

MINUTES OF MEETING
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD
SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2023
GATEWAY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Members Present: Quincey Daniels, Janixa Franco Gonzalez, Douglas Holton, Sr., Dan Klecker, John W. Miller, Amy Pechacek, Sara Rogers, Leslie Svacina, S. Mark Tyler, Jill Underly, Stephen Willett.

Members Absent: Alex Lasry, Dan Sperberg.

System Office Staff Present: Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Morna Foy, Stephanie Glynn, Mandy Johnson, Christina Lorge, Chris Martin, Colleen McCabe, Jeremy Nichols, Katy Pettersen, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Lenard Simpson, Latisha Spence-Brookens, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, JP Villavicencio, Ann Westrich.

District/Others Present: Sunem Beaton-Garcia, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chuck Bolstad, Layla Merrifield, District Boards Association; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; David Aguirre, Liz Allen, Megan Bahr, Kelly Bartlett, Ram Bhatia, Marv Campbell, Katie Graf, Matt Janisin, Cyndean Jennings, Allie Johnson, Sharon Johnson, Bob Kaebisch, Sabrina Morgan, Jacqueline Morris, Chris Perez, Equaines Price, Ritu Raju, Stacy Riley, Jeff Robshaw, Stephanie Sklba, Jim Steinmetz, Tammi Summers, Dajanae Williams, Dwayne Whyndam, Gateway Technical College; Girish Prabhu, Fine Taufatofua imaginX; Paul Carlsen, Stephanie Leonhard, Lakeshore Technical College; Jack Daniels, III, Madison Area Technical College; Betty Bruski Mallek, Peter Mallek, Shelly Mondeik, Mid-State Technical College; Vicki Martin, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Cleo Krejci, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel; Bonnie Baerwald, Moraine Park Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; John Will, Northwood Technical College; Karen Bolstad, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College; Angie Lawrence, Roger Stanford, Western Technical College; Sharon Wendt, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Katrina Willis, Wisconsin Student Government; Lindsay Blumer, WRTP/Big Step and WTCS Board Nominee.

Board President Tyler called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

Board President Tyler welcomed Janixa Franco Gonzalez, student representative on the WTCS Board.

Board President Tyler thanked President Ritu Raju and her team for hosting the WTCS Board. Dr. Raju welcomed the Board to Gateway Technical College (GTC) and introduced GTC's WTCS Ambassador Dejanae Williams who addressed the Board.

ITEM A: Approval of July 11-12, 2023, Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Board Member Underly, seconded by Board Member Klecker, that the July 11-12, 2023, meeting minutes be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM B: Report of the Board President

Board Member Miller's UW System Board of Regents report for July was shared with Board Members on September 5, 2023.

Board President Tyler thanked the WTCS education directors, college presidents, faculty and staff that have been working with the University of Wisconsin System and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) to expand opportunities for our students and graduates. He went on to say that substantial progress is being made in expanding pathways and recognition of work at other institutions which is good news for our students and for Wisconsin's economy.

Board Member Daniels arrived at 4:48 pm.

ITEM C: Report of the System President

System President Foy introduced Dr. Kristen Raney, the first woman president to lead Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC), welcoming her back to Wisconsin and to the System. Her career began as a part-time instructional assistant at Chippewa Valley Technical College where she held a range of positions in her twelve years there, followed by working at Saint Paul College in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she served as dean of students and interim vice president of student affairs before becoming the vice president of academic affairs. Most recently, she was the vice chancellor for academic affairs at Eastern Iowa Community Colleges in Davenport, Iowa. Dr. Raney shared that she is happy to be back at the best two-year college system.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is the accrediting body for our colleges. Earlier this year, they proposed updates to guidelines which clarify that institutions are responsible for establishing and maintaining reasonable processes for determining instructor qualifications. The proposed policy allows institutions to consider factors beyond traditional academic credentials. HLC had imposed some very rigorous and restrictive academic requirements on dual enrollment instructors that threatened to reduce access to these opportunities, especially in rural areas. WTCS, and Dr. Colleen McCabe in particular, have been advocating for this more flexible policy that will enable WTCS colleges to build upon their dual credit program successes to expand access and create greater diversity among the students being served.

