



Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

Board of Governors-Northeast Community College Area

2/12/2026 9:00 AMCST

@ Lifelong Learning Center, Suite O197, 801 East Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701

Attendance

Present:

Members: Del Ames - Secretary, Board of Governors, Steve Anderson - Member, Board of Governors, Diane Davies - Member, Board of Governors, Donovan Ellis - Chairperson, Board of Governors, Dirk Petersen - Member, Board of Governors, Pat Wojcik - Member, Board of Governors

Absent-Excused:

Members: Terry Nelson - Member, Board of Governors, Julie Robinson - Member, Board of Governors, Jeffrey Scherer - Member, Board of Governors, Nicole Sedlacek - Vice-Chairperson, Board of Governors, Carol A. Sibbel - Member, Board of Governors

Staff: Leah Barrett - President, Scott Gray - Vice President, Administrative Services and General Counsel, Charlene Widener - Vice President, Educational Services, Tracy Kruse - Vice President, Development and External Affairs, Amanda Nipp - Vice President, Student Services, David Cone - CIO, Lindsay Spiegel - Director, Institutional Effectiveness, Mike Walkowiak - Vice President, Human Resources & Organizational Development, Jerry Guenther - Director, Public Relations, Diane Reikofski - Executive Assistant and Board Recording Secretary

Guests: Kyler Mosel-Student Leadership Association, Olivia Dekok-Student Leadership Association, Allison Lambert-College Engagement Coordinator, Erin Sharpe-Director of iHub, Wendy Swenson-Spanish instructor, Trentee Bush-Agriculture instructor, Brandon Keller-Agriculture instructor, Avery Carl-Norfolk Daily News, Michela Keeler-Strom-Dean, Academic Outreach, Dr. Jeff Hoffman-Dean, Health and Public Services, Brad Ranslem-Dean, Applied Technology

1. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Chairperson Donovan Ellis convened the meeting at 9:04 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Chairperson Ellis led the assembly in pledging their allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

3. OPEN MEETINGS ACT (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Pursuant to Nebraska Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible printed material which will be discussed at today's meeting is located in Suite O197 of the Lifelong Learning Center and on the Northeast Community College website. Also available in Suite O197 is a current copy of the [Nebraska Open Meetings Act](#) which is accessible to members of the public.

4. CONSENT AGENDA (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

APPROVE the Consent Agenda including:

- **Adopt** the Agenda of the February 12, 2026 meeting. Official Notice of the meeting is posted on the Northeast Community College website, and published in the [Norfolk Daily News](#) on Saturday, February 7, 2026.
- **APPROVE** [Minutes](#) of the January 8, 2026 meeting.

 [Board of Governors Meeting-Minutes 01.08.2026.pdf](#)

 [Consent Agenda - February 12, 2026](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion moved by Pat Wojcik and motion seconded by Dirk Petersen. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

5.1. Monitoring Report(s) (Presenters: Leah Barrett)

[EL-05, Financial Conditions and Activities Monitoring Report Summary](#)

 [EL-05, Financial Conditions & Activities.pdf](#)

Dr. Leah Barrett presented the monitoring report, EL-05, [Financial Conditions and Activities](#), reporting that the College is operating responsibly and within all financial guidelines. The annual audit showed no concerns, and all key financial indicators remain within healthy ranges. The report also confirmed that the College is keeping up with its bills, using funds appropriately, meeting all government filing requirements, and supporting activities that align with the Board's goals. No issues of non-compliance were found.

The Board of Governors assessed the monitoring report, EL-05, [Financial Conditions and Activities](#), and determined that evidence supports compliance with a reasonable interpretation.

5.2. President's monthly update (Presenters: Leah Barrett)

[President's Monthly Update 02.2026](#)

 [President's Monthly update-02.2026.pdf](#)

Dr. Leah Barrett expressed sorrow over the recent loss of Ryan Sevening, a key figure on campus known for his engagement with students and involvement in various programs. She stated the college community's support for students during this time and stressed the importance of continued recognition for Ryan's contributions.

