

MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE
Board of Trustees Workshop and Regular Meeting
Harrison, MI 48625 and Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

January 5, 2021

6:00 PM Workshop, 7:00 PM Meeting

Esther C. Conference Room and via Zoom video conference technology at

<https://midmich.zoom.us/j/99041820825>

Workshop Presentation

Marilee Kujat, Director of Educational Talent Search (ETS) Grant Project will give the annual ETS Update.

Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda

NEW BUSINESS

Item II, Election of Officers

Presenter: President Hood

Board Consideration: Action

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Item III, Approval of Agenda

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Action

PUBLIC COMMENT

Item IV, Public Comment

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Information

APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

Item V, Approval of Consent Items

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Action

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Item VI-A: Winter Enrollment Report

Presenter: Matt Miller

Board Consideration: Information

Item VI-B: Annexation

Presenter: Scott Mertes

Board Consideration: Information/Action

NEW BUSINESS

Item VII-A: Correspondence and Announcements

Presenter: President Hood

Board Consideration: Information

Item VII-B: Sabbatical Leave Request

Presenter: Scott Mertes

Board Consideration: Information/Action

BOARD COMMENTS

Item VIII-A: Calendar of Events

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Information

Item VIII-B: Board Comments- Other Business

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Information

New Business

Item II, Election of Officers

Presenter: President Hood

Board Consideration: Action

The Board will elect new officers to the offices of Board Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Each office will be elected for a two year term.

Recommendation:

None.

Approval of Agenda

Item III, Approval of Agenda

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Action

Approval of Agenda.

Recommendation:

It is recommended the Board approve the agenda as presented.

Public Comment

Item IV, Public Comment

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Information

The Board will allow public comment at this time.

Recommendation:

None, informational.

Approval of Consent Items

Item V, Approval of Consent Items

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Action

- A. Minutes- December 1, 2020 Regular Meeting
- B. Monthly Financial Report:
 - 1. Financial Summary for the period ending November 30, 2020.
 - 2. General fund balance sheet as of November 30, 2020.
 - 3. General fund statement of revenues and expenses for nine months ending November 30, 2020.
 - 4. Gifts and Donations: Donations totaling \$5,652 were received for the Mid Foundation in November 2020.
- C. Monthly Personnel Report.

Recommendation:

It is recommended the Board approve the consent items as described by the Board Chair.

Mid Michigan College Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

December 1, 2020 – page 1

The meeting took place via Zoom Video Conference Technology.

Present: Douglas A. Jacobson (attending remotely), Board Chair; Betty M. Mussell (attending remotely), Vice Chair; Richard S. Allen (attending remotely), Jr., Secretary; Thomas W. Metzger (attending remotely), Treasurer; Terry Petrongelli (attending remotely), Trustee; Carolyn C. Bay (attending remotely), Trustee; Eric T. Kreckman (attending remotely), Trustee.

Absent: All Trustees were present.

Agenda Item I: *CALL TO ORDER*

The Board Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Agenda Item II: *APPROVAL OF AGENDA*

Trustee Mussell wished to add to the agenda under other business about a Trustee workshop. Other than that addition, the agenda stands as presented by acclamation.

Agenda Item III: *PUBLIC COMMENT*

The Board Chair asked for public comment, no one wished to comment.

Agenda Item IV: *APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS*

The Board Chair stated the consent items stand as approved.

Agenda Item V-A: *ACCEPTANCE OF FOUNDATION GIFTS & PLEDGES/APPROVAL OF NAMING OPPORTUNITIES*

Associate Vice President of the Mid Foundation Tom Olver presented the Board with the following requests for naming opportunities:

Jill Smith, Daughter of Rich Smith made an \$8,500 donation to the Student Emergency Fund Endowment, in doing so Classroom 247 (Harrison Campus), Food Pantry (Harrison Campus), and a Student Alcove (Harrison Campus) will be named in Rich's memory.

W.C. Cornwell Ranch donated \$1,000 to be added to the Bob and Rosemary Carter Scholarship Fund, in doing so the Co-Lab 240D (Harrison Campus) will be named in their honor.

Motion by Trustee Kreckman, to accept the gift from the Foundation and allow the naming opportunity as presented. Second by Trustee Allen. All Ayes; motion carried.

Mid Michigan College Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

December 1, 2020 – page 2

Agenda Item V-B: *WINTER ENROLLMENT REPORT*

Vice President of Student Services Matt Miller presented the latest Winter Enrollment Report.

Agenda Item VI-A: *CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS*

President Hood thanked everyone for their swift action to move classes to distance learning once the announcement was made at the state level. Mid is responding responsibly and promptly as decisions are coming down the pipeline, and perfecting our best practices as we go. Assuming the order is not extending, classes will resume on December 9, 2020.

