



Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

Board of Governors-Northeast Community College Area

3/19/2026 9:30 AMCDT

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

Attendance

Present:

Members: Del Ames - Secretary, Board of Governors (remote), Steve Anderson - Member, Board of Governors (remote), Diane Davies - Member, Board of Governors, Donovan Ellis - Chairperson, Board of Governors, Terry Nelson - Member, Board of Governors, Dirk Petersen - Member, Board of Governors, Julie Robinson - Member, Board of Governors (remote), Jeffrey Scherer - Member, Board of Governors, Nicole Sedlacek - Vice-Chairperson, Board of Governors, Pat Wojcik - Member, Board of Governors

Absent (Excused):

Members: Carol Sibbel – Member, Board of Governors

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

Guests: Wendy Swenson-Spanish instructor, Avery Carl-Norfolk Daily News, Jeff Hoffman-Dean of Health and Public Services, Trentee Bush-Agriculture instructor, Heather Claussen-Director of Allied Health, Candice Climer-Director of Assessment, Curtis Smith-Director of EMS/Paramedic program, Scott Crawford-EMT/Paramedic instructor, Brad Ramslem-Dean of Applied Technology, Kyle Voecks-Utility Line instructor (remote), Allison Lambert-College Engagement Coordinator, Olivia Dekok-Student Leadership Association, Jaylynn Spencer-Student Leadership Association, Madison Tunender-Student Leadership Association, Isaiah Saldana-Student Leadership Association

1. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Chairperson Ellis convened the meeting at 9:33 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 March 19, 2026 meeting. Official Notice of the meeting is posted on the Northeast Community College website, and published in the [Norfolk Daily News](#) on Saturday, March 14, 2026.
- **APPROVE** [Minutes](#) of the February 12, 2026 meeting.

 [Board of Governors Meeting-02.12.2026 Minutes.pdf](#)

 [Consent Agenda - March 19, 2026](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

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

5. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session for the purpose of discussing the potential purchase of real estate.

 [Closed Session - Real Estate - March 19, 2026](#)

Motion:

At 9:37 a.m., motion was made to enter into closed session for the purpose of discussing the potential purchase of real estate and to reconvene to the public meeting after business is discussed.

Pat Wojcik joined the meeting at 9:41 a.m.

Reconvened to the public meeting at 9:52 a.m.

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

6. PUBLIC HEARING

[PUBLIC HEARING](#) regarding the acquisition of real estate: 907 E. Benjamin Ave., Norfolk, NE.

 [907 E. Benjamin Ave., Norfolk, NE 68701.pdf](#)

7. PUBLIC COMMENT on purchase of real estate

Individuals commenting on the purchase of real estate 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.

8. PURCHASE of REAL ESTATE

Discuss, consider, and take all necessary action to approve the [purchase of real estate](#): 907 E. Benjamin Ave., Norfolk, NE 68701.

 [Purchase Agreement - signed.pdf](#)

 [Purchase of Real Estate - March 19, 2026](#)

Scott Gray discussed the purchase of a residential house located at 907 E. Benjamin Ave, Norfolk, NE, purchase price of \$200,000. Potential short and long-term uses for the property were discussed.

Purchase agreement is contingent upon approval by the Board of Governors. Closing would be scheduled for June 2026.

Motion:

Motion to approve the purchase of 907 E. Benjamin Ave., Norfolk, NE.

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

9. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

[EL-07, Compensation and Benefits](#)
[Monitoring Report Summary](#)

 [EL-07 Compensation and Benefits.pdf](#)

Dr. Leah Barrett presented the monitoring report, [EL-07, Compensation and Benefits](#), reporting that all compensation, employment, and benefit practices are responsibly managed, legally compliant, and aligned with market standards, with no grievances or public concerns during the reporting period. The College's retirement plan remains fully compliant with all federal and state requirements and does not create unfunded liabilities. McMill CPAs and Advisors continue to work with Northeast employees regarding their retirement program, which is a great bonus for employees.

The Board of Governors assessed the monitoring report, [EL-07, Compensation and Benefits](#), and determined that evidence supports compliance with a reasonable interpretation.

