditures. The plan emphasizes ensuring the message is in several languages and communicated to many community focus groups.

Chair Quiroz asked this follow-up question:

As departments budget, are they expected to align to the strategic plan elements?

Mr. Speer said the decision-making process must go through specific steps focusing on student outcomes. This helps guide decision-making.

Dr. Skari added they use a decision-making framework that is an equity lens to identify outcomes to guide things that come to the President's cabinet. Any request over \$5,000 has to tie back to a specific objective.

Commissioner Ofsink asked the following questions:

Let's talk about one of the big topics – enrollment. The budget message tells us that enrollment appears to be stabilizing for the college, and the budget assumes an increase in numbers. What's driving back-to-back annual enrollment increases after several years of declines? Can you tell us about the longer-term forecast? Given demographics (lower birth rate, shrinking population in Multnomah County), what are you expecting trends to be over the next five years and beyond?

Mr. Sergey Shepelov said that MHCC enrollment has increased by 4% in the 2022-2023 academic year based on the current estimate. An increase in non-credit enrollment and dual high school enrollment were primary drivers. The trend in the regular credit enrollment was less consistent, but it's also up 2.5% for the upcoming summer term and 8% up for the fall term compared to the same point in time.

The college enrollment declines up to 2020 was primarily driven by improving labor market conditions, which traditionally led to a decline at community colleges. The last couple of years, the decline was caused by COVID-19. The end of the pandemic led to the stabilization of enrollment in the 2022-23 academic year.

The expectation of continued modest growth is based on the recovery from COVID-19 and an improved pipeline of students. The college adopted the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan a year ago with specific objectives and initiatives. Implementation of the plan is estimated to increase college enrollment by two to three percent annually.

This year's declining population in Multnomah County has not affected the eastern side as much. Gresham's population increased last and this year by 0.4% and 0.1%, respectively, while there was a decline in Portland. Based on the enrollment numbers in the district high school, the college also expects a flat number of high school graduates in the next three years. Based on that, MHCC does not expect the shrinking population to be an issue for the college in the short term, but it's a potential threat beyond the next three years.

The decline of two to four percent annually in high school graduates is expected to start in the 2025-26 academic year. Attracting an underserved population is one of the strategies to sustain enrollment. The new strategic plan also aims to strengthen connections with the local and regional community partners. This opens an opportunity to provide more services relevant to the college to counter an inevitable decline in high school graduates.

Commissioner Wubbold asked this follow-up question:

Are the increases in enrollment all for credit classes, or are they a mix of adult learning classes and visual arts or hobby-relaxation-type classes?

Mr. Shepelov said it is a total of all types of enrollment.

Commissioner Norton asked the following questions:

Last year, we discussed retention and enrollment with you, and you shared your plan to focus on enrollment building with the five-year Strategic Enrollment Plan. And it appears that you are seeing results. You planned to track progress on goals related to the plan at a high-level, and we'd love to hear more. What's been most challenging, where are you seeing the most success, and what hasn't proved as effective as you had hoped?

Mr. John Hamblin said, as Dr. Skari and Sergey Shepelov shared, that the past year of enrollment was very promising, truly growing many of the pipelines for enrollment in Early College, ESL, and Adult Basic Skills and overall improvements in retention. This year was the first full year of Strategic Enrollment Management, and overall, it was a successful year.

Here are a few highlights from this past year;

- Communication Audit Completed in Winter 2023. This audit provided MHCC with a communication framework for students, focusing on timing, content, and building the college's brand.

- Admission Application and process review and updates were completed in Spring 2023. The updates will be made to the online admissions application in early summer 2023. This work is an effort to modernize the application and improve data collection during admissions.
- The college has also begun a needs assessment on a Student Information System project to replace the current student information system.

Last year, the college funded a new position and a restructuring of the student services hub, the central student support area. This resulted in adding a staff position and restructuring a position to lead the area. Here are a few statistics as they tracked a pilot cohort with a model of onboarding that included holistic and wrap-around support for students, building a connection and sense of belonging for these students.

- Example data: 1,052 first-time freshman students were enrolled in Fall 2022.
- 65.3% of them were retained to Winter. 72% of the pilot cohort were retained to Winter.
- MHCC is adding an additional FTE to this area to scale this work up next year.

Student Employment

- For the 2022-23 academic year, 188 students have been placed into a student employment position. A 52% increase from 2021-22 (124 students).
- Of the 188 students, 62 were first-time students at MHCC this academic year.
- 94.6% of the 188 student employees persisted and were retained through the entire academic year, averaging 11 credits per term, which is higher than the average MHCC student
- 108 of the 188 student employees (Federal Work-Study + Student Aide) were eligible for Pell Grant.