Agenda Item VI-B: *MRI SIMULATOR*

Dean of Health Sciences/Director of Nursing (Mt. Pleasant) Barb Wieszcieski presented the Board with a request to purchase MRI simulator software in the amount of \$33,250. Mid is a part of a consortium through MCCA in which student fees will help to reimburse for the amount of the simulator software.

Motion by Trustee Mussell to approve the purchase of the MRI simulator software as presented. Second by Trustee Kreckman. All Ayes; Motion Carried.

Agenda Item VI-C: *BOARD POLICY 304.10*

Associate Vice President of Human Resources Lori Fassett presented the Board with a request to create a policy regarding Personally Identifiable Information.

Motion by Trustee Petrongelli to approve the creation of Board policy 304.10 as presented. Second by Trustee Allen. All Ayes; Motion Carried.

Agenda Item VI-D: *PRINTER/COPIER SERVICE RENEWAL*

Vice President of Finance and Facilities Lillian Frick presented the Board with information regarding a request for proposal pertaining to printing and copying services.

A recommendation will be presented to the Board at the January 5, 2021 meeting.

Agenda Item VI-E: *CRF TECHNOLOGY PURCHASE*

Vice President of Finance and Facilities Lillian Frick presented the Board requested to take item VI-E off of the agenda and stated that it would be brought up at a later time.

Agenda Item VII-A: *CALENDAR OF EVENTS*

Jan 5 Board of Trustees Meeting, Esther C. Conference Room- Harrison Campus

Mid Michigan College Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

December 1, 2020 – page 3

Agenda Item VII-B: *OTHER BUSINESS*

Motion by Trustee Mussell to have the next Board of Trustees meeting on January 5. Second by Trustee Kreckman. All Ayes, Motion Carried.

Trustee Mussell spoke about the idea of having a Special Board Meeting to discuss Trustee duties, responsibilities, officer duties and any other matters that need to be discussed. Trustees expressed interest in the past of hosting someone as a facilitator to lead this discussion. An option would be to pass a motion allowing Vice Chair Mussell to lead the January meeting in order to allow for extra time so that a facilitator can be sought and the time during the regular January Board meeting can be utilized for this purpose.

Motion by Trustee Kreckman to extend the Vice Chair the ability to facilitate Board meetings until the February Board meeting or until the election of new officers, whichever comes first. Second by Trustee Petrongelli. All Ayes; Motion Carried.

Mid Michigan College would like to thank Board Chair Doug Jacobson for 24 years of service to the Board of Trustees.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM

Recording Secretary,
Amy Lince
Executive Assistant to the President and Board of Trustees

Douglas A. Jacobson, Board Chair

Richard S. Allen, Jr., Board Secretary

MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS
GENERAL & AUXILIARY FUNDS

November 30, 2020

GENERAL FUND REVENUE:

- As of November 30, 2020, 2020-21 revised tuition and fee revenue budget was based on a 13.7 percent enrollment decrease from 2019-20 levels. Fall tuition and fees revenue represents 37% of the total 2020-21 revised budgeted tuition and fees revenue. The 2021 Winter term registration began on October 14 and accounts for the balance of the tuition and fees revenue to date.
- State appropriations revenue for 2020-21 decreased 0.3% from the original 2019-20 levels and was booked in October at \$5,309,200. Additional state appropriations of \$1,449,035 were allocated to Mid for the UAAL funding.
- No property tax revenue was booked since 2021 taxes will not be levied until December 2020. The tax levy for 2021 is expected to be consistent with prior year.

GENERAL FUND EXPENSES:

- Departmental expenses are in line with 42% of the annual budget, with the exception of:
 - Information Technology expended only 34% due to software maintenance expenses not yet expended.

GENERAL FUND REVENUE OVER EXPENSES:

- The total increase in net assets as of November 30, 2020 is \$9.3 million. This includes \$3.5 million in tuition for the 2021 Winter term that begins on January 11, 2021. A portion of this excess will help fund the balance of the 2020 Fall term operations.

BALANCE SHEET:

- The cash balance decreased \$868,502 from October 31, 2020 to fund November operations.
- The State appropriations receivable of \$5,529,486 represents the remaining 9 monthly payments of 2020-21 general and UAAL state appropriations.
- Student receivables increased \$1.6 million due to registration for the Winter 2021 term that began October 14, 2020.
- The prepaid expense balance of \$187,891 represents a few multi-year prepaid items, other prepaid 2010-21 expenses, and the College contributions to the employee HSA accounts that will be earned during 2020.
- The balance due to other funds of \$5.8 million can be broken down as follows:
 - \$830,000 due to the designated student activities fund

- \$2.4 million due to the auxiliary services for sales
- \$723,000 due from the scholarship and grant fund (TIP)
- \$852,000 due from the federal restricted fund for student financial aid funds disbursed to the student accounts (drawn down 12/4/20)
- \$450,000 due from the restricted grant fund
- \$4.6 million due to building and site for current and future college needs
- \$8,000 due to the Foundation
- The \$1.7 million in accrued payroll and other compensation includes expenses incurred but not paid as follows:
 - Accrued salary, wages and vacation of \$294,000
 - FICA, Federal and State withholding of \$51,000
 - MPSERS/ORP/UAAL payable of \$689,000
 - Employee health and dental insurances payable of \$234,000
 - Deferred faculty pay of \$372,000
 - Unemployment and workers' compensation insurances payable of \$9,100
 - Miscellaneous payroll deductions
- A significant portion of the preliminary Unreserved Net Assets of \$5 million represents funds set aside by the Board of Trustees to fund current and future college expansion needs.