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

President's Monthly Update 03.2026

[2026-2027 Fridays @ Northeast](#)

[Additional Fridays courses-Fall 2026](#)

 [2026-2027 Fridays at Northeast.pdf](#)

 [Additional Fridays Courses Fall 2026.pdf](#)

Dr. Barrett provided the following update regarding partnerships and connections:

- Nebraska Department of Labor is taking the lead on Workforce Pell.
- Participated in Northeast Nebraska Day at the Capitol and Nebraska Community College Day at the Capitol.
- Nebraska Chamber Foundation's Go Big Future initiative continues.
- Missouri River Historic Development awarded \$200,000 in student scholarships.
- Work with Rural Guided Pathways continues with an emphasis on dual enrollment, advising, and quality instruction.
- Dr. Leah Barrett and Steve Anderson have been asked to participate in ACCT's New American Trustee-President Advisory Committee on Economic and Workforce Development.

- Pat Wojcik and Katie Towler represented Northeast Community College during the 48th annual Dakota County Joint Governing Meeting, consisting of representatives from the city, county and schools.
- Facility updates continue at the Cox Activities Center, iHub, L-Building, Weller, as well as P-3 exploration for housing.

Key themes and highlights from the Engagement Survey were reviewed and discussed:

Theme 1: We Have a Strong Foundation

- 70% response rate.
- Employee Experience Score: 28.1, above benchmarks.
- High levels of pride, commitment, and advocacy for working at Northeast.

Theme 2: Employees Are Engaged

- 62.8% engaged; 20.4% almost engaged.
- 88% feel emotionally safe at work.
- Strong trust in department leadership (72%).

Theme 3: Collaboration Is the Biggest Opportunity

- Department collaboration: lowest scoring driver (50%).
- Only 41% agree departments communicate effectively.
- Opportunities to improve cross-department processes.

Theme 4: Clarity & Connection from Leadership

- Executive leadership scores improved: now 56%. This is below other drivers but has improved since the last survey.
- 48% understand decision rationale; 51% feel leadership considers feedback.

Theme 5: Growth, Development, Recognition, & Investing in Talent

- Career advancement & development at 59% (Improve quadrant).
- Only 44% feel they can advance their career at Northeast.
- Recognition remains a challenge (51%).

Theme 6: From Feedback to Action

- 67% believe their department takes action on engagement.
- 54% believe the college does the same.

Three-Year Trends

- Largest improvements: working environment, coworker relations, salary/benefits, executive leadership.
- Slight declines: recognition (-2%), company potential (-1%).
- Notable improvements attributed to new safety roles, enhanced transparency, adjusted compensation, and increased cross-college engagement by leadership.

Next Steps

- The Engagement Survey will be shared with the campus community via the Employee Newsletter with a link to the Clearinghouse.
- Division results will be shared with the respective Vice President
- Intentionality and heightened communication on actions moving forward together.

Unicameral update:

- LB 1086-Changes eligibility requirements for community college gap assistance. This is a speaker priority bill. Senator Dover requested consent agenda placement.
- Appropriations for all Nebraska community colleges has been reduced by \$5 million.

9.3. Strategic Plan update

[Draft structure](#)

 [Strategic Plan-DRAFT Structure 5.pdf](#)

Review was given to the draft strategic plan with overall impressions provided:

- The plan reflects significant thought and effort.
- Communicating the “why” behind the plan is essential for buy-in.
- Priority areas highlighted:
 - Workforce alignment, especially given the declining 18-year-old population and increasing need for upskilling among adult learners.
 - Greater focus on a diverse student body and organizational adaptability.
 - The plan must remain flexible (“live enough to change”) to respond to shifting labor-market needs.

Example: paramedic programs must adapt as markets seek faster workforce entry, not multi-year educational timelines.

- The strategic plan intentionally ties back to the college's Ends and mission.
- Discussion confirmed that engagement is not a separate category; instead it is embedded across all strategic pillars.

9.4. Reaffirm Mission

Northeast Community College is dedicated to the success of students and the region it serves.

Members of the Board of Governors expressed their support to reaffirm the mission: Northeast Community College is dedicated to the success of students and the region it serves. The mission is simple, yet impactful.

10. BOARD EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

10.1. Educational Services Report

10.1.1. Student-built homes (Presenters: Brad Ranslem, Dean, Applied Technology)

CONSIDER the Resolutions authorizing the sale of student-built homes: [House #120035 Middle North](#) and [House #120036 North](#)

 [Board Resolution Student House #120035 Middle North.pdf](#)

 [Board Resolution Student House #120036 North.pdf](#)

 [Resolutions authorizing the sale of student-built homes - March 19, 2026](#)

The student-built homes this year are similar in size to previous years but feature unique layouts, including distinctive kitchen-living room designs. One home includes a stand-alone tub in the master bathroom, another features modern window placement, and both houses will incorporate electric fireplaces.

