

**WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**INFORMAL MEETING
MINUTES**

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

The Western Community College Area Board of Governors held an Informal Board meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at Western Nebraska Community College Scottsbluff Campus, 1601 East 27th Street, in the City of Scottsbluff, in the County of Scotts Bluff, in the State of Nebraska, as per the publicized notice in the Star-Herald on Tuesday, May 13, 2025.

A current agenda was available in the Board Secretary's office on the Scottsbluff Campus at the time of the publicized notice.

ROLL CALL

AREA BOARD

Linda A. Guzman-Gonzales	Present
Allan D. Kreman	Present
Joshua R. Hanson	Present
Mark A. Kaufman	Present
Starr Lehl, Vice Chairperson	Present
Lori J. Liggett	Present arrived at 10:53 a.m.
William M. Packard	Present arrived at 11:43 a.m.
Coral E. Richards	Present
R. J. Savely, Jr.	Absent
Marjorie A. Schmidt	Present
John P. Stinner, Chairperson	Present

Mr. Savely informed the Board Secretary he would be unable to attend the meeting due to personal business.

QUORUM

Chair Stinner declared a quorum was present for the transaction of business.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Chair Stinner asked for comments from the community. Pursuant to Board Policy BP-106, community members who wish to make comments will be limited to a five-minute presentation.

BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Stinner announced for public information there was a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act available on the table at the back of the room.

Chair Stinner announced the Board reserves the right to enter a closed session if deemed necessary for any item on the agenda per Section 84-1410 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes.

Board Training – Budget Update

President Dart reported that regarding budgets, there is a lot happening on the state and federal level and at the institution. While the budget will not be adopted until September, it is important to understand some of the components that have the potential to impact the budget.

As of midnight tonight (May 21, 2025), the Governor can veto any portion of the state budget passed by the legislature, including appropriations for higher education. The state appropriation for the college budget is made up of three components, the base appropriation passed by the legislature is a flat appropriation. A portion of that appropriation is based on enrollment. Due to the significant enrollment growth in Lincoln and Omaha, the larger community colleges benefit and WNCC will see a \$20,000 decrease. Property tax has been replaced by the Community College Future Fund so the College will see an increase of \$426,000.

The Nebraska Legislature approved the distribution of the nameplate capacity tax to community colleges on May 30, 2025. This decision addresses an unintended consequence of a recent change in the way community colleges are funded. The nameplate capacity tax is levied on renewable energy generation facilities and replaces personal property taxes on equipment used to generate electricity. The distribution of this tax to community colleges is part of the state's efforts to support educational institutions and address funding challenges.

An important component of the budget is dual credit. When Board Chair John Stinner served as Senator, funding was established to support dual credit programs. That funding has since grown to just over \$3 million and remains included in the current budget. In addition to this base funding, the Legislature previously allocated \$5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to help community colleges reduce dual credit tuition. The goal was to eliminate tuition costs for students for the upcoming year. However, those ARPA funds have now been exhausted. As a result, one of the Legislature's priorities this session has been to replace that temporary funding with a permanent solution.

A projected \$400,000 decrease in tuition revenue is expected, primarily due to changes in dual credit program operations. Of this reduction, \$247,000 is specifically related to dual credit tuition. Historically, the College collected tuition from dual credit students and reimbursed high schools for instructional costs, as the instruction was delivered by high school faculty. Under the new model, the College will no longer collect this tuition or incur the related instructional expenses. While this change results in a reduction in reported tuition revenue, it is offset by a corresponding decrease in instructional costs, resulting in a minimal net financial impact on the College's budget.

One significant piece of anticipated legislation may lower non-resident tuition rates, which directly impacts international students. This comes amid a broader national trend of declining international student applications, largely driven by safety concerns and perceptions of the U.S. environment. In contrast, WNCC is seeing an increase in applications from transfer students who are already residing in the United States. This trend may help offset some of the challenges associated with international recruitment. On the financial side, the most notable change between the 2024–25 and 2025–26 budgets are a difference of approximately \$1.4 million. Last year, about \$900,000 from the College's reserve funds was used to balance the budget. Importantly, those funds supported ongoing expenditures rather than one-time costs. WNCC is now actively working to reduce its reliance on reserve funding in future budgets.

Board Training – Budget Update

Due to an anticipated decrease in non-credit offerings, we are ramping up the construction trades program. Last year, all courses in this area were non-credit. This year, the College is working to transition to offering credit-bearing courses.

To do so, approvals from both the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the U.S. Department of Education must be obtained to ensure eligibility for financial aid. The College is currently awaiting the final two approvals, one of which pertains to an additional site where the courses will be offered.

Several budget changes are expected between last year and this year, particularly in expenditures. These include increases in salaries and benefits for faculty, as well as the addition of a staff position that was previously funded by a grant but will now be funded by the College.

An estimated \$200,000 increase in property, liability, and cybersecurity insurance had been anticipated. However, with the 2019 claims now falling off, it is expected that insurance rates will decrease.

Decreases in staffing include position changes and the reorganization of existing roles. Decisions regarding the potential elimination of programs have been postponed for one year. Discussions concerning faculty overload and release time are ongoing. Faculty have consistently expressed a desire to provide input whenever matters related to compensation are addressed. Most recently, a request was received to incorporate the policy and procedures regarding faculty overload into the faculty negotiated agreement.

This year, WNCC adopted a zero-based budgeting approach for the general fund, which includes all non-personnel expenses. Unlike the traditional method of adjusting previous budgets incrementally, this process required departments to build their budgets from scratch and justify every expense. For many departments, this may have been the first time engaging in such a comprehensive budgeting process.

