A. Study Session – Kentfield Campus, Deedy Hall

1. Call to Order, Roll Call and Adoption of Agenda

The Board of Trustees of the Marin Community College District met for a Study Session in Room 111, Deedy Student Services Building, at the Kentfield campus, members having received notice as prescribed by law. Board Vice President Brockbank called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. Board Clerk Hayashino called the roll and all Trustees were present except Trustees Treanor, Long and Moore. Trustees Treanor and Long arrived at 3:15.

M/s Dolan/Hayashino to approve adoption of the agenda. Motion passed unanimously by a vote of 4-0.

Board President Long announced that the purpose of the Board Study Session is to seek feedback from the Board members and for the Board to provide direction and guidance to President White, management, and staff. The Board does not take action at a Study Session.

2. College of Marin Mission Statement

Dr. Elise Schneider, Interim Vice President of Student Learning and Chair of the Mission Task Force, made a presentation to the Board on the mission review process. She highlighted the inclusiveness of the process and noted that input was obtained from faculty, staff, students, administrators, Board members, and the community. Dr. Schneider introduced members of the taskforce and thanked them for working so well together and doing such an outstanding job.

Recommended New Mission Statement

The College of Marin’s mission is to provide educational opportunities for all students and community members: preparation for transfer to four-year schools and universities, workforce education, intellectual and physical development,
cultural enrichment, and basic skills improvement. The College is committed to responding to community needs by offering student-centered programs and services in a supportive, innovative learning environment. The College of Marin pledges educational excellence to all members of our diverse community.

Board members expressed their appreciation to the task force for their hard work and for developing a “living” document that reflects values important to the College of Marin and our community. They also commented that they appreciated that fact that the college community came together to work together so well on this document.

After discussion the Board recommended re-ordering the wording of the mission statement to better reflect the priorities of the Education Code. The suggested change was to move the phrase “basic skills improvement” so that it would immediately follow “workforce education” in the first sentence.

3. College of Marin Governance Review System

Board President Long asked Dr. White to explain the goal of the WASC process to date and what the consequences would be if we did not meet the deadline of the WASC recommendations and timeline. Dr. White explained that we are in warning status with WASC and that a visiting Accreditation team will come to our campus later in March to see what we have been doing to respond to the recommendations. At its June meeting, the ACCJC will decide whether to remove us from warning status or place us on probation.

Kathleen Kirkpatrick, Staff Development Program Administrator, updated the Board on the process followed by the Governance Review Council to develop the College of Marin Participatory Governance System currently being reviewed. She introduced members of the Governance Review Council so that they could be acknowledged for their considerable efforts to develop this document. Ms. Kirkpatrick’s presentation included an overview of the philosophy of the system and college committee structure and operating guidelines.

Austin Smith, on behalf of the Student Advocacy Committee (a joint committee of the Student Senate and ASCOM), presented a position paper on the Governance Review Council Participatory Governance System Plan and brought to the attention of the Board several concerns of the Student Senate. A copy of his statement is attached to the minutes as part of the official record.

Board members thanked both Ms. Kirkpatrick and Mr. Smith for their presentations and expressed their appreciation to the Governance Review Council for working so diligently on the proposed Participatory Governance System.

Trustee Kranenburg stated that one of his concerns about the proposal and document is that it does not allow for a timeframe to make it possible to act and make decisions in a timely fashion.
Trustee Treanor commented that the Board had received a draft of the document in December but had never discussed it. Board members received the updated document for the 1st time at the March 1 Study Session. She stated that it would have been helpful to have a red-line version showing the changes. Trustee Treanor thought there was strong Board support for the document but that it needed further work.

Trustee Hayashino stated that in the March 1 Study Session many Board members learned that previous Board policy 7.0007(a) had been revoked based on misinformation about the Governance Review Policy not being necessary. She stated that she appreciated the Governance Review Council’s work, but recognized that the policy needed additional work. Faced with a March 15 deadline by the Accreditation Commission, Board members expressed their opinions that the College should reinstate the former policy.

Trustee Brockbank stated that all Board members would have liked to see everyone come together in consensus, but since this did not happen, they did not want the March 15 deadline to pass by. It just came to their attention that the old policy (which had been repealed by mistake) could be reinstated.

Student Trustee Lopez asked that a copy of the Classified Senate Response to the COM Governance Plan, which was given to Board members at the March 1 Study Session, become part of the official record of that meeting.

Board President Long added her comments and suggestions at the end of the discussion with the following remarks:

She expressed appreciation for the extensive work and hours that have gone into the plan to date and the work done by leadership of faculty, classified staff and students. Further, she acknowledged the leadership of Ms. Kathleen Kirkpatrick, Dr. Blackman, and Dr. Gilliland.

Although this Participatory Governance System Plan is a work in progress, Board President Long indicated that having served on numerous WASC visitation teams over many years, she reviewed the Participatory Governance System Plan from the "lens" of a Board member, and also a WASC member, who understands the expected WASC standards and the key concepts of demonstrated/documentated results.

She expressed a concern about the "spirit" of the document and the lack of collaborative decision-making and lack of partnership with constituent groups. While the College is struggling with the WASC warning and meeting the deadline requirements of the WASC recommendations, she was concerned that the document contained trigger words such as "corruption or manipulation," "no back room deal," “leap of faith” (although positive in nature, these words indicated that the document was not where it needed to be). Trustee Long expressed caution about the trigger words and expressions of conflict, lack of trust and cooperation, unwillingness to work together to build a team and lack of teamwork, collaboration, and partnership. WASC reviewers will be looking for the COM team to be working together and progressing if we are to be granted a “pass” during this cycle.
If we continue to have conflicts and to not work together toward compromise and exhibit a demonstrated lack of progress even with a WASC warning, it is likely that COM could be placed on probation for not taking the recommendations seriously.

Trustee Long said she did not want COM to play games with the WASC process since we must take this process very seriously. This would be the second time the institution would be submitting documents of progress toward meeting the standards. She said that if it is not the intent of staff to move positively toward working together, we should accept “probation” even though the status would be very painful for all. We need to be honest and respectful of the WASC accrediting process since they can help us with staff assistance and suggest resources to help COM. “We need to work smart and not shoot ourselves in the foot again.”

Trustee Long also supported her Board colleagues in the reinstatement of Board Policy 7000.7(a). The first self-study noted that COM WASC Governance Committee members preferred the previous Board policy and was critical that the current Board policy was much less inclusive and comprehensive, and not aligned with the proposed draft of the Participatory Governance System Plan.

Board President Long summarized each Board member’s comments and common suggestions and requested that Dr. White bring back a progress report on March 8.

After considerable discussion, Board members seemed to conclude that the proposed draft of the Participatory Governance System needs additional work and is not ready to be submitted to the Accrediting Commission. They recommended reinstating Board Policy 7.0007 (a), our former policy on District Governance, and continuing to fine-tune the proposed new system. Additional work and collaboration are particularly needed on these issues: decision-making process, committee voting procedures, and committee composition.

Both the Mission Statement and the Governance Review System will be action items on the Board agenda for the regularly scheduled March 8 meeting.

4. Adjournment

M/s Brockbank/Hayashino to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously and Board President Long adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m.