He concluded by thanking TSCC for letting him share just a few items from a long list of accomplishments from the SEM teams. Some of the challenges have been associated with getting the data collection and analysis in place to measure initiatives. Some great work is happening because of the college's investments in this work.

What allowed you to expand student employment opportunities? Could you give some examples of types of employment students have?

Mr. Hamblin said this year, the main thing was building a connection with faculty and staff interested in supervising students. Not all of them had the skill set or the desire to do that. So, building that pipeline was key. MHCC had opportunities all over the campus, such as a visual arts center, student center, etc. There is extra need in some areas, like facilities. The college is trying to cater jobs to the students' skill set and development so they will get real-world career experiences that will help them in other career opportunities.

Commissioner Wubbold asked this follow-up question:

Did you get any pushback from staff about this? Do people want the student's jobs?

Mr. Hamblin said he was not aware of any pushback. The project is not replacing staff jobs but offering stepping-stone opportunities for students.

Commissioner Ofsink asked the following questions:

What's the latest with employer partnerships? We know you've worked with Amazon and others. Have these programs grown? Will they potentially replace the slowing high school pipeline?

Mr. Al McQuarters said all the career technical education programs have industries that match up.

He gave the following examples:

- 2022-23 employer partnership with accelerated supported career pathways includes working with employers for tours for our Machining and Welding programs;
- The college has new partnerships with the semiconductor industry - namely Microchip, MCI, and Onsemi. The college has several pipelines to and from them, including apprenticeship programming and onsite courses.
- MHCC has participated in Amazon recruitment events

The tuition program where the industry pays for the students to take the classes has also grown this year. He shared numbers from some businesses with students enrolled with business vouchers in 2023, saying Amazon had 80, Boeing 14, Microchip 28, and OnSemi 20. Since 2020, there have been 169 students who have benefited from this relationship.

Is there an opportunity to improve the curriculum based on feedback from these industry partners?

Mr. McQuarters said yes, they all meet with faculty, staff, and partners twice a year to ensure the curriculum is relevant. For example, based on input, the college started an associate degree program vs. just a welding certificate. This also influences the schedule. MHCC can adjust to what is needed for workers.

Commissioner Donahue asked the following question:

Many of the capital projects listed in this year's budget are the same ones listed in last year's budget. Progress from our perspective seems slow. For example, last year, we heard that the Dental Hygiene Remodel was planned to start in July 2022, with plans to be completed as soon as possible. We see it again in this year's budget. What are the obstacles to completing these projects?

Ms. Jennifer DeMent answered, saying as it has been for years, the primary challenge has been funding. The \$8 million match from the state has been helpful - \$16 million is the most significant capital budget ever available for MHCC. As with many institutions, scheduling contractors and supply chain issues impact project progress. Sometimes, finding contractors who will even bid on a project is challenging.

The Dental Lab Accreditation remodel was a highly involved and firmly managed project. MHCC has temporary occupancy of the Dental Lab but is waiting for some HVAC pieces to finish the project.

Additional issues facing the college are limited Facility staffing to do the projects, projects with timing challenges, and sometimes weather issues that must be done when most students are off campus. Despite all the challenges, the college expects to have all projects they can afford to do with the \$16 million completed by the end of the upcoming FY 24.

MHCC is doing a Facilities Master plan, which kicked off in January. Over the summer, they will prepare a prioritized maintenance list that immediately identifies maintenance needed, what will be on a five-year plan, and what will be on the ten-year plan. Deciding what must be done in the next five years is important. Staff is preparing to bring the proposal to the board in the fall and discuss funding options, such as possibly a bond. The proposal will align with the strategic, enrollment, and academic plans.

Commissioner Norton asked the following questions:

We see that you are planning for accreditation reaffirmation in Fall 2023 - what have you been doing to prepare? Do you see any potential risks that could impact the accreditation reaffirmation?

Dr. Skari said with accreditation, staff is always preparing for the next visit. Since the last seven-year visit, assessment and planning were the two areas with recommendations. The college has been working on those, creating a Unit Planning and Outcome Assessment process, and has tied these to the budget process. They are also working on improving transparency, releasing a Student Success dashboard to monitor student disaggregated data. The college has released new dashboards that tie to the Strategic Plan performance indicators and the goal and objective status. In August 2022, the college submitted written reports, and all areas were found to be in full compliance, except for two areas, meeting the needs for library resources and assessing the impact of the declining enrollment on resources.

