



**PALO VERDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

SPECIAL MEETING/STUDY SESSION

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

Open Session 4:00 p.m.

One College Drive, Blythe, CA – CS 209

(Livestream held at PVC Needles Center, 725 W. Broadway, Needles, CA)

1. Opening of Meeting

1.1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Board President Stella Styers.

1.2 Roll Call

Members Present: Stella C Styers, Gloria A Copple, Jon E McNeil, Brad E Arneson, Glenda K Williams, George W Thomas, Melina Rangel-Ruiz(Student Trustee)

Administrators Present: Dr. Bruce Moses, Superintendent/President, Clint Cowden, Asst. Supt./V.P. of Instruction and Student Services, Stephanie Slagan, Asst. Supt./V.P. of Administrative Services and College Advancement

Absent: Angel Ramirez

Note: In accordance with California Education Code, the Student Trustee's vote is advisory and does not count toward the final Board action.

1.3 Flag Salute

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1.4 Approval of Agenda

Approve the Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Brad E Arneson, second by Jon E McNeil.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Stella C Styers, Gloria A Copple, Jon E McNeil, Brad E Arneson, George W Thomas, Glenda K Williams

1.5 Announcement of Recusal From Agenda Items

No recusals were declared.

2. Hearing of Citizens on Agenda Items

2.1 Members of the public have this opportunity to directly address the Board on agenda items. Persons wishing to address the Governing Board under this item should fill out a Speaker Request Form available at the reception table. Each speaker will be allowed a maximum of five (5) minutes per topic. Fifteen (15) minutes shall be the maximum time allotment for public speakers on any one subject regardless of the number of speakers at any one board meeting.

Dr. Julien Sperling introduced himself as the faculty representative for Umoja, offering to provide clarification or faculty perspective on matters discussed. He shared that he has been involved with Umoja for two years, first serving as a co-coordinator and faculty practitioner, and noted that he has volunteered throughout his involvement. He invited Board members to direct questions to him as needed.

Helen Pouvi introduced herself as a proud Palo Verde College graduate and current student. She said, "I want to share my story tonight, because it speaks to why Umoja matters so deeply and why we cannot afford to lose it." She explained that with the support of mentors like Jaclyn Randall, Dr. Sperling, and the Umoja community, she not only achieved her academic goals but also found a family. "Umoja gave me my voice back. It gave me purpose and it gave me my life again."

Pouvi described coming to Palo Verde College as a single mother, escaping an abusive relationship and fighting for custody of her child. "I felt broken, scared, completely alone. Umoja became my safe space." She credited Umoja with guiding her academically, affirming her value, and creating opportunities that led to her acceptance at four universities.

She questioned the lack of communication from administration and asked, "Why has the Director of Student Services not even reached out to our regional coordinator to try to solve this issue?" She reminded the Board that "students should not have to pay the price for administrative silence." Pouvi emphasized that equity programs like Umoja are "life line support systems and our rights to equity." She concluded by urging the Board, "First Puente, now Umoja? How many cultural programs must students lose before listening? Call our regional coordinator, work with us, find a solution... because equity programs like Umoja are not just about fairness, they're about survival, success, and giving students like me a future."

Velma Miles, introduced herself and shared that she graduated from the Automotive program and found belonging through Umoja. She explained, "Umoja actually kind of, yeah, basically saved me, because during my freshman year... I finally found a place where I belonged."

Miles reflected on growing up attending Black history events and community activities, and said Umoja gave her the same sense of purpose and connection. "It's not just for African American kids. It's for everybody to say that we have a place where we can stay in, be ourself. No one would judge us... people see us for who we are."

She became emotional as she described the challenges of public speaking, admitting, "I suffer from anxiety and talking to people. I'm nervous, I'm shaking because... this is what I love to do. I love helping my community, giving back to them, telling little kids, talking to my siblings, my cousins... to tell them there is something better out there."

Miles emphasized that Umoja is about family and community, bringing together students from different cultures and backgrounds. She explained that through Umoja, students support one another and create lasting connections across campus. She concluded by saying that is why she came to speak: *"That's just what Umoja is — to bring the people together, to have the community to support us. And that's why I'm here."*

Alice Dean thanked the students, saying, "I love it, and I applaud you for the courage you took to come here today and write your signs." She reminded the Board that "we're here for the students... and for all the students that will come after them." Dean explained that she has served Needles students and spoke from her direct experience with the Needles community. She said, "Needles is a special community... it deserves the same access to educational opportunities. The Needles Center must remain open."

Reflecting on its transformation, she stated, "When I first began visiting the center, it was quiet, almost lifeless. Students were not present, and there were no activities to draw them in. But today, the Center tells us a very different story. It has transformed into a vibrant, thriving hub." She emphasized that students are now "attending classes, engaging in activities, fundraising and, most importantly, supporting one another in their academic and personal journeys."

Dean urged the Board to honor the generosity of the Claypool family and the taxpayers who supported the bond that made the center possible, warning that "closing the center would signal... their sacrifice and investment were not valued. That would be unacceptable." She highlighted partnerships the Center has built with IEHP, San Bernardino County, and local leaders, saying these connections show the trust the community has placed in Palo Verde College. "To close the center now would break that trust."

She concluded by reminding the trustees, "Even if only one student were present, they would deserve the right to feel like a full member of this college, a Pirate, not an afterthought or an outcast. The choice before you is not just about a building, it is about equity, accountability, and honoring commitments made to the community that has stood by this college. Needles is part of Palo Verde College. Let's continue treating it that way by keeping the Center open and thriving."

Sharniece Collier introduced herself as the president of Umoja and echoed earlier comments about the program's impact. "Finding Umoja, it actually saved me," she said, explaining that she is a single mother of four. She shared that she has often struggled academically, but Umoja mentors like Dr. Sperling and Jaclyn Randall believed in her. "For her to believe in me and her showing us all these other colleges that are actually telling us... they're taking a chance on us, we're able to get accepted to colleges because of Umoja."

Collier expressed frustration at the potential loss of the program, stating, "You taking that away is basically telling us that you guys don't care about us, and you guys are giving up." She added that Umoja, like Puente, is not about just one culture but about family and inclusion. "It's all of us together. We all are family. And if you would take that away... it's just showing us that you really don't care about students like you said."

Omar Rangel-Lopez addressed the Board with what he called "great disappointment... that I am back here speaking again for students and fighting for the bare minimum that they at least deserve." He noted that "these students represent me and the rest of the student body of PVC more than I felt like the PVC administration has ever tried to."

Rangel-Lopez shared that programs like Umoja and Puente shaped his community college experience, provided support for transfer, and contributed to his acceptance at six of the eight universities where he applied. "Seeing UC Irvine last year with Puente... that is the university where I'll be attending next month." He emphasized that many PVC students view the college as a second chance, asking, "How can you give them the best second chance... if they can't participate in programs and extracurriculars that will benefit them?"