A partnership to work on a Foster Youth Pathways Project between WTCS, the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) and specific K12 partners has led to real movement to encourage students in foster care to enroll in dual credit while in high school. In Wisconsin, 49% of foster youth are unemployed at age 19, and 25% are homeless. By age 21, 45% are unemployed, and 35% are homeless. This effort to create awareness and provide education and strategies to better care for foster youth students will also help them navigate college after they age out of foster care. Lakeshore Technical College and Lakeland University; and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and St. Norbert College have been meeting since August 2022. They have determined the largest obstacle is that students have been carrying the 'foster kid' title for so long they don't want to self-identify as foster youth if they go to college. But, if we can work with the student to get them in dual credit programs, then it's more of an anonymous hand off from high school to our colleges, where our colleges are already aware of the student and can offer the services that students may need without ever having to self-identify as a former foster youth. Through these partnerships, our colleges can inform the WAICU college if the student continues on. Initial interest is now expanding to more areas of the state. The Board will hear more about the success of this project at the November Board meeting.

The Board gets to see many of the System professionals during Board meeting Teaching and Learning segments and our facilities and grant approvals, but you don't get to hear from all of them. WTCS Multimedia Specialist Jeremy Nichols has been working on a video project that highlights WTCS education directors talking about what they do, and more importantly, why they do what they do. This is another way to share our story and continue to raise awareness and support for WTCS. A sample of

those videos was played for the Board. Additionally, a video of Gateway working with Habitat for Humanity to not only offer students a true hands-on experience, but to do so in order to help the people in their community was also shared.

Some good news to share on enrollment:

- Enrollment projections for 2022-23 show a 5% growth in headcount of about 29,000 students and 2.7% growth in FTE, the highest level since 2018-19.
- 2021-22 had a 10% headcount 0.6 FTE growth, meaning more students are taking more courses.
- FTE vs. Headcount – our colleges have year-round enrollment, and the majority (70%+) of WTCS students are part-time, so headcount is a better measure of cost/investment majority.

The last three meetings have included a level of focus on Artificial Intelligence/Augmented Reality/Generative AI. It's apparent this subject is of significant interest in higher education. Both from a cautionary side with an increased threat of plagiarism, but also from an opportunity side with new ways of learning, new ways of teaching and new ways of doing business, and the future is full of jobs we don't even know exist yet. We will be looking at these opportunities and assessing the threats as we move forward. System President Foy shared two articles on this topic.

- One is a compilation of articles from the Chronicle of Higher Education. It speaks to the dangers of Generative AI, which is a program like ChatGPT, where you can ask a bot to draft a paper, letter or an article about anything and it will produce appropriate samples.
- The other is from the US Department of Education Office of Educational Technology and includes insights and recommendations on sharing knowledge and developing policies for AI.

One additional article from Higher Education was emailed to the Board and highlights two of our colleges – Nicolet College was the first to adopt competency-based learning, with Lakeshore also rolling out that model more recently – as the inspiration for California educators seeking to chart a new direction in higher education as they fundamentally restructure how their community colleges measure learning. Instead of using traditional methods, like attendance and grades, the new system focuses exclusively on a set of skills that students must master.

ITEM D: Teaching & Learning – Tools for the Future: Augmented Reality and Digital Twins

WTCS Education Directors Chris Martin and Ann Westrich were joined by Gateway Technical College's (GTC) Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) Technician David Aguirre; Director of High School Partnerships Katie Graf; Student and Scholarship Recipient Allie Johnson; Dean of the School of Manufacturing, Engineering and IT Chris Perez; CEO imaginX Girish Prabhu; and Business Development Manager, imaginX Fine Taufatofua who provided an overview of Augmented Reality and Digital Twins.

WTCS Education Director Ann Westrich shared that 57,219 students earned college credit while in high school in 2021-22 with the unofficial number for 2022-23 being 62,209. While all 16 colleges participate, GTC is a very active partner in dual enrollment with more than 5,100 taking more than 8,800 courses, earning 24,000 college credits.

WTCS Education Director Chris Martin explained that Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Digital Twins can be used in many programs such as Civil Engineering Technology, Architecture, Structural Engineering, Welding, Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare and Protective Services.

GTC IIoT Technician David Aguirre explained that digital or virtual options you see on the screen in the learning environment is what you would see in the real world. He gave the example of a CEO of a company needing a \$1 million assembly line. That assembly line could be created in a digital space so adjustments could be made before making the actual line. Rather than stopping an assembly line to

make corrections, it can be tested and adjusted as necessary in a digital environment before ever going live.

