

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**January 13, 2025 – Immediately Following Annual Meeting – BH 3rd Floor Board Room**

**Call to Order**

Action     Information

**Recognition, Awards, and Information Items**

- Introduce Dr. Chris LaFata, Dean of Business and Computer Information Systems

Action     Information

**Attendance**

Action     Information

**Approval of Minutes**

- Regular Board Meeting – November 11, 2024

Action     Information

**ENDS Monitoring Report**

- E-103: Campus Master Planning (*Mrs. Liz Anderson*)

Action     Information

**Executive Limitations Monitoring Report**

- EL-204: Treatment of Staff

Action     Information

**Committee Reports**

- Finance Committee

Action     Information

**Presidential Report**

- Academic Programs Update
- Enrollment Update
- Budget Work Session – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- Feb BOT Meeting: Tuition/Fees and Annual Audit

Action     Information

**Chairman's Report**

- ACCT National Legislative Summit - Feb. 9 to Feb. 12
- Statement of Financial Interest Due to Sammantha Jan. 24
- Board of Trustees Evaluation (See BOT Book)
- Committee Chair Appointments
- Review Code of Ethics
- Board Governance Presentation

Action     Information

**Other Board Action Items and Considerations**

- None

**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, November 11, 2024**

**MINUTES**

Chair Mark Scott called the Board of Trustees of NorthWest Arkansas Community College meeting to order on Monday, November 11 at 4:33 pm in the SCGBD Peterson Auditorium.

**Members Present:** Mark Scott (Chair), Rachel Harris (Vice Chair), Todd Schwartz (Secretary), Dr. Carolyn Reeves, Lori Frank, Ron Branscum, Jonathan Woods, Amber Latimer, Joe Spivey, and Taryn Settle

**Also in Attendance:** Dr. Dennis C. Rittle

**MINUTES**

**September Regular Board Meeting**

Mrs. Harris moved and Mr. Spivey seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on October 14, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

**RECOGNITION**

**Introduce Alex Vasquez, Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Government and Public Relations**

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that Alex Vasquez has been hired as Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Government and Public Relations and started serving in this role in October.

**ENDS MONITORING REPORT**

**E-105: NJCAA and Club Sports**

Brooke Brewer praised the Men's and Women's Cross Country Teams and Coach Boit for their amazing efforts during the Cross-Country Championship. She then began her presentation by giving a brief review of Athletics as it is now. She listed the ways in which students feel welcomed, safe, and valued by holding walk-on tryouts, keeping club sports open to all students, allowing all students to attend athletic events, and letting students get involved with sports journalism, media, and technology. She further highlighted the ways in which staff and faculty also get involved including competing in the Tri-Fest for MS competition, fundraising and luncheon events, MVP Faculty and Staff awards selected by student-athletes, and

coaching and volunteer opportunities. She also noted that many departments help the Athletics department with day-to-day activities. Mrs. Brewer further explained that NWACC Alumni speak at events, attend events, and tutor current student-athletes. She finished her presentation by explaining that the Athletics Department keeps everyone informed through the Athletic website, social media, email newsletter, and luncheon events.

### **Approval of E-105 Monitoring Report**

Dr. Reeves moved and Mrs. Latimer seconded the motion to approve the ENDS-105 Monitoring Report. The motion passed unanimously.

### **EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS MONITORING REPORT**

**None**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Land Use Report**

Mrs. Latimer informed the Board that the Land Use Committee met to review two informational items. She said that Bob Couch informed the Committee that the prescribed burn for the Outdoor Living Laboratory is now being maintained by the Physical Plant and the prescribed burn has been postponed until further notice due to the Benton County Burn Ban issued in response to the drought. She also said that Liz Anderson introduced the Lake Flato Team and shared an update from the Campus Master Planning project. She further explained that Lake Flato shared that an assessment was completed that included a variety of stakeholders, feedback was collected on the existing campus infrastructure, facilities, and new infrastructure, and the team identified key growth areas.

Mr. Spivey commended Bob Couch for his work on the storm damage cleanup.

Mr. Scott asked Mrs. Harris to give an update on the Campus Master Planning project. She thanked Liz, the students, and the community for their impressive work and contribution.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that NWACC's Spring enrollment had 900 students register on the first day to register.

Dr. Rittle shared with the Board that he had two major takeaways from the ACCT event in Seattle, Washington. The first takeaway is the importance of future

planning and he explained that NWACC's Cabinet members discussed this at a recent retreat and addressed bottlenecks. The second takeaway is encouraging communities for civic service, and he explained this is being discussed at community colleges nationwide.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Scott let the Board share takeaways from the ACCT National Legislative Summit. Mr. Scott shared that he was happy to represent the college and the community, and he attended sessions regarding engagement with elected leaders. Mr. Schwartz shared that attended sessions regarding how trustees can help the president, how trustees can help with planning, trustee involvement in donor relationships, and student equity and culture.

Mr. Scott informed the Board of the upcoming ACCT National Legislative Summit in February. He told them to let Sammantha know if they plan to attend by November 11.

Mr. Scott reminded the Board of the January 13 Annual Board of Trustees Meeting, during which they will approve the 2025 meeting dates.

Mr. Scott reminded the Board that the Statement of Financial Interests will be due in January and turned in to Sammantha by January 24.

Mr. Scott informed the Board that the self-evaluation is provided in their book. He asked them to fill them out and turn them in to Sammantha by the end of the year.

### **OTHER ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Nomination and Election of 2025 Board Officers**

Mr. Scott announced that the Board will hold open nominations of officers. He opened the nominations for the office of Chairman of the Board. Mr. Branscum nominated Mr. Schwartz for the office of Chair and Mr. Woods seconded. Mr. Spivey nominated Mrs. Harris for the office of Chair and Ms. Frank seconded. Mr. Scott held a vote via hand raise and Mr. Schwartz was elected as Chair of the Board of Trustees for NorthWest Arkansas Community College by majority vote.

Mr. Scott opened the nominations for the office of Vice-Chair of the Board. Mr. Schwartz nominated Mrs. Latimer for the office of Vice-Chair and Mr. Branscum seconded. Dr. Reeves nominated Mrs. Harris for the office of Vice-Chair and Ms. Frank seconded. Mr. Scott held a vote via hand raise and Ms. Harris was elected as

Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for NorthWest Arkansas Community College by majority vote.

Mr. Scott opened the nominations for the office of Secretary of the Board. Mr. Spivey nominated Mrs. Latimer for the office of Secretary and Mr. Schwartz seconded. There being no other nominations, by acclamation Mrs. Latimer was elected as Secretary of the Board of Trustees for NorthWest Arkansas Community College.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

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Mr. Todd Schwartz, Chair

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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