AUXILIARY FUNDS:

- Total revenue is at 60% of the revised annual budget.
- In-person auxiliary services, including both bookstores and the Harrison Laker Café closed March 11, 2020 due to restricted building access in response to the Corona Virus (COVID-19) Stay-at-Home order. On-campus operations have now resumed with limited hours and services.
- Total expenses, at 55% of the revised annual budget, represent operational costs for the months of July through November and corresponds with sales volume.
- The excess revenue over expense to date is \$77,457, which will help fund bookstore operations for the balance of Fall term.

MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE
BALANCE SHEET
November 30, 2020

Assets

Current Assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	\$	12,778,987
Short-term investments	\$	640,441
Property taxes receivable	\$	-
State appropriations receivable	\$	5,529,486
Student receivables	\$	5,183,885
Other receivables	\$	61,428
Prepaid expenses and other assets	\$	187,891
Due from (due to) other funds	\$	(5,835,229)
Total current assets	\$	18,546,889

Long-term investments	\$	-
Total assets	\$	18,546,889

Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$	66,526
Accrued payroll and other compensation	\$	1,656,892
Total liabilities	\$	1,723,419

Net assets:

Reserved for:		
Technology	\$	884,632
Program development	\$	398,311
Retirement incentives	\$	200,000
Self-funded healthcare reserve	\$	1,055,501
Unreserved	\$	5,015,598
Current year excess revenue over/(under) expenditures	\$	9,269,429
Total net assets	\$	16,823,470

Total liabilities and net assets	\$	18,546,889
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MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE
 STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES
 For the five months ended November 30, 2020

