



MORTON COLLEGE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NO.527

Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Approved

1. Call to Order

The Regular Board meeting was called to order by Board Chair Leonard Cannata at 10:08 AM on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at the Centennial Room, located at 3801 S. Central Ave., Cicero, IL 60804.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Present:

Leonard Cannata, Chair
Anthony Martinucci, Vice Chair
Jose Collazo, Secretary
Charles Hernandez, Trustee
Oscar Montiel, Trustee
Frances F. Reitz
Eliana Ruiz, Student Trustee

Absent:

Susan Grazzini, Trustee

Also Present:

Dr. Keith D. McLaughlin, President
Edward Wong, Attorney, Del Galdo Law Group, LLC

4. Citizen Comments

The Chair moved citizen comments later in the agenda.

5. Reports

5.1 Student Trustee – None

6. President's Report

Dr. McLaughlin presented the following:

FY2025 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Kimberly Marshall, Managing Director of Forvis, LLP, Auditors, presented an overview of the FY2025 audit.

Audit Highlights:

- The College received a clean, unmodified opinion (highest level of assurance).

- Total federal expenditures: approximately \$9.3 million, including \$8.4 million in student financial aid.
- No material weaknesses or significant deficiencies were reported in financial reporting.
- One material weakness was identified in enrollment reporting related to timeliness requirements under federal guidelines.
- No audit adjustments were required, indicating strong internal controls.

Administration reported that the recent hiring of a full-time Registrar will address the enrollment reporting findings.

Discussion occurred regarding federal funding and discretionary grants for minority-serving institutions. Administration noted that certain grants (e.g., Title III and Title V) are currently not being funded at the federal level, but existing grants remain unaffected.

Health Sciences Program Updates

Dr. Keith reported that the College has continued to monitor and support the improvement efforts within the Health Sciences division, particularly in relation to student outcomes on required licensure and certification examinations. He invited Dr. Cynthia Young, Dean of Health Sciences, to present updated outcomes and achievements on behalf of the faculty, staff, and administration.

Dr. Young reported that the Health Sciences division oversees the Paramedic, Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA), and Nursing programs and shared comparative licensure and certification pass rate data for academic years 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Paramedic Program

Dr. Young reported that the Paramedic Program continues to demonstrate strong performance and remains in good standing with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the governing body responsible for program approval and oversight. She noted continued improvements in student outcomes and compliance with state requirements, reflecting the effectiveness of instructional practices and program management.

Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program

Dr. Young reported significant progress within the PTA Program. She explained that in 2023 the program had been placed on warning status by its accrediting body due to multiple years of lower ultimate pass rates. She was pleased to report that the warning status has since been fully removed.

For the Class of 2025:

- The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) first-time pass rate was 92.3%.
- The accrediting body ultimate pass rate reached 100%.

Nursing Program

Dr. Young highlighted substantial improvements in the Nursing Program, noting that prior to 2023 the program experienced several years of low first-time licensure exam pass rates, with results declining during the COVID-19 pandemic period. She explained that during this time, the State of Illinois had issued a temporary stay on disciplinary actions for nursing programs, which provided an opportunity for program evaluation and restructuring.

Dr. Young reported that through targeted academic interventions, strengthened instructional oversight, and enhanced student support, the program has achieved a major turnaround. For the

Class of 2025, the Nursing Program recorded a 96% first-time pass rate on the licensure examination, a significant improvement from 69% in 2024 and substantially higher than results from earlier years.

She credited the success to a collaborative effort among faculty, staff, and administration, noting a shared commitment to delivering high-quality instruction and improving student readiness for licensure.

Acknowledgments

Dr. Young expressed sincere appreciation to the College's leadership, faculty, and staff for their collective efforts in advancing the Health Sciences programs and improving student outcomes.

She specifically thanked Dr. Keith McLaughlin, President of Morton College, for his leadership, support, and commitment to program improvement. She also acknowledged Dr. Walcher for administrative guidance and institutional support throughout the improvement process.

Dr. Young formally acknowledged Trustee Grazzini for her mentorship, noting her consistent encouragement, guidance, and willingness to check in regularly during a challenging period for the programs. She stated that her mentorship and thoughtful advice were instrumental in supporting her leadership and decision-making.

She further recognized Laurie Cashman, whom she identified as a key mentor whose insight, experience, and support were critical to the turnaround efforts within the Nursing Program.

Dr. Young also expressed appreciation for Nancy Jeffries, administrative assistant, for her dedication and behind-the-scenes support that helped sustain daily operations within the Nursing Department.

Additional recognition was given to:

- Cara Bonick, Director of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program
- The academic clinical coordinator
- Health Sciences faculty members
- Administrative support staff

Dr. Young emphasized that the improvements achieved across the Paramedic, PTA, and Nursing programs reflect a true team effort and a shared commitment to student success, compliance, and continuous improvement.

The Board commended administration, faculty, and staff for improvements and acknowledged the allocation of institutional resources to support program success.

This concluded the President's report.

7. Consent Agenda

Trustee Martinucci made a motion to approve the consent agenda, which includes agenda items 7.1 to 7.21.1, as listed below. Trustee

Reitz seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Cannata, Collazo, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, and Reitz

Nays: None

Absent: Grazzini

Motion Carried

7.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on January 28, 2026.

7.2. Approval and ratification of accounts payable and payroll for January 2026 and approval of budget

transfers.

