

MINUTES OF MEETING
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD
JANUARY 16, 2024
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM OFFICE

Members Present: Quincey Daniels, Jr., Janixa Franco Gonzalez, Douglas Holton, Sr., John Johnson for Jill Underly, Dan Klecker, John W. Miller, Amy Pechacek, Sara Rogers, Dan Sperberg, Leslie Svacina.

Members Absent: Alex Lasry, S. Mark Tyler, Stephen Willett.

System Office Staff Present: Sarah Arneson, Jamie Bernthal, Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Morna Foy, Stephanie Glynn, Mandy Johnson, Tou Ya Khang, Ben Konruff, Colleen Larsen, Kristin Long, Christina Lorge, Ward Lyon, Joel Mathis, Cristina Parente, Colleen McCabe, Carolann Nelson, Jeremy Nichols, Katy Pettersen, Anna Richter, Michelle Rudman, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Brent Simmons, Lenard Simpson, Latisha Spence-Brookens, Becky Stewart, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Julie Tyznik, JP Villavicencio, Ann Westrich, Jim Zylstra.

District/Others Present: Tracy Pierner, Blackhawk Technical College; Sunem Beaton-Garcia, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chuck Bolstad, Layla Merrifield, District Boards Association; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Ritu Raju, Gateway Technical College; Paul Carlsen, Lakeshore Technical College; Fred Brechlin, Mark Thomas, Jr., Sylvia Ramirez, Madison Area Technical College; Shelly Mondeik, Mid-State Technical College; Scott Fisler, Vicki Martin, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Cleo Krejci, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel; Bonnie Baerwald, Moraine Park Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Darren Ackley, Northcentral Technical College; Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; John Will, Northwood Technical College; Karen Bolstad, Jason Wood, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College; Richard Barnhouse, Richard Haen, Mike Shiels, Waukesha County Technical College; Sharon Wendt, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Katrina Willis, Wisconsin Student Government; Lindsay Blumer, WRTP/Big Step and WTCS Board Nominee; James Jelak, WTCS Marketing Consortium.

Board Vice President Holton called the meeting to order at 9:06 am. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

Board Vice President Holton introduced and recognized Katrina Willis, President of Wisconsin Student Government (WSG), who joined the meeting on behalf of WSG.

ITEM A: Approval of November 7-8, 2023, Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Board Member Pechacek, seconded by Board Member Klecker, that the November 7-8, 2023, meeting minutes be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM B: Report of the Board President

The UW System Board of Regents reports for the November and December meetings were shared with Board Members on January 12, 2024.

ITEM C: Report of the System President

- Congratulations to Chippewa Valley Technical College for its certification as a Gold Level Family Friendly workplace.

- A renewed articulation agreement with the Milwaukee School of Engineering's (MSOE) Rader School of Business allows WTCS graduates and alumni going back five years to transfer into the Technical and Business Management Bachelor's degree program as MSOE Juniors.
- A bipartisan proposal championed by the System, Rebuilding America's Middle Class and the Association of Community College Trustees has support from U.S. Representatives Virginia Foxx and Bobby Scott to pass Workforce Pell, which would allow part-time students access to Pell grant financial aid.
- The Legislature is wrapping up the session and heading into an election year. There are several bills impacting WTCS which will be shared during the legislative report.
- System President Foy attended a New Citizenship Recognition and Resource Fair at Milwaukee Area Technical College last fall. Governor Evers was also in attendance and the event was intended to honor the determination and accomplishments of students who completed citizenship requirements.
- The Governor's Task Force on Workforce and Artificial Intelligence met in December. The speakers highlighted that Wisconsin's longstanding partnerships among educators, labor groups, employers, workforce development organizations and economic development leaders put the state in a strong position to advance equity and economic opportunity through training and other strategic investments in AI. Board Member Pechacek, committee chair, explained that Wisconsin has a worker shortage, a challenge throughout the United States with low birthrates and baby boomers retiring which is going to continue to tighten our labor force. This is the perfect opportunity to augment and supplement our workforce. AI is going to impact 300 million jobs and is the fourth industrial revolution. New AI credential at WCTC was just approved by the Board.

Board Member Rogers arrived at 9:19 am.

- WTCS hosted the first Faculty Summit in November 2023. This fully virtual, free event was focused on innovations throughout the System and was intended for faculty, presented by faculty, with topics that impact faculty. The summit was held over two days with more than 700 people attending.
- WTCS Ag Day is March 19 at Northcentral Technical College 10:00 am – 1:30 pm with industry tours to Feltz's Dairy Store and Miltrim Farms immediately following.