He criticized the college for claiming the status of a Hispanic-Serving Institution while discontinuing programs like Puente and planning to end Umoja, saying, "This is contradictory, and at this point, it feels performative. Put your money where your mouth is and start getting students the resources they need to be successful."

Rangel-Lopez stressed the importance of community, particularly for students of color and queer students of color: "We will always resist and fight for our community... do not continue to let us down." He urged the administration to improve communication with students, adding, "Stop letting students find out about programs disappearing due to the lack of announcement from administration... Please own up to your choices and let them be known, especially when they affect students so heavily like this."

Melina Rangel-Ruiz read a statement from James Lancaster, who identified himself as "a proud student at Palo Verde College and a participant in the Umoja program." Lancaster expressed his "deep concern about the potential closure of this program, which has been an invaluable part of my academic and personal growth."

He explained that Umoja had provided him with opportunities beyond the classroom, including touring community colleges and universities, connecting with community leaders and fellow scholars, and meeting mentors and peers who "truly have the best interests of Umoja students at heart." Lancaster emphasized that "what makes Umoja unique is that it does more than focus on African American students' educational experiences. It also builds a strong, inclusive community that welcomes and supports people of all ages, races, colors, sexual identities, and backgrounds."

He described Umoja as fostering unity, cultural awareness, and belonging, saying it empowered students to succeed academically and personally. "For me and many others, Umoja has been a source of encouragement, motivation, and pride. It represents an investment in the students of today who will become the leaders of tomorrow."

Lancaster urged the Board and administration to reconsider the closure, warning that eliminating the program would "take away vital resources and opportunities for current students, but also diminish the legacy of support and unity that Umoja has built on this campus." He concluded, "Division is not the answer. Supporting students and their success is."

Lillian Jones introduced herself and recalled her disappointment upon learning that Puente had been discontinued during her first year at Palo Verde College. "Then right after I learned that Umoja was gone, and I didn't feel like I was being received as a student who doesn't qualify for any of the programs here, and is also first generation." She explained that Umoja and Puente were the only programs providing her with transfer information and opportunities to go on trips. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be able to go to places like L.A. and to our Umoja conference there and learn so many things about transfer like a TAP account. I wouldn't have known that I need to make a TAP account if I didn't have Umoja with me."

As a Black student, Jones shared that she had never truly felt seen before Umoja. "I felt like everyone saw me as just a good student. I felt separated from my Black peers, and with Umoja I felt like I had a community with my Black side and my Black community for the first time." She expressed uncertainty about the future without the program, saying, "Now that this program is being taken away, I don't know where to go."

Jones urged the college to ensure that when Umoja returns, it is supported and well-run. "Please make sure that the program is running well, and make sure to check in with our administration or anyone working with Umoja. Please keep up the communication... because right now, student trust has been breached, and students are a big part of this community, and without their trust, there is no Palo Verde culture."

Gwendolyn Crawford introduced herself by saying, "I am a member of the community. I'm a parent, a student, a taxpayer, and it has been my honor to be a part of Palo Verde College." She noted that she has attended the college over the past 20 years and has "seen the great work that this college has done and its movement." She added, "Look

around you. You are at the top of the valley overlooking the city of Blythe, and the work you do here is instrumental in garnering our students and providing a future for them.”

She emphasized the importance of programs like Umoja, Puente, and the Needles Center, calling them “the connective tissue that allows our community to grow. It reaches into the schools, and it motivates our students to get an education and then to find the connection to college.”

Crawford reminded the Board that such opportunities don’t happen automatically, but through “clubs...charters, and with strong faculty that step in and lead the students.”

Crawford highlighted the success she has witnessed at PVC graduations, praising the Board and faculty: “I’m always very pleased at what you have produced. So if you have the right ingredients, don’t overlook what’s in the mix. Be very careful to recognize what you have built and what you continue to build. You have done a magnificent job in building this college up, and you’ve done it through your programs.”

She encouraged the trustees to value and protect these programs, stating, “Sometimes you have a special niche that you don’t even realize you have that’s working — don’t mess it up.”

Mayor Jan Jernigan addressed the Board, beginning with a question: “Do you have board meetings, actual physical board meetings here in Needles that our citizens can attend and speak our mind about your programs, what we’d like to see more beneficial to our city?”

After Board President Styers clarified that this was a public hearing and questions would not be answered at that time, Jernigan continued, “You don’t have to respond to my question, but I just want to put it out there... for our citizens to... be able to speak our concerns with you that we have a physical board meeting here.” She noted, “I know our school board here goes down to Chemehuevi. They travel down to Monument Peak, you know, so they’re in constant communication with their citizens and students and parents at those cities.”

Jernigan also raised concerns about the use of local taxpayer funds, stating, “The tax dollars that you have, that the citizens here in Needles have paid to you over the years, I don’t think we’ve gotten response back favorable.” She urged the Board to consider expanding offerings at the Needles Center, saying, “We need trade programs offered here at our school... just asking that you do take a better look here at Needles, what... we would like to see offered here in our community, for our students, students across the river, and our adults here that want to further their education.”

David LaBarre introduced himself as “a product of community colleges, 168 units, seven colleges, four of them are community colleges.” He said that background is “the reason why I’m here.” LaBarre explained that he was representing property owners and realtors in Needles, emphasizing that “they need the college to educate the students. If we’re going to grow this community, [it] must be with the college.”

He shared his experience with foundation work, noting that he had recently been appointed as a member of the Mojave College Scholarship Foundation and had previously served 10 years as chairman of the Contra Costa College Foundation, “raising millions of dollars for students.” LaBarre expressed strong support for the role of community colleges, stating, “Great affinity for making these colleges grow, I know the benefit they bring to the community. We must have college in this community.”

Wayne Colburn introduced himself as “a resident here of Needles and a very strong community activist.” Although he has only lived in Needles for three years, he said that in that time he has “watched the college here grow and become much stronger, to a point where it is [a] household word, household name.”

He stressed the importance of keeping the college in Needles, saying, “We need to keep it here because the fact it is community.” Pointing to the turnout at the meeting, Colburn noted, “You see how many people are sitting behind us right now... there’s still people up here you may not be able to see, and there’s people out in the hallway, that’s how many. That’s commitment we have to make sure that our voices are being heard.”

Colburn reminded the Board that the college is “vital to us as a community,” highlighting the graduations and events that bring residents together. He urged the trustees not to take any action that would cause the community to shrink, but instead to support growth, stating, “It’s going to grow because of the fact that we have this college here. This college is here to help our community become a stronger community. So we need you as the board to understand the importance and the validity we have here.”

Kathleen Rabanales shared her personal connection to Palo Verde College, recalling that she first attended in 2007 when classes were still held in portable units at the high school for the GED prep program. She explained that she came “from a long line of no college background” and that it wasn’t until she had a child and entered the Welfare to Work program in Needles that she was encouraged to pursue higher education. “I actually graduated from Palo Verde College in Needles back in 2012 and I drove out to Blythe to attend my graduation,” she said, noting that at the time the Claypool building had “next to nothing.”