Dr. Barrett provided the following update:

- Later today, some members of the Northeast leadership team will participate in a telephone interview with Aspen as the next step in the 2027 Aspen Prize process.
- Dr. Barrett participated in a statewide convening of higher education leaders on the current education landscape.
- Northeast Community College hosted the Nebraska Governor for an update on the Highway 275 project.
- Dr. Barrett attended higher education sessions at the University of Southern California, highlighting dual enrollment successes, especially for students in poverty.
- Learned about impactful state initiatives and community-based partnerships improving access and student success.
- Dr. Barrett has been appointed to the Board of Nebraska Children and Families Foundation.
- Construction is beginning on the Norfolk Area Childcare Collaborative.
- Work on updating the Strategic Plan continues and will be reviewed by President's Council and the Ownership Linkage Committee prior to the draft being presented to the Board of Governors.
- Engagement Survey is now open; closes at end of day today.
- Numerous concerts, competitions, and professional activities have occurred across campus.
- TRIO Student of the Month: Sam Gibbs.
- NCCA Day at the Capitol will be held on February 25, 2026.

6. CLOSED SESSION to discuss collective bargaining as authorized by Nebraska Revised Statute §84-1410 which is necessary to protect the public's interest.

 [Closed Session - February 12, 2026](#)

Motion:

At 9:50 a.m., motion was made to enter into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining as authorized by Nebraska Revised Statute 84-1410, and to return to the regular meeting after business is discussed
Reconvened to the regular meeting at 10:03 a.m.

Motion moved by Del Ames and motion seconded by Diane Davies. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

7. Consider compensation agreement(s):

7.1. Professional-Managerial (PM) Staff Employee Association Total Compensation Agreement for FY 27 and FY 28.

[PM Staff Compensation Agreement - FY27 and FY28](#)

 [PM Staff Compensation Agreement - FY27 and FY28.pdf](#)

 [Negotiated Agreement-PM](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve the Professional Managerial Association (PM) total compensation agreement for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 contract years.

Motion moved by Del Ames and motion seconded by Diane Davies. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

7.2. Classified Staff Association Total Compensation Agreement for FY 27 and FY 28.

[CSA Compensation Agreement - FY 27 and FY 28](#)

 [CSA Compensation Agreement - FY 27 and FY 28.pdf](#)

 [Negotiated Agreement-CSA](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve the Classified Staff Association (CSA) total compensation agreement for the 2026-2027 and the 2027-2028 contract years.

Motion moved by Steve Anderson and motion seconded by Del Ames. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

7.3. Faculty Association Negotiated Agreement for the 2026-2027 Contract Year

[Faculty Master Contract 2026-27](#)

 [Faculty Master Contract 2026-27.pdf](#)

 [Negotiated Agreement-Faculty Association](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve the Faculty Association Negotiated Agreement for the 2026-2027 contract year.

Motion moved by Dirk Petersen and motion seconded by Pat Wojcik. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

8. BOARD EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

8.1. Educational Services Report

8.1.1. Consider new program(s) of study:

- 8.1.1.1. SACA Industry 4.0 Foundations Skill Award (Presenters: Erin Sharpe, Michela Keeler-Strom)

Consider [SACA Industry 4.0 Foundations Skill Award](#)

 [SACA Industry 4.0 Foundations Skill Award 2026.pdf](#)

 [Program Approval-SACA Industry 4.0 Foundations Skill Award](#)

Dr. Widener explained that a few years ago, Northeast conducted a gap analysis, and the programs presented today are a direct result of that work. This ensures that we have the programming needed to support Workforce Pell.

Erin Sharpe, Director of iHub, advised that the SACA Industry 4.0 Foundations introduces students to the core principles, technologies, and skills used in today's smart manufacturing environments. This course, which consists of 8 credit hours over 14-weeks, blends theory with hands-on lab experience to build foundational competencies in automated machine operation, safety, blueprint and schematic reading, precision measurement, basic electrical and pneumatic systems, sensors and introductory robotics.

Motion:

Motion to approve the SACA Industry 4.0 Foundations Skill Award at Northeast Community College.