Aguirre further explained that Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) are focused on providing users with a realistic 3-D experience mimicking the real world. The imaginX platform is equipped to manage and employ unlimited number of users. It can be assessed in real time directly or via the LMS system on all mobile devices, web browsers and VR headsets. imaginX is providing STEM-related content that can be customized based on existing course curriculum syllabus.

imaginX CEO Girish Prabhu and Business Development Manager Fine Taufatofua shared that they are based in Texas and after 18 years in education they developed a tool to create an AR/VR environment with usability for faculty, accessibility for students, and management by IT. They highlighted the importance of those three departments' need to collaborate so they are coordinated with course curriculum. It's easy to use and can be integrated with current systems, allowing students access.

GTC Director of High School Partnerships Katie Graf described how students in high school can use these tools and earn college credits through dual enrollment. It is 100% free for students due to a private donor, including a GTC scholarship. Students from the Racine Engineering, Arts and Leadership (REAL) School and LakeView Technology Academy (Kenosha Unified School District) come to the GTC iMET Center for classes. The growth of Dual Credit enrollments in Civil Engineering, Architectural Technology and Automation System Technology has grown from nine students receiving Dual Credit in 2017 to 310 students in 2022.

Dean of the School of Manufacturing, Engineering and IT Chris Perez acknowledged the generous donation from SC Johnson, the STEM Scholars Pathway program, which allows students to pursue their interests in science, technology, engineering and math. They receive financial support as they complete the first two years of the program at GTC before transferring to Carthage College, Concordia University Wisconsin or the Milwaukee School of Engineering to complete their bachelor's degree.

Student and Scholarship Recipient Allie Johnson shared that she has been at GTC since she was a freshman in high school at the REAL School and is part of the SC Johnson STEM Scholars Program. She enjoys the financial freedom and the wrap around support services including case management, study halls and weekly check-ins. There are great opportunities in the STEM field for women and the seamless transfer experience is a great benefit.

The Board was given an opportunity to experiment with AR/VR technology.

It was moved by Board Member Underly, seconded by Board Member Pechacek, to recess the meeting until Wednesday, September 13, 2023. The Board adjourned at 5:47 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Members Present: Quincey Daniels, Janixa Franco Gonzalez, Douglas Holton, Sr., Dan Klecker, John W. Miller, Amy Pechacek, Sara Rogers, Dan Sperberg, Leslie Svacina, S. Mark Tyler, Jill Underly, Stephen Willett.

Members Absent: Alex Lasry.

System Office Staff Present: Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Morna Foy, Stephanie Glynn, Mandy Johnson, Tou Ya Khang, Kristin Long, Christina Lorge, Chris Martin, Joel Mathis, Colleen McCabe, Carolann Nelson, Jeremy Nichols, Cristina Parente, Katy Pettersen, Anna Richter, Katie Roberts, Michelle

Rudman, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Lenard Simpson, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Julie Tyznik, Ann Westrich.

District/Others Present: Tracy Pierner, Blackhawk Technical College; Rod Bagley, Sunem Beaton-Garcia, Anne Thurmer, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chuck Bolstad, Layla Merrifield, District Boards Association; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Liz Allen, Kelly Bartlett, Marv Campbell, Jacqueline Morris, Equaines Price, Ritu Raju, Jeff Robshaw, Tammi Summers, Gateway Technical College; Jack Daniels, III, Sylvia Ramirez, Madison Area Technical College; Betty Bruski Mallek, Peter Mallek, Shelly Mondeik, Chris Severson, Mid-State Technical College; Vicki Martin, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Bonnie Baerwald, Mike Chevalier, Roy Marquez, Moraine Park Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Robert Elliott, Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; John Will, Northwood Technical College; Karen Bolstad, Jason Wood, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College; Rich Barnhouse, Waukesha County Technical College; Angie Lawrence, Roger Stanford, Western Technical College; Sharon Wendt, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Katrina Willis, Wisconsin Student Government; Jim Jelak, Wisconsin Technical College System Marketing Consortium; Lindsay Blumer, WRTP/Big Step and WTCS Board Nominee.

