

**WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

The Western Community College Area Board of Governors held a Regular Board meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 19, 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 Thursday, November 6, 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
Joshua R. Hanson	Present (via zoom)
Mark A. Kaufman	Present
Allan D. Kreman.....	Present
Starr Lehl, Vice Chairperson	Present
Lori J. Liggett.....	Present (via zoom)
William M. Packard	Present
Coral E. Richards	Present
R. J. Savely, Jr.....	Present
Marjorie A. Schmidt.....	Present
John P. Stinner, Chairperson.....	Present

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. There were no comments.

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.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Review Contents of Consent Calendar
 - a. Agenda
 - b. Excuse Absent Board Member(s) All Board members were present.
 - c. Minutes
 - i. November 19, 2025 Informal Meeting
 - ii. November 19, 2025 Regular Meeting
2. Claims: October 2025
 - a. WCCA Unrestricted Fund - \$2,587,353.52
 - b. WCCA Restricted Fund - \$29,110.55
 - c. WCCA Federal Fund - N/A
 - d. WCCA Agency Fund - \$9,344.44
 - e. WCCA Loan Fund - 0 -
 - f. WCCA Plant Fund - \$818,984.42
 - g. WCCA Auxiliary Fund - \$125,183.60
 - i. City Planning Commission Reports (no reports)
3. Approval of Consent Calendar
4. Consideration of Items Extracted from Consent Calendar

There were no extractions. Chair Stinner entertained a motion for approval of the Consent Calendar as presented.

Mr. Savelly MOVED to approve the Consent Calendar. SECONDED by Ms. Schmidt. The vote was, Yes: Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Savelly, Schmidt, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

BOARD MEMBER MILEAGE AND/OR EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT (September & October)

Ms. Guzman-Gonzales MOVED to approve the following travel expenses: Mr. Josh Hanson for \$106.40 and Mr. Allan Kreman for \$54.60. SECONDED by Mr. Kaufman. The vote was, Yes: Kaufman, Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Savelly, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: Hanson, Kreman. Absent: None. Motion carried.

BOARD MEMBER MILEAGE AND/OR EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT (September & October)

Ms. Guzman-Gonzales MOVED to approve the following travel expenses: Ms. Starr Lehl for \$73.36 and Ms. Lori Liggett for \$64.68. SECONDED by Mr. Kreman. The vote was, Yes: Kaufman, Kreman, Packard, Richards, Savelly, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: Lehl, Liggett. Absent: None. Motion carried.

BOARD MEMBER MILEAGE AND/OR EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT (September & October)

Mr. Kaufman MOVED to approve the following travel expenses: Mr. R. J. Savelly for \$252.00 and Ms. Marjorie Schmidt \$358.40. SECONDED by Ms. Lehl. The vote was, Yes: Kreman, Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: Savelly, Schmidt. Absent: None. Motion carried.

PRESIDENT'S PERSONNEL REPORT

1. Review Contents of Personnel Consent Calendar
 - a. Resignation(s)
 1. Mr. Nathanael Andresen, Admissions Specialist II
Effective November 11, 2025
 - b. Appointment(s)
 1. No Appointments

Chair Stinner entertained a motion for approval of the President's Personnel Report as presented.

Ms. Guzman-Gonzales MOVED to approve the President's Personnel Report. SECONDED by Mr. Kaufman. The vote was, Yes: Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Savely, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Reports and Recommendations from the Finance and Operations Committee

WNCC Annual Audits - FY 25 Financial Audit

Ms. Lynne Koski, Vice President of Administrative Services, reported that Mr. Kevin Sylvester of Dana F. Cole and Company had presented the Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Audit to the Board Finance and Operations Committee earlier in the week. She noted that the audit was clean and included no management letter, a result she characterized as highly positive.

She further explained that the audit did not include the Single Audit related to federal funds. Owing to the federal government shutdown, auditors had not yet received federal guidance on the criteria required to complete the Single Audit. Preliminary work has been completed, and the Single Audit will be issued once federal guidance is finalized. Should the criteria change, additional audit procedures may be necessary. The results of the Single Audit will be presented at a later date.

Ms. Koski expressed appreciation for all employees involved in the audit process. Although the finance office plays a primary role, achieving a clean audit requires cooperation across multiple offices and individuals.

In the absence of further discussion, Chair Stinner entertained a motion for acceptance of the 2025 Financial Audit.