Board members are invited to attend the open houses that are scheduled for May 26 and 28 at 7:00 p.m. The auction will be held on June 6, 2026. The program continues to provide students with hands-on experience in bidding processes and collaborating with vendors such as window companies to learn about product differences and industry standards.

Motion:

Motion was made to approve the Resolutions authorizing the sale of student-built homes: [House #120035 Middle North](#) and [House #120036 North](#).

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

10.1.2. Program Review (Presenters: Curtis Smith, Director of EMS/Paramedic Program, Scott Crawford, EMT/Paramedic Instructor)

CONSIDER the continuation of the [Paramedicine program](#) at Northeast Community College for submission to and consideration by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE).

 [Paramedicine Comprehensive Program Review Report 2025-26 Final Copy.pdf](#)

 [Northeast PPT 7 Year Paramedicine Program Review 2026.pdf](#)

 [Paramedicine program](#)

Curtis Smith, Director of the EMS/Paramedic program, reported that the Paramedicine program at Northeast supports critical rural healthcare needs by training paramedics, EMTs, and EMRs who largely serve within the 20-county Northeast Nebraska region. The program maintains strong clinical and community partnerships, high-quality simulation labs, and updated curriculum delivery that aligns with accreditation requirements and industry standards. Despite enrollment challenges and historically inconsistent National Registry pass rates, recent improvements including standardized course materials, enhanced testing resources, and expanded recruitment efforts, etc., are strengthening overall student success. Graduate outcomes remain strong, with most alumni employed in Nebraska EMS, and the program continues to play an essential role in addressing regional EMS workforce shortages and supporting community health and safety.

Data and charts within the Paramedicine Comprehensive Program Review report were reviewed, proving a basis for recommendation for board action.

Motion:

Motion was made to recommend continuation the Paramedicine program at Northeast Community College for submission to and consideration by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE).

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

10.2. Student Services Report

10.2.1. Athletics Hall of Fame (Presenters: Amanda)

CONSIDER the [Athletics Hall of Fame-Class of 2026](#) Nominees

 [Northeast Athletics Hall of Fame-Class of 2026](#)

Nominations for the Class of 2026 Athletics Hall of Fame were reviewed. Names will be withheld until proper notification has occurred.

Motion:

Motion to approve the Class of 2026 Hall of Fame nominations as presented.

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

10.3. Administrative Services Report

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

CONSIDER the [Monthly Financial Report](#) for February 28, 2026, and the [Paid Bills Report](#) for February 2026. Board members who received reimbursement during the month abstain from voting on those items only:

Ames, Del - \$55.10

Anderson, Steve - \$68.15

Davies, Diane - \$29.00

Ellis, Donovan - \$82.65

Wojcik, Pat - \$2,905.56

 [Monthly Financial Report-February 28, 2026.pdf](#)

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

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

Review was given to the Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes, and corresponding entries, providing a comprehensive review of the monthly financial activities.

Expenditures of significance within the Paid Bills report were explained by Scott Gray.

Motion:

Motion to approve the February 28, 2026 Monthly Financial Report and the February 2026 Paid Bills Report as presented. Board members who received reimbursements during the month abstain from voting on those items only.

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

10.3.2. Acklie Family College Farm (Presenters: Scott Gray)

Support buildings [construction project update](#) (information only)

 [Acklie Family College Farm-Support buildings.pdf](#)

The Acklie Family College Farm Support Buildings project includes construction of a hoop barn, an equipment storage building, grain bins, and a silage pad, along with site improvements such as extended service roads and utilities. The project aims to consolidate all farm operations into a single centralized location, eliminating the need for the old vet tech/farm operations site, which will eventually be demolished and converted to productive farmland.

The project aligns with institutional goals by enhancing student learning opportunities, improving operational efficiency, and ensuring prudent use of taxpayer resources.

Bids are scheduled to be released in March 2026. Construction is planned to begin in May 2026 and be completed by October 2026. The project will be funded through the Capital Fund.

The former farm site will eventually be cleared of all existing buildings. Long-term operational efficiencies are anticipated once the old

site is phased out. Current bids will pertain solely to the new site, while demolition of the old facilities is anticipated to occur several years down the road, with a separate bid process at that time.

