



Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

Board of Governors-Northeast Community College Area

4/9/2026 9:30 AMCDT

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

Attendance

Present:

Members: Del Ames-Secretary, Board of Governors, Steve Anderson-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, Jeffrey Scherer-Member, Board of Governors, Carol Sibbel-Member, Board of Governors, Nicole Sedlacek-Vice-Chairperson, Board of Governors

Absent-Excused:

Members: Diane Davies-Member, Board of Governors, Pat Wojcik-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, Jen Greve-Executive Director of Marketing and Recruitment, Diane Reikofski-Executive Assistant and Board Recording Secretary

Guests:

Dr. Trentee Bush-Agriculture instructor, Dr. Karen Weidner-Director of Nursing Programs, Dr. Jeff Hoffman-Dean of Health and Public Services, Michelle Kuehner-Nursing instructor, Megan Pfeiffer, Nursing instructor, Debbie Bates-Nursing Programs Advisor, Sheila Meyer-Nursing instructor, Rebecka Bosler-Nursing instructor, Heidi Merritt-Nursing instructor, Ashtyn Schwartz-Nursing student, Caleb Sobotka-Nursing student, Tresha Koch-Nursing student, Stefanie Dvorak-Nursing instructor, Katie Brummels-Nursing instructor, Sarah Luebe-Nursing instructor, Darin Watts-Director of Service Center Operations

1. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Chairperson Ellis convened the meeting at 9:32 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 April 9, 2026 meeting. Official Notice of the meeting is posted on the Northeast Community College website, and published in the Norfolk Daily News on Saturday, April 4, 2026.
- **APPROVE** [Minutes](#) of the March 19, 2026 meeting.
- SECOND READING and APPROVAL of REVISIONS to [EL-10, Land Development and Construction](#).

 [Board of Governors Meeting-03.19.2026 Minutes.pdf](#)

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

 [Consent Agenda - April 9, 2026](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve the Consent agenda as presented.

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

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

[EL-01, Treatment of Students](#)

[Monitoring Report Summary](#)

 [EL-01, Treatment of Students - April 26 Final.pdf](#)

Dr. Leah Barrett presented the monitoring report, [EL-01, Treatment of Students](#), highlighting complaint process improvements, including the integration of

Maxient software to track complaints and conduct issues, and emphasized that while not all students are satisfied with outcomes, no complaints have elevated to a grievance. The number of complaints has increased over the past year but believe that is a result of better utilization of the complaint process and software. Various training methods are used to integrate and communicate the complaint process to both students and staff, e.g., new student registration and orientation, employee onboarding, etc.

Evidence demonstrates that students are treated safely, fairly, respectfully, and equitably through established and regularly reviewed policies related to safety, nondiscrimination, confidentiality, harassment prevention, and student support. Crime and safety incidents remain minimal, student engagement scores exceed state and national benchmarks, complaint volumes are low and properly resolved, and student rights, responsibilities, and complaint processes are clearly communicated. Dr. Barrett noted that some adjustments were made regarding the reporting of the data as some surveys are only administered every two to four years. Students are also meaningfully included in shared governance through representation on all standing committees.

The Board of Governors assessed the monitoring report, [EL-01](#), [Treatm](#)


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

[President's Monthly Update 04.2026](#)

[Higher Learning Commission-Trends 2026](#)

[Nebraska's SNAP Next Step Employment and Training Program Sees Growth, Cost Savings in 2025](#)

 [Higher Learning Commission-Trends 2026.pdf](#)

 [Nebraska's SNAP Next Step Employment and Training Program Sees Growth, Cost Savings in 2026.pdf](#)

 [President's Monthly Update-April 2026.pdf](#)

Dr. Leah Barrett provided the following updates:

Partnerships and Engagement

- Participation in HLC Annual Conference and other national and regional leadership activities.
- Engagement with Nebraska Chamber Foundation, workforce and economic development partners.
- Involvement in trustee-president advisory and emergency management initiatives (Dr. Leah Barrett and Steve Anderson).

Federal and Legislative Updates

- Updates on accountability in higher education and Workforce Pell initiatives.
- Cohort Default Rate (CDR) reinstated as a federal accountability metric.
- Nebraska Legislature activity, including pending legislation and a \$5 million reduction in community college appropriations.

College Updates and Highlights

- Housing Capacity Study.
- Evolution of Educational Services division.
- Transfer Center development in the College Welcome Center.
- Student achievements (FBLA, SkillsUSA).
- Northeast Community College has hosted the Career Fair and other large regional high school events (FFA, History Day, Scholastic Contest, Jazz Festival).

Upcoming Milestones

- iHub Ribbon Cutting/Grand Opening is scheduled for August 11, 2026.

6. BOARD EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

6.1. Educational Services Report

6.1.1. Program Review (Presenters: Karen Weidner, Director of Nursing programs)

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

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

 [Northeast PPT Template 7 Year Nursing Comp Final.pdf](#)

 [Nursing program](#)

Dr. Karen Weidner, Director of Nursing programs, reported that Northeast Community College's Practical Nursing (PN) and Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs are high-quality, in strong demand, and critical to meeting regional healthcare workforce needs. The programs demonstrate consistent enrollment, strong completion outcomes, and excellent student success, with NCLEX-PN and NCLEX-RN pass rates at or above

state and national averages, near-universal graduate employment or continued education, rising wages, and high employer satisfaction, primarily within the College's 20-county service area.