Rabanales shared that she was part of EOPS and later secured a position with the county, working for Welfare to Work and promoting PVC. "A lot of people like myself back then didn't know what there is out there when you come from a long line of welfare recipients and we just get a paycheck and move on and have more kids. So, I'm living breathing proof that this program works in Needles." She went on to earn her bachelor's degree through NAU and now works in Adult Protective Services as a social worker.

She concluded by stressing the importance of the Needles Center, telling the Board, "We have little next to nothing in resources. Don't take this from us. Don't take this from us."

3. Presentations

3.1 TRIO Update

Ger Xiong, Dean of Student Services, provided a presentation on the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program, beginning with an overview that Palo Verde College operates two TRIO programs: TRIO Upward Bound, which serves high school students, and TRIO SSS, which supports college students. She reported that the continuation application for TRIO SSS was submitted in July 2024 for an estimated \$272,000 to serve at least 100 students annually. The application received a score of 111, two points below the cutoff of 113, and because it did not reach the 112-113 "funding band," the college is not eligible to appeal. As a result, the TRIO SSS program was not renewed for the next cycle.

She explained that the grant was reviewed by three federal evaluators. The application earned strong scores in categories such as plan of operations, evaluation, budget, and personnel, but received zero out of eight points in the "objectives" category. Trustees observed that reviewers concluded the college did not demonstrate persistence, graduation, transfer, or academic standing goals, and that "none of what we're doing was ambitious, attainable, or measurable." Dean Xiong confirmed that the reviewers' scoring sheet stated there was no clear baseline data provided to judge whether the objectives could be achieved. This was identified as the most significant factor in the program's non-renewal.

Trustees expressed concern that the program had fallen short by only two points and emphasized the need for stronger grant-writing support and more comprehensive baseline data in future applications. They also asked whether services could continue for the affected students until the next funding cycle. Dean Xiong noted that most of the TRIO SSS participants are also enrolled in DSPS, and the goal is to absorb them there if not already receiving those services. However, she clarified that while there are some similarities, DSPS and TRIO SSS are distinct programs, and not all services can be duplicated.

Trustees asked whether a formal plan had been developed to support the impacted students. Dean Xiong stated that planning is underway but in its early stages, emphasizing that the immediate priority has been to avoid reductions in staffing and to identify ways to sustain essential services while positioning the college for a stronger reapplication in 2026. She explained that TRIO SSS provided three primary services—academic counseling, career preparation, and enrichment activities such as university tours and conferences. Academic counseling will continue through DSPS, career preparation can be supported by the college's job specialists, and enrichment activities will be coordinated through other programs where possible.

Trustee McNeil specifically asked whether TRIO SSS students would still be able to attend field trips. Dean Xiong explained that this year the college plans to enhance the CSU transfer trip by requiring students to participate in preparatory workshops and to submit a CSU application as part of the process. She added that she did not see why TRIO SSS students would not be able to participate in the transfer trip, even if they had already attended in a previous year.

Superintendent/President Dr. Moses explained that it is still early in the process, and the administration is in the data collection and observation stage as it determines how to respond to the loss of TRIO SSS funding. He noted that it is not unusual for grants to expire without renewal and that higher education institutions must often decide which successful elements of a grant to absorb and which to discontinue. He emphasized that the college had only learned of the outcome a month earlier, during the summer break when faculty and staff were away, and that more time and collaboration are needed before a full plan can be developed.

Dr. Moses assured the Board that "no student is not going to go unserved in any type of way based on the resources that were part of this program." He stated that the college will find ways to continue serving students but acknowledged that activities such as conferences will require alternative funding if they are to continue. Decisions about what to sustain and what to let go will need to be made collectively by the administration.

Trustee McNeil thanked Dr. Moses, remarking, "What I appreciate is that you pledged that these students would be served. That's what I heard you say."

The Board discussed whether the college could retain and spend down the unspent balance of the TRIO SSS grant. Dean Xiong noted that this depended on approval from the federal government, which would allow the college to use the remaining funds; if not approved, the unused balance would need to be returned. Administrators explained that staff formerly funded through TRIO SSS had already been absorbed into other TRIO programs, ensuring continuity of employment. Approximately \$230,000 in unspent funds remain. If the college is permitted to use these dollars, services can continue for a period of time while a more intentional plan is developed. If the funds must be returned, the college will need to pivot more quickly to determine how to support students in the spring semester.

3.2 Umoja Update

Ger Xiong, Dean of Student Services, provided an update on the Umoja program, explaining that the college is required to abide by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Umoja Community Education Foundation. "We get the funding, we sign off on the agreement, and these are the things we are required to do," she said, noting that Palo Verde College first established Umoja in 2018. In June 2025, the college received an official notice from Umoja headquarters citing "ongoing and systematic misalignment with the Umoja Memorandum of Understanding."

Dean Xiong outlined the six core requirements of the MOU, beginning with staffing. A core team is required, consisting of a coordinator, counselor, one instructional faculty member, and one full-time classified staff member. She acknowledged, "Since 2018 we have not had an Umoja core team." Faculty representative Dr. Julien Sperling added that he had been volunteering to support Umoja for two years, explaining that he had been "filling in, trying to bring in faculty who have the right personality and commitment," while also noting his personal dedication to students: "When they call or reach out to me, I'm there. I'll drive three hours on a weekend if needed."

The second requirement is space, which Umoja headquarters identified as lacking during a site visit in Fall 2024. The regional coordinator observed "there is no visible site for the campus community." The third requirement is curriculum, which calls for at least two Umoja-designated transferable, degree-applicable courses. Dean Xiong noted that the college has not yet established these courses. Dr. Sperling shared progress in developing communication studies and English offerings and emphasized the willingness of Umoja headquarters to work with the college on expanding course options.

Dean Xiong continued by stressing data reporting as the fourth requirement. Umoja requires colleges to report student participation every term. "In 2018 there was one report. Between that and Spring 2024 there has been no data," she said, calling this lapse "out of compliance." Only eight students were reported in Fall 2018, and regular reporting did not resume until Spring 2024. She emphasized that although the program had done well in areas such as field trips and events that celebrate students, "all of the other areas, we have not done well. I want to really emphasize the reporting."

Trustee McNeil asked whether the compliance issues were connected to the lack of dedicated staff. Dean Xiong confirmed, "My understanding is that we never had a core team established."

Trustee McNeil suggested that the lack of Umoja reporting after 2018 might have been tied to the absence of a core team, asking, "So from spring of 2019, it's possible we didn't have a core team in charge, so no reportings as a result of having nobody put in charge?" Dean Xiong acknowledged, "Possibly," but explained she could not provide further explanation since she was not at the college during that time. When pressed if there was another reasonable explanation, she replied, "No, sir. I wasn't here during the time."