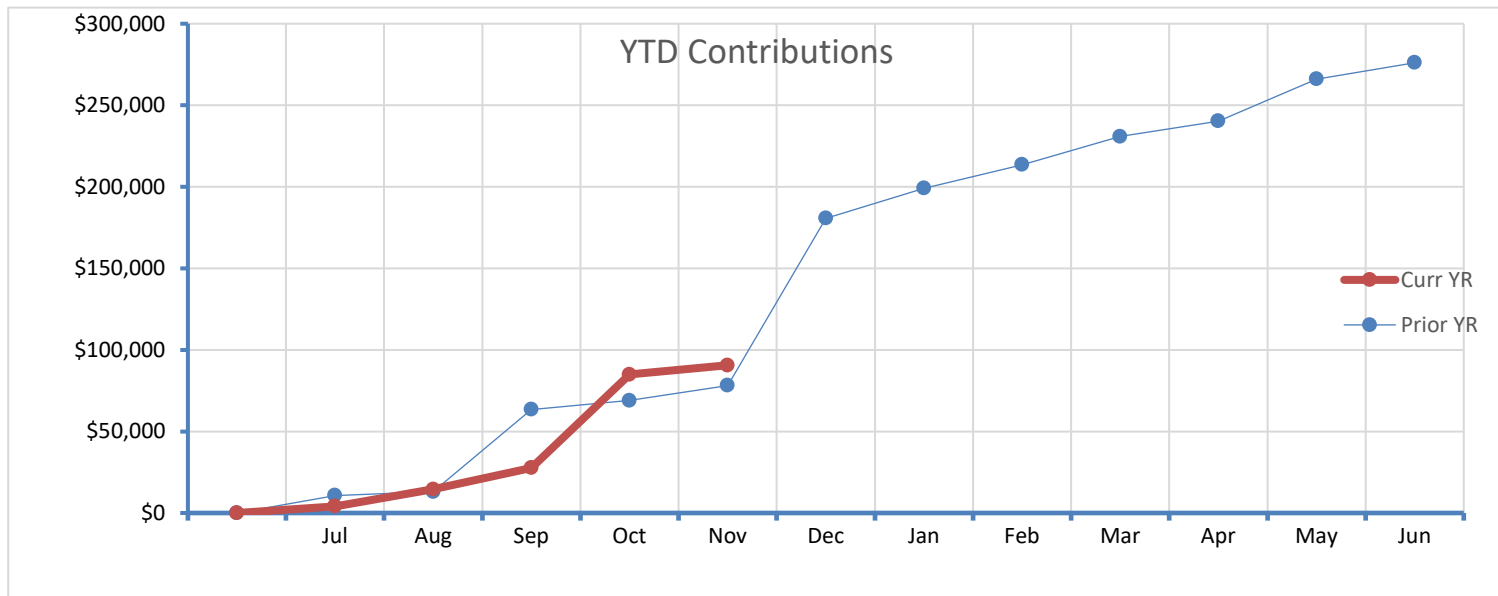
	Current Fiscal Year		Prior Fiscal Year	
	Amount	% of Budget	Amount	% of Budget
OPERATING REVENUES:				
Tuition and fees	\$ 11,446,405	78%	\$ 13,188,457	81%
Miscellaneous	\$ 16,367	24%	\$ 39,923	23%
Total operating revenues	<u>\$ 11,462,772</u>	<u>77%</u>	<u>\$ 13,228,380</u>	<u>81%</u>
EXPENSES:				
Operating expenses:				
Instruction	\$ 3,990,065	39%	\$ 3,991,031	40%
Information technology	\$ 492,380	34%	\$ 770,666	42%
Public service	\$ 248,791	40%	\$ 332,598	38%
Instructional support	\$ 709,169	42%	\$ 893,085	38%
Student services	\$ 1,159,546	41%	\$ 1,171,320	36%
Institutional administration	\$ 1,522,570	38%	\$ 1,808,056	46%
Operation and maintenance of plant	\$ 889,373	39%	\$ 952,619	34%
Total operating expenses	<u>\$ 9,011,893</u>	<u>39%</u>	<u>\$ 9,919,375</u>	<u>40%</u>
Operating income/(loss)	<u>\$ 2,450,879</u>		<u>\$ 3,309,006</u>	
NON-OPERATING REVENUES:				
State appropriations	\$ 6,849,744	108%	\$ 6,758,459	101%
Property tax levy	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
Investment income	\$ 11,229	12%	\$ 100,780	202%
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	\$ (367)		\$ 3,759	
Gifts	\$ -		\$ -	
Miscellaneous	\$ 34,388		\$ 32,677	
Total Non-operating revenues	<u>\$ 6,894,995</u>	<u>78%</u>	<u>\$ 6,895,675</u>	<u>91%</u>
Revenues over/(under) expenses	<u>\$ 9,345,873</u>		<u>\$ 10,204,680</u>	
Inter Funds Transfers				
Planned Savings (Building & Site)	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
Bond Debt Service (Building & Site)	\$ 72,801	20%	\$ 11,455	2%
Restricted Grant Match	\$ 3,643	2%	\$ -	0%
Total Transfer to Building & Site	<u>\$ 76,444</u>		<u>\$ 11,455</u>	
Net increase (decrease) in Net Assets	<u>\$ 9,269,429</u>		<u>\$ 10,193,225</u>	

MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE
 STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES
 For the five months ended November 30, 2020
 AUXILIARY FUND

	Current Fiscal Year		Prior Fiscal Year	
	Amount	% of Budget	Amount	% of Budget
REVENUE:				
Bookstore	\$ 584,560	62%	\$ 719,158	52%
Espresso Bar*	\$ 10,279	24%	\$ -	0%
	<u>\$ 594,840</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>\$ 719,158</u>	<u>50%</u>
EXPENSES:				
Bookstore	\$ 452,932	57%	\$ 553,495	46%
Espresso Bar*	\$ 11,024	31%	\$ -	0%
Auxiliary Services	\$ 53,426	46%	\$ 54,181	46%
	<u>\$ 517,382</u>	<u>55%</u>	<u>\$ 607,675</u>	<u>44%</u>
EXCESS REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	<u><u>\$ 77,457</u></u>		<u><u>\$ 111,483</u></u>	
	13%		16%	

*Both Harrison Laker Cafe and Mt. Pleasant (included in bookstore operations) café locations closed beginning March 11, 2020 due to stay-at-home order, and reopened with limited hours at the beginning of Fall term.

Mid Michigan College Contributions November 2020



	Curr YR	Prior YR
Monthly Contributions	\$ 5,652	\$ 9,163
YTD Contributions	\$ 90,584	\$ 78,145

YTD Top Contribution Totals in 2021:	
Rich Smith Memorial Student Emergency Fur	\$ 43,500
General Fund (Unrestricted)	\$ 11,185
Harris Allied Health Scholarship	\$ 7,500
Kathleen Kehoe Memorial Scholarship	\$ 7,000
Lakers Academic Fund	\$ 7,085
Lakers Athletic and other Athletic Funds	\$ 5,110
Lakers Leadership Fund	\$ 3,511
Other Funds	\$ 5,693
YTD Total	<u>\$ 90,584</u>

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Lori Fassett, Associate VP of Human Resources
SUBJECT: Staffing Update, January 5, 2021 Board Meeting
DATE: December 14, 2020

FULL-TIME NEW HIRES:

Jason Howard – TRiO SSS Coordinator

Jason previously worked as the Director of Learning Services at Mid and brings to this new position a thorough understanding of student support. He holds a BA in Environmental Studies from Ithaca College in New York and a MS in Exercise Science from Syracuse University in New York. He has been a member of the Mid team in a variety of capacities since 2017. Welcome to your new role on the Mid team Jason!

