

Mountain Gateway Community College
1000 College Drive
Clifton Forge, VA 24422

Local Board Meeting Minutes
Minutes Number 296

The Mountain Gateway Community College Local Board held its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, September 8, 2025, at Mountain Gateway Community College's Karin Ellis Board Room in Backels Hall on the main campus in Clifton Forge, VA.

The following members participated:

Marylin Alexander	City of Lexington
Ingrid Barber	Alleghany County
Jason Coleman	Rockbridge County
Sue Hirsh	Bath County
Jerry Morgan	City of Covington
Tony McFaddin	Rockbridge County
Joan Vannorsdall	Alleghany County

The following members were unable to attend:

David Crosier	City of Covington
Dr. Byron Honore	City of Buena Vista

Members of the College administration and staff in attendance:

Angie Graham	Vice President for Financial and Administrative Services
Suzanne Ostling	Associate Vice President of Student Affairs
Dr. Matt McGraw	Chief Workforce Officer
Dr. Ben Worth	Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. John Rainone	President
Lisa Hicks	Recording Clerk, Executive Assistant to the President

1. Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm by Ms. Alexander, MGCC Local Board Chairperson, with a quorum of members present.

Following the opening of the meeting, Ms. Alexander informed the Local Board of the appointment of Dr. Byron Honore representing the City of Buena Vista.

2. Approval of May 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the May 19, 2025, meeting were approved with one correction to the spelling of Dr. Rainone's name on page 7.

Mr. Hirsh made the following motion:

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

Ms. Barber seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

3. Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

4. President's Report

a. Approval of the Local Board/President's Budget for FY2025-2026

Dr. Rainone presented the Local Board/President's budget for 2025-2026. The budget reflects items that cannot be paid for by the state, including food, excess hotel expenses, contributions to organizational campaigns, some professional development and faculty-related expenses, etc.

This item was tabled from the May 19, 2025 meeting.

Ms. Vannorsdall made the following motion:

TO APPROVE THE LOCAL BOARD/PRESIDENT'S BUDGET FOR FY2025-2026.

Mr. McFaddin seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

b. Approval of the 2025-2026 Slate of Officers

The proposed slate of officers for 2025-2026 was presented. The recommendations included:

- Chairperson—Sue Hirsh (Bath County)
- Vice Chairperson—Ingrid Barber (Alleghany County)
- Immediate Past Chairperson—Marylin Alexander (City of Lexington)
- Secretary—Dr. John Rainone (MGCC)

This item was tabled from the May 19, 2025 meeting.

Ms. Vannorsdall made the following motion:

TO APPROVE THE SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026 AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Coleman seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Following the approval of the 2025-2026 slate of offers, Ms. Alexander passed the gavel to Ms. Hirsh who presided over the remainder of the meeting.

College Updates

Dr. Rainone opened the floor to allow members of the Executive Team to address the Local Board directly and provide updates on their respective areas.

c. Student Services

Ms. Ostling provided an update on MGCC Student Services. She reported that all MGCC student enrollment statistics have increased from last year. To date, MGCC currently has 1,022 students enrolled and is at 8,700 credits. The College is up 60 FTEs. She attributes much of the increased enrollment numbers to the work of the Career Coach positions in the local high schools, as well as the efforts of other Student Services staff in reaching out and connecting with local high school students. Beginning last year, Student Services staff registered all high school students preparing to attend MGCC with a full schedule rather than a part-time schedule of classes. This was well received by students and has helped increase enrollment numbers for the Fall 2025 semester. She also noted that the push by the MGCC PR and Marketing Coordinator significantly help spread the word about what MGCC has to offer.

Ms. Ostling let the Local Board know that a new Career Coach will begin this Fall at Rockbridge County High School, and that the Career Coach position at James River High School will now be part-time. She also noted that the former Career Coach at Rockbridge County High School has moved and is now serving Alleghany High School and Bath County High School.

d. Finance and Administration

Ms. Graham gave the Local Board an update on revisions to the MGCC Facilities Master Plan. She noted that the plan is a requirement of SACSCOC, and that she would be submitting the revised plan to VCCS for review and approval. Thanks to the work of Mike Hendrickson and Lisa Hicks on this project.

Ms. Vannorsdall made the following motion:

TO APPROVE THE REVISED MGCC FACILITIES MASTER PLAN AS PRESENTED.

Ms. Alexander seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Ms. Graham provided a detailed review of the FY2025 Local Funds financial statements ending June 30, 2025. She noted that local funds continued to diminish due to a decline in support from the localities, and that the college continues to navigate the reduction in funds.