Motion moved by Del Ames and motion seconded by Dirk Petersen. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

8.1.1.2. Principles of Industrial Manufacturing Skill Award

Consider [Principles of Industrial Manufacturing Skill Award](#)

 [Principles of Industrial Manufacturing Skill Award 2026.pdf](#)

 [Program Approval-Principles of Industrial Manufacturing Skill Award](#)

Erin Sharpe, Director of iHub, presented the principles of Industrial Manufacturing Skill Award. This program provides students with foundational skills for today's advanced manufacturing environments. Students gain experience in core areas of industrial production, including workplace safety, materials and processes, blueprint reading, precision measurement, quality practices, equipment operation, and effective communication and teamwork. This program aligns with the Nebraska Manufacturing Alliance Bronze Credential, ensuring graduates demonstrate essential competencies recognized by employers statewide.

Motion:

Motion to approve the Principles of Industrial Manufacturing Skill Award at Northeast Community College.

Motion moved by Dirk Petersen and motion seconded by Del Ames. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

8.1.1.3. Professional Truck Driving Skill Award (Presenters: Brad Ranslem)

Consider [Professional Truck Driving Skill Award](#)

 [Professional Truck Driving Skill Award 2026.pdf](#)

 [Program Approval-Professional Truck Driving Skill Award](#)

Northeast Professional Truck Driving Skill Award training offers a comprehensive course designed to equip students with the skills necessary to obtain a Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The curriculum includes 240 hours of classroom and lab instruction. This immersive program not only prepares students to pass their CDL exam with confidence but also positions them to enter a high-demand, high-paying industry where skilled drivers are essential to keeping goods and services moving across the country.

Motion:

Motion to approve the Professional Truck Driving Skill Award at Northeast Community College.

Motion moved by Steve Anderson and motion seconded by Pat Wojcik. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

8.1.1.4. Small Business-Entrepreneurship Certificate (Presenters: Dr. Jeff Hoffman)

Consider the [Small Business-Entrepreneurship Certificate](#)

 [Small Business-Entrepreneurshp Certificate 2026.pdf](#)

 [Program Approval-Small Business-Entrepreneurship Certificate](#)

Dr. Jeff Hoffman reported that as a result of the gap analysis that was conducted, along with what was learned through conversations with our constituents, Northeast learned that our existing entrepreneur certificate was not meeting the needs of our South Sioux City partners.

Student who choose the Small Business-Entrepreneurship Certificate will receive instruction pertaining to skills necessary to begin the journey of becoming an entrepreneur. Students will explore basic marketing, accounting, sales, and the first step in opening a business-the written business plan. All coursework will apply as full credit toward an Associate of Arts Degree.

Motion:

Motion to approve the Small Business-Entrepreneurship Certificate at Northeast Community College.

Motion moved by Dirk Petersen and motion seconded by Steve Anderson. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

At 10:37 a.m., Chairperson Ellis requested a brief 15-minute recess. Reconvened to the regular meeting at 10:51 a.m.

8.2. Development and External Affairs Report

8.2.1. Foundation Board of Directors' report (Presenters: Del Ames, Donovan Ellis)

[Quarterly Foundation Board meeting update](#)

 [Quarterly Foundation Board meeting updates.pdf](#)

Donovan Ellis provided the following report:

- The Foundation Board of Directors met on January 27, 2026.
- The Foundation Board welcomed Donovan Ellis as a new Board of Governors representative.
- Two Scott Scholar students shared program highlights, including academic, leadership, and internship components, and described benefits of full-ride funding and community-building support.
- Investment Manager Jared Faltys reported strong portfolio performance, exceeding benchmarks across 1-, 3-, 5-, and 10-year periods (most recent: 17.1% one-year return).
- Holly Quinn reported significant growth in scholarship funding—from \$192K (2015) to \$1.14M (2025)—with nearly 100 additional awards added last year and increased average award amount.
- Bill Tielke resigned his position as President. Paula Havranek was elected President, Courtney Schmidt elected Vice President, Brian Chapman elected Treasurer and Matt Hoelsing elected Secretary.
- The Board of Directors approved maintaining the 4% payout and 1% admin fee, totaling \$1,370,316 for 2026–2027.
- Approved funding for a Growing Together intern, adding \$12,000 total for staffing and technology needs.
- Nearly \$3M secured for the iHub; ~\$2M raised in Q4 alone.