Board Member Klecker gave an overview of the Byrl Shoemaker award from Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), where Scott Fisler, an automotive instructor at Milwaukee Area Technical College received the 2023 top transportation instructor in the nation. A [video](#) was shared and Scott Fisler addressed the Board and praised Board Member Klecker for his instruction.

- System President Foy visited her first college of the official Tour of Excellence in November where she toured Lakeshore's new healthcare space and their dental clinic. Additionally, she met Shawn Engel, a student who is an employee at Johnsonville Sausage Company and saw an opportunity to change his career trajectory. He is in the culinary arts program and taught System President Foy a bit about knife skills and hands-on beginning culinary tips. Visits with all the colleges will take place during the first part of 2024.
- WTCS was told the office would be moving to the Hill Farms building within one to three years, and it is now more likely to happen within the coming year. Disruptions will be minimal – the new space is modern and will meet the needs of our team, including the meeting spaces, which

include modern technology. This will be a nice space for the two meetings per year the Board attends at the System Office.

- The innovative work happening at WTCS is of interest to colleagues nationally. WTCS System President Foy and Provost and Vice President Dr. Colleen McCabe will be traveling to California to present at the Future Campus Summit, sponsored by the University of California-Irvine. The Summit focuses on the use of data analytics and AI to drive transformation in higher education. WTCS was invited to discuss how we use data to drive program and delivery decisions and create equitable educational pathways that enhance success for all students. System President Foy and Dr. McCabe expect to learn good information and will share both internally in the System as well as with our partners on the Governor's AI taskforce.

Board Vice President Holton commented that it is great to see the new year starting with new, innovative work and how quickly WTCS can pivot in an industry such as AI, getting ahead of the curve so our students are prepared.

Board Member Daniels expressed concerns around DEI and stated that the importance System President Foy places on DEI cannot be understated.

Board Vice President Holton remarked on the absolute commitment from Dr. Foy, her staff and all 16 colleges, ensuring that all our students are successful.

System President Foy remarked that the five-year strategic plan, which is developed, written and designed through an inclusive process of a WTCS Board Workgroup and the WTCS staff will begin this summer. The work will include a review of the current plan and a survey of partners inside and outside of the System, including employers, legislators, and other stakeholders to learn where our System priorities should be focused. The current plan ends at the end of 2025. The Board has made it clear that DEI is an important part of our work. Any Board Members interested in being part of the process should let Board President Tyler or Board Vice President Holton know, as Board members will be assigned to the committee this summer.

ITEM D: Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association (DBA) President and Southwest Wisconsin Technical College Trustee Chuck Bolstad and Executive Director Layla Merrifield updated the Board on recent activities.

Typically, DBA hosts four quarterly meetings. After review and suggestions from members and striving to be more economically efficient, they will have two Board meetings virtually to conduct business and two in-person membership meetings. This will cut back on expenses and still provide professional development for the trustees. WTCS colleges comprise skilled educators with a great deal of knowledge, so DBA will rely on their systematic experts to provide the bulk of the education. The first meeting will be a virtual Board of Directors meeting on January 26. The first in-person meeting will be at Nicolet College in Rhinelander March 22-23 and will focus on competency-based education with hands-on learning, Board Member onboarding and will include examples of Native communities. All WTCS Board Members are welcome to attend.

Mr. Bolstad highly encouraged all Board Members to attend the Ambassador Banquet on April 18, the highlight of the best of what the technical college system does: transforming our students into Ambassadors for Life.

ITEM E: WTCS Presidents' Association

Dr. Paul Carlsen, president of Lakeshore Technical College and of the Association, provided a brief update on recent activities of the Association.

Dr. Jack Daniels of Madison Area Technical College was honored recently during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day ceremonies in Wisconsin where Governor Evers presented him with the annual Heritage Award, honoring his upcoming retirement.

Winter graduations were held at the colleges, and colleges are going through the District Board appointment process which will wrap up in March. At Lakeshore Technical College they are seeking School Administrator, employee and employer positions. It ensures that they get representation from different constituencies.

The Presidents' Association is moving up their annual planning meeting from June to March 4. This ensures a full-year's planning under one chair. The new chair takes over annually in June.

ITEM F: Consent Agenda

It was moved by Board Member Klecker, seconded by Board Member Sperberg that the Board approve the program and facilities development requests and interim district board appointment as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting reconvened at 10:20 after a break.