Board President Tyler called the meeting to order at 9:37 am. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

Board President Tyler congratulated Precision Plus on receiving the Futuremaker Partner Award for their partnership with Gateway Technical College and their commitment to revitalizing manufacturing and the creation of the Reader Precision Machining and Manufacturing Center on the Elkhorn Campus. In addition, they are helping secure new equipment that aligns the college curriculum to the work happening in industry.

ITEM E: 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.

Mr. Bolstad introduced himself as the new president of the association.

The DBA lost longtime Assistant Executive Director Steve Tenpas who passed away July 17. Over the last 22 years, Steve transformed the professional development program and opportunities available to hundreds of district board members, delivering content on the role and responsibilities of public board members and educating the governing boards about exciting new initiatives across the System. Steve also created and expanded DBA's virtual presence and capacity, critical to keeping the organization engaged during the physical restrictions of the global pandemic. Steve will be impossible to replace. The DBA will search for a new hire.

The DBA fall quarterly meeting will be held alongside the biennial Legal Issues Seminar at Waukesha County Technical College October 26-27. Presenters will offer reminders on open meetings and public records, legislative issues and a keynote on artificial intelligence. Continuing legal education credit will be available. If Board members are interested in attending, please contact Ms. Drake. The Legal Issues Seminar is organized and driven by WCTC and the meetings will be held all day Thursday and Friday morning. The DBA meeting will take place Friday afternoon and Saturday is the annual strategic planning meeting, a fantastic educational opportunity.

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Leadership Congress is October 9-12 in Las Vegas. Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Trustee Carla Hedtke will campaign for a seat on the ACCT national board. Additionally, Moraine Park Technical College Trustee Vernon Jung is being awarded Central Trustee of the Year and many WTCS colleges will be presenting at the conference.

ITEM F: WTCS Presidents' Association

Dr. Paul Carlsen, president of Lakeshore Technical College and of the Association, updated the Board on recent activities.

The President's Association has not met since the last Board meeting but will be meeting the afternoon of September 13. The two topics on the agenda are to debrief on legislative activity since June to become aware of current legislative issues and to review the marketing consortium and determine how they can optimally leverage their combined efforts.

While all WTCS colleges kicked off their fall terms, it is important to remember that the colleges throughout the System teach and support students year-round, not just in the fall and the spring. They do this because many adult students are not interested in a traditional academic calendar year. They are interested in earning their degree as quickly as possible because their degree means a pay raise, a promotion or a career change.

Many WTCS colleges will be presenting at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Annual Congress in Las Vegas in October. Lakeshore will be presenting presidential evaluations under policy governance. John Lukas, Lakeshore trustee, will have completed his second, three-year term as a Board Member of ACCT and has been term limited. Carla Hedtke, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Trustee, is running for a spot on the ACCT Board.

ITEM G: 2024-2025 Board Meeting Schedule

It was moved by Board Member Rogers, seconded by Board Member Underly to adopt the WTCS Board meeting schedule for 2024-2025. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM H: Consent Agenda

It was moved by Board Member Pechacek, seconded by Board Member Sperberg that the Board approve the program and facilities development requests and interim district board appointments as presented, with the exception of program items for Waukesha County Technical College. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Board Member Holton, seconded by Board Member Miller that the Board approve the program request for Waukesha County Technical College. Motion carried 11-1. Board Member Franco Gonzales abstained.

ITEM I: Moraine Park Technical College – Project Review – Construction of Additional Facilities in Horicon

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon provided an overview of the project. This is the second review by the Board. The concept review was approved at the May 2023 WTCS Board meeting at \$5,706,000. After receiving bids on the project, the lowest of three bids exceeded the original estimated cost.

It was moved by Board Member Sperberg, seconded by Board Member Holton, that the Board grants approval to the Moraine Park Technical College District to construct additional facilities in Horicon at a cost of \$6,800,265. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM J: Adult Education Trends and Comprehensive Funding Model

WTCS Associate Vice President for the Office of Student Success Dr. Christina Lorge and Gateway Technical College Dean for Pre-College and Momentum Programs Cyndean Jennings shared information on the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act's (AEFLA) comprehensive funding model.

Dr. Ben Konruff, WTCS education director for strategy and improvement, wrote an action research brief, *WTCS Adult Education Participation: Trends, Change Agents and Strategies to Maximize Impact*, which was provided to the Board. The brief contains AEFLA enrollment and comprehensive funding data.

