WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS

INFORMAL MEETING
MINUTES

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

The Western Community College Area Board of Governors held an Informal Board meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at Western Nebraska Community College, Coral E. Richards Boardroom, 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 Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

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

AREA BOARD

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

Ms. Guzman-Gonzales, Mr. Hanson, and Ms. Liggett informed the Board Secretary they were unable to attend the meeting due to personal business commitments.

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, Chair Stinner reminded community members who wish to make comments will be limited to a five-minute presentation. There were no comments.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON 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
Institutional Academic Program Performance Review - Fall 2025

Purpose and Review Framework
Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) conducts academic program reviews on multiple, overlapping timelines to ensure its academic offerings continue to meet the educational, workforce, and economic needs of its 13-county Panhandle service area.

The institution operates within three established review cycles:
1. **External Program Review (7-year cycle)**
   Mandated by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE), this review applies to all academic programs and follows a standardized, statewide framework.
2. **Internal Program Review (5-year cycle)**
   A primarily faculty-led process that evaluates enrollment, completion, curriculum quality, and—where applicable—industry alignment.
3. **Institutional Academic Program Performance Review (Annual)**
   Initiated in 2024, this presidentially led annual review serves as an early diagnostic "check-up" on program health. It is designed to identify emerging challenges, provide targeted support, and inform long-term strategic planning, rather than to function as a punitive or automatic program elimination mechanism.

This annual review supplements—but does not replace—the five- and seven-year reviews. Its primary goal is institutional responsiveness and sustainability, particularly for workforce-aligned programs.

Outcomes and Program Improvement Highlights
The Fall 2025 review demonstrated that the annual process has produced meaningful programmatic improvements and stronger institutional understanding. Three programs illustrate the impact of this approach:

Early Childhood Education
Early Childhood Education is a high-demand, high-skill program critical to regional workforce stability, though it does not meet the "high-wage" threshold typically associated with H3 careers. Enrollment challenges mirror statewide and national trends tied largely to compensation levels in the field.

Through the annual review process, the institution identified opportunities to strengthen program visibility and community engagement beyond curriculum alone. Outcomes included expanded outreach efforts, continued hosting of the Week of the Young Child, and the launch of an on-campus Early Childhood Conference. Increased use of flexible and online course options also improved access for working students. As a result, fall enrollment increased and overall awareness of the program continues to grow.

Health Information Technology
Health Information Technology is a fully online, high-demand workforce program. During the review period, the program navigated significant changes in national accreditation standards. Faculty participation in the annual review led to WNCC serving as a pilot institution for a new accreditation-aligned curricular model.

Board Training (cont.)
Institutional Academic Program Performance Review Fall 2025
This effort resulted in a comprehensive curriculum redesign and the introduction of a new Medical Coding certificate. The new certificate reached full enrollment in Fall 2025, and additional cohorts are being developed in partnership with Box Butte General Hospital. The program now shows strong enrollment momentum and enhanced employer alignment.

Medical Laboratory Technology
Medical Laboratory Technology is a high-wage, high-skill healthcare program with strong regional demand but historically limited student awareness. The annual review process improved institutional understanding of program structure, accreditation constraints, and workforce pathways. Increased engagement with regional healthcare partners and more targeted outreach contributed to improved enrollment trends compared to the prior year. While continued growth is needed, the program is trending positively.

These examples demonstrate that the annual performance review frequently results in program strengthening, innovation, and targeted support rather than program closure.

Evaluation Criteria and Use of Data
Programs are evaluated using five quantitative indicators, analyzed as three-year averages:
1. Average student headcount
2. Average student full-time equivalent (FTE)
3. Credentials awarded (degrees and certificates)
4. Student FTE to instructional FTE ratio
5. Program capacity utilization

An additional contextual indicator—declared majors per instructional FTE—is also reviewed to distinguish between service courses and program-specific enrollment.

Programs appearing in the bottom five of at least two indicators are flagged for further review. Enrollment alone is not determinative. Capacity, instructional costs, accreditation limits, and workforce relevance are evaluated in context.

Benchmarks are internal and comparative, including:
- WNCC workforce program averages
- WNCC institutional averages
- Transfer program benchmarks where applicable

The review also recognizes that state funding is weighted by Reimbursable Education Units (REUs) rather than raw FTE alone, providing additional consideration for high-cost technical and healthcare programs.

Quantitative data (Phase 1) is supplemented by qualitative analysis (Phase 2), including prior program reviews, industry demand, dual credit impacts, inter-program dependencies, and trend data. Qualitative findings are reviewed internally to avoid premature identification of potentially impacted programs in public meetings.

Governing Authority
Any recommendation for program closure or faculty reduction is governed by:
- Board Policy BP-430
- Administrative Procedure AP-430.01
- Nebraska State Statute

Board Training (cont.)
Institutional Academic Program Performance Review Fall 2025
These policies apply to programmatic decisions and are distinct from faculty or staff performance evaluation processes.

Reduction in Force: Evidence and Standards
Under BP-430 and AP-430.01, a reduction in force or program elimination may be considered only when supported by documented evidence of a change in circumstance. Required evidence includes:
- Inability of the program to meet current student demand or regional economic needs
- Sustained enrollment and FTE trends
- Student-to-instructor ratios
- Program viability relative to workforce alignment
- Confirmation that no reasonable reassignment opportunities exist for affected faculty

Importantly, this process evaluates program performance, not individual employee performance. Faculty members affected by program closure are dismissed with honor, not for cause.

Faculty and Student Protections
If a program is eliminated:
- Students are guaranteed a teach-out plan, developed collaboratively by administration and faculty
- Faculty receive:
  - Advance written notice
  - The right to a hearing before the Board
  - The right to representation
  - Preferred reemployment and recall rights for 24 months for any position for which they are qualified

Institutional Program Review Timeline
The annual review follows a structured and transparent timeline:
- September – Institutional budget adoption
- October – Board discussion of program review purpose and rationale
- November – Presentation of indicators and review methodology
- Late November–December
  - Phase 1: Quantitative analysis
  - Phase 2: Qualitative analysis
- Early January – Faculty discussions and internal review
- January Board Meeting – Possible recommendation (if any)
- February – Faculty hearing if requested
- By February 13 – Statutory 90-day faculty notice deadline
- By March 15 – Statutory 60-day Board action deadline

At most, one program—or none—would be considered for closure in a given year. No recommendation for program closure was made as part of the Fall 2025 presentation.

The Fall 2025 Institutional Academic Program Performance Review reinforces WNCC's commitment to proactive planning, transparency, and workforce responsiveness. The annual review process strengthens programs, informs resource allocation, protects students and employees, and positions the institution to meet evolving regional workforce needs over the next 5, 10, and 15 years.

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 1:00 p.m., Coral E. Richards Boardroom, WNCC Scottsbluff Campus, 1601 East 27th Street, Scottsbluff, NE.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:50 a.m.

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John P. Stinner, Chair   Susan L. Verbeck, Secretary