Ms. Barber made the following motion:

TO APPROVE THE FY2025 LOCAL FUNDS FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED.

Ms. Alexander seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

e. Academic Affairs

Dr. Ben Worth updated the Local Board on MGCC's National Center for Inquiry and Improvement (NCII) Rural Guided Pathways initiatives currently being developed and delivered. These priorities include:

1. Creating workforce and academic pathways to help facilitate transitions from short-term training into credit courses. Dr. Worth noted that there are a number of NCCER courses being conducted on campus, as well as being offered to several high schools in our service area creating a conduit into additional training on campus. MGCC is also working on adding a National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) component in industry-based credit courses. An example of which is MGCC's electrical and instrumentation degree.
2. Aligning credentials for high school students by providing access to the Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS). The UCGS is a 30-credit hour certificate that transfers to all public and many private institutions in Virginia. The UCGS is provided at no cost to students and flows directly into the Transfer Virginia program to streamline the process of moving credentials and associates degrees on to four-year institutions. Pathways are being created for CTE students. Dr. Worth highlighted the work the MGCC welding program is doing to assist students in receiving career studies certificates at our local Career and Technical Centers and then moving on to MGCC to earn a full degree. He noted that other CTE opportunities are being explored. MGCC offers two onsite programs specifically designed for high school students, including the MG-TEC Lab School and the Jackson River Governor's School. Dr. Worth hopes to continue to build these programs and provide a way for these students to graduate high school with an associate's degree from MGCC. The College continues to explore other program development opportunities.
3. Moving all credit classes to 8-week sessions as the primary mode of delivery for most MGCC programs. This move will help with student retention, access, and improve use of financial aid. Faculty are currently working on crafting lessons and delivery methods to successfully accommodate this change. MG-TEC Lab School, Jackson River Governor's School, and students currently working to complete a UCGS will remain on a traditional 16-week semester-based learning schedule.

Dr. Worth presented the MGCC Local Board with 2025-2026 Advisory Committee Members for the following programs:

- Administration of Justice
- Business Management
- Early Childhood Development
- Electrical and Instrumentation Technology

- Forest Management Technology
- Information Systems Technology
- Nursing
- Welding Technologies

Ms. Alexander made the following motion:

TO APPROVE THE 2025-2026 MGCC ADVISORY COMMITTEES AS PRESENTED.

Mr. McFaddin seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

f. Institutional Advancement and MGCC Educational Foundation

Dr. Rainone noted that Bruce Loving is currently serving as Interim Executive Director for the Foundation. The MGCC Educational Foundation Board of Directors hopes to have the Executive Director's position filled by early October. The Foundation is currently gearing up for the Bubbles, Bands, and Brunch fundraising event scheduled for September 28th. This year's theme is a Hawaiian luau. He also announced that the upcoming Donor Scholar's reception is scheduled for November 7th.

g. Human Resources

Dr. Rainone reviewed the personnel report. The report noted open positions at the college, as well as recent hires.

h. Workforce

Dr. Matt McGraw reviewed new career studies certificates in diesel mechanic, machine operator, millwright, and transportation and logistics. Dr. McGraw noted that the machine operator and millwright programs lean heavily on NCCER curriculum, and that the machine operator program will be conducted in partnership with JRTC and be a dual enrollment opportunity for students. The machine operator program will also be offered in the evenings at JRTC targeted to the adult learner population. The diesel mechanic program was developed to offer an Auto Service Excellence (ASE) certification and will be taught primarily at the Rockbridge Regional Center. Plans are being made to replicate the equipment and set-up on the main campus. The transportation and logistics program grew out of NCII initiatives to create a direct pathway from MGCC's CDL program to an associate's degree opportunity for students.

Mr. McFaddin made the following motion:

TO APPROVE THE NEW CAREER STUDIES CERTIFICATES AS PRESENTED.

Ms. Alexander seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Dr. McGraw reviewed his Fullbright Specialist Grant trip to Sri Lanka from July. During his time there, he worked with a local institute of higher learning to help create a strategic plan to transition the institute into a university.

He distributed a flyer about the upcoming MGCC study abroad program. The trip to London and Paris will take place in the summer of 2026.

