



President's Brownbag Notes

Dr. Curt Freed, President

May 23, 2024, 12:00 p.m. via WebEx

- 1) Participants: 38
- 2) Desryan Jenson shared a live update from Old Faithful Geyser at Yellowstone National Park. He is participating in an MCC student field trip with staff, faculty, and students.
- 3) Curt Freed thanked everyone who participated in the commencement ceremony May 4. Suzanna Spears and Ariella Gonzales-Vondy shared about their positive experiences at the event. Jane Fries described the contrast with when commencement used to be held in the MCC east parking lot. Christiane Olivo noted that she enjoys seeing the various stoles worn by the students.
- 4) Curt expressed thanks to those who participated in the "Topping Off" Ceremony for the Dahms-Talton Center for Skilled Trades & Technology on May 7. The project is expected to be completed in early November.
- 5) The HVAC RTU project is finished in Aspen and Cottonwood Halls. The final new RTUs will be installed at 300 Main Street and over the ambulance garage in the coming weeks.
- 6) MCC has changed the APT appraisal cycle to start June 1 instead of May 1. The APT appraisals will be conducted online via NEOED Perform. APT staff who have not activated their NEOED accounts should do so prior to June 1. Classified staff and faculty will transition to online appraisals via NEOED in August.
- 7) James Thompson from Senator Michael Bennet's office notified Curt Freed and Deb Coates that MCC's request to receive \$750K in congressionally designated funding to purchase a mobile welding lab is moving forward for further consideration. To reach this point, Senator Bennet, Senator Hickenlooper, and Governor Polis first approved the request. Senator Bennet will present the request to the congressional appropriations committee.
- 8) Curt noted that some System colleges are experiencing a considerable number of fraudulent enrollments. He expressed gratitude for Kenne Bauer's work catching fake enrollments. He also emphasized how important it is for faculty to do roster checks to help remove the students who registered but never attended.
- 9) Budget:
 - a) Curt shared that a list of MCC budget priorities has been developed to present to the State Board in June. He will send the list of priorities to all staff. MCC will receive slightly over \$1M in state allocation funding for FY 25. He noted that this is due to several factors, including increased state funding for higher education and a steady increase in MCC's enrollment. The FY 25 budget includes adding \$500K to the college's reserves. This is part of a strategy to save money to help fund future construction projects.

- b) Curt noted that the City of Fort Morgan created a document listing business and housing projects under development. Approximately 540 new homes are under construction or will be under construction soon. Population growth in the area will impact educational needs.
 - c) The FY 25 budget includes a Health Sciences Dean to oversee a Health Sciences Division. Curt will be meeting with Health Sciences faculty and staff to obtain input on the development of a Health Sciences Dean job description and a Health Sciences Division.
 - d) The System approved 3% raises for APT staff, Faculty, and Instructors. Curt asked Chancellor Garcia for permission to give 5% raises, and this was approved effective July 1. Curt noted that Classified employees' pay is determined by a union contract through the Governor's Office, which authorized a 3% raise. However, some Classified staff will receive significant increases in pay due to years of service step increases. For those who will not receive the Classified step increases, Curt is investigating ways to elevate their raises to 5%. Curt noted that by System policy, employees who receive "Needs Improvement" ratings are not eligible for raises.
- 10) Curt shared that MCC has pulled out of the recent Equity Audit by Neovate. The audit was funded by a grant received by NJC, with MCC designated a subrecipient. During the audit interview process red flags were raised about conflicts of interest and ethical concerns. The data collected from MCC participants will be destroyed and the college will not receive a report. Curt noted that equity work at the college remains a high priority and MCC will be working with Dr. Brenda Allen on the subject in the fall.
- 11) A Childcare Taskforce chaired by Jamie Hohanadel developed and prioritized nine strategies to increase childcare opportunities in the community. The strategies include collaboration with regional childcare providers and increasing the number of trained childcare providers in the area. Curt would like to see the proposed strategies vetted in the community before proceeding with implementing the strategies.
- 12) Michelle Uhrick's last day is May 23. A Controller position will be advertised soon. Curt will send an email to staff with further details about a transition plan.
- 13) MCC's summer enrollment is looking strong and is currently 74.98 FTE.
- 14) Curt gave a reminder that in most cases the only entities authorized to sign contracts/agreements on behalf of the college are the President (himself) and the Chief Business Officer (Tracy Schneider). If others sign contracts, they potentially place themselves and the college in a liability situation.
- 15) CACE events
- a) There is an Astrophotography Exhibit in the CACE Gallery of Fine Art until June 20. A reception will be held for the photographer (Maggie Martin) June 20 in conjunction with the Third Thursday Art Walk in Fort Morgan. The photographer will bring around ten cameras with her and hopes to teach participants how to set cameras for astrophotography that evening around 8:00 p.m. if the skies are clear.
 - b) CACE Impromptu activities will be held June 14 and 15 in partnership with the Philip K. Dick Festival in Fort Morgan.

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- 16) The final business development series hosted by the City of Fort Morgan will be held May 23.
- 17) Susan Clough shared that candidates for the Director of Human Resources position will be on campus May 28 and 29. Open forums with the candidates will be available.
- 18) April Amack shared that the next online author series will feature Smithsonian Curator Matt Shindell. He will be speaking June 3 on "For the Love of Mars: A Human History of the Red Planet."
- 19) Shelli Crandall shared that the staff and students participating in the Yellowstone trip are dealing with cold weather but are having a great time.

Notes by: Jane Fries, Assistant to the President