

MINUTES OF MEETING
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD
MAY 21, 2024
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM OFFICE

Members Present: Lindsay Blumer, Douglas Holton, Sr., Dan Klecker, Amy Pechacek, Sara Rogers, Dan Sperberg, Leslie Svacina, S. Mark Tyler, Jill Underly, Karen Walsh.

Members Absent: Quincey Daniels, Jr., Janixa Franco Gonzalez, Alex Lasry.

System Office Staff Present: Sarah Arneson, Hilary Barker, Jamie Bernthal, Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Madeline Erce, Morna Foy, Stephanie Glynn, Mandy Johnson, Tou Ya Khang, Colleen Larsen, Betsy Leonard, Kristin Long, Christina Lorge, Ward Lyon, Colleen McCabe, Carolann Nelson, Jeremy Nichols, Cristina Parente, Katy Pettersen, Anna Richter, Katie Roberts, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Lenard Simpson, Latisha Spence-Brookens, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Julie Tyznik, JP Villavicencio, Ann Westrich, Danika Woods, James Zylstra.

District/Others Present: 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; Jack Daniels, III, Katrina Willis, Madison Area Technical College; Vicki Martin, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Darren Ackley, Robert Elliott, Northcentral Technical College; Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; Deanna Lapacinski, John Will, Northwood Technical College; Holly Clendenen, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College; Thomas Huberty, TRANE Technologies; Richard Barnhouse, Waukesha County Technical College; Wade Hackbarth, Western Technical College; Sharon Wendt, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Kai L. Brito, Wisconsin Student Government; James Jelak, WTCS Marketing Consortium.

Board President Tyler called the meeting to order at 10:12 am. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

ITEM A: Approval of March 19-20, 2024, Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Board Member Underly, seconded by Board Member Pechacek, that the March 19-20, 2024, meeting minutes be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM B: Report of the Board President

The UW System Board of Regents report for the April meeting was shared with Board Members on May 16, 2024.

Board President Tyler welcomed and introduced UW System Regent President Karen Walsh to the Wisconsin Technical College System Board.

Board President Tyler introduced and recognized Kai L. Brito, enrolled in the Accounting associate degree program at Madison College where he also serves as president of Wisconsin Student Government (WSG), Student Senate and Business Professionals of America. Mr. Brito will attend the WTCS Board meetings on behalf of WSG.

Board President Tyler provided an update on the presidential search. The deadline to apply was May 8, with 30 resumes received. The search committee will be conducting interviews June 24-25, 2024.

The Board will convene in closed session as part of the May 21 meeting to discuss public records requirements, the recruitment timeline and interview questions. The committee plans to hire a president by early fall.

Board President Tyler commended all those involved in planning the Ambassador event in April. A reporter from PBS interviewed Western Technical College's Ambassador Courtney Chambers with a wonderful article highlighting how WTCS supports student success.

The Governor's Task Force on AI met at Northcentral Technical College (NTC). Board President Tyler thanked Dr. Jeanne Worden, president of NTC for hosting the event. Board Member Pechacek, chairperson of the AI Task Force, commended Dr. Worden and NTC for their outstanding Ag Center.

ITEM C: Report of the System President

- System President Foy attended her 25th and final Ambassador event. Foy expressed thanks to System staff Stephanie Glynn, Julie Drake, Katy Pettersen and all involved in coordinating the event. Additionally, she thanked Board members and college leaders for attending the banquet, which is important to the student Ambassadors. Foy thanked Baird for their continued support and for making the event possible. Videos of each Ambassador will be created and shared when they are completed.
- Due to time constraints, there will not be a legislative update at today's meeting. The Joint Finance Committee (JFC) approved WTCS's proposal for \$20 million to expand WTCS oral healthcare programs. These funds were set aside in the biennial budget last year but required authorizing legislation and approval by JFC for release. System President Foy thanked Senator Mary Felzkowski, Northcentral Technical College President Jeanne Worden, WTCS Policy Advisor Megan Stritchko, WTCS Health Education Director Dani Cook and DBA Executive Director Layla Merrifield for finding a solution to Wisconsin's oral health access challenges and taking the steps necessary to secure funding and program authority to implement it.
- The Joint Legislative Audit Committee approved an audit of DEI efforts in Wisconsin's Executive branch agencies. WTCS has already provided the information requested on our Equity and Inclusion plan and implementation plan and will keep the Board informed as the audit proceeds.
- Ascendium provided scholarships for WTCS Apprenticeship students through the Tools of the Trade. This year alone, 801 students, from all 16 WTCS colleges, received \$2,000 scholarships, for a total of \$1.6 million. Additionally, Ascendium has now committed to sharing \$500,000 with the System Office to help educate staff and faculty at the colleges about the modality of apprenticeship for other occupations, promote apprenticeship as a learning model and share our experiences with apprenticeship beyond our state's borders.
- Of the more than 1,000 community colleges across the country, three of Wisconsin's technical colleges: Northeast Wisconsin, Southwest Wisconsin and Western, have been named top 20 semi-finalists for the 2025 Aspen Prize. The \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence is awarded every two years.
- System President Foy has completed her Tour of Excellence, having been to all 16 college campuses, and shared highlights from each of her visits. Videos will be created of the visits, and they will be shared on WTCS social channels when they are ready. A [video of Lakeshore Technical College's visit](#) was shared with the Board.