Members of the audience informally noted that the onset of COVID-19 in 2019 might have contributed to the lack of reporting.

Dean Randall provided additional background on Umoja's history at Palo Verde College. She explained that when the program began in Fall 2018, "we actually had two faculty members... one stepped back but still wanted to offer her classes, and the other left during COVID." During the pandemic, staffing challenges intensified and she had to balance Umoja responsibilities while serving as Director of Student Success and Equity. "It was me who was trying to do everything at the same time," she said.

Dean Randall noted that Umoja had originally operated as a grassroots effort with no dedicated funding, relying on equity funds until formal Umoja support began about three years ago. Reporting processes were also inconsistent, shifting from direct reporting to Umoja to coordination with the college's Admissions Office. She described repeated efforts to push reporting forward: "Please upload these... they need this information. And it didn't happen."

She emphasized that Umoja once had dedicated space—now used for TRIO—that also served Puente, Pride, and evening tutoring. The program had been "on the cusp of building momentum" before losing key support. Randall voiced frustration that staffing and program development had not been sustained: "They really deserve this program. It doesn't have to be me, but it needs to be something, and it needs to be supported." She closed by affirming her pride in the students and her continued willingness to assist.

Trustee McNeil questioned the recommendation shown in the presentation, asking, "Last slide that went up there said we're going to terminate it. That's the recommendation? But we have to terminate it because we're not going to have funding? Do we have to terminate it?"

Dean Xiong clarified that while TRIO SSS had been terminated by the federal government, the situation with Umoja was different. "The Umoja program itself, the recommendation is to terminate it given the non-compliance for years," she explained.

Trustee Copple asked, "Or is the federal/state recommending it? Who's recommending we terminate the Umoja program?" Dean Xiong responded, "As an administrator, I am."

Trustee McNeil pressed further, asking if the recommendation had the support of cabinet and the Superintendent/President. Xiong reiterated that the college had received an official notice of noncompliance from Umoja headquarters and explained that the institution had to act responsibly: "We have to make a decision to be good stewards of a program. Do we continue to do a triage solution to these programs, or is the responsible thing to do to ensure we can close out this program?" She stressed that this would not necessarily mean the permanent end of Umoja, but that the college had developed a culture of applying for grants without building the staffing or sustainability needed to support them.

Dr. Julien Sperling offered a faculty perspective, reflecting on his two years of volunteer service with Umoja. He described the first year as challenging, with only himself and Dean Randall trying to keep the program running, but noted that in the second year they were advised to focus on building infrastructure. "What we had to do within that first year was establish a structure. We got the base solid. We don't have the core pieces to help, but that also comes from the institution—that support. We can only do so much from within," he said.

Dr. Sperling emphasized that faculty interest could be recruited quickly, recalling that when asked to identify someone, "I think I got that done within a day." He pointed to student leadership development, increased student participation, and strong attendance at events such as the February Black History Month celebration with its Mobile Museum exhibit, which he described as "so powerful, so impactful." He concluded by urging the college to invest in Umoja beyond external funding: "In my honest opinion, for a program that's on probation that can be repaired with the proper institutional support, we can make it happen. But we need the institutional support, not just the grant money."

Trustee Copple responded, "So it can happen."

Superintendent/President Dr. Moses reported that the Chancellor's Office had issued a communication "dovetailing with Umoja" that reinforced program requirements. "It doubled down on us having a dedicated space for Umoja. This was a very strict directive that we need to...have these three pieces in place," he said. Dr. Moses pointed out that two of those requirements were still unmet: "We do not have a dedicated Umoja space right now. Do we have an Umoja course on the books for spring semester?"

Dr. Sperling responded that faculty had been told only days before the semester began that the program was considered dead, making course planning impossible.

Dr. Moses emphasized that the Chancellor's Office had made it clear that three core requirements must be in place for Umoja. "This was in the middle of the summer. Two of those things absolutely are not in place right now, and they weren't in place when I got this communication, and they're still not in place," he said. Reflecting on the situation, he added, "This program has been in place for six years or so. When I look at where we are right now, I don't feel comfortable signing the MOU when I've been told by the Chancellor's Office and Umoja, 'You are out of compliance.' And then I look and see—do we have the pieces that they're telling us we absolutely need to have in place? And we don't."

Dr. Sperling asked whether the college had been provided any guidelines or tools to help get off probation and restore the program.

Dr. Moses explained that while a template had been provided by Umoja, efforts to get clarification from the organization were met with silence for over a month. "I reached out to these people a month and a half ago, and I didn't get a response until I heard back from the head person," he said, noting that Dean Xiong had more recently met with them as well. He emphasized that the Chancellor's Office had "doubled down" on its directive, which was "very, very clear." Dr. Moses added that some of the details were better addressed outside the meeting to avoid unnecessary conflict, telling Dr. Sperling he was welcome to follow up privately.

Dr. Sperling responded, "Understood. This is definitely not about hurting people's feelings. It's about being transparent for the students... all we're trying to do is provide the information out there for them."

Trustee Williams asked whether Umoja could continue in another form, suggesting, "How come we can't take away the name and just turn it into a club with all of the groups?"

Dr. Moses responded that administrators were already considering similar options: "Dr. Bolin and Ger have a similar plan—something along those lines. If we get to the next presentation, that's what they're going to speak on."

Trustee Williams added that the current generation might benefit from a program that fosters direct connections among students, remarking, "This generation, I think, has been more texting and not as much live interaction with their friendships. Maybe this is where they become more connected to their fellow people."

Faculty member Richard Castillo spoke about parallels between Umoja and the earlier Puente program, arguing that both struggled due to lack of administrative support. "That was the same approach with Puente... and it was said very directly to the administration that there is no support for this program. Why aren't you using the money the way it's supposed to be used? And the administration did not have an answer," he said. Mr. Castillo asserted that Puente was effectively shut down shortly afterward and cautioned that "this is a repetition... this is a pattern." He emphasized that faculty had been ready to support Puente with courses and participation but that classified staff support was not provided. "The one thing that was lacking was support from the administration to get a classified staff member to help support the program, and all they needed to do was use the grant money to supplement that. They wouldn't even do that," he said. Mr. Castillo concluded by urging trustees to look closely at whether Umoja had been given the institutional backing it needed.

Trustee McNeil responded, "Can you prove any of that? Those are pretty far out accusations."

Student Trustee Melina Rangel-Ruiz stated, "I was an officer in that and I was...acknowledged of all those discussions that they were having and kept asking and pushing so I could be one. Robert could be another."

Mr. Castillo responded to Trustee McNeil's earlier question by clarifying, "To answer your question, yes, I have emails. And no, I'm not making any accusations. I'm just saying as a matter of fact, because I have emails, that's all." He added that former Puente coordinators Ilona Missakian and Sandra Loureiro could also attest to the lack of support, noting that Ms. Loureiro had even spoken publicly about the program's closure at a prior Board meeting.