ITEM G: Waukesha County Technical College – Project Concept Review – Remodeling to Create the Gene Haas CNC Training Center in Pewaukee

Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC) Director of District Facilities Richard Haen provided an overview of the project to renovate approximately 15,600 square feet of existing classroom and lab space for better utilization and to mirror industry standards which will allow for placement of additional CNC equipment along with two new 5-Axis CNC lathes. Additionally, new classrooms will be constructed within the existing space that will support modern technologies to enhance learning as well as the student's overall experience. Renovating these labs will further ensure the spaces reflect current innovation.

Board Member Pechacek asked what the timeline of the project is and what will be done while this space is being renovated. Mr. Haen replied that classroom space will be switched with space in another area with the machines to continue having classes after May commencement.

President Barnhouse shared that they will be pushing the data from the machines into an AI program with more equipment, which is important for the lab to be supportive from an environmental standpoint and sharing from area to area. Robotics and AI are coming together more quickly so there is a need for multiple spaces. In addition to learning what they need as CNC students, the space will show them what they will see in industry.

Board Member Klecker asked if the current space is being used for manufacturing. Mr. Haen replied that they are using the existing space and not taking away from any other programs.

It was moved by Board Member Rogers, seconded by Board Member Sperberg that a finding is made that the concept for the Waukesha County Technical College's proposed remodeling of facilities in Pewaukee is reasonable. The final scope and design of the project is subject to review and approval by the Board is required by s. 38.04(10) Stats. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM H: Apprenticeship Completion Report

Katy Pettersen, WTCS director of strategic advancement, provided an overview of the most recent [Apprenticeship Completion report](#) highlighting high earnings and apprentices' strong level of satisfaction with on-the-job training and related instruction they receive through a Wisconsin technical college. The median annual earnings reported for all apprentices who completed the program in 2022 is \$85,000. Median earnings ranged from \$104,500 for utilities apprentices to \$82,500 for the maintenance mechanic sector.

Ms. Pettersen introduced new WTCS Education Director for Architecture, Construction & Apprenticeship Jamie Bernthal who started on January 2, 2024, as she will be presenting the report in the future.

Registered Apprenticeship combines structured, on-the-job training with classroom instruction. Apprentices learn the theory and practice of a highly skilled occupation in one to six years and are paid for their time on the job and in the classroom. Wisconsin's technical colleges work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) -Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS) to meet employer needs in apprenticeship, providing classroom instruction for apprenticeship programs in industrial, construction and other sectors. Highlights of the report include:

- 94% of apprentices were satisfied with their on-the-job training, and 95% reported they were satisfied with their related instruction.
- As Wisconsin employers struggle to attract and retain talent, it is important to note that 97% of employed apprentices were working in Wisconsin after their completed training. Of those, 48% worked in the district where they received training, and apprenticeship participation has increased about 19% over the past five years.

Board Vice President Holton commented on the outstanding report and asked where we are going to be in five years. Ms. Pettersen feels that we have a proven model and that it is unique across the United States. Other industries and occupations understand and agree that this is a sustainable model to attracting and retaining talent.

Board Member Pechacek shared that we broke a record high in registered apprentices - 16,000 and nearly 9,000 youth apprentices and a record number of employer partners. This model is tried and true and there is not a need for a mountain of debt to be successful. Apprentices start earning money as they are learning while doing hands-on work and, in the classroom, often with benefits and time off.

For example, in order to earn a four-year nursing degree, students can start at a technical college for their first two years and partner with a university for the last two years. There is funding from Governor Evers and bipartisan support with additional funding to continue to expand these programs. There is also a federal \$5 million grant from Senator Baldwin. We continue to have waitlists and we need more employers to pick up the employee sponsorship. More employers are embracing this model in a variety of occupations.

Board Member Klecker shared that the numbers are outstanding. He asked if the apprentice model is competency-based, or time based. Ms. Seeley-Schreck shared that competency is what moves you along in apprenticeship areas with coursework. To move forward students must demonstrate learned skills and competencies, and there is discussion about moving away from the timing model as the program grows.

Board Member Pechacek mentioned that there is a licensing component for many apprentices. For example, nurses must complete a certain number of hours.

Board Member Sperberg shared that this model already exists within the Operating Engineers. When apprentices meet competency, they go back to work and move on to learn the next competency.

Board Vice President Holton shared that he recently hired an electrician who had an apprenticeship student working with him. The student shared that he liked the apprenticeship program and said it was the best thing that happened to him.