NEW PART-TIME AND STUDENT EMPLOYEES:

Annette Jeske – Direct Support Professional Instructor (EDUStaff) Effective: 11/30/2020

Michelle Argueta – Online Learning Intern (EDUStaff) Effective: 11/30/2020

Vanessa Bracamonte – Assistant Softball Coach Effective: 12/10/2020

INTERNAL TRANSFERS:

N/A

SEPARATIONS:

Ethan Hall – IT Technical Assistant (EDUStaff) Effective: 11/25/2020

VACANCIES:

Adjunct Biology – MOISD Big Rapids (part-time) Posted

Adjunct Communication – Clare HS (part-time) Posted

Adjunct Health Education – Dewitt HS (part-time) Posted

Adjunct History – Big Rapids HS (part-time)	Posted
Adjunct Music - MOISD Big Rapids (part-time)	Posted
Adjunct Psychology – Clare HS/Sacred Heart HS/Huron & Tuscola ISD (part-time)	Posted
Adjunct Religion – MOISD Big Rapids (part-time)	Posted
Adjunct Welding – Clinton County RESA/Ovid-Elsie (part-time)	Posted
Assistant Coach – Softball (part-time)	Filled
Custodian – HA & MP (part-time)	Posted
Direct Support Professional Instructor (part-time)	Filled
Director of Title III Grant (full-time)	Posted
HRA Lab Technician (part-time)	Posted
Head Coach – Softball (part-time)	Posted
Phlebotomy Instructor (part-time)	Posted
TRiO SSS Coordinator (full-time)	Filled
Welding Lectureship – Clinton County RESA Ovid-Elsie HS (part-time)	Posted

Unfinished Business

Item VI-A: Winter Enrollment Report

Presenter: Matt Miller

Board Consideration: Information

Vice President of Student Services Matt Miller will present the latest Winter Enrollment report.

Recommendation:

None, informational.

Unfinished Business

Item VI-B: Annexation

Presenter: Scott Mertes

Board Consideration: Information/Action

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Community Outreach Scott Mertes will present the Board with information regarding annexation efforts for the May ballot.

Recommendation:

It is recommended the Board proceed with the approval of a May annexation ballot initiative as presented.

New Business

Item VII-A: Correspondence and Announcements

Presenter: President Hood

Board Consideration: Information

Announcements may be made at this time.

Recommendation:

None, informational.

New Business

Item VII-B: Sabbatical Leave Request

Presenter: Scott Mertes

Board Consideration: Information/Action

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Community Outreach Scott Mertes will be presenting a Sabbatical Leave request from Lucia Elden.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Board approve the Sabbatical Leave request for Lucia Elden as presented.

1 October 2020

To: Kelley Eltzroth, Chair of Sabbatical Review Committee

Cc: Mid Michigan College Board of Trustees

From: Lucia Elden, PhD

Re: Sabbatical Proposal Revision for Fall 2021

On my first sabbatical for the college, I took two online courses on adult learning and brain-based learning. This experience helped to guide my pedagogy in online courses that I developed and taught. Also, as a result, I presented at ETOM on the critical component of chats in online courses.

On my second sabbatical for the college, I began my PhD program in Curriculum, Instruction, and Teacher Education at MSU in order to learn more about retention and persistence. A third of my research was on technology integration by faculty and a “comps” research paper was on the pedagogy in multiple wikis. My dissertation was focused on retention and persistence stories of community college students.

It is essential for a writing teacher to write, yet as a community college professor, there is not enough time to use our craft to create knowledge through pedagogical inquiry and research. This has been especially true since I took on the art history sequence for our graphic design majors (Hum 101-102) which has a tremendous amount of content to prepare each week.

For this sabbatical for the college, I propose to work on several projects, which continues my work in technology and pedagogy:

- **Technology of Replies as Job Skill for the Future:**
Discussion forums are commonly used in online courses. Replying to other students is usually a requirement to engage with others and to extend learning. Though I have been using this format for the 20 years that I have been teaching online, **I now contend that creating a forum post is a “job skill.”** In Humanities 101 and 102, I have many students who are in digital marketing, video creation and editing, and web design. I am using another approach: no required replies. Instead, I am encouraging these students to see this as a practice for gaining attention to their posts, much like their social media work. How can you create a post that encourages other students to read it and engenders response? I would like to learn more about this “job

skill” and how to facilitate it in online and hybrid courses. In addition, my English 111 students focus on “why people write? why do people reply online?” We “count” the replies that posts receive and problematize the results through the framework of rhetorical choices.

