

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

March 17, 2025 – Immediately Following Board Retreat – SCGBD Peterson Auditorium

Call to Order

 Action X Information

Recognition, Awards, and Information Items

- Faculty Sabbatical Presentation

 X Action Information

Attendance

 X Action Information

Approval of Minutes

- Regular Board Meeting – February 17, 2025

 X Action Information

ENDS Monitoring Report

- E-105: Faculty Senate (*Mrs. Megan Looney*)

 X Action Information

Executive Limitations Monitoring Report

- EL-206: Asset Protection

 X Action Information

Committee Reports

- Code of Ethics Committee Ad Hoc (*Dr. Carolyn Reeves*)
 - Approval of Update to BOT Code of Ethics
- Honorary Associate Degree Committee (*Dr. Carolyn Reeves*)
- Land Use Committee (*Ms. Lori Frank*)
 - Approval of Campus Master Plan

 Action X Information

 X Action Information

Presidential Report

- Enrollment Update
- Budget Work Session – April 30, 2025
- NWACC Foundation Plant a Seed – Fri. May 2, 2025
- NWACC Mission Statement

 Action X Information

 X Action Information

 Action X Information

Chair Report

- BOT Business Attire for Commencement
- April Executive Session: President's Regular Annual Performance Evaluation, Part 2
- Professional Conferences for Board of Trustees

 Action Information

Other Board Action Items and Considerations

- None

 Action X Information

Executive Session: President's Employment Review

Adjourn

For Upcoming events, please see the Board of Trustees Calendar of Upcoming Events document in the binder's front pocket.

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING
Monday, February 17, 2025**

MINUTES

Chair Todd Schwartz called the Board of Trustees of NorthWest Arkansas Community College meeting to order on Monday, February 17 at 4:30 pm in the Burns Hall 3rd Floor Board Room.

Members Present: Todd Schwartz (Chair), Rachel Harris (Vice Chair), Amber Latimer (Secretary), Carolyn Reeves, Lori Frank, Ron Branscum, Mary Schneider, and Joe Spivey

Also in Attendance: Dr. Dennis C. Rittle and Student Trustee, Taryn Settle

Members Absent: Mark Scott

MINUTES

January Annual Board Meeting and Regular Board Meeting

Mrs. Schneider moved and Mr. Spivey seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the Annual Board Meeting and Regular Board Meeting on January 13, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

RECOGNITION

Introduce Jessica Chronister, Dean of Community & Student Engagement

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that Jessica Chronister has taken on the role of Dean of Community & Student Engagement. Dr. Justin White gave a brief bio of Jessica and turned to her to address the Board. Jessica expressed her gratitude to NWACC and said that it has been an honor to serve in her new role.

SGA New Logo Presentation

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that the Student Government Association recently underwent a new branding initiative. He turned to Student Government Association President, Taryn Settle. Taryn presented the new logo to the Board.

ENDS MONITORING REPORT

E-101: Academics

Dr. Diana Johnson informed the Board of some current academic initiatives NWACC is focused on including Biotechnology, artificial intelligence, academic support, serving students not currently served, co-requisite math sequence, increasing adjunct faculty pools, and an open education network.

She further explained that Biotechnology is a new certificate that aligns to A.A.S in General Technology and was funded by the National Science Foundation under the EPIIC Grant NWACC received.

In January 2024, NWACC expanded general tutoring by moving the Math Center and Writing Center to the same location so they are visible and accessible to all students. The Library has offered 42 skills workshops supporting retention and success with 504 attendees. The Writing Center held 208 sessions in person and 204 online sessions.

Dr. Johnson continued explaining that an Academic Standards Committee was created to address artificial intelligence in policies. NWACC also offers non-credit classes and college credit certificates teaching artificial intelligence.

Block schedules at Bentonville and Washington Campus, year-long and hybrid schedules, evening classes, and micro-credentials have been established to help serve students that NWACC is not currently serving.

Dr. Johnson finished by listing the other initiatives such as open education resources, adjunct faculty pools, co-requisite math sequence, and classroom technology.

Approval of E-101 Monitoring Report

Mrs. Latimer moved and Mr. Spivey seconded the motion to approve the ENDS-101 Monitoring Report. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS MONITORING REPORT

EL-200: Executive Constraint

Dr. Rittle stated that the President shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decisions, or organizational circumstance, which is either unlawful, imprudent or in violation of commonly accepted business and professional ethics or Board of Trustee policy.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Honorary Associate Degree Report

Dr. Reeves informed the Board that the Honorary Associate Degree Committee discussed updating the program to create new opportunities for others to be recognized. She further explained that the Committee will meet again on February 19 to establish the timeline for nominations.

