

**WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

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

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Review Contents of Consent Calendar
 - a. Agenda
 - b. Excuse Absent Board Member(s)
 - c. Minutes
 1. November 19, 2025, Informal Meeting
 2. November 19, 2025, Regular Meeting
2. **Claims:** November 2025
 - a. WCCA Unrestricted Fund - \$2,204,631.06

- b. WCCA Restricted Fund - \$49,342.50
 - c. WCCA Federal Fund - \$164.77
 - d. WCCA Agency Fund - \$2,061.63
 - e. WCCA Loan Fund - 0 -
 - f. WCCA Plant Fund - \$194,232.17
 - g. WCCA Auxiliary Fund - \$82,732.98
- 3. City Planning Commission Reports – no reports
 - 4. Approval of Consent Calendar
 - 5. Consideration of Items Extracted from Consent Calendar – there were no extractions

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

BOARD MEMBER MILEAGE AND/OR EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Ms. Lehl MOVED to approve the following travel expense: Mr. R. J. Savely for \$186.20. SECONDED by Mr. Kaufman. The vote was, Yes: Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: Savely. Absent: None. Motion carried.

PRESIDENT'S PERSONNEL REPORT

Resignation(s)

No Resignations

Appointment(s)

- 1. Ms. Alexandra Ewert, Admissions Specialist II, Effective December 28, 2025
- 2. Ms. Tanya Woodward, English Instructor, Effective August 10, 2026

In the absence of extractions, Chair Stinner entertained a motion for approval of the President's Personnel Report.

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

WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) Scholarship

Ms. Jennifer Branson, Account Manager for Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), joined the meeting to present a \$15,000 check in support of student scholarships at Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC). She shared that NPPD was honored to make the presentation as part of its ongoing commitment to education and workforce development.

The contribution was generated through the 34th Annual Nebraska Open Golf Tournament held in September. Over the life of the tournament, a cumulative total of \$2,095,821 has been raised to directly support community college students across NPPD's service territory.

Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) Scholarship (cont.)

WNCC has been a key partner in this effort and with this latest gift, has now received a total of \$416,635 from the tournament.

Ms. Branson noted that the funds help students cover tuition, pursue career goals, and strengthen Nebraska's workforce and economy. She also emphasized NPPD's strong relationship with WNCC, highlighting the hiring of WNCC graduates and the ongoing support of interns from the Powerline program. She praised the skill and dedication of the students as a testament to the value of community colleges and thanked WNCC for its continued partnership, noting that together they are investing in Nebraska's future, one student at a time.

WNCC representatives expressed sincere appreciation for NPPD's financial support and, equally important, its role as an industry partner. They emphasized that partnerships like NPPD's ensure the Powerline program remains industry-relevant and provide students with meaningful internship and employment opportunities. Both organizations acknowledged the partnership as a shared success that benefits students, the College, and the workforce alike.

2026-2027 Academic Calendar

The academic calendar presented today has been routed for review and is presented for approval by the Board of Governors. In the absence of discussion, Chair Stinner entertained a motion for approval of the 2026-2027 Academic Calendar.

Mr. Kaufman MOVED to approve the 2026-2027 Academic Calendar as presented. SECONDED by Dr. Packard. The vote was, Yes: Kreman, Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Savely, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Omnify (WNCC FSA Plan) Amendment

WNCC was recently notified that, during the month of December, a guaranteed-issue cancer policy would be offered. It is intended to provide coverage for individuals who were unable to qualify for the cancer policy during the regular open enrollment period in August due to a recent cancer diagnosis or ongoing treatment.

To accommodate this opportunity, WNCC amended its Section 125 cafeteria plan through Omnify. AFLAC offers this guaranteed-issue option only in December, which aligns with many organizations' open enrollment periods, though not with WNCC's. As a result, individuals were able to take advantage of this option, contingent upon approval of the plan amendment, which is being requested today.

