

April 28, 2026 Board of Advisors meeting

Attendees: Jacob Ashby, Hugh Breslin, Kim Eichelberger, Heather Guessford, Jim Holzapfel (via Zoom), Dr. Maulik Joshi, Jim Kercheval, Lisa McCulloh, the Hon. Bill McIntire, Dr. Gaye McGovern, Scott Nicewarner, Tim Palkovitz, Peter Perini, Jeannette Peters, Jason Rappaport, Dr. Tara Sargent, Del. Matt Schindler (via Zoom), Dr. James Sovine, Dr. Darlene Brannigan Smith (via Zoom), Michelle Walls.

Mr. Breslin shared news from the system that Vice Chancellor Dr. Allison Wrynn is retiring in June. A search is currently underway for her replacement and there are 138 reviewable candidates with more than 200 who applied. Another big issue is from the legislative session regarding the unionization of non-tenured faculty and graduate students. Mr. Breslin also told the board that FSU was approved for in-state tuition rates for folks outside the state.

Mr. Perini asked Jacob to give Dr Wrynn the board's thanks for working with the Hagerstown Center and to let her know she'll be missed.

Jeannette Peters, student representative to the USMH Board of Advisors, was happy to share that a student council is being established. Three other students including herself will be on the council. They will have a president and vice president, as well as a student communicator, and will be reaching out to all programs at USMH seeking volunteers to join. They would like to have a representative from each program. The first few meetings will be organizing and promoting activities, and Ms. Peters said they would like to create a monthly newsletter. In addition, they'd like to organize a clean-up day for the education building.

Dr. Ashby said there were 45 scholarship applicants this year, a significant increase from just 17 last year. He went on to say that we continue to work with United Way for basic needs rooms. The Cheers to 20 Years event raised \$107,000. Another fundraising effort, the pickleball tournament, had 59 registrants. The year will be finished with an applied computer science lab with a kickoff event post-graduation. Dr. Ashby shared that he continues to work on different opportunities for program development. He is hoping to identify areas to have work force area certificate programs for the region that don't overlap with HCC. A potential program possibility is an air traffic controller program, created in partnership with an outside organization. Additionally, a full security system upgrade is in the works as well. The contract was awarded to a company named ConvergeOne but it has been terminated due to non-compliance. It uses a cloud-based platform called Genea

Dr. Sovine thanked Dr. Ashby and the USMH staff for supporting Williamsport High School's presence at USMH while the asbestos issue at the high school was being resolved. The students had a meaningful first semester and everyone is grateful that USMH had space available for staff, students, and faculty.

Dr. Ashby told the group that USMH will realize substantial cost savings in ending its lease at the hospitality center at 59 West Washington. Among other things, it will allow USMH to add a second maintenance person. Our current maintenance lead, Jim Sexton, will be retiring in the near future and Dr. Ashby wants to have some overlap for learning. He doesn't want the knowledge to leave the building with Jim.

Mrs. Walls reviewed the latest marketing initiatives. The Open House has been revamped with more promotion. 20 prospective students attended and there was nice energy at the Open House. There isn't much change for the 2026-2027 marketing plan. Connect Films created new student videos which are showing on the website, and they are very well done. Students were asked to choose a mascot. They came up with an owl whose image shows in shadow for now until it's decided what it will look like and what its name will be. Invitations for the Graduation Celebration will be sent digitally. It will be Saturday, May 16, at the hospitality center.

Mrs. Eichelberger told the members that the scholarship dinner planned for October will feature the new mascot, and the event will be named Wisdom Takes Flight. It will be Friday, October 16, in the USMH building. It will include a silent auction, and food on all five floors. Save-the-date cards will go out soon. Mrs. Eichelberger told the group she has officially joined Rotary and has applied for membership in the next class of Leadership Washington County. She continues to attend Chamber events and is the liaison to business education with the Chamber.

Scholarship applications were due April 15. Eight students applied for the Inspire scholarship, one of the requirements of which is to attend the Open House. Mrs. Eichelberger reiterated having 45 scholarship applications and said that five of those were for PA scholarships. USMH partnered with Dill Dinkers for a pickleball tournament scholarship fundraiser. It was held in their indoor facility and raised \$3,000 in sponsorship money. The second tournament is being planned for late February 2027. The scholarship reception is scheduled for Friday, 9/18, and will be held in the USMH building.

Dr. Ashby told the board that he is on a committee that is focusing on the future of Regional Higher Education Centers (RHECs). Mr. Perini said lots of conversations have been had over the years regarding overall future of higher ed. The RHEC issue interests him and he'd like to know how the conversations are going. He believes the biggest threat to RHECs is online education, and he is aware of discussions on whether higher education is needed at all. Mr. Perini said these kinds of discussions create concern about the welfare of our country.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40am.