

MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING OPEN SESSION  
Legislative Breakfast  
Thursday, April 12, 2012



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Evelyn Phillips called the meeting to order at 7:55 a.m., at TPC Deere Run, Silvis, Illinois.

**II. Roll Call**

Present: Trustees Evelyn Phillips, John T. Ahern, Dorothy W. Beck, Donna M. Frye, David L. Emerick, Jr., Sonia Berg

Absent: Trustee Mike Boland

Others Present:

President Thomas Baynum, Vice Presidents Leslie Anderson, Chanda R. Dowell, Michael R. Phillips. Dr. Richard Vallandingham; Executive Assistant to the President Karen Mowers

Legislative Guests: Sen. Darin LaHood, Rep. Don Moffitt, Rep. Pat Verschoore, Rep. Rich Morthland

**III. Welcome and Introductions**

Dr. Baynum had everyone at the table go around and introduce themselves. The legislators thanked the board for hosting this breakfast and letting them know what issues are of interest to the College. They also thanked Dr. Baynum for the quality education that BHC provides.

Dr. Baynum shared some introductory comments:

- a) BHC serves about 13,000 students per year
- b) 6,500 per fall & spring and additional students in summer and off site locations
- c) 18% - 20% of students are in developmental courses and 45 % of the students are male, 55% are female, 28% are minority students
- d) BHC has an impact on the community by addressing business and industry needs
- e) BHC has a high retention rate for a community college: 69% between fall and spring that finish the semester successfully.
- f) 19 – 20% of students will come through the door and leave with a degree. 25% of our students transfer and with WIU in the area, we will see that

rise. A public university that is affordable will make a difference. 700 students graduated with a certificate or AA from BHC last year.

An issue that sparked this meeting is that BHC and all community colleges are in an interesting situation with the budget in Illinois, and we are looking at how to get money to the community colleges. Some of the state leaders met with the ICCTA leaders and the Illinois Community College President's Council and held a spirited conversation. Multiple solutions are being explored.

The state employer of record for Black Hawk College, the State of Illinois, reported that SURS employee match is at 12.4% which is \$2.5 million for the college. If the burden to fund this was put back on the students, based on the historical data, it would mean that each student would have to pay an additional \$21 per credit hour to make up that difference. That would deny access to college for many students even those with PELL grants and loans. There was also a discussion about the impact that would be made if funding came from property taxes. We are hoping that if this is going to be put back on the colleges to fund, that it can be transitioned slowly. We recognize that the state needs the funding to keep moving forward.

The College and the Board of Trustees wants to help support the State, but we also have some new programs that are coming forward that will be maintained by student tuition and fees and are put in place in the beginning by institutional funds. The message of the college is that we want to maintain the support at the level we are promised.

The college is currently at \$95 per credit hour, and if the amount had to be raised, it would mean fewer students, possibly longer to complete a degree, and fewer classes. We have challenges to students getting MAP grants now because of the closing date of funding application. BHC is trying to be more successful with our student financial aid and we have had several events that are specifically designed to help our students and their families get more funding help.

BHC raised tuition this year and overall the students are in support of this. We raised tuition by \$6 and tech fee by \$3.

## **VI. Discussion**

Rep. Pat Verschoore – The pension plan by the state has been discussed for colleges and K-12 districts. Legislators can't raise property taxes in the state, and the taxes in this part of the state are already the highest paid anywhere in the state. It is a problem that has to be addressed but no one has any answers right now. The stakeholders (citizens) have to have a part in this.

Rep. Rich Morthland – He thanked Rep. Verschoore for taking leadership in this area in the state because it is really hard to do, and he is working to get some compromises.

Rep. Don Moffitt – The stakeholders must have a stake in this and even though some answers have gone to the governor, they have been turned down because of the way it was done.

Dr. Baynum – BHC has a strong faculty and some are coming here from out of state and are asking why it is being done this way. There is a fear about retirement benefits in the future at a time when BHC is losing 34 faculty/staff members with a combined 778 years of institutional history. They are afraid of what is going to be happening and it is an issue for the stability of institutions. Employees may be leaving earlier than they would have because of this fear. The good thing is that we do have people applying because they know the quality that we have at BHC.