In the absence of further discussion, Chair Stinner entertained a motion to approve the amendment to the Section 125 cafeteria plan through Omnify, including the approval of the Certificate of Resolution.

Omnify (WNCC FSA Plan) Amendment (cont.)

CERTIFICATE OF RESOLUTION

The undersigned authorized representative of Western Nebraska Community College (the Employer) hereby certifies that the following resolutions were duly adopted by the governing body of the employer on December 17, 2025, and that such resolutions have not been modified or rescinded as of the date hereof:

RESOLVED, that the form of amended and restated Welfare Benefit Plan, effective January 01, 2026, presented to this meeting (and a copy of which is attached hereto) is hereby approved and adopted, and that the proper agents of the Employer are hereby authorized and directed to execute and deliver to the Administrator of said Plan one or more counterparts of the Plan.

RESOLVED, that the Administrator shall be instructed to take such actions that the Administrator deems necessary and proper in order to implement the Plan, and to set up adequate accounting and administrative procedures for the provision of benefits under the plan.

RESOLVED, that the proper agents of the Employer shall act as soon as possible to notify the employees of the Employer of the adoption of the Plan and to deliver to each employee a copy of the Summary Plan Description of the Plan, which Summary Plan Description is attached hereto and is hereby approved.

The undersigned further certifies that attached hereto as Exhibits, are true copies of Western Nebraska Community College's Benefit Plan Document and Summary Plan Description approved and adopted at this meeting.

Mr. Savely MOVED to approve the amendment to the Section 125 cafeteria plan through Omnify, to include approval of the Certificate of Resolution. SECONDED by Ms. Schmidt. The vote was, Yes: Lehl, Liggett, Packard, Richards, Savely, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Stinner. No: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

2026 National Legislative Summit Attendance (February 8-11, 2026)

Chair Stinner entertained a motion for approval of his attendance at the 2026 ACCT National Legislative Summit scheduled February 8-11, 2026 in Washington D.C.

Mr. Kaufman MOVED to approve Chair Stinner's attendance at the 2026 ACCT National Legislative Summit scheduled February 8-11, 2026 in Washington, D.C. SECONDED by Ms. Schmidt. The vote was, Yes: Liggett, Packard, Richards, Savely, Schmidt, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Lehl. No: None. Abstain: Stinner. None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

2026 Higher Learning Commission Attendance (March 20-24, 2026)

Chair Stinner entertained a motion to approve the attendance of Ms. Lehl, Ms. Schmidt, and himself at the 2026 Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference, scheduled for March 20-24, 2026, in Chicago, Illinois.

Ms. Liggett MOVED to approve the attendance of Ms. Lehl, Ms. Schmidt, and Chair Stinner at the 2026 Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference, scheduled for March 20-24, 2026, in Chicago, Illinois.

2026 Higher Learning Commission Attendance (March 20-24, 2026) (cont.)

SECONDED by Mr. Savely. The vote was, Yes: Packard, Richards, Savely, Guzman-Gonzales, Hanson, Kaufman, Kreman, Liggett. No: None. Abstain: Lehl, Schmidt, Stinner. None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

PTK College Project

Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) students delivered presentations highlighting their chapter's College Project and Honors in Action (HIA) initiative, demonstrating student leadership, community engagement, and academic excellence.

College Project: Cougar Spotlight

Phi Theta Kappa is an international honor society that promotes scholarships, leadership, service, and fellowship. Each academic year, the Lambda Pi chapter develops a College Project aligned with the institution's mission to provide learning opportunities, enrich lives, invigorate communities, and change futures. Katalia Adams presented the PTK College Project, *Cougar Spotlight*.

Cougar Spotlight supports this mission by highlighting students and staff through interviews and digital features, fostering inclusion and strengthening connections across campus and the community. The project encourages student engagement by welcoming both current and prospective students and by promoting campus activities such as athletics, esports, STEM clubs, and student organizations.