Mr. Savely MOVED for acceptance of the 2025 FY Financial Audit. SECONDED by Mr. Kaufman. The vote was, Yes: Liggett, Packard, Richards, Savely, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Lehl, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

F.T.E. Audit

Mr. Arich Knaub, Enrollment Research Analytics Director, presented the annual audit of Full-Time Equivalency (FTE). Mr. Knaub explained that each year following the close of the academic cycle, the Institutional Research team conducts an audit of FTE—full-time equivalency—by counting every class in which students are registered that qualifies for reimbursable state aid.

F.T.E. Audit (cont.)

The presentation detailed the two primary components of this process: FTE and REU (Reimbursable Education Units). REUs are calculated using the weight factor assigned to each course. A traditional academic course carries a weight of 1.0. A "light" course, which requires some modification outside a traditional classroom setting, receives a weight of 1.5. A 2.0 course involves significant modification—such as those in Diesel Technology or Power Line programs—and receives a higher weight due to typically lower enrollment and the increased need for equipment, technology, and funding.

The audit was completed in collaboration with Dana F. Cole and Company, as in previous years, and no issues were identified. All students registered in courses after the drop/add period were counted as eligible for the audit, regardless of whether they later withdrew, dropped, or completed the course. The audit measured the number of students who paid some amount of tuition.

The key section of the report is the Statements of Reimbursable Full-Time Equivalent Student Enrollment. The total audited FTE for the year was 1,004, compared to 1,008 the previous year—a modest difference of four FTE, indicating that the 2024–25 academic year closely mirrored 2023–24.

Preliminary forecasting indicated promising trends. Last fall's FTE was 484, while this fall's figure had already reached approximately 520, reflecting a significant increase that the team anticipates will continue.

The report also continued the practice initiated last year in alignment with Governor Pillen's priorities, of separately tracking dual-enrolled students. Dual-enrollment FTE reached 226, an increase of 13 FTE over the prior comparable year and an area of ongoing growth. When asked whether dual-enrollment data was available by district, Mr. Knaub indicated that this breakdown was not included in the report but could be provided.

The team also reviewed shifts in FTE and noted a slight decline in the non-credit area. This reduction was primarily the result of new program development and instructor-related challenges that prevented several courses from running. These issues have since been resolved, and this decline accounts for most of the FTE decrease.

The remainder of the report offers additional breakdowns, including four-year academic comparisons and three-year snapshots for both the current and previous years. Overall, FTE has remained steady at approximately 1,000 for the past four academic years.

Ms. Schmidt MOVED for acceptance of the F.T.E. Audit as presented. SECONDED by Mr. Savelly. The vote was, Yes: Packard, Richards, Savelly, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Lehl, Liggett, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Presentation of 2025-2026 Proposed Fiscal Year Student Charges

Tuition and Fees/Room and Meal Plans

Ms. Lynne Koski, Vice President of Administrative Services, reminded the Board that at the November meeting, tuition and fee information was presented as a first read to allow time for review. Ms. Koski noted that the administration has reviewed and compared both in-state and out-of-state tuition and fee data with those of other community colleges. This includes approval of a proposal to eliminate the border state rate, which currently represents about 8% of total credit hours. Even with a proposed flat non-resident rate of \$150 per credit hour (tuition + fees), WNCC would remain competitive—still at or below other colleges' resident rates.