Board Member Rogers arrived at 10:31 am.

ITEM D: Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association (DBA) Executive Director Layla Merrifield updated the Board on recent activities.

The DBA hosted their spring meeting March 22-23, at Nicolet College in Rhinelander. The meeting focused on competency-based education with hands-on learning, Board Member onboarding and included examples of Native communities. The meeting also featured a Trustee-developed orientation, where three Trustees collaborated to create onboarding materials for new Trustees, a national model that will be submitted to Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) as an example of how they collaborate at all levels.

Thirteen Trustees attended the 2024 WTCS Ambassador banquet. The DBA would like to increase participation of Trustees at this event in the future.

ITEM E: WTCS Presidents' Association

Dr. Rich Barnhouse, president of Waukesha County Technical College and vice chair of the Association, provided a brief update on recent activities of the Association.

Most of the colleges have had their graduations or will very soon. There has been wild success on social media with unbelievable stories of graduates, a great reminder of why and how well the System delivers for the state and for the economy. There have been so many life-changing moments, not only a celebration for the student walking across the stage, but for the students and their families and communities.

The Presidents' Association (PA) has been focusing on budget balancing strategies, highlighting the unbelievable skill we have at all 16 colleges. Often, we forget about the business enterprise that has to function at a really high level. Dr. Barnhouse was impressed with the critical thinking and long-term planning happening when the Presidents were talking about budget balancing strategies. All 16 colleges are looking well beyond two years into the late 2020's, early 2030's.

In June, the PA will hear from the DEI committee, comprising individuals across the System. They will share learnings from each other and share where we are going as a System.

In June, they will bid President Martin farewell as she retires. Dr. Martin has been a stabilizing force and will be missed.

Additionally, the June PA meeting will be System President Foy's last. Dr. Barnhouse thanked Foy for her exceptional leadership of the System and for her counseling of the presidents.

The President of the PA changes annually with Dr. Barnhouse taking over as Chair; Dr. Carlsen outgoing Chair; Dr. Jeanne Worden will move into Vice Chair and a decision will be made on the Secretary at their June meeting.

ITEM F: Consent Agenda

Board Member Klecker was thrilled to see the number of oral healthcare expansion programs, not only for the public but also for employees in that field, creating more job opportunities and more job pathways.

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

ITEM G: Western Technical College District Board Appointment

Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo provided an overview of the item.

Board President Tyler shared that these situations do not happen often. It is a statutory qualification issue and there is nothing negative about the situation.

It was moved by Board Member Sperberg, seconded by Board Member Holton that the Board disapprove the appointment of James A. Dillin for the School District Administrator position on the Western Technical College Board.

ITEM H: Blackhawk Technical College – Project Concept Review – Remodeling of Existing Facilities at the Main Campus in Janesville

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon provided an overview of the project to remodel existing facilities to expand training for dental programs.

It was moved by Board Member Pechacek, seconded by Board Member Sperberg that a finding is made that the concept for Blackhawk Technical College’s proposed remodeling of existing facilities at the Main Campus in Janesville is reasonable. The final scope and design of the project is subject to review and approval by the Board as required by s. 38.04(10) Stats. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM I: Blackhawk Technical College – Project Concept Review – Remodeling of Existing Facilities at the Main Campus in Janesville

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon provided an overview of the project to remodel existing Chemistry, Physics and Anatomy labs.

It was moved by Board Member Sperberg, seconded by Board Member Holton that a finding is made that the concept for Blackhawk Technical College’s proposed remodeling of existing facilities at the Main Campus in Janesville is reasonable. The final scope and design of the project is subject to review and approval by the Board as required by s. 38.04(10) Stats. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM J: Teaching and Learning – Perkins V Update

WTCS Provost and Vice President of Education Services Dr. Colleen McCabe and Education Director-Strategy and Improvement Dr. Hilary Barker provided the Board with an overview of Perkins V Updates.

Perkins V is a federal grant program that invests in both secondary and postsecondary career and technical education (CTE). The goal of this investment is to create programs that prepare students for high-skill, high-demand and high-wage careers; and provide supports so each student is successful and equity gaps are closed.

Perkins funding supports guided career pathways. CTE is our work; Perkins funding does not cover everything but helps support our mission and allow colleges to enhance their impact.

Board Member Pechacek asked what special populations are served. Dr. McCabe clarified that special populations serves individuals with disabilities; individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults; individuals preparing for nontraditional fields; single parents, including single pregnant women; out-of-workforce individuals; homeless individuals; youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; youth with an active military parent; and English language learners.

Board Member Pechacek understands that \$25 million is distributed , but asked how is it implemented? Dr. Barker indicated that the funds we receive are through grants given to our colleges in categories

such as career prep, student success, credential attainment to strengthen CTE and non-traditional occupations (NTO).

