

**Approved Minutes of the Regular Meeting**  
**Alpena Community College Board of Trustees**  
Thursday, December 19, 2024  
665 Johnson Street, Alpena, MI 49707

On Thursday, December 19, 2024, the Alpena Community College Board of Trustees held its regular monthly meeting in the Roger C. Bauer Board Room, 400 Natural Resources Center. The meeting was brought to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair John Briggs.

Trustees present in person: John Briggs, Teresa Duncan, Joseph Gentry II, Lisa Hilberg, Susan Stender, Florence Stibitz, and Tom Townsend. Absent trustees: none.

Also present in person: ACC President Dr. Don MacMaster and Board Secretary Denis “Jay” Walterreit.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Trustee Stender led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

Trustee Townsend made the motion to approve the agenda as presented; Trustee Stibitz seconded the motion. Ayes: 7. Nays: 0. Motion approved.

**Approval of the Proposed Minutes of the November 21 2024, Regular Board Meeting**

Trustee Gentry made the motion to approve the proposed minutes of the November 21, 2024, regular meeting; Trustee Stibitz seconded the motion. Ayes: 7. Nays: 0. Motion approved.

**Introduction of Guests and Public Comment**

Guests attending the meeting in person were: Alpena County Deputy Mike Lash; Dr. Paige Gordier, ACC administration; Dr. Nick Brege, ACC administration; Wesley Repke, ACC faculty; Abigail Platt, ACC student; Alec Fairchild, ACC student; Jeff Blumenthal, ACC staff; Tom Sobek, ACC administration; Doug Mayo, ACC faculty; Angela Soltysiak, ACC faculty; Christy Wiltse, ACC staff; Rob Heeke, Solscient Energy; and Nicole Hatch.

Guests attending the meeting via Webex were: Bob Tosch, community member; Matt Longthorne, Solscient Energy; Arthur Longthorne, Solscient Energy; Granger Souder, Solscient Energy; and Ryan Fairchild, ACC faculty.

Rob Heeke delivered public comments in person; Bob Tosch delivered public comments via Webex.

**Communication(s)**

None.

## **Board Member and Subcommittee Reports**

Trustee Duncan reported on recent activities related to the ACC Foundation:

- Lunch with the President — The ACC Foundation hosted its quarterly “Lunch with the President” on December 11. ACC Foundation trustee Ken Dragiewicz served as the host with a total of 23 community leaders in attendance.
- The ACC Foundation Ad-Hoc Fundraising Committee met several times in November to begin formulating and strategizing a long-range fundraising plan.
- Giving Tuesday Update — A total of 60 nonprofit organizations participated in the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan’s December 3 Giving Tuesday. The ACC Foundation had a total of 39 donors who generated a total of \$10,850 in support for the John Berg Student Assistance Fund.
- Joint Board Retreat — January 31 at the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The time has not been finalized yet, but let’s say for now 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. More details will be forthcoming.

## **Faculty Report**

Nursing instructors Doug Mayo and Angela Soltysiak gave a PowerPoint presentation about recent activities in the Nursing Department.

## **Student Report**

Students Alec Fairchild and Abby Platt attended the meeting in support of the solar array bid action item. They spoke to the trustees about their experiences with the bid evaluation process during the action item portion of the meeting.

## **President’s Report**

President’s Report to the Alpena Community College Board of Trustees  
December 19, 2024

### Alpena Community College Hosts Iosco RESA Adult Education

ACC began hosting adult education beginning in Fall Semester 2024. Director Nichole Hatch is here tonight to talk about how this partnership is going and to also talk about IGNITE (Inmate Growth Naturally and Intentionally Through Education), a national initiative to help jails replicate a program created by Genesee County Sheriff Christopher Swanson. Alpena County Sheriff Erik Smith and Director Hatch recently announced they were bringing IGNITE to the Alpena County jail, the third county in Michigan to bring IGNITE to local inmates.

Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee and Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Updates

Dr. Nick Brege, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Dr. Paige Gordier, Vice President for Instruction, share leadership for the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee and both are also members of the Accreditation Steering Committee led by Dean of Workforce Development Dawn Stone. Dr. Brege and Dr. Gordier are here tonight to provide an update on the SPBC and accreditation. The 10-year re-accreditation cycle for ACC culminates in 2027.

Followings is a summary of Dr. Brege’s report to the trustees:

**Higher Learning Commission and Strategic Planning and Budgeting Update**

In preparation for the Higher Learning Commission re-accreditation cycle and as part of the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee process, Alpena Community College employees have engaged in a dialogue to collectively examine strengths and opportunities for the College. Throughout the Fall 2024 semester, ACC employees have been actively participating in discussions to identify, prioritize, and improve key areas of the College’s strategic plan.