Trustee Copple emphasized the Board's responsibility: "I'm telling Jon... talk to students, talk to faculty, talk. That's our job as board members. It's not our job to sit and be quiet. If they come to us and tell us things, then yes, we need to bring that up to the rest of the Board."

Trustee Styers responded, "I don't think we've been quiet... I'm thinking that the administration is saying that we haven't been compliant. We haven't done any reports... So where do we go from here? What do you suggest we do?"

Trustee Copple responded that the decision ultimately rested with the administration. "It sounds like it's up to the administration to say the final say. Do we cancel it or try to work it out? See what can be done. Like Mr. Sperling is saying, maybe it can be brought back. That's what I'm saying."

Trustee Jon McNeil emphasized that the decision on Umoja ultimately rested with the Board, not the administration. "I don't think it's up to the administration. I think it's up to us right here. It's up to the administration to bring forward recommendations and proposals, and then to support it, convince us," he said. McNeil pointed out that the Board had consistently supported administration recommendations in the past but stressed the Board's role in deliberation: "We've got two choices—we're going to accept it and support the administration... or not. But it's up to us to synthesize it, get the information from all the people, and then determine what's the best thing. And there's seven of us, so it's group speak. It's not one person that's going to decide it."

Dr. Moses reminded the Board of the purpose of study sessions, emphasizing that no action was being requested at this time. "As the Board has heard me say in the past, these study sessions are to provide data and information before a decision is ever made... That's why these presentations are on the agenda," he explained.

Trustee McNeil referenced the presentation slide noting a recommendation to terminate Umoja, stating, "That last slide said that there was a recommendation, and your Dean gave us a recommendation."

Dr. Moses clarified, "There's no action in this meeting. There's nothing on the agenda... These meetings are to provide data and information. When we come back with an action...there's a recommendation to terminate the program, that would be at a future meeting."

Trustee McNeil pressed further, recalling that Dean Xiong had characterized the recommendation as her own. "That's when I turned to you, after she said that, and asked you if that was part of your cabinet recommendation. But she said it was her recommendation, not your recommendation," he said.

Dr. Moses responded, "No, we speak as one... The entire administration speaks as one. We have no action item on this agenda."

McNeil followed, "But your recommendation will be to terminate the program then." Dr. Moses replied, "Probably."

3.3 Student Equity and Achievement Plan Update

The Board moved ahead to Item 3.4, Needles Educational Center – Enrollment, while photocopies for Item 3.3, Student Equity and Achievement Plan Update, were being prepared for the Trustees and audience.

A handout was distributed to Trustees and members of the audience. A copy of the handout is included as an attachment to these minutes.

Co-Leads, Dr. Timothy Bolin and Dean Ger Xiong, provided an update on the Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Plan. Dr. Bolin explained that SEA is a major state funding source, recently used to support activities such as ASG events and an upcoming Hispanic Heritage Month film screening and discussion.

Dean Xiong highlighted that SEA funds support approximately 90% of counselor salaries—about \$1.2 million annually—making it a critical funding line for the college.

The presenters outlined the SEA Plan's primary goal of reducing disproportionate impact among student groups, with outcomes measured in areas such as enrollment, completion of math and English, persistence, overall completion, and transfer to four-year universities. They noted past challenges in gathering disaggregated data for groups such as Rising Scholars, Fire Sciences, and local adult learners. To address this, the college is working with the Research Department to create data dashboards for improved reporting in the next three-year plan.

Key initiatives include:

- Focusing on Rising Scholars, who meet both low-income and male student equity categories.
- Aligning campus programs (DSPPS, NextUp, etc.) with Vision 2030 goals from the Chancellor's Office.
- Supporting student development and engagement activities, such as covering graduation gowns, student trustee training, and ASG leadership opportunities.

Dean Xiong emphasized that equity funds should also be used to reduce financial barriers to student participation. She cited the large turnout at commencement after the college covered the cost of graduation gowns as an example of SEA funds directly improving equity.

Trustee McNeil asked about the size of the SEA grant, and Xiong confirmed it totals approximately \$1.2 million.

3.4 Needles Educational Center - Enrollment

Dean of Instruction Dr. Sam Robinson presented an update on enrollment at the Needles Center, reporting that the site currently offers 25 total sections, including credit and noncredit courses. Two welding courses are held at Needles High School, five classes are offered on-site (such as quilting and lab instruction), and 18 sections are live-streamed. In addition, Needles students can access 51 online sections—30 synchronous and 48 asynchronous—available to all Palo Verde College students.

Dr. Robinson highlighted efforts to expand "real-time" instruction for Needles students. "We need to offer some things in real time to the Needles students, and faculty stepped up and met the need," she said. This includes three synchronous courses in communication and English, along with three core first-year math classes live-streamed to the Center. Robinson called these foundational courses "the Golden Four," underscoring their importance for transfer and degree completion. She credited division chairs and faculty for their collaboration: "I want to give a shout out to the division chairs and faculty who helped make that happen."

Dr. Robinson reviewed data provided by Admissions and Records as of August 21, 2025, noting that FTES and headcount calculations will change as the semester progresses. Noncredit courses, which use positive attendance, cannot be counted until the end of the semester, and phlebotomy students will move into a practicum course later in the term, adding additional FTES. "This is just a snapshot of where we are now," she explained. Looking ahead to spring, Robinson said the schedule is being finalized to ensure continued access to synchronous English, math, and communication courses, while also maintaining asynchronous options online. She praised faculty for keeping livestream classes open during the first weeks of the semester—even with zero initial enrollment—to allow students every opportunity to add.

Trustee McNeil sought clarification on enrollment data, noting that totals did not align due to students being enrolled in multiple courses. Dr. Robinson confirmed that the discrepancy was due to duplicate enrollments and emphasized that while the section totals add up (seven in-person and 18 live-stream for 25 total), the headcount reflects unique students. She also thanked Admissions and Records for providing the data.

Trustee McNeil expressed appreciation for the update, stating that having clear numbers and data “gives us a starting place for what we can do in the future.” He commended Robinson’s work.

Alice Dean asked whether there was historical data to compare current Needles Center enrollment trends. Dr. Robinson responded that such information had been included in a prior presentation during the spring and offered to locate and share that report, though she had not personally presented it.

3.5 Needles Educational Center - Re-Examining of Institutional Data

Superintendent/President Dr. Bruce Moses explained that the purpose of this agenda item was to revisit budget, revenue, and expense data for the Needles Center. He noted that this review stemmed from a request by Trustee McNeil during a March study session, at which time preliminary financial data had been presented.

Dr. Moses acknowledged that during a subsequent Board meeting, some Trustees raised concerns regarding the accuracy or completeness of the earlier data. To address this, the administration prepared to share both the original spreadsheet and an updated version that now included the completed 2024–25 fiscal year information.

He emphasized that the intent was to provide transparency and accuracy, stating that the floor would be open to Board members with specific questions about the data, since the administration was unclear about the particular concerns raised.