- Board giving participation: 61.5% combined.
- Members were encouraged to provide nominations for the Alumni Hall of Success/Achievement Awards (nominations due in spring; close in May). The ceremony is scheduled for October 8.
- Alumni Hall of Success/Achievement Award nominations close in May. Achievement Awards event is scheduled for October 8, 2026.
- Annual Scholarship Luncheon set for April 30, 2026, with Foundation Board members and Board of Governors encouraged to attend.

8.2.2. Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) National Legislative Summit report

Pat Wojcik and Dr. Tracy Kruse attended the ACCT National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC, February 8-11, 2026, with Pat Wojcik reported the following:

- Heard from national leaders. Their insight into current government policies and how they directly impact community colleges was very helpful. They emphasized what is happening in the government.
- Pat is a new representative on the ACCT Board of Directors. She also participated in respective committee meetings. ACCT is a great group and encourages board members to be more involved in their community colleges.
- Northeast is highly respected across Nebraska and throughout the nation and known for being innovative and proactive.
- Appreciate the great work of Dr. Leah Barrett, Dr. Tracy Kruse, and Steve Anderson. Northeast's involvement in ACCT has provided additional opportunities that open doors and create connections.
- Individual meetings were held with Nebraska representatives in Washington, DC.

8.2.3. Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA)

Pat Wojcik provided the following report:

- NCCA Board of Directors met on January 30, 2026.
- Reviewed legislation and determined those that would be supported, opposed to, or remain neutral on.
- Have taken the stance to protect funding and don't become a target.

- Updated budget projection will be released at the end of February. The Governor's budget will be based on that projection.
- The NCCA Office is funding an economic development study with results expected in March 2026.
- NCCA Legislative Day at the Capitol is scheduled for February 25, 2026.

Del Ames inquired why the NCCA budget does not align with the community college budgets, e.g., January 1-December 31 vs. July 1-June 30. Pat will inquire regarding this.

8.3. Student Services Report

8.3.1. Spring Enrollment Report (Presenters: Amanda Nipp)

[Enrollment Report-02.2026](#)

 [Enrollment Report-02.2026.pdf](#)

Amanda Nipp reported that the spring 2026 enrollment increased by 5.5% in headcount and 3.6% in credit hours compared to Spring 2025, driven primarily by gains in early college, returning, non-degree seeking, and first-time freshmen students.

10th-day enrollment rose to 5,387 students and 38,742.3 credit hours, up from 5,106 students and 37,410.3 credit hours the previous year.

8.4. Administrative Services Report

8.4.1. Monthly Financial Report and Paid Bills Report (Presenters: Scott Gray)

CONSIDER the [Monthly Financial Report](#) for January 31, 2026, and the [Paid Bills Report](#) for January 2026. Board members who received reimbursement during the month abstain from voting on those items only:

Anderson, Steve - \$68.15

Davies, Diane - \$29.00

Ellis, Donovan - \$54.15

Nelson, Terry - \$63.80

Scherer, Jeff - \$52.20

Sibbel, Carol - \$114.55

Wojcik, Pat - \$104.40

 [Monthly Financial Report-January 31, 2026.pdf](#)

 [Paid Bills Report-January 2026.pdf](#)

 [Monthly Financial and Paid Bills Report-January 2026](#)

Items of note within the Monthly Financial Report include increased receivable; largely due to what students owed for tuition. Also included is grants that have been awarded but not yet received and scholarships that are owed to us but not received.

In the Statement of Changes, the Scholarships and Financial Aid column reflects revenue of \$10.9MM compared to last month at \$6.4MM. This increase reflects timing differences, as financial aid is awarded to students before the College draws down Pell Grant funds from the federal government.

In the Capital Improvement Column, there is a \$4MM increase in the Government Appropriations line which is the receipt of additional property taxes. The second installment of property taxes will be received in September.

Items of significance within the Paid Bills Report include payment to the City of Norfolk for the rent that we pay for the use of baseball and softball fields that are used for athletic practices and contests.

A school bus has been purchased for training purposes. Dr. Charlene Widener reported that Northeast has been approved to teach school bus drivers for the next two years. Mr. Gray stated that this is an outstanding example of the planning that takes place as the purchase of the school bus was included in last year's budget planning process.

Other payments of note include Control Management for iHub locks, etc., Dana F. Cole for payment of audit services, Heartland Business Systems for wireless access points, and Rogge Construction for their work on the iHub.