Finance Committee Report

Mrs. Latimer informed the Board that the Finance Committee met to review and recommend for approval of the Board the proposed Tuition and Fees and accept the audit findings. She thanked all Board Members who attended the Lunch & Learn Event in which the Tuition and Fees were reviewed.

She and Anya Petersen-Frey explained to the Board that the three main goals of the budget are to address required expenses in building maintenance, employee compensation, and IT upgrades. The proposed Tuition and Fees are outlined as follows.

- Introduce a new Automation and Robotics fee of \$150 per course.
- Introduce a new Workforce Artificial Intelligence fee of \$150 per course.
- Introduce a new Medical Lab Technician fee of \$150 per course.
- Introduce a new Phlebotomy fee of \$100 per course.
- Introduce a new Medical Assistant fee of \$100 per course.
- Introduce a new Pharmacy Technician fee of \$100 per course.
- Adjust the Trails Course Fee by \$50 per course
- Adjust the Bike Assembly and Repair Fee by \$50 per course
- Add Bike and Trails Programs to the tier one Workforce and Technology program specific differential tuition.
- Introduce Robotics and Electronics as a new tier two Advanced Technology differential tuition at \$60.
- Adjust tuition per credit hour by \$12.00 for FY26, \$9.00 for FY27, and \$6.00 for FY28.
- Adjust the Learning Support Fee by \$5.00 for FY26, \$3.00 for FY27, and \$1.00 for FY28.

The Board discussed the history behind the stagnant tuition rates over the last ten years and the importance of keeping tuition affordable for all students. Tuition remained stagnant due to a decline in enrollment and the economy, however, the

Board acknowledged that NWACC has seen growth and is offering many new programs. The Board discussed striking FY27 and FY28 from the proposal.

Approval of FY26-28 Fee Adjustment

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of the FY26-FY28 Fee Adjustment as presented by Mrs. Latimer and Ms. Frank seconded the motion. The Board voted via roll call. Ms. Frank and Mrs. Latimer voted in favor. Mrs. Harris, Dr. Reeves, Mr. Branscum, Mrs. Schneider, and Mr. Spivey voted against. The motion did not pass.

Approval of FY26 Fee Adjustment

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of the FY26 (to exclude FY27 & FY28 Tuition per Credit Hour and Learning Fee) Fee Adjustment as presented by Mrs. Latimer and Mr. Branscum seconded the motion. The Board voted via roll call. Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Latimer, Dr. Reeves, Ms. Frank, Mr. Branscum, and Mrs. Schneider voted in favor. Mr. Spivey voted against. The motion passed with a majority vote.

Anya Petersen-Frey and Catherin Doner presented the audit findings to the Board. They explained that Workday capabilities did not align with the older systems which created incorrect accountings. These systems have been updated to correct the issue.

Acceptance of Audit Findings

Mr. Spivey moved and Dr. Reeves seconded the motion to accept the Audit Findings as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Code of Ethics Committee Report

Dr. Reeves told the Board that the Code of Ethics Committee met to review and recommend updates to the Board's Code of Ethics. She presented the proposed recommended updates such as reworking the statements to be action-focused, adding statements to clarify the role and serve as guidance, and adding a space to sign often to reaffirm commitment. She opened the floor to discuss the recommended updates. The Board requested more time to review. This item was tabled to the next meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that a Campus Master Planning presentation will be given during the March Board Retreat on March 17.

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that NWACC's enrollment is up by about 7-8 percent.

Dr. Rittle shared with the Board that he had a great time at the ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC. He recognized Alex Vasquez for his work coordinating meetings with the legislators. He further shared that he learned ACCT will be rolling out online badges for trustees who complete targeted trainings.

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that NWACC has paid down one million dollars on the Washington County Campus. He explained that NWACC has paid down two million dollars in two years with one million dollars left to pay.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Schwartz opened to the trustees who attended the ACCT National Legislative Summit to share some highlights from their trip. Mr. Spivey expressed that he loved meeting with the other trustees from other institutions nationwide. Mrs. Schneider expressed that she loved meeting with the legislators. Mrs. Latimer expressed that she loved learning new things about NWACC. Mrs. Harris expressed that she liked representing NWACC and making NWACC's voice heard on a national level. Dr. Reeves expressed that she liked speaking with Congressman Womack about the under-tunnel trail on campus. She also said that she would like to have a student representative attend in the future.

Mr. Schwartz reminded the Board that the Board Retreat, March Regular Board Meeting, and Executive Session will be on March 17 in the Peterson Auditorium.

OTHER ACTION ITEMS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Mr. Todd Schwartz, Chair

Mrs. Amber Latimer, Secretary

POLICY TITLE: TREATMENT OF STAFF

Policy 204: With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the President shall not cause or allow conditions, which are unfair, undignified, and unclear or present a conflict of interest.