Typically, zero-based budgeting results in an increase in budget requests. However, this year saw the opposite—a decrease of approximately \$70,000, or about 1%. This suggests that departments approached the process thoughtfully and conservatively. Moreover, based on the broader budget discussions held a few weeks ago, it is likely that additional efficiencies will be identified. As a result, a slight decrease in the overall General Fund budget is anticipated.

Policy Approval Process

Ms. Reichert explained that Board policies provide the operational framework within which the College functions. Administrative procedures are the operational processes required to implement the institutional policy. Board Policy (BP-115 Board Policies and Administrative Procedures) governs WNCC's development and management of policies and procedures. The Board is authorized by Nebraska state statute to "adopt and promulgate such rules and regulations as the Board may deem necessary or appropriate to the administration of the community college area." The Board works with the WNCC President in determining which policies are necessary for the effective and efficient operation of the College.

Policy Approval Process (cont.)

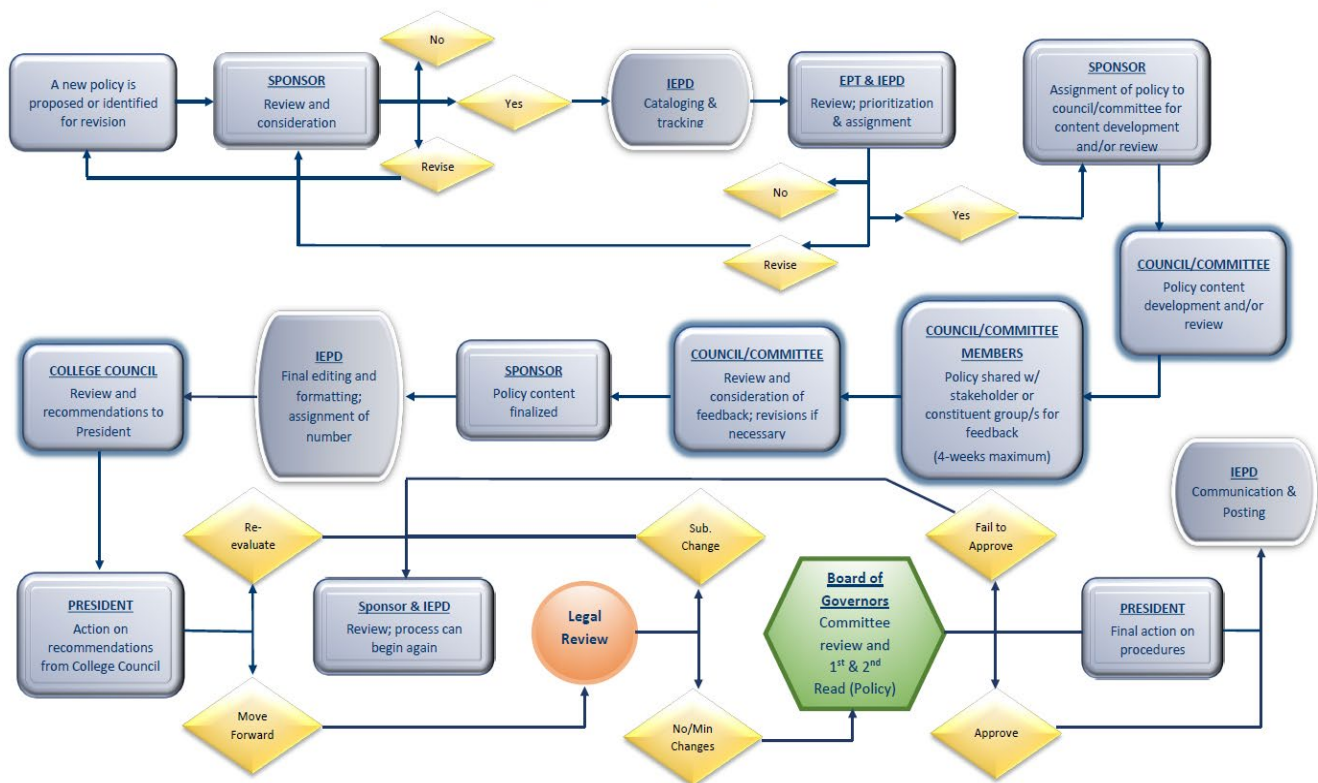
The WNCC President is responsible for establishing a process that engages campus expertise in the development of a policy. While it may be crafted and recommended through shared governance and the administration of the College, a Board policy is not final until it has been reviewed by the Board of Governors and formally adopted at a public meeting.

The Board delegates to the President the authority for the development, adoptions, and execution of administrative procedures necessary to implement Board policy. The President's leadership team advises the President on policy matters. College Council serves as the final review body for policy and procedures and is advisory to the President regarding the adoption of new or revised policies and procedures. All Board policies and administrative procedures will be reviewed on a routine basis, but at a minimum, every five years. The President and members of their leadership team will establish appropriate review cycles.

Board Policies and administrative procedures are organized as follows:

Numbering Sequence	Policy Category	Responsible Authority
Series 100	Board of Governors	Board of Governors
Series 200	College Organization	President and Vice Presidents
Series 300	Financial Services	Chief Financial Officer
Series 400	Human Resources	Associate VP of Human Resources
Series 500	Student Services	Chief Student Services Officer
Series 600	Instruction	Chief Academic Officer
Series 700	General Institutional	President and Vice Presidents
Series 800	Information Technology	Chief Financial Officer

Appendix D – Board Policy Flowchart



Board Member Comments

There were no comments.

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 1:00 p.m., Coral E. Richards Boardroom, Scottsbluff Campus, 1601 East 27th Street, Scottsbluff, NE

Adjournment