Rep. Don Moffitt– Fewer students are going into education majors because of the mess in the system right now, and with the budget adopted this spring, they can fully fund for at least the next two years. The State of Illinois has a budget problem but some of the doomsday stories being told are based on the assumption that everyone will retire at the same time and break the system. This has caused some fear. There is a problem and we do need to address it. We have never had everyone retire in the same year but we do have a problem, and we are admitting it, and we are going for a solution.

Rep. Pat Verschoore – This problem didn't just happen. It has been building up for 40 years because the state didn't fund the pension fund enough.

Rep. Rich Morthland – He thanked the Trustees for having Senator LaHood and Rep. Moffitt at the breakfast because they represent a large area where we draw students for BHC. The impending retirement of Dr. Campbell speaks volume about her confidence in Dr. Baynum.

It is good to have open enrollment at a community college but it also affects the graduation rate. If we are talking about pension funding, it will have more power when we have to take care of it ourselves, but the state will work on finding a solution.

Last year, when Illinois had to have a balanced budget, they did it by not paying Medicaid payments and now they have to be made up. The Human Services Department divided up the pot of money they had and if they had done it correctly in the past, we wouldn't be having these discussions now. The pot was divided equally in the past for five years and that may not have been the best way to do it. The good news is that the House Higher Education Appropriations Committee knows that community colleges are the best bargain in education.

Sen. Darin LaHood – The Senator introduced himself and gave some background. He lived in East Moline for ten years and his mom was a BHC graduate so BHC is part of his life. When Caterpillar talked about leaving Illinois, it crystallized the fact that we can no longer take care of just ourselves, we must deal with the rest of the country. We must also deal with education as well as business. Many of the calls that come to Senator LaHood's office are from agencies that need to get paid by the State. We have the worst

payment system in the country. Three financial rating systems downgraded Illinois because we don't have a way to tackle our financial issues and get them solved. The bipartisan groups working together will solve the crisis, but it will take some hard work and sacrifices. Over the last ten years, Illinois has had two governors in prison and has made many bad business decisions. It will take a little bit of time to get out of debt. How we get out of debt without cutting services and not going too far one way or the other is what we are faced with in the next six weeks in session.

Dr. Baynum – BHC is also looking at how we can prepare ourselves for this problem.

Chanda Dowell – What can BHC do to prepare?

Sen. Darin LaHood - Whatever the State of Illinois does will be phased in and everyone will be told ahead of time so that they can prepare in a tiered approach. People can prepare if given time. The state is hoping to learn from the mistakes of others.

Rep. Don Moffitt – We need to work with our organization and play our “chips.” Look at what we, as an institution, have that we can offer and ask for some exemptions on things.

Rep. Pat Verschoore – People want to have it gradually changed and work with it that way. That way they know what to expect and how to prepare.

Chanda Dowell – Depending on what our peers do, we have to stay within the state formula so we are not undercutting them. If we raise our tuition, we affect our people more. The formula is for tuition setting based on other local community colleges.

Rep. Rich Morthland – BHC students pay 42% of their own costs. In theory, they pay 1/3 but we have a smaller amount so it is higher.

Leslie Anderson - Our property taxes are as high as they can be right now.

Trustee John Ahern – We are not playing on a level playing field with the private colleges and some of the others. They are able to get money in ways that we can't.

Rep. Rich Morthland – It is unfair to say we (State of Illinois) won't give more money but colleges must increase their tuition, raise graduation rates, and must have open enrollment. The Higher Education Committee is a friend of community colleges.

Dr. Baynum – BHC is getting more challenged students for many reasons and we have to bridge them from Adult Basic Ed to a community college program but they need additional resources to be successful such as tutoring and counseling. Not all students come to us from the top 10% of their classes and that is the mission of the community college: to bring them in and pull them up by their boot straps to get them through.

Rep. Rich Morthland – We are ethnically diverse and we have to work with all students.  
The expansion and advancements are great at BHC.

Rep. Don Moffitt – He didn't realize that BHC tuition is tied to other community colleges  
and that we needed permission to do a tax levy.

Motion to close Trustee Berg made motion, Trustee Emerick second.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51

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Evelyn L. Phillips, Chair  
Board of Trustees

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David L. Emerick, Jr., Secretary  
Board of Trustees