Outreach efforts included distributing flyers to high schools in Scottsbluff, Gering, and Mitchell, as well as sharing content through campus TVs, the College mobile app, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. The project also connects students with resources such as internships through the Partners in Progress program, coordinated by Katie Moser.

Planning and execution involved weekly project team meetings, regular updates with President Dart, and collaboration with faculty, marketing staff, and community partners. Students developed interview questions, conducted interviews, created PowerPoint presentations and flyers, and coordinated publication across multiple platforms.

Quantitative outcomes included flyer distribution across three high schools, seventy-one total YouTube views, 51 Instagram likes, and thirty mobile app interactions. Qualitative outcomes showed strong engagement during interviews and positive feedback from participants, including faculty and coaches who expressed appreciation for being featured. The project strengthened relationships with college administration and increased awareness of campus resources, contributing to a richer college experience.

Honors in Action Project: Human Trafficking Awareness

Maraki Andargie, president of the PTK chapter, presented the Honors in Action (HIA) project, a year-long research and service initiative focused on human trafficking. Guided by PTK Theme Five, *The Power of Stories*, the project examined how silenced or suppressed stories impact public awareness and community response, particularly in rural areas like Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

The group selected human trafficking after recognizing its local relevance, including a recent near incident involving a student. Research showed that Nebraska's location along major highway corridors contribute to higher trafficking risks and that awareness is low—campus surveys revealed that only one in ten students knew trafficking occurred locally.

PTK Honors in Action Project: Human Trafficking Awareness (cont.)

The project emphasized ethical research practices, working with counselors to design sensitive surveys. Findings revealed widespread misconceptions, including the belief that trafficking primarily involves foreigners rather than occurring within U.S. borders.

In response, the team created educational bulletin boards, distributed over 150 flyers featuring ethically sourced survivor stories, and hosted an awareness event during a WNCC basketball game. In collaboration with announcers, statistics and calls to action were shared, and approximately eighty awareness t-shirts were distributed. Funding was secured through a \$600 Phi Theta Kappa grant. Additional collaboration included the National Guard, which provided educational materials.

Key challenges included addressing sensitive topics with a diverse student population, ensuring emotional safety, overcoming language barriers, and correcting assumptions about who is affected by trafficking. These challenges were mitigated through partnerships with mental health counselors and careful, respectful messaging. Overall, both projects demonstrated student-led initiatives, meaningful collaboration, and a strong commitment to leadership, service, and community impact.

Student Report

Cougar Council president, Muhammed Bittaye shared an overview of events that were scheduled over the past year:

- August 27, the organization participated in the Campus Resource Fair to engage and recruit new and returning students. The first general meeting was held on September 15.
- September 24, a successful Bond Night event was hosted, bringing students together for community building. During this period, nominations for council president were opened on October 6, and the nomination process was finalized on October 10.
- November 1, a Quality Night event was conducted. This was followed by a food and clothing drive on November 4.
- November 7, the Council promoted the College through Google and Instagram platforms.
- Between November 11 and November 18, a giveaway initiative was conducted.
- November 15, the organization partnered with PTK to participate in the "Talk It Out" community service event.
- November 23, the organization once again partnered with PTK for a *wobble and gobble* donation initiative. The final meeting of the semester was held on December 1.
- Looking ahead to the next semester, a student welcome event is scheduled for January 16.

Faculty Report

With the semester concluded, the faculty held a final faculty assembly meeting. President Dart attended and has continued to participate regularly, which has helped foster open communication. Recent discussions have focused on challenges related to faculty roles, expectations, and division chairs, bringing those conversations to a close for the semester.

Faculty Report (cont.)

The department also announced a new hire, Tanya Woodward, who will join the faculty in August. Although hiring during current budget constraints may seem unusual, the position addresses a critical need in Language Arts. Following Jen Pedersen's transition to CollegeNow, the English department has been operating with only two full-time faculty members, supported by numerous adjuncts. Tanya brings a broad teaching background, particularly in developmental writing and integrated reading and writing, and will be able to teach nearly all English courses offered.