Trustee McNeil emphasized that he had previously raised his concerns clearly, while Dr. Moses explained that the item was brought back to allow the Board to review the data with updated information and to clarify any outstanding questions.

Trustee McNeil stated, “I thought the Community College Chancellor's Office had a different number for their FTES instead of 11. I thought we came up with a different number, but this number was significantly different — like 123. And then this number wasn't consistent with these. It looked like this was like half a year, and these look like a full year. Those are just some starts we're...”

Vice President Stephanie Slogan explained that in 2024–25, the San Bernardino property taxes generated for Palo Verde College totaled \$622,455.55. She clarified that the 11.70 FTES figure reflects credit, face-to-face FTES generated specifically by the Needles Center. She further noted that the \$349,491 listed represents the roll-up costs for the Dean of the Needles Center as well as salaries for 12 adjunct faculty members teaching in Needles and surrounding areas.

A discussion followed between Trustee McNeil and Vice President Slogan regarding adjunct faculty assignments. Trustee McNeil questioned whether the 12 adjuncts listed were teaching exclusively for the Needles Center or also serving students in Blythe. Vice President Slogan responded that these adjuncts reside in Needles and the surrounding areas and teach at the Needles Center, including assignments with Needles Unified. Trustee McNeil pressed for clarification, noting that many of these instructors also teach online courses that serve the entire district, and expressed concern that they were being credited “100% to the Needles Center because of where their residences” rather than the actual scope of their teaching.

Dr. Moses explained that in the past, the college had allocated FTES from online and correspondence courses to the Needles Center in order to meet the base funding requirements. He said, “the number you saw that gets reported to the Chancellor’s Office was those allocations coming from the online or correspondence courses. We didn’t put them on here like that, because in actuality, this is the reality of what is happening at the Needles Center versus what we have been reporting...which is giving up that allocation of 100.”

Trustee McNeil replied that the explanation “makes perfect sense,” but clarified that his concern was about the faculty salaries tied to Needles. He asked if instructors were being included because “they happen to live there, or because they’re connected to that allocation.”

Dr. Moses responded that the \$349,491 line item for academic salaries included the dean of the Needles Center and faculty who taught courses “associated with the Needles Center.” He explained that a faculty member’s full salary was not counted — “if Clint taught one class and it was associated with the Needles Center, part of the salary would be incorporated in that number.”

Trustee Williams confirmed, “Okay, part but not all of their salary,” to which Dr. Moses noted that if the 100 FTES allocation were added, “we would also have to take the dollars of those faculty of that 100, and also incorporate it into that number, which would make it go up as well.”

Trustee McNeil responded, “That’s where I’m interested in going. And you get where I’m going on that, that’s exactly right.”

Dr. Moses concluded by stating that the administration could prepare that information, but "it's going to take us time... a collaboration between A&R, Business Office, and Payroll" to generate the figures.

Trustee McNeil explained that his interest in the data was to better understand "what's going on in Needles, what's going on in Palo Verde, and what we're all doing...so that we can, in the future, have a plan that's going to work." He emphasized, "My interest is not torpedoing anybody or doing anything bad. It's...I get those numbers, and I can look between the lines. And that's what you just did for me."

He clarified that his earlier questions about property tax reporting, "...when you said before, they told me it was a half a year on the property tax, they did not..." Trustee McNeil went on to explain, "It's like clay. You start to mold it and move it around, and start to see what we've got. Because what we have is not what we want... and what we want, we don't know how to get there until we know what we've got." McNeil concluded, "That's what this is all about. That's why I asked all those questions. So this was very helpful...as long as we get back to these things with this conversation that you and I are having about, how does it all work? What's it all mean?"

Dr. Moses stated, "...the conversation that we've been having collectively as administration...when I came into the organization, one of the things that I'm going to look at, first of all, is where is the college having risk management issues...? Where is there an enterprise risk? And when you asked about, 'Hey, I need to see a budget for Needles. I need to see what's going on with Needles,' we put this together."

He explained that administration intentionally went back to 2014, noting that this was the last time the college went out for a bond. "So if you look at 2019–2020, you can see \$1.476 million from Measure P was invested in the Needles Center."

Trustee McNeil noted that the earlier bond funding represented "our money, not college." Dr. Moses explained that his review of the history showed additional college investments in the Needles Center, including \$125,000 in 2019–20 and \$691,000 in 2021. Trustee McNeil asked whether these later amounts were also bond funds. Ms. Slagan clarified that they were not bond dollars but capital outlay funds, explaining that when Measure P funds were exhausted, the college supplemented with capital outlay funds to complete the project.

Trustee McNeil sought clarification regarding the use of Measure P bond funds, acknowledging some confusion in his earlier understanding. He confirmed with Vice President Slagan that all Measure P funds were exhausted by the end of 2020, at which point the Bond Oversight Committee was dissolved and a final audit report submitted. McNeil noted that he had mistakenly believed that approximately \$700,000 expended in 2021 was bond money, but Ms. Slagan reiterated that those funds came from capital outlay, not bond dollars.

Vice President Slagan explained that beginning in 2019 the college began transferring general funds into capital outlay to help balance the 50% law. As a result, capital outlay expenditures covered not only construction but also repairs and site improvements, which is why costs continued to appear in 2019–2021 even after the project was completed.

Trustee McNeil responded, "Okay, very good. Now we've got the year that you had with no students. We had no students one year, but I know that there were two years we didn't have any students because I'd given that information to Dr. Thomas. And so since we had no students, we have grown every year since then, but we would love to grow to 100 or 200 and that 250 target that you have for this next year for growth, we'd like..."

When Trustee McNeil referenced "that 250 target...for this next year for growth," Dr. Moses responded, "I don't know what you're talking about—250 target." Trustee McNeil clarified that he had understood it as an "improved growth, improved cap for the future year," noting prior conversations about increasing the cap.

Dr. Moses explained that the reference was not specific to Needles but "overall for the institution." He stated that the college had "very intentionally reduced the number of Rising Scholar students that we were serving in our incarcerated institutions to open up space so that we can serve our local learners more." Moses noted that enrollment growth had been seen among local learners at both the main campus and in Needles, with the most significant increases probably coming from online courses. He added that detailed data on this shift would be presented in a future study session.

Trustee McNeil concluded by affirming his support, stating, "And as you know...I believe [I'm] one of the only advocates on the board for doing precisely what you just said."

Dr. Moses stated, "...I want to go back to the point you were making about where we want to be. I always look...in my history of working with additional locations or centers, new academic programs...you want to have a target where at some point you go, we break even, right? It's just like having a startup company. You're going to invest money in it, you're going to lose money the first two or three, four or five years, but at some point, you want to break even. We

have not broken even...in this 10-year span, and we're trending in the wrong direction. So that's where, to me, we got to get to a point where we go, decisions have to be made. How do we get to the point where we're breaking even? Because right now we're trending in the wrong direction."