AEFLA is the largest federal investment in adult education and literacy, is Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is administered by the Office of Career Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) at the U.S. Department of Education.

The need for adult education in Wisconsin is great. There are more than 354,000 adults without a high school degree; 142,000 adults do not speak English very well or at all; and 70% of all U.S. jobs will require some education beyond a high school degree in 2027.

The need for adult education in Gateway's District is higher than the state average of 8.7%. Speaking a language other than English at home is 8.8% higher than Wisconsin in Racine county, and 14.6% higher than Wisconsin in the city of Kenosha. Strategies for growth include delivering messages that matter, just-in-time supports and equity-minded adult education pathways. Additionally, Gateway is offering classes on a three-semester calendar in spring, summer and fall in addition to alternative delivery methods. Best practices include meeting students where they are, partnerships (internal and external), community outreach and transition services. The AEFLA Grant provided instruction to 1,500 adults covering a three-county district located at five sites in Racine, Kenosha, Elkhorn, Racine Workforce Solutions Center and Racine Alternative Learning.

Board Member Holton asked how students are being taught time management. Ms. Jennings shared that each student has their own plan and works with college staff to help them stay on task. Segments in career exploration show students what the life of an employee looks like and what it is like to transition from being a student to the workforce.

Board Member Tyler toured Cardinal Glass in Fargo, North Dakota where their workforce represents more than 300 countries, with many who didn't speak English. They brought in some team members who shared that they don't feel there are barriers in their workplace. Cardinal values diversity and was recognized by the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce with the 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Award. This award celebrates that over 70% of the Cardinal Fargo team consists of individuals born outside of the U.S. and BIPOC.

Ms. Jennings works with business workforce solution teams to save employers time with an instructor who comes to them and alters the curriculum to teach students how to use machines while building their English language skills.

System President Foy explained that adult education is a statutory responsibility of the Wisconsin Technical College System, but that's not the case in every state. The System nor its colleges can charge for this instruction. The resources the colleges have to run these programs comes from what the System receives along with their state funding. The people being served do not always get counted in studies or in staff investments, as most of these students are not included in the colleges' enrollment. She said it is important to keep in mind the scope of what we give to our communities.

The Board reconvened at 10:45 after a ten-minute break.

ITEM K: Workforce Advancement Training (WAT) and Apprentice-Related Instruction Grant Guidelines

WTCS Grants Manager Tou Ya Khang provided an overview of the State of Wisconsin WAT and Apprentice-related grant guidelines for fiscal year 2024-25, which operates on a different timeline than the state and federal guidelines approved at the July 2023 meeting.

Apprentice-Related Instruction updates include language in the funds available and additional limitations and grant report due dates.

WAT updates include:

- total funds available increased to \$5 million;
- updated application due date;
- updated formal budget revision deadline;
- maximum number of applications a college can submit reduced to six;
- new deadline for completion of WAT projects;
- new timeline for when final report and the WTCS Economic Impact Survey needs to be submitted.

Upon the Board's approval, the colleges will submit grant applications for funding in December and January for Board approval at the March WTCS Board meeting. The colleges will receive notification of grant awards in March with grant activities beginning July 1, 2024.

Board Member Tyler commented that at the federal level there's tension between innovation and regulatory oversight. They're asking for innovation in workforce development but at the same time there are 900 pages of oversight. He said that we see a lot of innovation in our colleges – how do we allow for innovation in these grant guidelines?

System President Foy mentioned that Governor Evers championed a \$1 million increase to the WAT program. Based on that we are under capacity with requests for these funds. This increase allows for innovation with accountability through reporting to Mr. Khang and his group. WAT grants are designed so that if a company can't use it, the grant can be returned and reissued to another company, sometimes at the same college, and can be applied for throughout the year if the funds are available. Colleges can use this money to work with employer partners. The Fast Forward grant at the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is a similar case.

Board Member Underly if the employers approach a specific college or if they work through DWD when there is a gap in workforce needs. System President Foy answered that as it relates to WAT grants, a company approaches a college for assistance. Additionally, colleges may monitor a sector/industry that needs improvement. WAT grants bring competitors together to increase efficiencies in their industry. Artificial Intelligence will be a driver for industry topics with colleges making note of changes in their local economies.