Spring enrollment numbers are still developing. Although spring terms are typically lighter than fall, final figures will clarify year-over-year enrollment trends. The department continues to balance course offerings, particularly between online and face-to-face sections. Online courses often fill immediately at registration, while live sections enroll more gradually. This pattern reflects national trends and creates challenges in maintaining sufficient in-person offerings while meeting strong demand for online instruction.

The department remains cautious about expanding online offerings without safeguards, as online attrition rates are significantly higher than those in live courses. Many students enroll expecting online courses to be easier, then struggle with deadlines, expectations, and self-discipline. In response, faculty are standardizing online course expectations, strengthening onboarding, and developing preparatory modules that clarify requirements, resources, and time management strategies. The goal is to ensure students understand that online learning requires consistent engagement, organization, and motivation.

Additional efforts include faculty training to support high-quality online instruction and better preparation for increasing numbers of high school and non-traditional students. Key differences between high school and college expectations—such as the inability to complete coursework at the end of the semester—are being emphasized more clearly. An online learning committee is actively addressing these issues, with increased collaboration across departments.

Demand for online courses continues to grow. For example, an online Anatomy and Physiology I course recently enrolled nearly fifty students and required splitting into two sections. These courses are especially important for working adults pursuing careers such as nursing. Maintaining quality is critical, as insufficient support increases the risk of students leaving for other institutions.

Non-traditional students often rely on online courses due to work and family commitments. While some face technological challenges, many are highly motivated and engaged. The College provides support through laptop checkouts, eHelp services, and extended library hours, with a long-term goal of expanding after-hours technical support. Faculty continue to offer flexible support through office hours, Zoom meetings, and individualized assistance, while also considering sustainability.

Overall success rates in online courses remain lower than in live classes, primarily due to missed deadlines, inconsistent engagement, and misunderstandings about course rigor. Faculty mitigate these issues through frequent announcements, reminders, and clear communication. Online learning can be highly effective for self-directed students, and the department remains focused on helping students determine whether this format is appropriate and how to succeed when it is their primary option.

Faculty Report (cont.)

WNCC Theater department reported on recent recruiting efforts. The theater program attended the Texas Thespian State Festival in Grapevine, Texas, from November 18–22. Instructor Violette Briggs led recruitment efforts, with Violette conducting three “Emotional Body” workshops for more than 250 participants. The workshops were extremely well received, with students citing them as highlights of the festival and encouraging peers to attend. The team spoke with numerous students, teachers, and parents and returned with nearly one hundred interest cards, including interest from students outside the performing arts. Due to high demand, they distributed a large number of recruiting materials and even had to reproduce additional copies.

While at the festival, Violette connected with representatives from nearly all participating colleges. Nineteen institutions expressed interest in developing articulation agreements with the WNCC Theater department. The program also attended the Wyoming Thespian Festival (December 4–6) and the Colorado Thespian Festival (December 11–13). Reports from those events will be forthcoming.

Nebraska Community College Association

The upcoming NCCA Legislative Day is scheduled February 25th in Lincoln. Once the Legislature is in session, NCCA Executive Director Courtney Wittstruck will be emailing updates.

Western Nebraska Community College Foundation

Around Thanksgiving, the Foundation hosted an event focused on how donated dollars are used. For one of the first times, they involved students not only in fundraising, but also in sharing their personal stories. This has been incredibly impactful. President Dart recommended following the Alumni Association and Foundation on social media, they are sharing some amazing stories about how these efforts are directly affecting students. One recent story featured a welding student who shared how the Foundation has supported him throughout his welding experience.

The Foundation continues to find creative and innovative ways to raise both funds and awareness. Most recently, a lighthearted fundraising event brought together WNCC employees, President Dart, Ryan Burgner, and Jeff Downey for a bit of friendly competition.