As part of our annual start-up process, all College staff and faculty were introduced to the accreditation criteria and invited to join a criterion team of their choice. Each team brainstormed strategies to demonstrate proficiency in their assigned criterion and identified areas for improvement, reflecting HLC’s emphasis on “continuous improvement.”

A review of the session minutes revealed recurring themes, with communication being the most commonly highlighted area for growth.

To gather more insights, Dawn Stone distributed a staff survey to collect ideas and input on ways to enhance communication. While the responses varied widely, they provide valuable perspectives for committees and staff to consider moving forward.

One positive and unforeseen outcome of this initiative is an increased focus on clear and thorough communication across teams. For example:

- Additional newsletters and updates are now being shared with all staff.
- Committee discussions have increasingly prioritized raising awareness about campus events, activities, and other initiatives.

The SPBC has also embedded communication improvements into multiple focus areas. Additionally, an informal ad hoc committee has met to explore tactics for creating a shared, accessible, and user-friendly communication platform.

While progress has been made, work remains to identify a platform that effectively minimizes duplication of effort while meeting the needs of all users.

#### Alpena Community College Receives Consultation Education and Training (CET) Grant

Alpena Community College (ACC) is one of 18 nonprofit organizations and labor unions across Michigan receiving a state grant to improve workplace safety and health.

The awards through the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) will be used to develop and implement safety and health training programs for small and medium-sized employers and organizations.

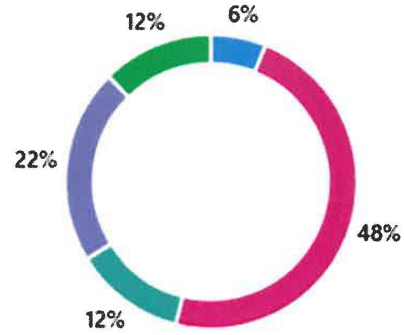
ACC will use its \$65,000 grant to provide safety and health training throughout Northeast Michigan in the healthcare, construction, manufacturing, forestry, and logging industries. Kudos to Dean of Workforce Development Dawn Stone and Assistant Lisa Blumenthal for their focus on workplace safety.

Results of the SPBC communications survey conducted during Fall Semester 2024.

**Response Overview**

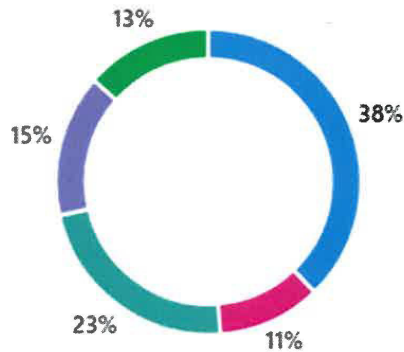
1. How effective do you find the current communication channels (e.g., email, meetings, newsletters) used within the college?

● Very effective	4
● Somewhat effective	31
● Neither effective nor ineffective	8
● Somewhat ineffective	14
● Very ineffective	8



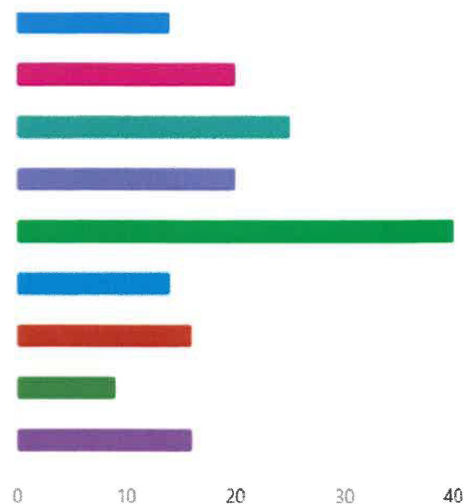
2. What are the primary challenges you see with communication amongst colleagues, administrators, or students? (Choose all that apply)

● Lack of timely information	45
● Too much information at once	13
● Inconsistent messaging	27
● Lack of clarity in communication	18
● Other	16



3. What would GREAT communication look like to you? Be specific and actionable! (Choose all that apply)

● Weekly newsletters	14
● Monthly newsletters	20
● Accurate and up to date website calendar	25
● Internal shared calendar	20
● Increased frequency of email updates on college-wide initiatives and changes	40
● A streamlined communication channel (Slack, Microsoft Teams, Private Facebook Group, etc.)	14
● Monthly all-staff meetings	16
● Virtual suggestion box	9
● Other	16



Iosco RESA Adult Education Director Nicole Hatch spoke to the trustees about the history of the Adult Education program, how it came to be housed at ACC, and her experiences helping educate inmates at the Alpena County Jail.

Vice President of Administration and Finance Dr. Nick Brege addressed the Trustees and provided details in addition to his written report. He also pointed out the survey results included in the written President's Report which focused on communication within the College.