Board Member Pechacek commented that DWD has 54 job centers around the state and each center has business service teams that are surveying businesses to find gaps and pipelines of talent. Additionally, DWD has over 30 economists looking at trend data. Forward looking, the Governor is creating a task force on Workforce and Artificial Intelligence as we continue to face working quantity challenge. Last month, Wisconsin broke the record for lowest employment rate.

System President Foy mentioned that these are competitive grants which must have demonstrated need. For every request received, there are many others, so we rely heavily on data.

It was moved by Board Member Klecker, seconded by Board Member Sperberg, that the Board adopts the funding categories of the State of Wisconsin WAT and Apprentice-Related Instruction grant programs for fiscal year 2024-25. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM L: Legislative Update

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

Ms. Merrifield has been working on the following bills:

- Oral Healthcare Grants – one time set-aside of \$20 million will be released to WTCS and then to the colleges with details still being worked on.
- Wisconsin GI Bill proposed expansions.
- Firefighters Bill – we want it to be consistent across the state and nation.
- Resource constraints – it's easy for legislators to take tours of the campuses, but our colleges are constrained when it comes to capital equipment. If the colleges are expected to do more, we will need additional resources.

System President Foy commented that this is the time in the legislation process where the work done by Ms. Merrifield, herself and the colleges is important. Building relationships with legislators and educating people on the opportunities that WTCS provides, and showing through campus visits throughout the year what our institutions and students face are integral to the policy work.

WTCS Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo provided the Board with an update on State Financial Aid Modernization. Senate Bill 380 and Assembly Bill 381 were introduced at the end of July and a hearing was held on August 23. WTCS worked with the University of Wisconsin System, the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the Tribal colleges on a request to the legislature to change the Wisconsin Grants lifetime eligibility to align with the Federal Pell Grant. The eligibility limit requested is six years or 12 semesters, is prorated based on the enrollment of the student and allows students enrolled less than half-time to receive funding. The Wisconsin Grant currently caps eligibility at ten semesters, regardless of the number of credits taken and prohibits students who are enrolled less than half-time to receive a grant. This leaves Wisconsin's nontraditional students at a disadvantage. The request also included:

- state statutes be amended to align the eligibility cap with the Federal Pell Grant;
- provide students who are enrolled less than half-time equal access to Wisconsin Grant funding;
- outdated formula components be eliminated in statutes to allow for a consistent award process for all sectors of higher education; and
- Wisconsin Grant maximum award dollar amount be removed from state statutes.

WTCS Policy Advisor Megan Stritchko provided a federal update on appropriations.

The end of the federal fiscal year is September 30. Each chamber has marked up their appropriations bills for Labor, Health & Human Services (HHS)-Education. WTCS funding priorities are those funding sources that provide support to the colleges and students, including Perkins V Career and Technical Education (CTE) Basic State grants, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), and college grant and student supports, including financial aid programs.

As noted at the July meeting, appropriation levels were included as part of the debt ceiling agreement. The Senate aligned with the agreed upon levels, but the House was lower than the debt ceiling agreement.

The House proposed significant cuts to education programs, approximately 15% to the full Education budget, including the elimination of federal work-study and the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program. The proposal maintains the same funding level for Perkins CTE, AEFLA and Pell grants. The Senate proposed some cuts, not at the level of the House, and increases to several programs including Perkins CTE State Grants, Pell grant and CCAMPIS. AEFLA is level funded.

Differences between the House and Senate proposals must be reconciled before a final bill can pass and be signed by the President and there's limited time remaining before October 1, the start of the new fiscal year.

As in previous years, if Congress passes a continuing resolution, they can avoid a federal government shutdown on October 1. It is not a foregone conclusion that Congress will reach agreement even on a continuing resolution before October 1.

Despite whether Congress reaches agreement on a continuing resolution, they still need to come to agreement on the appropriations bills. Notably the Debt Ceiling agreement contained a provision that the House and Senate need to pass all 12 appropriations bills before January 1, 2024, to avoid a forced 1% across-the-board cut. Appropriations will likely be the main focus for Congress through the end of the year.

ITEM M: Announcements/Adjourn

Board President Tyler shared gratitude with Gateway Technical College, President Raju and her team for hosting an excellent meeting.

The next meeting of the Board will be held November 7-8, 2023, at Lakeshore Technical College.

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:23 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Drake