Definition: Conditions are defined as official actions, policies, and procedures. Unfair refers to legally defined discriminatory acts, policies, or procedures. Undignified refers to disrespectful treatment or language. Unclear refers to ambiguously written or oral presentation. A conflict of interest is defined where a party shall receive direct personal monetary gain, or an advantage in the workplace as a result of official college decisions they are in a position to make.

Narrative: NWACC administration encourages the development of a campus culture that exemplifies a spirit of mutual support, respect and civility. This expectation of a collaborative spirit is projected throughout the college in meetings, Expanded Cabinet, Deans Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Council and in open forums.

Employee recognition occurs often and is celebrated both formally and informally as a means of acknowledging individual and team accomplishments. Examples include: the New Employee Luncheons, Celebrate Learning Days, Administrative Professionals Day, an annual recognition of outstanding faculty and staff at the Arkansas Community Colleges Association and various national conferences, Summer Employee picnic, and Holiday gatherings. Open Forums occur twice a year on each campus and Final Friday Forums, held virtually, will begin in 2024. Additionally, a new “Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony” to recognize outstanding faculty and staff, as well as new retirees started in 2016 and will continue.

In order to promote lifelong learning, all full-time college employees or their dependents are eligible to receive up to twelve hours per semester of tuition assistance at NWACC. Part-time employees and Early College Experience faculty are eligible for three hours of tuition assistance per semester.

Full-time non-faculty employees with ten or more years of service as a state employee receive a “career service bonus” annually in recognition of continuous service; faculty receive additional compensation based upon higher level academic achievement.

Mandatory, as well as elective training programs are available to all employees through the College’s online learning management compliance training platform, to assure that employees receive the required compliance training on HIPAA, FERPA, Title IX, Clery, and other important laws and safety issues.

To help create awareness and promote ethical accountability, the College strives to maintain an atmosphere of acceptance for employees to openly express concerns and issues regarding the College without fear of retaliation. The College does not condone any unfair or illegal discriminatory personnel actions or the existence of a conflict of interest within any college department. The Human Resources Office has an employee relations’ contact who is available for all faculty and staff to express concerns regarding College-related issues. To ensure a healthy conducive work environment, this person has the autonomy to address any issue that may arise. The College also utilizes a third-party online anonymous reporting platform,

“EthicsPoint”, for any member of the college or the public to use to report ethics violations. The link is located on the main NWACC website:
<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/15781/index.html>.

The College also promotes ongoing professional development training and continued review and updates of College policies and procedures in order to foster a values-based culture.

Further, without limiting the scope of the foregoing by this enumeration, he or she shall not:

1. Operate without written personnel policies, which clarify personnel rules for faculty and staff, provide for the effective handling of grievances, and protect against wrongful conditions.

Definition: Personnel policies, which address these provisions, are included in the online NWACC Policy and Procedures database.

Narrative: The policy database, “Policy Stat”, contains college-wide policies affecting employees and students; it outlines the operations framework for the College. Included in this manual are policies related to the management of grievances, identification of processes and regulations, and protection for employees from wrongful conditions. College administrators are expected to operate within the parameters of these policies and procedures. To ensure that each policy is clearly defined and legally sound, policies are reviewed regularly and updated as needed.

2. Fail to make available to staff in a timely manner all personnel rules that affect them.

Definition: Making policy and procedure available to staff in a timely manner refers to having a complete copy of the NWACC Policy and Procedures manual available online for all employees. This electronic format supports open access and also ensures that policy and procedure updates are completed regularly and communicated efficiently.

Narrative: As policies and procedures are updated, they are reviewed by Cabinet, Expanded Cabinet, and Deans Council, as needed. If required by the policy process, information on potential policy changes are provided by email in order to allow employee feedback immediately. Instructions for locating the policies and other key informational resources are included in new employee orientation.

A comprehensive benefit package is available to employees, which includes a wide range of health and wellness benefits, voluntary products, and paid leave. Benefits are explained to eligible employees in both verbal and written formats. Additionally, annual forums may be held for employees every year to discuss health care changes and other topics pertinent to employees.

In order to enhance employee’s understanding of their total compensation package and to assist them during their initial employment period, new employees are required to attend new hire orientation.

3. Continue in employment or employ any person serving on the Board.

Definition: Employees who are elected to the Board will be asked to resign immediately upon election. The college may not employ any current Board members.

Narrative: The College does not employ any current members of the Board of Trustees.

I am reporting in compliance with Executive Limitation #204.

Dennis C. Rittle, Ph.D.

President

January 13, 2025