In response to Dr. Moses, Trustee McNeil stated that during his first two years on the Board, the Needles Center had no students enrolled and no classes offered. Trustee Williams added, "We brought you in to do that, to grow both of our campuses."

Dr. Moses reiterated, "Again, if you look over the 10-year span, we're trending in the wrong direction." He explained that past data and history provide insight into the future, which was the purpose of compiling and reviewing the Needles Center's budget information. Referring back to 2019, when Measure P bond funds were invested, and again in 2021 with capital outlay funds, he stressed that despite these significant infusions of resources, the Needles Center has continued trending in the wrong direction, noting that it is not generating revenue and is far from reaching a break-even point.

Trustee McNeil stated that for two years the Needles Center did not offer a single class, emphasizing, "You spent the money and did not put a class in there for two years...you can't have students if you don't have classes." He explained that his focus on past trends was to better understand where the Center is today, where it has been, and where it can go in the future. In response, Dr. Moses noted, "And that's exactly what this chart is showing us."

Trustee Styers asked Trustee McNeil how the college could build classes and grow enrollment without taking on more debt, noting the \$616,085 deficit in 2023-24. McNeil responded that when he first joined the Board, the Needles Center had no students for two years, yet money continued to be spent without supporting programs. He emphasized the need for a public relations effort and a comprehensive educational plan with measurable objectives to reach the 250,000 people in the region. McNeil added that although an economic plan shows Needles has strong potential, the college has not implemented a clear strategy. He noted that this semester is the first with a sizable number of classes and stressed that the goal should be moving the center toward profitability rather than continued losses.

Trustee Copple expressed concern about the financial data, asking why the Needles Center showed such a large deficit and what specific expenditures were driving the red numbers. She questioned whether the costs were salaries. Dr. Moses clarified that the deficit reflected the college spending more than it was taking in. Ms. Slagan reviewed the breakdown of salaries and benefits, confirming that the figures shown were specific to the Needles Center and did not include Blythe.

The Board discussed salary and benefit costs for adjunct faculty at the Needles Center. It was clarified that while adjuncts do not receive health benefits, they do receive STRS contributions, payroll taxes, and other mandatory benefits such as workers' compensation. The Board reviewed how these costs were reflected in the budget line item for benefits. Ms. Slagan referenced the three salary and benefit lines on the presentation, noting their combined total of \$953,044.04. Trustee Copple asked about the revenue figure. Ms. Slagan responded that the combined revenue from the Grandparent Center and San Bernardino property taxes totaled \$893,642.55, noting this created a negative difference of \$59,404.49

Trustee McNeil emphasized that property tax revenue should make up only a small portion of the Center's income, with the majority coming from tuition and student enrollment. He noted that the current reliance on property taxes was unsustainable, explaining that "if we had even five times that number in student enrollment, we'd be making a ton of money to support both campuses." He argued that building high-quality programs would attract students and, in turn, generate the revenue needed to expand offerings. McNeil also pointed out the competitive advantage of lower tuition compared to Arizona schools and the District's ability to offer better salaries and benefits to attract strong faculty.

Trustee Arneson responded that McNeil's comments did not address the past 10 years of financial history. McNeil replied that he would not attempt to explain that period, reiterating that when he first joined the Board there were "zero classes, zero students" at Needles.

Dr. Moses responded that while increasing enrollment could help offset property tax reliance, the realistic capacity for growth in Needles was limited. He noted that Needles USD graduates about 50 seniors per year, and even if all of them enrolled at Palo Verde College—which he acknowledged was unlikely—the Center would still need to draw students from Nevada and Arizona to grow further. However, competition in the region is strong, particularly from Mohave Community College (MCC), which operates a full campus with comprehensive programming. Dr. Moses pointed out that the Needles Center currently offers some career and technical education programs, such as welding at the high school. When Dr. Moses asked about automotive, Mr. Cowden confirmed that it is not currently offered but identified it as an area the College would like to expand into.

Dr. Moses went on to stress the challenge of sustaining a sufficient student pool. While there are many people in the region, he explained, most are likely to access Palo Verde's programs online. He stated that "we can't compete with MCC as a campus—that's a myth," though Palo Verde can compete in offering general education courses for transfer to CSU or UC. He cautioned that while it sounds appealing to cite the 200,000 people in the area, the more important question is how many of them are realistically potential PVC students. He added that the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) has revealed important issues, but a strategic plan must now be developed from it, with the immediate priority to "stop the bleeding." Dr. Moses further explained, "I agree with you—most institutions are trying to get that property tax number to around 30–35% of their overall funding. But California is much different than other states I've worked in." He emphasized the unique challenges of PVC's location, noting, "We're a small rural community college district. Needles is way out on the eastern border of San Bernardino County, and across the river you have high-level competition with MCC's main campus and their full programming. There's only so much we're going to be able to do to attract students." While acknowledging that growth is possible, he cautioned, "I don't think we're going to be able to attract 100 students. And 100 FTES is what you need to actually say you are a center and properly report that to the Chancellor's Office. We're far off from that."

Dr. Moses pointed to figures in the presentation, noting that the FTES numbers listed—"18.80 and 23, the 13.2"—represent the actual amounts generated by the Needles Center. He explained that while some institutions bolster their centers by allocating online FTES to them, Palo Verde could eventually "get called out on that one day."

Trustee McNeil agreed, stating, "That's what I think. That's why I'm calling everybody out on it, and the person calling them out is me, and I'm the Needles person." Trustee McNeil observed that he and Dr. Moses held different views about what could realistically be achieved, drawing from his professional experience. He pointed to Mohave Community College (MCC), which he said "five years ago...had trouble getting students" and struggled to build programs, but has since transformed into "a dynamo."

Dr. Moses responded by reiterating that MCC is a full-fledged campus. Trustee McNeil emphasized the rapid growth of Mohave Community College, stating that "they are now a university" and have addressed challenges such as faculty retention by building housing for teachers. He described MCC as "a dynamo, absolutely, no doubt about it," but maintained that he believed they were "beatable," noting, "California has a better program, and I know quality always wins out. That's been my whole career, my whole life."

Trustee Copple asked, "Can't we just look at this and try to see, what can we do to try to make it?" Dr. Moses responded, "That's exactly what we're doing...we're going to bring you a bunch of information." Copple expressed concern that the discussion sounded overly negative, as though success in Needles "is not going to happen." Trustee Williams stated, "we can get online from anywhere in the United States."

Mr. Cowden explained that one of the issues Dr. Moses had raised was the risk involved in how PVC has been reporting online classes through the Needles Center. He noted that while this has been done in past audits to maintain "grandfather" status, it is becoming increasingly scrutinized by the state. Without an "anchor program" or hub of services in Needles, the Chancellor's Office may question why online courses are being assigned there rather than to the main campus.

