

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
April 14, 2025 – 4:30 PM – BH 3rd Floor Boardroom**

Call to Order

Action Information

Recognition, Awards, and Information Items

- Introduce Dr. Lois Chun, Dean of Science and Math
- Employee Satisfaction Survey Results (*Mrs. Kim Purdy*)

Action Information

Attendance

Action Information

Approval of Minutes

- Regular Board Meeting – March 17, 2025

Action Information

ENDS Monitoring Report

- E-102: Workforce (*Ms. Starlinda Sanders*)
- E-101: Student Government Association (*Mr. Taryn Settle*)

Action Information

Executive Limitations Monitoring Report

- EL-207: Compensation & Benefits

Action Information

Committee Reports

- Honorary Associate Degree Committee (*Dr. Carolyn Reeves*)
 - Approval to Name Lynette Bennett and Stan Dark as Honorary Associate Degree Recipient
- Finance Committee (*Mrs. Amber Latimer*)

Action Information

Action Information

Presidential Report

- Enrollment Update
- Budget Work Session – April 30, 2025
- NWACC Commencement – May 14, 2025 at 10:00 am
- NWACC Foundation Plant a Seed – Fri. May 2, 2025
- Legislative Update

Action Information

Chair Report

- ACCT Conference in October (See events sheet; deadline June 9th to let Sammantha know if interested)
- NWACC Grad Ceremonies (see events sheet; deadline May 1st to let Sammantha know if attending)
- Professional Conferences for Board of Trustees

Action Information

Action Information

Other Board Action Items and Considerations

- Provisional Position

Action Information

Executive Session: President's Employment Review

Adjourn

Please see the Board of Trustees Calendar of Upcoming Events document in the binder's front pocket for Upcoming events.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING

Monday, March 17, 2025

MINUTES

Chair Todd Schwartz called the Board of Trustees of NorthWest Arkansas Community College meeting to order on Monday, March 17 at 4:32 pm in the SCGBD Peterson Auditorium.

Members Present: Todd Schwartz (Chair), Carolyn Reeves, Lori Frank, Mary Schneider, and Joe Spivey

Also in Attendance: Dr. Dennis C. Rittle and Student Trustee, Taryn Settle

Members Absent: Rachel Harris (Vice Chair), Amber Latimer (Secretary), Ron Branscum, Mark Scott

MINUTES

February Regular Board Meeting

Dr. Reeves moved and Mr. Spivey seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the Annual Board Meeting and Regular Board Meeting on February 17, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

RECOGNITION

Faculty Sabbatical Presentation

Jim Laughton shared with the Board that he went on Sabbatical to explore AI's role in Community College Education and create a guide to equip faculty with basic knowledge about AI. He conducted multiple workshops and found that students and businesses are rapidly adopting the use of AI in their daily lives, while faculty are divided. He recommends using a cautiously optimistic approach where NWACC leverages AI's benefits while addressing concerns.

He further explained how he learned that AI is excellent for augmentation but not replacement. The more thoughtful the input, the better the results. He also found that AI lacks traditional creativity but excels at synthesis and refinement. AI is a great support, but it is not an expert and needs to be fact-checked and used in tandem with critical thinking.

He ended by explaining how this experience enhanced his teaching and expanded his perspective on AI in Education.

ENDS MONITORING REPORT

E-105: Faculty Senate

Ms. Megan Looney, NWACC's Faculty Senate President, informed the Board of how the Faculty Senate is a collective voice for the faculty at NWACC. She briefly explained that the Faculty Senate is comprised of three officers and twelve Senators. The twelve senators are comprised of two individuals from each academic area.

Ms. Looney outlined the key roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Senate as shaping academic policies, serving as the collective voice for faculty, ensuring faculty expertise is part of institutional decisions, and overseeing standing faculty committees. She also outlined each of the Faculty Senate Standing Committees, including Academic Standards, Assessment, Curriculum, Faculty Performance Review, and Sabbatical and Emeritus. She highlighted the work of the Curriculum Committee and the Assessment Committee for their work on maintaining consistency across courses, extensive course review, institution-wide collaboration, data-driven information, and a high success rate.

Ms. Looney concluded by highlighting a new Faculty Senate Committee called the Future of Teaching and Learning Committee that will evaluate the growth of the industry and make recommendations for how NWACC can move forward.

The Board asked questions regarding how many members are on each committee, how members are chosen for each committee, how members are selected to serve on the Faculty Senate, including leadership roles, and how the Board can help the Faculty Senate.

Ms. Looney told the Board that all committees have representatives from all academic areas, however, it varies as a couple of committees include members of staff. She further explained that the Faculty Senate will ask for volunteers to serve on committees first, then ask Deans to nominate someone from their area. She also told the Board that Faculty Senate Members are elected to their positions within their Academic Areas, and leadership roles are elected by the Faculty Senate Members. She concluded by informing the Board that the Faculty Senate is a good, supported state, but they did want the Board to be aware of the great work they do.

Approval of E-105 Monitoring Report

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

EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS MONITORING REPORT

EL-204: Treatment of Staff

Dr. Rittle stated that 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. Further, without limiting the scope of the foregoing by this enumeration, he or she shall not 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, fail to make available to staff in a timely manner all personnel rules that affect them, or continue in employment or employ any person serving on the Board.

Approval of EL-204 Monitoring Report

Dr. Reeves moved and Ms. Frank seconded the motion to approve the Executive Limitations Monitoring Report. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Code of Ethics Committee Report

Dr. Reeves reminded the Board of the proposed updates to the code of ethics statements as developed by the Code of Ethics Committee.