Supported by experienced faculty, modern facilities, extensive clinical partnerships, and engaged advisory committees, the programs meet accreditation and regulatory requirements, with ADN fully accredited and PN actively pursuing national accreditation.

Ongoing improvement efforts include curriculum modernization to a concept- and competency-based model, expanded regional access, and enhanced internships, positioning the programs for continued effectiveness despite challenges related to faculty recruitment, capacity, and funding. The Dean recommends continuation and continued support of the Nursing program due to its strong outcomes, regional impact, and strategic importance.

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

Motion:

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

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

6.2. Administrative Services Report

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

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

Davies, Diane - \$29.00
Ellis, Donovan - \$55.10
Nelson, Terry - \$63.80
Scherer, Jeff - \$52.20
Sedlacek, Nicole - \$289.28
Wojcik, Pat - \$287.10

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

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

 [Monthly Financial and Paid Bills Report-April 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 March 31, 2026 Monthly Financial Report and the March 2026 Paid Bills Report as presented. Board members who received reimbursements during the month abstain from voting on those items only.

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

6.3. Student Services Report

6.3.1. Commencement Overview (Presenters: Amanda Nipp)

Commencement - May 8, 2026

Amanda Nipp reviewed the commencement processional and recessional procedures. To allow sufficient time to change into commencement attire and prepare for the ceremony lineup, board members are requested to arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of each of the three ceremonies, scheduled for 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m.

7. 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.

8. LUNCH - Lifelong Learning Center, Suite H

At 12:28 p.m., Chairperson Ellis declared the meeting recessed for lunch. As part of the Ownership Linkage Committee activities, faculty and students from the Nursing programs joined the Board of Governors and administration for lunch. Chairperson Ellis declared the regular meeting back in session at 1:10 p.m.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1. Governance Committee (Presenters: Dirk Petersen)

- [Governance Committee Meeting Notes](#)-March 24, 2026
- Content Review:
 - [EL-07, Compensation and Benefits](#) - no recommendations for revision.
 - [GP-08.01](#), Governance Committee Charter - no recommendations for revision

[Board Self-Evaluation Action Plan](#)

 [Board Governance Committee Meeting - March 24, 2026 Minutes.pdf](#)

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

 [GP-08.1 Governance Committee Charter.pdf](#)

The Governance Committee meeting was conducted via Zoom on April 7, 2026.

Content review was conducted on:

- EL-07, [Compensation and Benefits](#), with no recommendations for revision suggested.
- GP-08.1, [Governance Committee Charter](#), with no recommendations for revision suggested. The Governance Committee had a positive assessment of the committee's adherence to its charter, with agreement that the committee is functioning effectively. The Governance Committee maintains a role of recommending action to the Board of Governors rather than implementing action.

The Governance Committee also discussed monitoring activities, noting that this has enhanced the evaluation process. Structured reports supporting discussions on engagement, staff, and committee activities all contribute effectively to ongoing improvements. The Governance Committee positively acknowledged the self-evaluation process and

monitoring report summaries, noting the improvements made and the incorporation of feedback into the spreadsheets that reflect the enhancements the transition to OnBoard was also recognized as a significant advancement in the monitoring process.

The next meeting of the Governance Committee is scheduled for April 28, 2026.

9.1.1. Appoint the annual Ad Hoc Committee to review the President's contract.

 [Ad Hoc Committee to review the President's Contract](#)

Motion:

Motion to appoint Donovan Ellis, current Board Chairperson; Jeff Scherer, most recent Board Chairperson; and Nicole Sedlacek, current Board Vice-Chairperson to serve on an Ad Hoc Committee to review the President's contact.

Motion moved by Donovan Ellis and motion seconded by Del Ames.

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

9.2. Ownership Linkage Committee (Presenters: Pat Wojcik)

- [Ownership Linkage Committee Meeting Notes](#)-April 7, 2026

 [Ownership Linkage Committee Notes 04.07.26.pdf](#)

The Ownership Linkage Committee met on April 7, 2026 via Zoom.

The Committee finalized plans for a May 1, 2026, workforce development visit in Ainsworth that will include a discussion with industry and community partners, the introduction of and presentation by Business and Community Engagement Liaison, Stacey Aldag,

A second outreach event is scheduled for June 11, 2026, at the South Sioux City Extended Campus, featuring a roundtable discussion, an update on LightCast Gap Analysis findings and the work being done, and the introduction of Brenda Sale as Business and Community Engagement Liaison. The Board of Governors meeting on June 11, 2026 will begin at 11:00 a.m.

The Ownership Linkage Committee also reviewed other upcoming Ownership Linkage activities, including:

- Continued lunches with students and faculty
- iHub grand opening/ribbon cutting on August 11,2026.

- Ownership Linkage activities at the O'Neill Extended Campus on November 19, 2026.
- Ownership Linkage activities at the West Point Extended Campus on March 11, 2027.

10. 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 comment.

11. OTHER

Other announcements and birthdays for the month.

Chairperson Ellis acknowledged board and staff members observing birthdays during the month of April.

He also thanked administration, staff, and board members for their work preparing for and during the board meetings.

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

Board Meeting Self-Evaluation-[April 9, 2026](#)

13. ADJOURNMENT

At 1:43 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, it was UNANIMOUSLY PASSED by VOICE VOTE to ADJOURN the meeting.