Dr. McGraw noted that MGCC apprenticeship programs are growing with the new cohort groups beginning this semester with Smurfit Westrock, RL Johnston, and Modine.

i. MGCC Real Estate Foundation

Dr. Rainone updated the Local Board on the progress of the 18-acre tract of land currently being considered by the VCCS for transfer from the College to the MGCC Real Estate Foundation. Due to a change in the review process at the State level, MGCC's request is on hold. Dr. Rainone estimates that the earliest MGCC's request will be evaluated is November 2025.

j. Review and Approval of 2025-2026 Institutional Goals

The MGCC Local Board reviewed the 2025-2026 President's and Institutional Goals.

Mr. McFaddin made the following motion:

TO APPROVE THE 2025-2026 INSTITUTIONAL GOALS AS PRESENTED.

Ms. Barber seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

k. Strategic Enrollment Management Plan

Dr. Rainone updated the Local Board on the VCCS mandated strategic enrollment management plan that is currently being conducted at MGCC. The effort is being led by Dr. Jan Gullickson, recently retired President of Germana Community College. Dr. Gullickson is currently meeting with faculty and staff to craft a plan to increase enrollment over the next three (3) years.

5. College Review and Plans for 2025-2026—Dr. John Rainone

Dr. Rainone reviewed with the MGCC Local Board the 2025-2026 plans for the college. These include:

- Adopting and putting into motion the VCCS Institutional Priorities, Chancellor's Goals, and VCCS *Accelerate Opportunity* strategic plan, including:
 - Increasing the percentage of FastForward completers to 90%.
 - Increasing the annual number of working-age adults.
 - Increasing the number of FT faculty engaged in professional development to at least 50%.
 - Ensuring that all courses required by Passport and UCGS will be available online asynchronously every semester.
 - Ensuring that all front-line staff will participate in at least one professional development opportunity on financial resources.
- Review of VCCS's *One System* principles and goals, including:
 - Creating consistent dual enrollment experiences and pricing.

- Creating consistent adult learner experiences by developing faculty on andragogy.
- Establishing consistent approach to campus safety and emergency preparedness.
- Providing a single budgeting system from the VCCS.
- Implementation of 2025-2026 key initiatives, including:
 - Launch of the MG-TEC lab school.
 - Focus on NCII Rural Pathways project.
 - Expansion of dual enrollment with UCGS and degrees.
 - Development of a 3-year enrollment management plan.
 - Continued focus on recruiting adult learners.
 - Expanding a culture of care of students and staff across MGCC's campuses.

Discussion continued with Dr. Rainone reviewing the most recent Great Colleges to Work For survey reflecting employee satisfaction with MGCC's workplace environment, employee well-being, supervision, etc. He noted that these results have been very positive.

Dr. Rainone reviewed the updated enrollment data. He noted that in FY25-26, dual enrollment constituted the highest percentage at 51%. He also explained the "credit model" of direct VCCS funding which excludes funding for workforce/FastForward students. Dr. Rainone provided a percentage breakdown of where our students come from in our service area. He noted that most of the college's current students come from Rockbridge County.

The hope to expand the MGCC footprint into all the college's service area was discussed noting the success of the Joe Wilson Workforce Center in Buena Vista.

6. Chair's Report

Ms. Hirsh praised the VCCS Chancellor's Retreat held in Augst 2025 at the Hotel Roanoke. She noted that it was a wonderful learning experience and provided an opportunity to meet with other VCCS colleges and colleagues. She encouraged other Local Board members to attend in 2026.

7. New Business

a. Upcoming MGCC Local Board Meeting Dates:

- Monday, December 1, 2025—Main Campus—Clifton Forge
- Monday, March 9, 2026—Rockbridge Regional Center—Buena Vista
- Monday, May 11, 2026—Main Campus—Clifton Forge

8. Information Items

A copy of *MGCC In the News* was provided to Local Board Members before the meeting.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business,

Ms. Vannorsdall made the following motion:

TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

Ms. Alexander seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:43 pm.

Signatures for approval of the meeting minutes:

Ms. Sue Hirsh, MGCC Local Board Chairperson

Dr. John Rainone, Secretary to the Board

Attachments: Approved Minutes #295; September 8, 2025, Board Meeting Agenda; Proposed President's Budget for 2025-2026; MGCC Local Board Slate of Officers for 2025-2026; 2025 MGCC Facilities Master Plan; FY2025 Local Funds Fiscal Statements; 2025-2026 MGCC Advisory Committees; August 2025 MGCC HR Report; Proposed MGCC Skilled Trades Career Studies Certificates; 2025-2026 Institutional Goals; *MGCC In the News* (May-August 2025).