11. COLLEGE REPORT(S)

11.1. Student Leadership Association (SLA)

[SLA Report](#)

[SLA Report-March 2026.pdf](#)

- The Student Leadership Association (SLA) reported several key activities and upcoming events for March 2026.
- Members attended NCCA Legislative Day, where they advocated for the value of dual-credit opportunities and engaged with state representatives.
- The group also held a successful “Pie Your Rep” fundraiser, raising \$220 and gaining experience in event planning and promotion.
- Preparations are underway for the Hawk Star Awards on April 30, which recognize outstanding students, faculty, and staff, with strong participation from students in the nomination process.
- SLA is also planning a leadership trip to Chicago to explore government offices, cultural sites, and universities, aimed at strengthening leadership development and resource stewardship.
- They closed by asking the Board for advice on effective leadership support.

11.2. LUNCH - Lifelong Learning Center, Suite H

At 12:23 p.m., Chairperson Ellis declared the meeting recessed for lunch. As part of the Ownership Linkage activities, faculty and students from the Paramedicine program joined the Board of Governors and administration for lunch.

Chairperson Ellis declared the public meeting back in session at 1:01 p.m.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT on 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 comment.

13. COMMITTEE REPORTS

13.1. Governance Committee (Presenters: Dirk Petersen)

- [Governance Committee Meeting Notes](#)-March 3, 2026
- FIRST READING of REVISIONS to [EL-10, Land Development and Construction](#).

[Board Self-Evaluation Action Plan](#)

 [Board Governance Committee Meeting - March 3, 2026 notes.pdf](#)

 [EL-10 Land Development and Construction Revised.pdf](#)

The Governance Committee meeting was conducted via Zoom on March 3, 2026. Content review was conducted on:

- EL-10, [Land Development and Construction](#). This was tabled from their January 29th meeting. Following in-depth review by Scott Gray, it is recommended to remove Item #7 due to its overlap with Items #4.6 and #5, related to funding sources and the incorporation of capital construction projects into the budget. The revisions are presented today for FIRST READING consideration.
- EL-05, [Financial Conditions and Activities](#). No revisions are recommended. The Governance Committee recommends that more in-depth discussion regarding language be held during a Board Retreat.
- GP-04, [Role of the Board Chair](#). No revisions are recommended.

The next meeting of the Governance Committee is scheduled for March 24, 2026.

13.2. Ownership Linkage Committee

[Ownership Linkage Committee Meeting Notes](#)-March 6, 2026

 [Ownership Linkage Committee Notes 03.06.26.pdf](#)

The Ownership Linkage Committee met on March 6, 2026.

- Provided initial review of the draft strategic plan and provided feedback.
- May 1, 2026 was identified as the date for an outreach visit to Ainsworth. This will provide an opportunity to introduce Stacy Aldag, Business and Community Engagement Liaison, to the region.
- Upcoming Ownership Linkage activities will be held as follows:
 - South Sioux City - June 11, 2026. Roundtable sessions are effective in South Sioux City.
 - O'Neill - November 12, 2026. Potential visit to Avera St. Anthony Hospital, Mitchell Equipment in Ainsworth. Nicole Sedlacek and

Carol Sibbel will be tasked to help identify potential businesses or schools to visit in the region.

- West Point - March 11, 2027.
- The Ownership Linkage Committee hopes to engage more communities and stakeholders in the service area, beyond the communities in which the extended campuses are located.

The Ownership Linkage Committee will meet again in April to finalize plans for the May 1st visit to Ainsworth and begin to plan for the June 11th session in South Sioux City.

14. 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.

15. OTHER

Other announcements and birthdays for the month.

Chairperson Ellis acknowledged a staff member observing his birthday in March.

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

Board Meeting [Self-Evaluation-March 19, 2026](#)

17. CLOSED SESSION for the purpose of legal advice on a pending claim.

 [Closed Session - Legal Advice - March 19, 2026](#)

Motion:

At 1:56 p.m., motion was made to enter into Closed Session for the purpose of hearing legal advice on a pending claim and to reconvene to the public meeting after business is discussed.

Motion moved by Diane Davies and motion seconded by Jeffrey Scherer. (Note: due to connectivity difficulties, received a verbal 'Yes' from Julie Robinson.) Voting yes: Ames,

Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Nelson, Petersen, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, and Wojcik.
Absent-Excused: Sibbel. MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened to the public meeting at 2:37 p.m.

18. ADJOURNMENT

At 2:38 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, it was UNANIMOUSLY PASSED by VOICE VOTE to ADJOURN the meeting.