He cautioned that the funding attached to grandfathered status is based on providing services for 100 FTES, and that figure translates to roughly 800 students at PVC, since most are part-time and take only one or two classes. Cowden further explained that while Sacramento often models a full-time load of five classes, this is not realistic in the community college setting. At PVC, a more accurate average is about three classes per student, which is reflected in the difference between unduplicated headcount and total enrollment.

Trustee Williams asked if the Board could also see the numbers for the Main Campus. Dr. Moses responded that this data would be brought forward at the next study session. Mr. Cowden confirmed that they would be presenting the enrollment and FTES figures.

Trustee McNeil asked if Dr. Moses could begin exploring what might serve as an anchor program in Needles to help offset the financial losses. Dr. Moses responded that, in his view, the most effective approach would be to leverage dual enrollment with Needles High School and the Cal-GETC Pathways. He noted that the College has reached out to the Superintendent and is scheduled to meet with them, adding that a recently signed MOU with Needles USD provides the foundation for this effort. Dr. Moses emphasized that "if we want to actually generate FTES, it's going to have to start with the high school students."

Trustee Williams suggested that the College also consider River Valley High School, asking why those students were not being reached since they could ride their bikes and scooters over the bridge to Needles.

Dr. Moses explained that while outreach to River Valley students may occur, the immediate focus is on Needles Unified School District, which he described as the best pipeline for generating FTES and building enrollment numbers. From there, the College could expand to adult learners and other groups. He assured the Board that administration is

actively pursuing opportunities aligned with the College's plans but cautioned that results will not come quickly. As an example, he noted that starting a brand-new program takes about 18 months just to get the first class running, a timeline Mr. Cowden confirmed. Dr. Moses added that the delay is due to California's bureaucratic requirements rather than the College moving slowly.

Trustee McNeil emphasized the importance of communication, stating that the Board could "wait 18 months, [or] three years, if we're in the pipeline, and we're knowledgeable." He explained that some of the information presented at the study session was new to him—such as the MOU with Needles Unified School District—and suggested that more ongoing updates would help Trustees answer questions from the community. McNeil added that living "100 miles away" sometimes leaves him feeling disconnected and reiterated that he "just likes to know stuff" so that he doesn't have to speculate.

Dr. Moses responded that administration has been sharing information, referencing the March study session and explaining that the full 2024–25 numbers could only now be presented since the fiscal year ended on June 30. He assured the Board that information will continue to be provided, noting that future study sessions will bring additional data such as main campus enrollments. Dr. Moses reiterated that study sessions are intended for sharing data and facilitating the conversations that may shape future Board decisions.

Trustee Styers added that she felt Dr. Moses had been transparent in communicating needs and that the study sessions were an effective way for Trustees to stay informed.

In closing, Ms. Slagan clarified the timing of the District's budget process, noting that while the fiscal year closed on June 30, the "soft close" was not completed until mid-August, with the "hard close" finalized just the day before the study session. She explained that the soft close provides the final property tax numbers, while the hard close reflects all final transfers.

Mr. Cowden added that some figures, particularly related to Instructional Service Agreements (ISAs) and positive attendance courses, continue to lag, with final enrollment and FTES numbers due by October. Ms. Slagan further explained that the recalculation process means the District will receive final FTES funding this year, but it will be applied to the prior year's budget.

4. Closing of Meeting

4.1 Possible Future Agenda Items

Trustee McNeil requested the results of the investigation be made public. He explained, "There was an investigation as a result of the Needles City Council passing a resolution, and the Mayor drove up and read it to us. The Board voted to do an investigation to find out where the information came from, and they investigated me and they investigated an employee. That was a real surprise to me, and I want to have a conversation with it. I'd like to have that investigation made public, because I think it vindicates the employee, vindicates me, and also casts dispersions on the way that was handled. I want that all in public, and that's what I'd like on the next agenda."

4.2 Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Bruce Moses

Dr. Bruce Moses, Superintendent/President

Minutes approved at November 18, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

Minutes generated by Naomi Alaniz, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/President and Board of Trustees. These minutes are a concise summary of reports, discussions, and actions taken at this meeting. For detailed comments and discussion, a tape is available to the public for 30 days after the date of this meeting.

Board of Trustees Study Session 26 August 2025

Student Equity Plan

Co-Leads: Dr. Timothy Bolin, Ger Xiong

What is it: The 2025-28 Student Equity Plan is strategically aligned with Vision 2030. With the 2025-28 Student Equity Plan, please continue to focus on future efforts on increasing equity for all identified students experiencing inequitable outcomes, with an overall goal of eliminating equity gaps and supporting the intent of the Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program (Education Code 78222).

- **Prior goals:** Our college has successfully promoted equity in three primary areas: 1) helped develop student-focused programming and support systems, 2) expanded and developed equity programming, and 3) began building our Rising Scholar supports to help our Justice Impacted Students.
- **Current challenges:** While working to complete the current report, organizers had difficulty locating clear data in part due to Palo Verde College's unique student population. PVC's unique population: Local learners, Rising Scholar Students, and Fire Sciences.

❖ **Current Goals and Main Categories**

- **2025-2028 Data**
 - Focus on White Males, Economically Disadvantaged Males¹
 - Rising Scholar Students
 - **Enrollment**
 - Increase Black/African American Rising Scholars Goal: 19%, Stretch Goal 22%.
 - Increase White Local Learners Goal: 30%, Stretch Goal 39%.
 - **Completed Both Transfer-Level Math & English**
 - From shared governance discussions about improving Transfer-Level Math & English Completion relating to AB 1705, Palo Verde College seeks to become a more culturally responsive institution.
 - **Persistence: First Primary Term to Secondary Term**
 - Increase Rising Scholar first primary term to the secondary term
 - DSPS Success Goal: 84 % Current: 79.20%
 - DSPS Retention Goal: 93% Current: 91%
 - **Completion**
 - Increase Rising Scholar Success Rate
 - Increase Dual Enrollment Completion
 - **Transferred to a Four-Year**
 - Goal: 5% transfer rate, 7.5% stretch goal
 - **Vision 2030 Alignment : Collaborate with Units across campus to ensure that we are integrating equity plans while adhering to the Chancellor's Goals**
 - Worked alongside Research Department each unit to develop 1) Mission statement, 2) Goals, 3) Strategies
 - **Student Education Plans - Collaborate with Counselors to ensure that we are integrating the SEA plan while developing Student Education Plans**
- **Where are we going next?**
 - **Development of SEA dashboard**
 - Track progress of each of the measures
 - Aid reporting in the future
 - Accreditation Best Practice

- Work alongside the Research Department to ensure tracking and progress

***Disproportionate Impact (DI) Definition:** Disproportionate impact (DI) occurs when a subset of students based on a student characteristic such as age, race, and gender have observably different outcomes when compared to the total student population. (California Community College Chancellor's Office)*






8.26.25 BOT Special Meeting Study Session Meeting Minutes

Final Audit Report

2025-11-19

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