

When I first made the decision to speak at this Open Forum, it was my understanding that the MCC Board of Trustees (BOT) had stipulated the proposed 2020-2021 would be balanced and not use any of the fund balance. I became more concerned about this stipulation during the ongoing budget development meetings. The interpretation I made from the data that was presented at these meetings was that to achieve a balanced budget it would require significant cuts that would inhibit the College to meet its Mission and be especially difficult for us to recover from as an institution. We did not get to the current fiscal situation overnight and we will not solve it overnight strictly through budget cuts.

I would like to thank Dr. Douglas who became very active in these discussions, literally the moment she arrived at MCC and has proposed a multi-year approach to the budget and use of fund balance. I think this is an important first step but given the time frame for the plan it may not be possible to close the budget gap in the time allotted.

As I have already said, we did not get here overnight. I have attended many BOT meetings in which the seriousness of the ongoing enrollment crisis and the failure to meet enrollment goals was presented to the BOT. Also, during this same period of time, the use of consultants and the purchase of analytical software was approved at the request of Dr. Kress. Many dollars later, there has been little to no return on investment in terms of enrollment or retention from consultants hired or data collected using analytical software. During this time frame there were no stipulations from the BOT pertaining to not using fund balance.

Spring 2019, the BOT stipulates that the 2020-2021 budget would be balanced and not use any fund balance. This was and is not a prudent way to handle the budget deficit, especially when issues regarding declining enrollment and its impact on revenue had been brought to the BOT numerous times. The purpose of a fund balance is to be there for use when necessary.

I again applaud the leadership of Dr. Douglas, and want to include Board of Trustee Chair Dr. Lovenheim in getting us to a point where some use of fund balance has been approved by the BOT. My concern is what happens if we do not meet the goal of a balanced budget within the projected timeframe. We all need to work together to solve this crisis. It is my hope that the BOT is flexible with use of fund balance as we move forward with the goal of achieving a balanced budget. It may take longer to get to this point, and we need to assess where we stand in terms of retention, enrollment, and the actions we are taking to achieve a balanced budget. Knowing the institution as well as I do, we can move forward by working together and develop budgeting strategies that are long term in nature and in the best interest of the College. It may be necessary to extend the timeline necessary, to avoid drastic cuts that would help no one. I am not saying we should squander the fund balance but assess the use of fund balance and use it judiciously to help us solve this crisis.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts on this topic.

Respectfully,  
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