They put together a mock evaluation to help those who have never been through an evaluation before practicing the process. This involved three evaluators, one from Oregon and two from Washington. It was a day-long visit and met with 21 different groups

Their commendations were:

- Student Basic Needs and the student-centeredness
- The strategic plan (the amount of input, number of manageable and meaningful goals and objectives)
- Resource management (Facility maintenance with no Bond, Board's direction on aligning budget and resources)

Recommendations for the college were:

- Evaluations (get current)
- Governance (decision-making unclear)
- Student learning assessment (making the clearer connection of assessment to outcomes)
- Use of student data (dashboards available, people are not consistent with using data)

Risks:

- None.

Related to accreditation efforts, how does the Dental Hygiene remodel project fit into accreditation for that program? Are delays to this project a risk for the Dental Accreditation?

Dr. Skari said they met in August and again in January. MHCC's Dental Lab is on probation, with reporting and temporary occupancy. The Accreditation Review Committee meets in July, and the college has requested a special appearance to share the good news since we are ahead of schedule and hope to receive a recommendation for continued accreditation at the Commission's August meeting.

Commissioner Wubbold asked this follow-up question:

Do you have a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) that is different and makes MHCC a different kind of institution?

Dr. Skari said the first Key Performance Indicator for Mt. Hood Community College is the intake of high school students in the area, with the goal of 30% of high school graduates. The second one is related to community representation and how this is reflected in the diversity of the college's employees.

Chair Quiroz asked the following questions:

The College and the community know students need emergency and safety net services to stabilize and focus on finishing their college experience. We know the college has prioritized funding some of these wrap-around services. What are you seeing in terms of need? Is it going up or going down? Is the college able to meet the needs of all those seeking services, or is there a gap?

Ms. Traci Simmons said the Student Basic Needs team moved into the bookstore location last fall to make it easy for students to find. Equity and Community Learning Center will be the name of the facility. They continue to see an increase in needs. Students can get a laptop, fresh food, a snack, and even food to go and prepare at home.

Most growth is in the TriMet hop cards. They are up 222%. Loaner laptop use is up 66%. Seeing growth in hotspots since many students don't have internet access at home. They can engage the internet from anywhere using the hotspots. Emergency aid is up 52% and is used for car repairs, child care, and other emergencies.

The area where it is hardest to fill the gap is in housing. Students are getting pushed further and further east. Housing Northwest partners with MHCC and has done an amazing job bringing students low-cost housing opportunities. The problem is the need is much greater than the resources available. The college is looking for grant opportunities to help in this area. Some students are just one missed rent payment from becoming houseless; some are even living in cars. Basic student support has an impact on enrollment and retention of students as well.

When we met with PCC earlier this year, they shared that they are utilizing college property for affordable housing by partnering with local agencies. Has Mt. Hood Community College explored anything along those lines?

Ms. Simmons said they have had the conversations and are still developing. They do have land, but so far, they have had better luck with already developed land, existing apartments, hotels, and being creative about what is available.

Can you discuss the balance between the revenues you use for these projects? Is it from the General Fund or grants, partnerships, or donations?

Ms. Simons said TriMet is a great partner, supplying the Hop cards. The college is working with the MHCC foundation. They have put aside money for students' basic needs the college has not had to dip into. MHCC is running out of grant dollars received during the pandemic. So, they must shift to other resources such as the foundation money. They have received some General Fund dollars for student basic needs.

Sustainability is also an issue for the college to grapple with. To help answer this, they are approaching the community for help.

Commissioner Norton asked these follow-up questions:

How do students come to the center? Are they referred, or do they come in on their own?

Ms. Simons said it is on the website. Many faculty members have it on the syllabus, and there is a group email they can use. Other students and staff on the campus make referrals. There are multiple ways to connect with Student Basic Needs. The college has also housed partners such as DHS, so they know the center when their clients come by. This has all been successful.

Chair Quiroz thanked the college for the discussion and contributions during the hearing. Then, she closed the hearing and opened a regular meeting of the Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission to certify Mt. Hood Community College's 2023-24 Approved Budget. She asked if the commissioners had

any questions or comments concerning the Budget. There were none.

She asked Executive Director Allegra Willhite to give staff recommendations for the certification letter.

Ms. Willhite said staff found the Budget estimates reasonable for the purposes stated and the Budget to comply with Local Budget Law. She said staff have no recommendations or objections to the fiscal year 23-24 budget. She thanked the Mt. Hood Community College Staff for their quick responses and willingness to answer questions.

Chair Quiroz called for a motion.

Commissioner Ofsink moved to certify the Mt. Hood Community College Approved Budget with no recommendations or objections as recommended by staff. Commissioner Norton seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous vote of the commissioners.

There being no other business, Chair Quiroz closed the meeting.