Vice President of Instruction Dr. Paige Gordier then spoke to the trustees about recent activities related to the ongoing Higher Learning Commission re-accreditation process. She said four groups had met throughout Fall Semester to identify evidence that could be used in the final report ACC will submit to the HLC. Gordier also noted how the Board of Trustees will be involved in the HLC process.

### **Action Items**

#### 2.925 Bids: Installation of Six-Acre Solar Array

The following resolution was proposed by Trustee Townsend and seconded by Trustee Duncan:

The Alpena Community College Board of Trustees approves Harvest Solar of Jackson, Michigan, as solar contractor at a cost not to exceed \$3,381,345.

After discussion related to the bid process and gathering feedback from the trustees, Chair Briggs called for a roll-call vote.

Briggs: Aye  
Duncan: Aye  
Gentry: Aye  
Hilberg: Aye

Stender: Aye  
Stibitz: Aye  
Townsend: Aye

Ayes: 7. Nays: 0. Motion approved.

### **Financial Report**

Monthly General Fund Revenue and Expense through November 2024 (Year-to-Year Actual Comparison)

- The property tax receipts of \$697,275 are \$32,159 more than those for November 2023.
- Tuition/fee receipts of \$6,183,421 are \$830,160 more than last year primarily due to an increase in the number of billable contact hours.
- State aid for the current year is \$1,412,580 and is \$35,275 more than November 2023.
- Interest is higher this year compared to last year because of the way the College invests its funds. We are now taking full advantage of the higher rates available through certificates and interest-bearing savings accounts.
- Instructional expenses are up due to contractual wage rate adjustments, the timing of hire for new faculty, and because there have been nine payrolls paid to date in the current fiscal year compared to eight for this time last year.

- Student Services is up primarily due to contractual wage rate adjustments, an additional payroll period, and athletic waivers.
- Institutional Administration is up primarily due to an additional payroll period this year compared to last year. Likewise, there is an increase in year-over-year insurance costs.
- Physical plant is up slightly compared to this time last year due to the timing of campus security contract payments and upgrades to building automation systems.
- Net income through the first five months of the year shows as a gain of \$1,290,678 which is typical for this time of year as spring tuition revenue is built up.

Monthly General Fund Revenue and Expense through November 2024 (Budget-to-Actual Comparison)

- Spending for supplies is on track for the current year. The current year budget for supplies expenses includes the cost of nursing supply packages, which was an unbudgeted expense last year.
- All other categories are in acceptable ranges for this stage of the year except as noted above.

General Fund Month-to-Month Comparison through November 2024

- Salaries and fringe benefits are higher due to having three payroll pay dates in November.
- Outside services reflects the Ellucian contract payment in the month of November.
- All other Month-to-Month comparisons are tracking as expected except as noted above.

**Personnel Report**

New hires, terminations, and status changes from November 5 to December 5, 2024.

New Hires:

- Michael Tulgestke, Women’s Softball Assistant Coach, effective 11/06/2024.
- Thomas Sobeck, Director of RE-EIED Grant, effective 11/15/2024.
- Jeff Blumenthal, Assistant to the Director of RE-EIED Grant, effective 12/03/2024.

Re-Hires:

- None.

Transfers:

- None.

Resignations:

- None.

Terminations:

- None.

Inactive:

- None.

Retirements:

- None.

Name Changes:

- None.

Position Name Changes:

- None.

**Gifts and Grants Report**

This report reflects the following activity for pledges and gifts received by the ACC Foundation between November 15 and December 9, 2024.

<b>Total Donors:</b>	<b>69</b>
New Gifts:	\$53,147.87
Pledge Payments:	\$0.00
New Pledges:	\$0.00

**Board Discussion**

Trustee Townsend asked Secretary Walterreit to keep the ACC trustees updated on developments related to the joint board meeting on January 31, 2025.

Trustee Hilberg added a comment about the discussion on the bidding process for the solar array action item. She expressed a desire to support ACC employees, and also wondered if there was a way to share more information with the trustees to help them better understand complicated projects like the solar array. All of the trustees expressed support for the ACC employees and students involved in the bid evaluation process. President MacMaster then discussed more details of the project and factors that affected the bid evaluations.

**New Business**

None.

**Suggested Future Agenda Items**

None.



### **Next Regular Meeting**

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 16, 2025. The meeting is scheduled to be held in Room 400 of the Charles R. Donnelly Natural Resources Center. Virtual attendance will be available through Webex. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Please note: the ACC Board of Trustees will participate in a joint meeting with the Alpena Community College Foundation board on Friday, January 31, 2025; that meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary building at 500 W. Fletcher Street, Alpena, MI 49707. The meeting time has not been set yet.

### **Adjournment**

The regular meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by  
Denis J. Walterreit,  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees  
(989) 358-7215