Motion:

Motion to approve the January 31, 2026 Monthly Financial Report and the January 2026 Paid Bill Report as presented. Board members who received reimbursement during the month abstain from voting on those items only.

Motion moved by Steve Anderson and motion seconded by Diane Davies. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Petersen, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

8.4.2. Review of quarterly budget (Presenters: Scott Gray)

[Quarterly budget review-February 2026](#)

 [Quarterly Budget Review-February 2026.pdf](#)

Scott Gray provided a seven-month snapshot comparing budgeted figures vs. actual performance.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT of Monitoring Report(s) or Board Education and Information

Individuals commenting on Monitoring Reports or Board Education and Information are allowed three minutes each. Any member of the public wishing to address the Board of Governors may sign in and comment to the Board at this time.

No constituents were in attendance to address the Board of Governors with a public comment.

10. COLLEGE REPORT(S)

10.1. Student Leadership Association report

[Student Leadership Association-February 2026](#)

 [Student Leadership Association-BoG-February 2026.pdf](#)

Kyler Moser and Olivia Dekok highlighted the Student Leadership Association's (SLA) recent engagement activities, including the Student Leadership Development Series focused on coping skills and car safety, and Spring Week of Welcome events such as Clubs & Cocoa, the Welcome Back Breakfast, and campus-wide vision board activities, all of which saw strong student participation. SLA also reported increased club involvement, gained new members, and is actively fundraising toward a \$5,000 goal to support an upcoming leadership trip.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

11.1. Governance Committee (Presenters: Dirk Petersen)

[Governance Committee Notes](#)-January 29, 2026

[Board Self-Evaluation Action Plan](#)

 [Board Governance Committee Meeting - January 29, 2026 Minutes.pdf](#)

Dirk Petersen reported the following:

Governance Committee Meeting was held via Zoom on January 29, 2026.

Governance Committee conducted content review on:

- EL-10, Land Development and Construction. The Committee discussed combining items #5 and #7 in the report as both address budgeting and confirming financing for construction projects. Scott Gray will draft language, and the Governance Committee will further review at their next meeting.
- GP-01, Governing Style. The Governance Committee recommends that this policy be reviewed with new Board of Governors candidates to strengthen their understanding and expectations of serving as a board member. This policy is recommended to be included in new board member orientation activities.

Board Self Evaluation (BSE) was conducted on GP-01, Governing Style. The Governance Committee recommends incorporating feedback from the Ownership Linkage Committee when making revisions during policy content review to improve the policy's application. The Governance Committee also encourages input from the Ownership Linkage Committee when revising certain policies.

The next meeting of the Governance Committee will be on March 3, 2026.

11.2. Ownership Linkage Committee (Presenters: Del Ames)

[2025 Ownership Linkage Summary Report](#)

 [Ownership Linkage Summary Report for 2025.pdf](#)

Del Ames provided the following recap of 2025 Ownership Linkage Committee activities:

- Focus was to deepen their engagement in the 20-county service area.
- Verified alignment between stakeholder perspective and what Northeast is doing
- Pursued an active role in stakeholder engagement.
- Meetings were held at various campuses to involve stakeholders.
- Input from stakeholders was consolidated and will be included in the updated Strategic Plan.

The next Ownership Linkage Committee meeting will be held via Zoom at 8:00 a.m. on March 6, 2026.

Dr. Leah Barrett provided a reminded that some members of the Board of Governors need to return to the Ainsworth area to reconnect with the hospital as well as welcome Stacy Aldag to her new position. This will be discussed during the next meeting of the Ownership Linkage Committee.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT on Committee Reports:

Individuals commenting on Committee Reports are allowed three minutes each. Any member of the public wishing to address the Board of Governors may sign in and comment to the Board at this time.

No constituents were in attendance to address the Board of Governors with a public comment.

13. OTHER

Other announcements and birthdays for the month.

14. Meeting Self-Evaluation (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Board Meeting Self-Evaluation-[February 12, 2026](#)

 [Board Meeting Self-Evaluation-February 12, 2026.pdf](#)

15. ADJOURNMENT

At 12:20 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, it was UNANIMOUSLY PASSED by VOICE VOTE to ADJOURN the meeting.