- 7.3. Approval of the Monthly Budget Report for the fiscal year to date ending in January 2026.
- 7.4. Approval of the Treasurer's Report for January 2026.
- 7.5. Approval of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for FY25, and the accompanying communication prepared by Forvis, LLP, Auditors.
- 7.6. Approval of curriculum changes as submitted.
- 7.7. Approval of the Adjunct Faculty Assignment/Employment Report for the Spring 2026 semester, pending additional class cancellations and/or additions.
- 7.8. Approval of Overload Employment Report for the Spring 2026 semester, pending additional class cancellations and/or additions.
- 7.9. Approval of out-of-state travel for Trustee Susan Grazzini to attend the AGB 2026 National Conference on Trusteeship in Denver, CO, from March 28, 2026, through March 30, 2026.
- 7.10. Approval of out-of-country travel for two participants to attend the Illinois Consortium for International Studies and Programs (ICISP) 2026 two-week International Exchange Program in the Netherlands, from May 9, 2026, through May 23, 2026.
- 7.11. Approval of a temporary 10% salary increase for Sandra Barajas, in accordance with the Classified Union Agreement, to serve as Preschool Substitute Teacher, effective February 2, 2026, through May 6, 2026.
- 7.12. Approval of network infrastructure cabling services with Whiting Electric for Fiscal Year 2026.
- 7.13. Approval to continue marketing and social media consulting services with Alyssa Barrera, independent consultant, for Fiscal Year 2026.
- 7.14. Approval of electrical services with Arc 1 Electric for Fiscal Year 2026.
- 7.15. Approval to purchase instructional supplies for the Automotive Technology Program from Consulab Educatech Inc., a sole-source vendor, utilizing grant funds.
- 7.16. Approval of the partnership agreement between The Early Childcare Department at Morton College and Berwyn South School District 100.
- 7.17. Approval of the Paralegal Internship Agreement, as submitted.
- 7.18. Approval of the memorandum of understanding between Morton College and Morton College Classified Staff Federation, Cook County College Teachers Union AFT, Local 1600, as submitted.
- 7.19. Approval of Facility Use Permits
 - 7.19.1. Nicor Gas, in partnership with Senator Javier Cervantes, to host a Health Fair in the Henry J. Vais Gymnasium on March 31, 2026.
 - 7.19.2. Chi-Town Classics Car Club will host three (3) car shows on May 9, 2026, August 25, 2026, and October 9, 2026.
- 7.20. Employment Status Change
 - 7.20.1. Daynelis Canino, Temporary Full-Time to Full-Time Regular, Custodian, Union Position, effective February 17, 2026.
- 7.21. Approval of Full-Time Employment
 - 7.21.1. Evan Peterson, Instructional Technologist, Union Position, effective April 6, 2026.

8. Closed Session – The Board Chair determined that a closed session was not necessary.

9. – 24. Approval of the updated board policies.

Trustee Martinucci made a motion to approve the updated board policies.

Trustee Reitz seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Cannata, Collazo, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, and Reitz

Nays: None

Absent: Grazzini

Motion Carried

25. Approval of continued employment of one tenured and four non-tenured instructors for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Trustee Reitz made a motion to approve the continued employment of one tenured and four non-tenured instructors for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Trustee Martinucci seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Cannata, Collazo, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, and Reitz

Nays: None

Absent: Grazzini

Motion Carried

Citizen Comments

The Chair opened the floor for public comments and reminded speakers to state their name and address for the record. Each speaker was allotted three (3) minutes.

Trustee Charles Hernandez addressed the Board and shared the following:

- Interest in inviting a representative from the Carpenters Union to present apprenticeship partnership opportunities. Trustee Hernandez explained that the Carpenters Union offers structured apprenticeship programs that allow students to complete training while earning competitive wages. He noted the potential benefit for students who may not pursue a four-year degree but are interested in skilled trades.
- Suggestion to coordinate with District 201 regarding first responder programs, which prepare students for careers in law enforcement, firefighter, paramedic, and EMT programs, and recruitment opportunities for Morton College.
- Recognition of the Morton College baseball team following a successful spring trip.

John Jelen, alumnus of Morton College (Classes of 1977 and 1982), addressed the Board regarding concerns related to the Morton College Foundation.

- A \$10,000 donation made to the Morton College Foundation for PTA scholarships that had not yet been distributed.
- Communication concerns related to Foundation operations.

Mr. Jelen expressed disappointment regarding the lack of communication and the delay in distributing scholarship funds, particularly given that the scholarship was established in honor of his sister. He requested clarification and resolution of the matter

The Board Chair clarified that the Morton College Foundation operates as a separate 501(c)(3) entity independent of the College and the Board of Trustees. The Chair acknowledged Mr. Jelen's concerns and expressed appreciation for bringing the matter to the Board's attention.

John Marbes (former Foundation board member) spoke regarding:

- His long-term involvement with the Morton College Foundation.
- Support for efforts to sustain and strengthen the Foundation.
- Encouragement to continue fundraising and organizational improvements.

Mr. Marbes requested the Board's general support in encouraging transparency and revitalization efforts related to the Foundation.

The Chair thanked all speakers for their comments.

No further public comments were made.

26. Adjournment

Trustee Martinucci made a motion to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Trustee Collazo seconded the motion.

Ayes: Trustees, Cannata, Collazo, Hernandez, Martinucci, Montiel, and Reitz

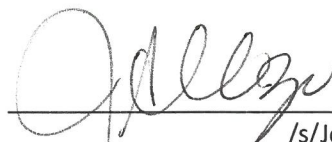
Nays: None

Absent: Grazzini

Motion Carried



/s/ Leonard Cannata,
Board Chair



/s/ Jose Collozo
Secretary