Board of Trustees: Katherine K. Rensin, chair; Roberta E. Dillow, vice chair; Edmund S. Coale; Kevin J. Doyle; Mary S. Esmond; and Patrick L. Huddie. Kathleen B. Hetherington, secretary-treasurer, was also present.

Staff: Lynn Coleman, vice president of administration and finance; Nancy S. Gainer, executive director, public relations; Thomas J. Glaser, vice president of information technology; Zoe Irvin, executive director, planning, research, and organizational development; Cynthia J. Peterka, vice president of student services; Sharon Pierce, vice president of academic affairs, and Erin Yun, director of board relations/special projects.

Facilitator: Stephen Mittelstet, president emeritus, Richland College

At 9:00 a.m., Dr. Hetherington welcomed the group and introduced Dr. Stephen Mittelstet. Dr. Mittelstet discussed previous visits to the college and past collaborations between Richland College and Howard Community College as they have progressed through the continuous quality improvement journey. He commended the trustees on embracing the idea of continuous learning and servant leadership in particular.

The order of the agenda was adjusted in order to accommodate trustee schedules.

A. Performance Excellence

Dr. Mittelstet gave a history of the Richland College performance excellence journey. Richland College is part of the Dallas County Community College District and it is the first community college to win a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

He emphasized methods used to infuse the mission, vision, values, and philosophy throughout the college community. Methods include professional development, retreat series, and visual reinforcement. Dr. Mittelstet discussed the connection between whole people and a whole organization while still focusing on performance excellence.

The role of senior leadership is to inspire a shared vision; focus and align to mission, vision, and values; focus resources of key priorities; and invite everyone on the journey. The importance of understanding key roles and responsibilities was discussed.

Balancing the need to support and challenge students in the classroom can also be a good model for senior leaders at colleges as well. It is also important to find people who fit into your organizational culture and can embrace its values and framework.

The role of the plan-do-check-act process, review of results, data-informed decisions, and questioning prior to judgment in the performance excellence journey was discussed.

Richland College submitted one or even two performance applications per year, focusing not on all the opportunities for improvement but instead picking just a few to work on that
resonated the most with the organization. He said even after winning the award they continued to review the “opportunities for improvement” suggested by the state and national examiners.

The trustees discussed Dr. Mittelstet’s presentation and their own focus on internal culture and nurturing its positive growth, especially with regard to succession planning. In order to make the best use of professional development opportunities, Richland asks employees every year what their professional aspirations are and what they have done to prepare themselves for this role. Then as professional development opportunities arise, they are cross-referenced with those individuals with aspirations for which the opportunities are most appropriate.

The trustees discussed the need for diversity of perspectives, cultural, cognitive styles, skill strengths, etc. while at the same time hiring for a common set of values. The trustees discussed the college’s and the board’s responsibility to take risks and be open to new ideas and build upon them while at the same time accepting that some ideas may not be successful.

The full-time/part-time faculty ratio and its impact on organizational culture were discussed. At Richland, there is a person in charge of professional development for adjunct faculty who came from the ranks of the adjunct faculty. This professional development is structured to provide incentives to adjuncts to participate, such as being at the top of the list for new classes or providing financial compensation (while funds are available).

The trustees asked what mechanisms Richland uses to listen to the community. Each area is responsible for environmental scanning and the results are incorporated into the strategic plan at the appropriate time.

**B. Servant Leadership & Effective Listening**

Dr. Mittelstet distributed copies of the board’s core values, the college’s values, and Richland College’s Thunder Values. Participants were asked to examine the values in light of the tenets of servant leadership.

Dr. Mittelstet discussed the value of silence in being a servant leader. Silence can be a tool for reflection and deeper understanding of those around us. Additionally, being in a state of wonder, questioning ourselves and reflecting inwardly before asking questions of others can be valuable.

The participants broke out into groups to discuss the values that were distributed and which were the most meaningful to them in light of the servant leadership discussion. After the breakout sessions, the group came back together and held a larger discussion on the topic.

**C. In-depth Board Self-Assessment**

The board self-assessment process was discussed. Dr. Mittelstet commended the board on the assessment that it does. He said the most important part of board self-assessment is making sure you are asking the right questions in order to ensure that the information that results meets your needs.
Dr. Mittelstet distributed literature from Richland College’s Center for Renewal and Wholeness in Higher Education. He welcomed members of the board to participate in any of its programs that might be appropriate.

He thanked the board for having him to their retreat and for their active participation in the discussion process. Participants commended Dr. Mittelstet on the retreat activities and thanked him for coming.

The retreat was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

The above constitutes the official minutes of the February 10, 2011, retreat of the Howard Community College Board of Trustees as approved on February 23, 2011, and is a true and correct copy of same.

Kathleen B. Hetherington, secretary/treasurer