Three donation containers were set up in the Pit, and the rules were simple: the jar collecting the most cash would determine who received a pie in the face. Thanks to the generosity—and perhaps mischievous spirit—of donors, President Dart emerged victorious and graciously took a pie to the face, all in the name of a great cause. The event sparked laughter, camaraderie, and meaningful support for the Foundation's mission.

During a recent press conference, officials shared several records set this year. A total of 669 runners participated. The most notable achievement, however, was that this year's Monument Marathon raised a record-breaking \$81,390.

President Comments

President Dart thanked Douglas Kelly Law Office for providing lunch today. Their generosity is truly appreciated.

President Comments (cont.)

President Dart addressed online courses, which was referenced in the faculty report. This is an increasingly important area for the College. In the near future, a report will be sent to faculty, staff, and board members outlining what we are seeing with online instruction and enrollment trends. This report is intended to help answer many of the questions raised today and to assist in preparing for what is clearly a continuous transition, as more students take advantage of online course offerings.

The Health Science facility renovation and expansion are essentially complete. While some equipment is still being installed, classes will begin there on January 12. We are excited about this milestone. The facility looks tremendous, and the quality of the work has been excellent.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for January 26. Everyone is invited to attend, and tours will be available. If you are unable to attend that day but would like a tour beforehand, please contact President Dart.

One of the most long-standing and significant projects for the institution has been the transition of the enterprise system to a cloud-based server. This has been a complex, multi-year process involving extensive work both inside and outside the College. The goal is to improve data security and ensure the long-term viability of our systems. This coming weekend is the critical transition period. If all goes as planned, the move to the new SQL server will be complete.

The College IT team has been working tirelessly to prepare for this. President Dart recognized Lauren Moench, who has led this effort and has done an outstanding job along with his staff. While most people are preparing for the holidays, the IT staff will be present throughout the weekend to ensure a successful transition. Contingency plans have been discussed and those are in place if needed, but everything is currently on track. While most end users will not notice any changes, this represents a monumental milestone for the College.

The last day before the holiday closure is December 23, and the College will be closed until January 2. President Dart stated that this break is a well-deserved opportunity to rest and recharge and thanked faculty, staff, administrators, and everyone across the institution for their tremendous work and dedication.

Board Member Comments

Board members thanked President Dart for his gift.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

1. **Health Sciences Ribbon Cutting**
Monday, January 26, 2026
4:00 p.m.
2. **2026 NCCA Board of Directors First Quarter Meeting**
Friday, January 30, 2026
Southeast Community College, Lincoln, NE
3. **2026 Community College National Legislative Summit**
February 8-11, 2026
Marriott Marquis, Washington DC

4. **2026 NCCA Legislative Day**
February 25, 2026
Nebraska State Capitol
Lincoln, NE
5. **2026 Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference**
March 20-24, 2026
Chicago, Illinois
6. **2026 AACC Annual Conference**
April 10-14, 2026
Seattle, Washington
7. **2026 NCCA Board of Directors Second Quarter Meeting**
Monday, May 11, 2026
Southeast Community College, Lincoln, NE
8. **2026 NCCA Board of Directors Third Quarter Meeting**
Monday, August 17, 2026
Southeast Community College, Lincoln, NE
9. **2026 NCCA Board of Directors Fourth Quarter Meeting and Annual Conference**
Sunday and Monday, October 4 & 5, 2026
Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff, NE
10. **2026 ACCT Leadership Congress**
October 21-24, 2026
Hyatt Regency, Chicago, Illinois

****Follow links to access information.**

[WNCC Athletics](#)

[WNCC Performing Arts](#)

[WNCC Athletic and Academic Calendar](#)

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 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 1:57 p.m.

John P. Stinner, Chair

Susan L. Verbeck, Secretary