WNCC Proposed Tuition, Fees, Room and Board		Current 2025-26	Proposed 2026-27	2026-27 \$ Change
Tuition per credit hour (1)				
	Resident tuition	\$109.50	\$111.50	\$2.00
Eliminate	Border States / Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota	\$119.50	\$0.00	(\$119.50)
	Non-Resident tuition	\$128.50	\$131.50	\$3.00
	High School Partnership	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fees per credit hour (1)				
	Activity / Student Service	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$0.00
	Facility	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$0.00
	Technology	\$5.50	\$5.50	\$0.00
	Scholarship	\$5.50	\$5.50	\$0.00
	Total Resident and Non-Resident	\$18.50	\$18.50	\$0.00
	High School Partnership fee	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Room and Board/Semester				
	Pioneer Hall Double as Single w/14 meal plan	\$3,987.00	\$4,062.00	\$75.00
	Pioneer Hall Double as Single w/19 meal plan	\$4,191.00	\$4,266.00	\$75.00
	Pioneer Hall Double w/14 meal plan	\$3,634.00	\$3,669.00	\$35.00
	Pioneer Hall Double w/19 meal plan	\$3,838.00	\$3,873.00	\$35.00
	Pioneer Horizon Double as Single w/14 meal plan	\$4,318.00	\$4,409.00	\$91.00
	Pioneer Horizon Double as Single w/19 meal plan	\$4,522.00	\$4,613.00	\$91.00
	Pioneer Horizon Double w/14 meal plan	\$3,967.00	\$4,012.00	\$45.00
	Pioneer Horizon Double w/19 meal plan	\$4,171.00	\$4,216.00	\$45.00
	Conestoga Single w/14 meal plan	\$4,565.00	\$4,669.00	\$104.00
	Conestoga Single w/19 meal plan	\$4,769.00	\$4,873.00	\$104.00
	Conestoga Double w/14 meal plan	\$4,232.00	\$4,285.00	\$53.00
	Conestoga Double w/19 meal plan	\$4,436.00	\$4,489.00	\$53.00
	Sidney Hall Double as Single no meal plan	\$2,026.00	\$2,127.30	\$101.30
	Sidney Hall Double no meal plan	\$1,675.00	\$1,725.25	\$50.25
Housing Fee/Semester				
	Laundry, To-go food container, Activities, Damage	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$0.00
Other Fees	Experiential Learning/credit hour	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$0.00
	GED Testing	\$120.00	\$120.00	\$0.00
	Transcripts – Official Copies			
	-Electronic	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$0.00
	-Paper	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$0.00
	International Registration Fee	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$0.00

Based on review, the administration brought forward a request for the Board to approve the tuition and fee schedule, as well as the room and board schedule.

Tuition and Fees

Mr. Savelly MOVED for approval of the 2025-2026 Proposed Fiscal Year Student Charges – Tuition and Fees. SECONDED by Mr. Kaufman. The vote was, Yes: Richards, Savelly, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Room and Board

Mr. Kaufman MOVED for approval of the 2025-2026 Proposed Fiscal Year Student Charges – Room and Board. SECONDED by Ms. Guzman-Gonzales. The vote was, Yes: Savelly, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Approval of Resolution Authorizing Prepayment of all Basic Rent Due Related to a Lease Purchase Agreement with First National Bank Omaha (FNBO)

Ms. Lynne Koski, Vice President of Administrative Services, presented a resolution to request authorization for the payoff of debt associated with the 2019 renovation of the Welcome Center building. There were two loans connected to the project: one for basic rent and another bridge loan tied to the capital campaign. The current request pertains only to the loan related to basic rent and the associated lease payment agreement for the facility. Ms. Koski noted that the College is no longer subject to any early payoff penalties. Accordingly, the request is that the Board authorize the administration to proceed with preparing the paperwork and all necessary documentation to retire the debt.

Chair Stinner stated that for the record, he would read the resolution.

Approval of Resolution Authorizing Prepayment of all Basic Rent Due Related to a Lease Purchase Agreement with First National Bank Omaha (FNBO) (cont.)

WHEREAS Western Nebraska College Area (WNCC) has outstanding basic rent with First National Bank of Omaha (formerly Western States Bank) under the terms of the Lease-Purchase Agreement dated February 15, 2018; and

WHEREAS the Board of Governors of WNCC has determined that it is in the best interest of the College to prepay this basic rent in full.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the administrators of WNCC are hereby authorized, empowered, and directed to pay the outstanding balance of the basic rent referenced above in full, including any principal, interest, fees, and other charges as set forth in the preliminary payoff statement provided by FNBO; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Vice President of Administrative Services is authorized to manage the payoff process, including requesting final payoff amount, signing necessary documents, and executing payment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon full payment, administrators are authorized to take actions to release security interests or liens and to terminate related agreements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all previous related actions taken by authorized individuals are hereby approved.