Board Member Underly shared that Perkins V is institution based at the K12 level. For example, \$25,000 for a school could buy a 3D printer or offset funds needed by Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) for skills competitions.

Board Member Klecker asked how employees engage in developing the plan for secondary and post-secondary schools. Dr. Barker noted there is a list of who must be involved for a state plan and a local plan – through advisory board work, district boards and special population representatives. They must engage beyond educational institutions.

Board Member Holton sought clarification on gender equity and how Perkins grants are being used for public safety. Dr. Barker stated that Perkins funds might not support the NTO at the college, but it is being supported through state grants being given to colleges.

ITEM K: Integrated Education and Training (IET) Grant Approvals

WTCS Grants Manager Tou Ya Khang provided an overview of the 2024-25 IET Development and Expansion grant programs. While the Board approved most of the 2024-25 grants at the March meeting, the applications for this grant category were not yet due. The purpose or goal of this grant category is to provide funds to support the development and expansion of IET. For FY24-25, \$1,500,000 was available for this grant category.

Integrated Education and Training is a service approach that combines adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities and workforce training to prepare students for a specific occupation or occupation cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

IET leads to many positive outcomes:

- connects students to a career pathway, saving students time;
- accelerates economic mobility;
- enhances student outcomes and beliefs for success;
- feeder for post-secondary programs; and
- lever to addressing Wisconsin's equity imperative.

Upon approval, the System Office will notify the colleges in the form of grant action notices. This will tell them which grants were approved and not approved, with feedback calls for disapproved grant applications.

Board Member Blumer asked if there has to be an employer associated with the grant requests. Mr. Khang indicated that applicants are typically connected with employers. when they submit IET grant requests.

It was moved by Board Member Sperberg, seconded by Board Member Klecker that the Board approves funding awards for the Integrated Education & Training Development and Expansion grant programs for fiscal year 2024-25, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM L: Outcomes for 2023 WTCS Graduates

WTCS Provost and Vice President for Educational Services Dr. Colleen McCabe and Director of Strategic Advancement Katy Pettersen provided an overview of the outcomes for 2023 WTCS Graduates. WTCS surveyed all 23,922 graduates, with 58.1% responding. Of those who responded and were in the labor force, 93% indicated they were employed within six months of graduation, including 82% who reported

they are employed in a job related to the training they received, and 91% working in Wisconsin, with 66% in their college district.

The median salary for 2023 graduates six months after graduation is \$52,308, up from \$51,070 in 2022. The median salary for associate degree earners is \$56,156, up from \$53,431 in 2022. The report also highlights that 60% of 2023 graduates were women and 25% were students of color with the majority of students being 20-24 years old. Additionally, 96% of graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with their technical training.

Ms. Pettersen emphasized that our enrollments are more diverse than the state's demographic makeup.

System President Foy attended several graduations and observed that there was a lot of attention being given to high school students graduating with an associate degree prior to graduating high school, a number we have not reported. This is a population that is increasingly growing.

This [report](#) is available on the WTCS website and will be distributed digitally to all high schools for students, prospective students and influencers; District Boards Association; colleges; adult education providers; and policy makers. Additionally, it will be shared in WTCS-in-Brief with a much broader audience.

ITEM M: Announcements

The UW Board of Regents Report was sent to the Board on May 16, 2024.

System President Foy noted this is the last time the Board will meet in the McCarthy Board Room because the System Office will be moving across the street to the Hill Farms State Office Building. If anyone is in Madison after the first week of June, she is happy to show you around the new office space. The Board will meet at the Hill Farms State Office Building on January 21, 2025.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be July 16-17, 2024, at Northwood Technical College in New Richmond.

The Board reconvened at 12:02 pm after a short recess for lunch.

ITEM N: Closed Session

Pursuant to sec. 19.85(1)(c) and (e), Wis. Stats., the Board convened in closed session to discuss the interview strategies and questions related to the Wisconsin Technical College System Presidential Search.

It was moved by Board Member Pechacek, seconded by Board Member Underly, to move into closed session, which was approved on a roll call vote with Members Blumer, Holton, Klecker, Pechacek, Rogers, Sperberg, Svacina, Tyler, Underly, Walsh voting in the affirmative. There were no dissenting votes and no abstentions.

ITEM O: Reconvene in Open Session

It was moved by Board Member Holton, seconded by Board Member Pechacek, to reconvene into Open Session and approved on a roll call vote with members Blumer, Holton, Klecker, Pechacek, Rogers, Sperberg, Svacina, Tyler, Underly and Walsh voting in the affirmative. There were no dissenting votes and no abstentions.

Board Members Holton, Pechacek, Rogers, Svacina, Underly and Walsh left the meeting at 1:15 pm.

ITEM P: Overcoming Cognitive Bias Training

WTCS Human Resources Director Madeline Erce led the Overcoming Cognitive Bias Training with the Board.

ITEM Q: Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Drake