ITEM I: Teaching and Learning – Program Approval Process

WTCS Provost and Vice President Dr. Colleen McCabe and Associate Vice President-Office of Instructional Services Chrystal Seeley-Schreck provided the Board with an overview of the program development process from concept to approval; program maintenance process, including assessment, modifications and discontinuances; and 2023 program activity. In 2023, the Board approved 64 new programs.

Ms. Seeley-Schreck introduced new WTCS Education Directors Ward Lyon (Fire Service); JP Villavicencio (Information Technology Programs and Academic Data Systems); and Jamie Bernthal (Architecture, Construction and Apprenticeship) sharing that this gives the System Office a full team of Education Directors.

Board Member Rogers asked if colleges take regional information into account for programs.

Ms. Seeley-Schreck answered that yes, colleges are encouraged to share that information and they need to show in-district labor market needs, many times with more positions available than anticipated graduates.

Board Member Klecker asked what the difference is between less-than-one-year technical diploma and a certificate? Ms. Seeley-Schreck answered that the credit value is the same, but the pathway certificate must use curriculum related to a career pathway.

Board Member Johnson asked if there is standard criteria for program discontinuation for consistency.

Ms. Seeley-Schreck answered that a structured process is used but the colleges have their own criteria.

System President Foy stated that colleges have a responsibility to the students enrolled. There is a suspension process and a plan to graduate students enrolled with a high-risk tolerance for programming. There is great confidence in the program development process, the input we gather and the efficiency in how it's done. It is atypical in higher education to cancel programs. Everything we do to develop a program means that we cannot hang onto programs if we can no longer honor the promise of the System that students will be employed if they have the credentials. Ideally, we won't have to do discontinuances, but programming changes. We are constantly remodeling space, so that we have space for programming that is in high demand.

Board Member Johnson commended the System for good use of metrics and what students and the local labor force need. System President Foy continued, saying that paperwork must be submitted for discontinuance with explanations of why, with so many different dynamics. It's the System's role to ensure thoughtful conversations are being had; there are challenges, but the colleges do a great job. System President Foy has a high comfort level with change seeing such great outcomes for students.

With more courses and programs being virtual because of the pandemic, more opportunities are being provided for more students to participate in programs at other colleges.

Board Member Pechacek asked if the data of approved and discontinued programs is available in one place. Ms. Seeley-Schreck stated the information is in each Board Book, and at her request a report on last year's programs will also be prepared and shared with the Board.

System President Foy shared an important reminder that shorter term credentials make up 41% of new programs. We talk about articulation and transfer agreements and creating pathways for students, because that is how students want to learn with a lot of behind-the-scenes work being done. We want to create rigorous, formal paths for students to pursue their academics, so they know they won't have to repeat work or spend more money. We are directly responding to how students want to learn.

ITEM J: Legislative Update

WTCS Executive Vice President Jim Zylstra, WTCS Policy Advisors Megan Stritchko and Brandon Trujillo and District Boards Association Executive Director Layla Merrifield provided an overview of legislative items affecting the System.

Mr. Zylstra indicated that 1,900 bills were introduced, 700 more since November, and they are currently tracking 330 bills.

WTCS Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo provided an overview of 2023 Wisconsin Act 80 that Governor Evers signed into law on December 6, 2023.

Board Member Franco Gonzalez asked when Act 80 goes into effect. Mr. Trujillo replied that it will go into effect for the 2024-25 academic year.

Ms. Merrifield highlighted several bills including the oral healthcare package to address oral deserts, particularly in rural and Northern areas of the state.

Board Vice President Holton inquired how the redistricting might affect the timeline of these bills. Mr. Zylstra shared that it could affect the next election cycle, but these exact bills will be gone when the legislative session concludes unless they are passed into law.

Board Member Pechacek commented on a bill that would help bring retired employees back to the workforce. The bill would allow people who are collecting their annuities through the Wisconsin Retirement System to continue receiving their benefits even if they return to the workforce.

Board Member Johnson mentioned this issue affected many in the K-12 System and asked if the bill would also include those former employees. Board Member Pechacek responded that there would be a limit on the number of days they could work.

WTCS Policy Advisor Megan Stritchko provided federal updates on Workforce Pell legislation.

ITEM K: Announcements/Adjourn

The next meeting of the Board will be held March 19-20, 2024, at Moraine Park Technical College in Fond du Lac.

It was moved by Board Member Sperberg, seconded by Board Member Johnson, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Drake