I am observing my own classes in Winter 2019-Winter 2021, and I hope to do further research on this online approach in Fall 2021 in order to teach this “job skill” and make the appropriate changes to my courses. I will complete a literature review and also interview some of my most effective “bloggers”. In addition, I hope to survey faculty on how they use forums, especially from various disciplines. (For example, my CIS students have praised how Chris Goffnett uses forums and so I have interviewed him.)

The learning in this project will help me to help students to connect their classroom work to their future technology skills. I have also spoke with Marisa Enos, Associate Dean of Instructional Design and promised her the results of my research at the end of the Sabbatical for consideration and conversation to transform the pedagogy of our online courses. I hope to create guidelines for faculty to help them to make decisions for their own classes.

I believe that presenting to Distance Education is a more creative, productive way of disseminating information than a professional development presentation; however, if the Distance Ed would like to sponsor a presentation for a professional development program with my information, I would present to the college faculty.

- **Theory into Practice: Creative Student Responses**

I began a blog for teachers during my doctoral studies, since I was the high school liaison. I wanted to connect what I learned in theories to teaching practices for teachers. There is so much focus on what teachers can do to promote retention and so many “tips” for students on how they become “better” students. I am, however, now focusing **on students as “creative” students, students who create a meaningful experience for themselves by using the projects and materials in their classes.** I plan to continue this blog for students, sharing student stories on how they can be creative by learning about what creative students do. See attached essay which provides the theories behind this philosophy. The blog will focus on student

stories—like the ones I use with permission in the essay—and help beginning students to see ways they can respond creatively to their education, creating a meaningful education for themselves. This is a new educational philosophy which I am trying to develop through my observations of students. Since I teach EDU 107 “Introduction to Teaching” and first year students in English 110 and 111, it is important that I continue to learn how students can be successful in teaching and learning. The blog is available to these students as a resource. I believe that this new approach to students as creators (not receivers of information) will transform their approach to their education and our teaching as well, as the college’s mission suggests their experience at Mid will do. I will share my ideas with the English department as well as with students in my own courses. If at some point there is a professional development emphasis on student identity and engagement, I would like to lead a session to the faculty.

- **Writing for Students: An Ethical Practice?**

An article that we use in English 111 is Peter Elbow’s “Writing for Teachers,” which problematizes writing for teachers as an unnatural form of communication. I often write “for students.” Reflection of ethics are a dominant conversational feature in Humanities 200 and in Introduction to Teaching. I submitted a proposal to the Michigan Academy to write a research essay based on Peter Elbow’s books to consider whether my pedagogical inclination of writing to students to create a pedagogy of equality based on Paulo Freire’s theories is an ethical approach to teaching. I did not have time to complete the essay due to my rigorous teaching load. I would like to complete this essay for presentation and publication by the end of the Sabbatical.

I have been filling in for others in our department for the last couple of years to make sure that Iliana Miller got a break from teaching Hum 101 and 102, to make sure that our English 110 is strong due to placement changes, and to make sure that our dual sites are maintaining the integrity of the course in English 111 through mentoring and meeting. I believe that my Sabbatical will not be overly disruptive, though I do believe that a lecturer in our area might be necessary. I plan to write one article from one of these three projects.

Lucia Elden

Eng 110 & 111:

Conversational Response Sample

28 Sept 2019

Creative Responses to Education

So much is said about what teachers can do to promote creativity, and so many tips are given to students about how they can be creative. When grades and financial aid are at stake, it is not easy to give a thought to making creative responses to the opportunities in courses. However, after teaching for thirty-five years, I have seen many students make the most of their college experience through creative responses. Every spring Mid Michigan College has a Student Showcase, in which students who go “above and beyond” are asked by faculty to present their paper, speech, play, welded guitar, steel engine, research project, or tin obelisk. These presentations of student work are artifacts that display creative responses to classroom activities and lead to conversations with others. They are exceptional, but I am interested in how community college students—even those who are strung out by biology exams and too many hours on the job—can make daily creative responses that engage them in their own meaning making “above and beyond” grades, and maybe even regardless of them.

If we consider people’s participation in discourse communities and how they negotiate multiple communities of language learning throughout their life, it is clear that humans are learning in dynamic ways outside of college. Adult educator Jack Mezirow begins his article “Transformative Learning: From Theory to Practice”: “A defining condition of being human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience” (87). When people enter the classroom, however, their habit of being “self-directed,” (Mezirow 92) is dismissed for their enduring “habit of mind” of behaviors for “school” (Mezirow 87). This habit is often to be quiet, sit in one’s seat, and do the assignments to the letter.