Chair Stinner entertained a motion for approval of the Resolution Authorizing Prepayment of all Basic Rent Due Related to a Lease Purchase Agreement with First National Bank Omaha (FNBO)

Dr. Packard MOVED for approval of the Resolution Authorizing Prepayment of all Basic Rent Due Related to a Lease Purchase Agreement with First National Bank Omaha (FNBO). SECONDED by Ms. Guzman-Gonzales. The vote was, Yes: Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Savelly, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Report from 2025 ACCT Leadership Congress

Mr. Savelly reported that this year's conference underscored that AI is already here and that colleges are actively integrating it, raising the question of how to use it most effectively moving forward. A standout session featured a cybersecurity and IT instructor with 40 years of experience who is now NSF-funded to teach AI—its benefits, risks, and pitfalls—to community-college boards and faculty nationwide. He emphasized the need for institutional AI policies while still allowing departments flexibility. AI, he noted, is no more disruptive than calculators or computers; it will not eliminate jobs but will change them. He demonstrated AI-supported instruction and grading using an English syllabus and highlighted more than 20 AI tools for grammar, source analysis, and detecting AI-generated content. He also shared an anecdote about a previously resistant instructor who embraced AI after her students copied AI-generated work, underscoring the need for adaptation.

He also recommended a website—created using AI—for faculty and boards to explore AI's capabilities and risks, and he invited Nebraska institutions to schedule a presentation.

Another session highlighted a Kansas City, Kansas, college that is partnering with four colleges and more than thirty businesses. Panasonic described a collaboration in which a college instructor's salary was doubled to \$150,000, modern equipment was provided, and training was aligned with plant needs. Using AI and hands-on shadowing, the program expanded enrollment and now supplies Panasonic with roughly twenty new hires per month.

A college in Arizona presented a model that treats every student equitably, whether academic or CTE. Recruitment begins at age eight through a summer "college for kids" program taught by high school students, and parents are engaged early to help them navigate admissions and academic planning.

Leah Barrett from Northeast Community College highlighted SNAP Employment and Training benefits which—although taking about two years to process—provide supports such as phone, gas, and rent assistance beyond standard SNAP.

A California college demonstrated AI use in dual-enrollment programs, including welding, automotive, and nursing. To address a regional shortage of five hundred new nurses per year, students begin in tenth grade with Nursing 101, which includes first aid and shadowing. Those who continue complete prerequisites in high school and enter nursing programs immediately after graduation, with plans to scale to 150 students by 2026–27.

Wyoming's community colleges showcased a model well-suited for rural states: systemwide specialization. Under this approach, each college focuses on two to four high-need programs rather than duplicating all offerings, maximizing financial efficiency while meeting regional workforce needs.

INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS

2025 Annual Library Report

Ms. Allison Reisig, Technical Services Librarian reported that the Library experienced a notably productive and transformative year, marked most prominently by the renovation of the Sidney Library. The original stacks had deteriorated—some visibly crooked—prompting the Library to secure funding for new shelving, study pods, updated furniture, and height-adjustable computer desks to support a more comfortable and accessible environment.

The floor plan also underwent a thoughtful redesign. Previously, the testing rooms near the entrance were bordered by casual seating, which often created noise conflicts. The redesign moved the stacks to the front of the building—with shorter shelving to improve sightlines—and relocated casual seating to a bright, welcoming area better suited for conversation. As part of the renovation, the physical collection was reduced by half, increasing reliance on electronic resources, and a small leisure-reading collection was introduced to encourage more frequent visits.

On the digital front, the Library launched a response-based chatbot on its website to answer common questions and route more complex inquiries for next-day follow-up. During development, approximately 75 FAQs were updated, significantly improving usage and giving students 24/7 access to reliable information. Findings from a user-experience study conducted last spring also guided improvements to several website menus.

To strengthen data-driven decision-making, the Library implemented LibInsight to more effectively track statistics and database usage. This tool supported cost-effectiveness reviews, including the discontinuation of a rarely used database that cost \$900 annually but received only three accesses.

Usage trends indicate that electronic resources continue to dominate student research. A recent dip in electronic borrowing appears to stem from rapid student turnover and points to a need for enhanced marketing—one of the Library's goals for the coming year.

Physical materials remain in high demand. All 150 graphing calculators circulate each semester, and the Library's seventy-five laptops and Chromebooks maintain consistent waitlists, offering substantial savings to students. Books, DVDs, and audiobooks also remain popular for leisure use.

Library visits continue to rise on the Scottsbluff campus, particularly for study room reservations. Although Sidney's in-person traffic has declined in recent years, the Library is optimistic that the refreshed space will draw students back.

In response to an inquiry, Ms. Reisig confirmed that the public may use the Library free of charge and may check out books and DVDs. Equipment loans and database access remain restricted, with database usage limited to on-campus access in accordance with vendor agreements.

Student Report

Two weeks ago, a clothing drive was held to support students arriving from warm climates who did not have adequate cold weather clothing. The community and student body were invited to donate gently used items, and last week, those donations were distributed to students.