Approval of Update to BOT Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics Committee recommended the approval of updating the Board of Trustee Code of Ethics as presented by Dr. Reeves and Ms. Frank seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Honorary Associate Degree Committee Report

Dr. Reeves informed the Board that the Honorary Associate Degree Committee started accepting nominations and will review all nominations in April. Any proposed nominees will be presented to the Board during the April Regular Board Meeting.

Land Use Committee Report

Ms. Frank informed the Board that the Land Use Committee met to review and decide whether to recommend the Campus Master Plan to the Board for approval. Per the grant, a first project will be selected and voted upon by the Board.

Mr. Mat Mozzoni, NWACC Foundation Board Chair, spoke to the Board, thanking Liz Anderson and Rachel Harris for their work on this plan. He encouraged the Board to help drive forward the vision of the future.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that NWACC's headcount and SSCH is up approximately 7.5%.

Dr. Rittle reminded the Board of the Budget Work Session on April 30 at 12:30 pm in the Burns Hall Third Floor Boardroom.

Dr. Rittle reminded the Board of the NWACC Foundation's Plant A Seed Soiree on May 2 at 6:00 pm at the Heroncrest Event Center.

Dr. Rittle turned to Dr. Diana Johnson, who presented the results from NWACC's Mission Statement Task Force. She informed the Board that the Task Force was tasked to survey the community, evaluate the survey results, and recommend a new mission statement to the College Cabinet. The mission statement proposed is as follows.

As a community-responsive college, NWACC ignites passion, unlocks potential, and creates economic mobility.

Approval of Update to Mission Statement

Mr. Spivey moved and Dr. Reeves seconded the motion to approve the proposed Mission Statement. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Schwartz informed the Board that NWACC can no longer rent Trustee commencement regalia. Therefore, the Board will be expected to wear business attire for the 2025 Commencement due to time constraints. He opened for discussion on whether the Board wishes to wear regalia moving forward. Per the discussion, the Board was in favor of each Board member purchasing and wearing the regalia in all future Commencements.

Mr. Schwartz reminded the Board of the Executive Session on April 14.

Mr. Schwartz proposed an amendment to the Board Manual about attending conferences that recommends a limit of three trustees to attend conferences to conserve taxpayer dollars. The Board discussed how this amendment could hinder the continuing education legislation to which they must adhere, and whether other opportunities for the Board to attend Trustee training could be made available to them. No action was taken.

OTHER ACTION ITEMS

None

The Board moved to executive session at 5:49 pm.

The Board returned from executive session at 7:08 pm. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Mr. Todd Schwartz, Chair

Mrs. Amber Latimer, Secretary

POLICY TITLE: COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Policy 207: With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits to employees, consultants, contract workers and volunteers, the President shall not cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal integrity or public image.

Definition: Cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal integrity refers to the total of all compensation and benefits paid to all employees, consultants, contract workers, etc. exceeding the total budget for these positions in a fiscal year plus 5%, unless specific revenue such as grants, gifts, etc. becomes available and expenditure of these funds is approved by the college President for these purposes.

Narrative: The President requires the VP of Finance and Administration/CFO to report in a timely manner the possibility of such jeopardy and propose a plan of remedy. This plan may include the reduction of budgeted expenditures or re-allocation of funds. Furthermore, the President complies with the BOT mandate of 8%-10% of the total unrestricted revenue budget, or other amount as approved annually by the Board of Trustees, set aside for each fiscal year as a contingency. The President requires periodic documentation of fiscal condition, such as financial statements and budget status reports to be presented to the College Cabinet and BOT Finance/Audit Committee by the VP of Finance and Administration/CFO as produced by the finance division. College secures all funds by U.S. Government securities or equivalents. The annual audits by the AR Legislative Audit verify the fiscal integrity.

Further, without limiting the scope of the foregoing by this enumeration, he or she shall not:

1. Change his or her compensation and benefits.

Definition: Changes refers to he or she altering his or her compensation/benefits without official Board action.

Narrative: Salary and fringe benefits received by the President have been approved by the Board of Trustees and have not been altered.

2. Promise or imply permanent or guaranteed employment.

Definition: Promising or implying permanent or guaranteed employment refers to employment of staff/faculty person with or without a Letter of Employment, entering into any other oral or written agreement with a staff/faculty person without the use of a college Letter of Employment, or entering into an employment contract not containing pertinent employment terms, such as starting date and salary.

Narrative: Employee Letters of Employment are issued at the beginning of each fiscal year. Employment letters include employment start dates and identify salary and conditions of employment. Newly hired employees receive employment letters at the time of hire. Additionally, Letters of Employment are issued when an employee changes position titles or receives compensation related adjustments.

3. Establish compensation and benefits, which deviate materially from the geographic or professional market for the skills employed unless required by law.

Definition: Deviate materially refers to 10% less than and up to 10% more than the average for the same position in compensation and benefits package combined. Geographic and professional market refers to similar positions in northwest Arkansas (Benton and Washington Counties) and at least two nearby community colleges and similar skilled positions as defined by Arkansas Department of Labor or where job descriptions are comparable.

Narrative: As outlined in our ENDS, Goals & Action Plans, NWACC continually reviews the individual salaries to address existing negative salary variances in staff and faculty positions. Maintaining the faculty salary scale is a further commitment of the College. Benefit offerings are monitored annually to ensure competitive rates and services for comparable regional employers.

4. Establish or change Defined Contribution or Defined Benefit Plans.

Definition: Establish or change refers to benefit change action by other than the College Board or Arkansas State Law.

Narrative: The Board of Trustees has approved the existing NWACC Defined Contribution Benefit Retirement Plan. The Board of Trustees shall approve any changes to the College's contribution to such Plan. The President may make any changes to other provisions of such Plan.

I am reporting compliance with Executive Limitations, Policy 207.
Dr. Dennis C. Rittle.
President