Regardless of the conditioning, there are students that do make their own meaning through connections to their “outside” of school discourse communities. For example, Sidney is in my Humanities 101 class on ancient cultures. She works at Herbs Etc. in Mt. Pleasant. Here is a bit of her

response to our class in week two where she tells us about her job and Egyptian oils:

I wanted to bring this to light because there are some very specific blends that have been named after several Gods and Goddesses. One of which is the essential oil blend Tjet. I know what you're thinking. What on Earth does this have to do with this week's topic? Let me explain. In Ancient Egypt there is a Goddess known by the name of Isis (not that Isis)...

Instead of doing some quick and easy online research, she write a lengthy connection to her job. In the third week of the semester, Sidney posted this on her forum for the week:

After hearing about Taoism and how the beginning had occurred in their viewpoint, I made it a mission of mine to learn further about how Taoism led the creation of the Bagua Feng Shui map (Bah-gwah Fung Shu-aye). As you know, I work in the field of holistic approaches. Our knowledge stems from many viewpoints such as Christianity, Taoism, Buddhism and many many more. *That is why I find it a little amusing when people say our ideas are "new age."* I have the pleasure of working with Dr. Lori Becker C.N., N.D. Several weeks ago, Dr. Becker held a class for an hour on Feng Shui and the setup of our homes...

We had a guest speaker prior to this post, James VanderMey, who studies Chinese and Indian culture. As generally quiet as Sidney is, she was one of the first in the class to ask him her question about Feng Shui. Gerald Graff, a professor of English, argues that "schools and colleges are missing an opportunity when they do not encourage students to take their nonacademic interests as objects of academic study" (203). As a creative meaning maker, Sidney did this on her own without me telling her to do it just so. She had self-direction in order to creatively respond. Mezirow explains, "New information is only a resource in the adult learning process. To become meaningful, it requires that new information be incorporated by the learner...an active process involving thought, feelings, and disposition." (92) Students can weave connections to their lives to their courses through questions, further research, and writing. They can create.

Questions do not have to only occur during a class, which sometimes students find unnerving. This is my second semester in having Tony in a

class. He does ask questions during class (did Mozart die of syphilis? what's up with the "let them eat cake" from Marie Antoinette before she was beheaded?), but he always chats with me after class. Often students join him, which he really enjoys. He engages not just in informational questions, but in all out conversations. This was also the case for the Saudi Arabian and Chinese students I have had in English 111. After every class period they would chat with me, perhaps to practice their new "discourse" in a safer space. (In the case of the Saudi Arabian students they could not talk with me before class because they were always late for class, which I enjoyed teasing them about, asking if it was a personal habit or a cultural one. They blamed their driver.) Mezirow posits, "...learners need to be assisted to participate effectively in discourse" (92). Tony, however, needs no assistance. Though he would probably refuse the label, he is a creative response leader. He, like the international students, are checking in; they want more discourse than the classroom provides for them. Mezirow continues, "Discourse is necessary to validate what and how one understands...In this sense, learning is a social process, and discourse becomes central for meaning making" (92). Whether the discourse occurs in pairs, small or large groups in class, online, or even with one's friends or family, it can become an "intellectual" activity, as Graff suggests, if it is examined what professor Ned Laff suggests "through academic eyes" (quoted in Graff 92). The instructor can help, like when Tony asked me about a video he saw on changes in the English language and comprehension, and I suggested other resources and perspectives. I'm looking forward to reading his paper, to continue learning from him.

School is so segregated, by discipline. Students are never asked in science class what they just talked about in math; they are rarely asked to connect their history knowledge to their literature study. College students can. When I suggested to Isaac Dieterman's class a foreign film that was available for a project, he chose to see a Spanish language film to practice for his Spanish class, encouraging the class to see it. Examples that he shared that came from other discourse communities besides our class or his psychology major was an experience on a missionary trip to the Dominican Republic and his experience of growing up in a farming community were used by other students in their projects. Storytelling can be a creative response. Inquiry can be another. A nursing student researched the effects of the Black Plague on medicine and how Leonardo DiVinci helped us learn about anatomy. We are whole people, not brains with separate boxes, even if they are arranged to generate a flow of energy of Feng Shui. Students can creatively cross the boundaries for themselves.

Motivation is often seen as a reason for promoting creative responses. Graff argues, “Making students’ nonacademic interests an object of academic study is useful, then, for getting students’ attention and overcoming their boredom and alienation, but this tactic won’t in itself necessarily move them closer to an academically rigorous treatment of those interests” (202). Thus, it is not that using one’s interests makes it “easier” for students; it might lead them to even more rigor. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educational reformer, uses the phrase “creative power” many times and warns teachers that an informational dump on students “inhibits their creative power” (98). Instead they need challenges to respond to in creative ways that of course they can provide themselves through problem-posing. Like Graff’s perspective that it could lead to more “rigorous treatment[s],” Freire agrees that the problem-posing process pushes students:

Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge...Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed (247).