On December 5th, an event is planned in the dining hall, where music will be played, and a relaxed space will be created to help students unwind and de-stress during the week leading up to finals.

Faculty Report - Brian Croft, Amy Winters

Performing Arts students, under the direction of Ms. Violette Briggs, Dr. Nathaniel Johnson, and Dr. Patrick Newell, performed for more than 1,200 students at six Panhandle Region high schools during the first week of November. Recruitment activities, workshops, and scholarship auditions were held at Scottsbluff High School, Gering High School, Hemingford High School, Kimball High School, Mitchell High School, and Morrill High School.

In September, Dr. Patrick Newell presented at the Nebraska Speech, Communication, and Theatre Association Conference in Kearney. His sessions included *I Have to Do What? Directing the Big Musical, Yeah, But Can She Sing It? Casting Voices*, and *The Character's Journey: Developing Authentic Characters*. He also staffed the WNCC recruiting table.

On the Applied Tech side, the Powerline program hosted another successful open house and is working to strengthen and reconnect with its advisory board. All Applied Tech disciplines—Auto, Diesel, Aviation, and Powerline—are striving to ensure their advisory groups remain strong, helping maintain community engagement and support.

Ms. Jennifer Pedersen and the CollegeNow team continue to strengthen communication with area high schools. They are working to clarify processes related to student registration, class attendance expectations, and course locations—efforts that are especially important as the number of dual-credit students continues to grow.

Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA)

Reports from 2025 NCCA Annual Meeting - Lehl, Kreman, Packard, Schmidt

Ms. Lehl opened the discussion by reporting on the Sunday night banquet, where three WNCC affiliates were recognized:

- Marcene Elwell was honored as the WNCC Outstanding Faculty Member.
- Pauline Newman who attended in person received the WNCC Administrator Award.
- Jodi Ruzicka was honored as the WNCC Distinguished Alumni.

Monday's meeting featured a keynote address by Mr. Jim Hermes, Associate Vice President for Government Relations at the American Association of Community Colleges. Although board members found the presentation somewhat dry, the industry partner panel that followed was well received. When asked which skills students most often lack, the panel unanimously emphasized communication—written, verbal, and interpersonal—citing students' heavy reliance on phones and computers as a contributing challenge. Ms. Lehl noted this as an important area for continued focus.

WNCC will host next year's event. Ms. Lehl recommended including a similar industry panel, as participants spoke highly of the community colleges they represented and provided strong examples of collaboration with local partners.

Mr. Kreman added that it would have been helpful for the board to have greater involvement in the program, perhaps through a guest speaker. He also noted that the government shutdown prevented some questions from being addressed. Attendees agreed that the industry panel was excellent, but felt the three hours leading up to it were unproductive given the time and cost of attending. Suggestions included adding more substantive sessions, such as presentations on the culinary school or the large welding program at Southeast Community College.

Western Nebraska Community College Foundation

Ms. Jennifer Reisig, WNCC Foundation Executive Director reported that the Alumni Banquet was held on October 24 and proved to be a wonderful evening. Past Board Chair, Karen Anderson received the Tom and Kara Perkins Friend of the College Award, and retired faculty member Mert Davis was honored with the Meritorious Service Award. Although Davis was unable to attend due to illness, his family traveled from across the region and the country to accept the award on his behalf. They celebrated with him the following day, and he passed away two days later at age ninety-four.

One of the memorials was designated to the WNCC Foundation, and the Foundation has received many touching stories from his former students and colleagues. While his passing is deeply felt, there is gratitude that he was honored so near the end of his life.

Additional honorees included Outstanding Young Alumnus Andrew Hunzicker, Outstanding Alumna Jodi Ruzicka (also recognized at NCCA), and the Pilkington family, who received the Family Pride Award in recognition of three generations who attended the College under its various names.

Planning is already underway for a significantly expanded celebration at next year's centennial banquet, with attendance expected to double from this year's more than one hundred guests.

A December celebration will be held to announce final profit numbers and recognize sponsors of the Monument Marathon. Registration reached a record 669 runners—an increase of 20% over two years. Profit rose from an average of \$45,000 in prior years to \$78,602 last year, and this year's total is expected to reach at least \$75,000. Feedback continues to be excellent, and recognition of the race is growing even beyond Nebraska. It has become a major community event that strengthens relationships and supports students.