This process takes a while. Sadly, sometimes students quit on themselves and their college education before they can find their own creative ways to respond to the challenges of college. It is possible that they might not know what their major is and so cannot make connections to it. On the other hand, they are all in various discourse communities, and bring down the walls between them and see if their new school discourse communities have something to add through reflection. While Mezirow believes that reflection is the key to transforming an old habit of mind that is holding humans back—although he also beautifully says that imagination is required—Freire connects creativity to transformation. He concludes, “Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation” (99). Within this archaic language, he calls for action.

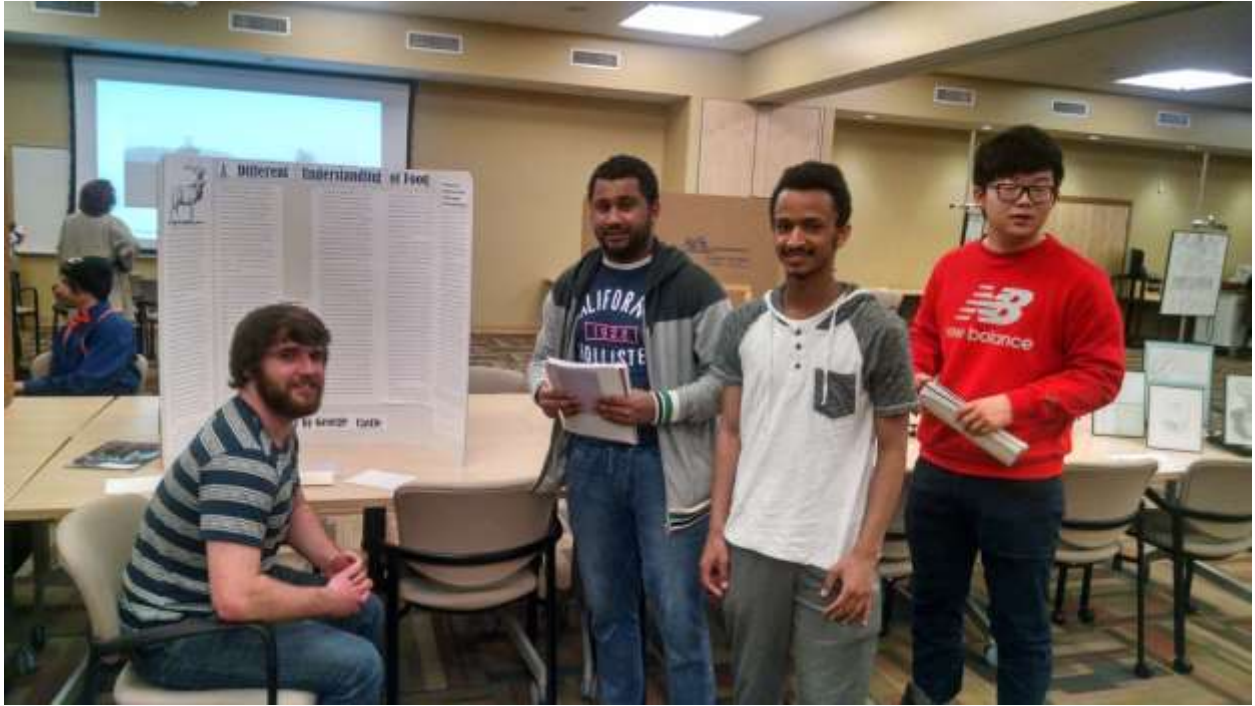
Perhaps it feels like there isn’t enough time to talk to an instructor or classmate, perhaps students just want to make a check in their planner that they finished a task in the shortest amount of time so they can move on to another or other parts of their lives. But they might find that they want to spend more time on them if they can bring their full self to their responses and make them meaningful not for the teacher but for themselves.

Works Cited

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th anniversary Ed. New York: Continuum, 2000.

Graff, Gerald. "Hidden Intellectualism." *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. Ed. G. Graff and C. Birkenstein. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 2010, pp. 198-205.

Mezirow, Jack. "Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice." *Exploring Connections: Learning in the 21st Century*. Pearson Learning Solutions, 2016, pp. 87-93.



Board Comments

Item VIII-A: Calendar of Events

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Information

Feb 2	Board of Trustees Meeting, Esther C. Conference Room, Harrison Campus
Mar 2	Board of Trustees Meeting, Esther C. Conference Room, Harrison Campus
Apr 6	Board of Trustees Meeting, Esther C. Conference Room, Harrison Campus
May 4	Board of Trustees Meeting, Esther C. Conference Room, Harrison Campus
June 1	Board of Trustees Meeting, Esther C. Conference Room, Harrison Campus

Recommendation:

None, informational.

Board Comments

Item VIII-B: Board Comments- Other Business

Presenter: Board Chair

Board Consideration: Information

1. Any comments may be offered by Trustees at this time.

Recommendation:

None, informational.