A workforce collaboration initiative has begun to strengthen connections with business partners across the Panhandle and improve internal communication regarding workforce needs. Doug Mader and the Foundation director are jointly leading the data/CRM component of the project.

Development Director Alena Haun traveled to Lincoln and Omaha following the NCCA meeting to meet with donors and foundations. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska—new marathon sponsors last year—expressed strong enthusiasm and verbally committed to returning as sponsors. Ms. Haun also met with the Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation to explore the creation of a Scott Scholars program, which could support tuition, room and board, and help recruit students into H3 programs.

In late October, discussions were also held with the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation regarding potential collaborations beyond its long-standing scholarship support.

The minimum for establishing an endowment is \$25,000, which can sustain a \$1,000 annual scholarship. The Foundation reserves 40% of earnings each year to safeguard the endowment against market downturns and ensure uninterrupted awards.

The Foundation's Greatest Need Fund supports the Student Emergency Fund, with up to \$5,000 in remaining funds each year directed to the food pantry. Ahead of the recent SNAP benefit suspension, Student Life surveyed students to identify priority needs and stocked the pantry accordingly. The current needs list will be shared with Board members, as those needs shift frequently. The pantry now includes cold storage thanks to a donated refrigerator and remains well-stocked and actively used by students.

Western Nebraska Community College Foundation (cont.)

Student Life is also providing Thanksgiving meal assistance through the Wobble and Gobble program. This year, fifty-six students across all three campuses requested support, a number well within capacity—though additional students would have been supported if needed.

The Foundation extends sincere appreciation for the continued support and care shown to its students.

President Comments

President Dart reported that he met yesterday in Kearney with the Aksarben Foundation's Executive Director. The Foundation is intensifying its support for apprenticeships and actively fundraising to expand those efforts. Apprenticeships remain a state and national priority as a work-based learning model.

The College's first registered apprenticeship—in welding technology—was expected to be approved six weeks ago, but the government shutdown caused delays. Approval is anticipated soon. This group apprenticeship is seeking employer partners across the Panhandle. Doug Mader, Workforce Training Director is leading the initiative, with strong collaboration from Aksarben.

On December 1, the College will convene government, industry, and education partners to discuss emerging needs in technical education as part of ongoing regional workforce efforts.

Very Valley Christmas will take place on campus December 6–7 (7:30 p.m. Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday). Finals are scheduled for December 8–12, with students returning January 12; faculty will remain on campus through much of the break.

The major update is that construction on the Health Science renovation is nearly complete. Equipment and technology installation is now underway, and classrooms, labs, and simulation spaces are on track for use by January 12. Not all displaced personnel will move back immediately, and relocations will continue through the semester.

Regarding student support during finals, it was noted that while some past activities (such as massage chairs) are no longer offered, the College now hosts De-Stress Week beforehand with daily activities on all three campuses. A late-night breakfast is held on Monday, and the library provides free coffee, cookies, fruit, and other snacks throughout finals week.

Board Member Comments

President Dart and administrative staff were thanked for their outstanding work in the dual-credit area. ACCT recently noted that the national average for dual-credit enrollment at community colleges is 20%, and last month we heard that WNCC is at 43%. That is remarkable work—thank you.

Ms. Koski and her team were thanked for getting the College through another audit. Their time and effort were appreciated.

Dr. Packard mentioned that the Board appreciates the student attendance at the Board meetings. This has been a wonderful opportunity to meet and get to know some of our students. These interactions bring us closer to our community and we need to take every opportunity to meet our students and for them to meet the Board members. Too often boards feel far removed from the colleges they serve. These interactions help bridge that gap.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

2026 Community College National Legislative Summit

February 8-11, 2026
Marriott Marquis, Washington DC

2026 Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference

May 20-24, 2026
Chicago, Illinois

Upcoming Meetings and Events (cont.)

2026 AACC Annual Conference

April 10-14, 2026
Seattle, Washington

2026 ACCT Leadership Congress

October 21-24, 2026
Hyatt Regency, Chicago, Illinois

**Click on the following links to access additional information.

[WNCC Athletics](#)

[WNCC Performing Arts](#)

[WNCC Athletic and Academic Calendar](#)

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 1:00 p.m., Western Nebraska Community College Scottsbluff Campus, 1601 East 27th Street, Scottsbluff, NE.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 2:21 p.m.

John P. Stinner, Chairperson

Susan L. Verbeck, Secretary