



Board of Governors Meeting Minutes

Board of Governors-Northeast Community College Area

5/14/2026 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, Diane Davies - Member, Board of Governors, Donovan Ellis - Chairperson, Board of Governors, Terry Nelson - Member, Board of Governors, Jeffrey Scherer - Member, Board of Governors, Nicole Sedlacek - Vice-Chairperson, Board of Governors, Carol A. Sibbel - Member, Board of Governors, Pat Wojcik - Member, Board of Governors

Absent-Excused:

Members: Dirk Petersen - Member, Board of Governors, Julie Robinson - Member, Board of Governors

Staff:

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

Guests:

Guests: Kristi Rastede-English instructor, Wendy Swenson-Spanish instructor, Travis Kaup-Diesel Technology instructor, Brad Ranslem-Dean, Applied Technology, Allison Lambert-College Engagement Coordinator, Samuel Gibbs-Student Leadership Association, Madison Tunender-Student Leadership Association, Landon Bonneau-Student Leadership Association, Avery Carl, *Norfolk Daily News*

1. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Chairperson Ellis convened the meeting at 9:36 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 May 14, 2026 meeting. Official Notice of the meeting is posted on the Northeast Community College website and published in the [Norfolk Daily News](#) on Saturday, May 9, 2026.
- **Approve** [Minutes](#) of the April 9, 2026 meeting.

 [Board of Governors Meeting-Minutes 04.09.2026.pdf](#)

 [Consent Agenda - May 14, 2026](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

5. CLOSED SESSION

CLOSED SESSION for the purpose of the evaluation of the job performance of an individual which is necessary to prevent needless injury to the individual's reputation.

 [Closed Session](#)

Motion:

At 9:39 a.m., motion to enter into Closed Session for the purpose of the evaluation of the job performance of an individual which is necessary to prevent needless injury to the individual's reputation, and to reconvene to the public meeting upon the conclusion of discussion.

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

Reconvened to the public meeting at 10:37 a.m.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

[EL-03, Treatment of Employees
Monitoring Report Summary](#)

 [EL-03, Treatment of Employees 2026.pdf](#)

Prior to reviewing the monitoring report, Dr. Barrett introduced Faculty officers for the next two years. Kristy Rastede, President; Travis Kaup, Vice President, and Wendy Swenson, member of the Faculty Executive Committee.

Dr. Leah Barrett presented the monitoring report, [EL-03, Treatment of Employees](#). The report highlighted strong employee engagement results exceeding industry benchmarks in areas of inclusion, empowerment, and workplace environment, demonstrating a fair, safe, and supportive organizational culture. Comprehensive human resources procedures, effective grievance and reporting systems, high compliance with required training, and clear performance management practices were also noted. No grievances, harassment complaints, or instances of retaliation were reported during the monitoring period. Continued attention to strengthening interdepartmental collaboration was identified as an area for ongoing improvement.

The Board of Governors assessed the monitoring report, [EL-01, Treatment of Students](#), and determined that evidence supports compliance with a reasonable interpretation.

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

President's Monthly Update [05.2026](#)

 [Aspen Prize-Data sheet for Northeast Community College.pdf](#)

 [Pres Monthly Update 05.2026.pdf](#)

Dr. Barrett provided the following updates:

- Partnerships, Connections, and Engagement

- Continued regional and statewide involvement through partnerships and leadership forums.
- Active participation in boards and workforce initiatives.
- During a recent NREA board meeting, it was decided to end the contract with Northeast Community College Job and Safety Training. Administration continues to work through that process at this time.
- Employee Recognition and Celebrations
 - Celebrated retirees with 197 years of combined service
 - Emeritus honors awarded to faculty. Dave Beaudette was recognized with the first-ever Professor Emeritus. Neil Harrison was honored with the Faculty Emeritus status.
 - Student-nominated awards recognized outstanding faculty and staff. Ryan Sevening was posthumously honored with the Outstanding Faculty Award.
- College Updates and Achievements
 - Northeast Community is a semi-finalist for the Aspen Prize 2027.
 - 992 graduates at 2026 Commencement.
 - Athletic and student achievements including the golf team attending the national tournament, Utility Line Rodeo student recognitions, PTK recognition, etc.
- Operations and Upcoming Events
 - SNAP E&T program approved with upcoming training.
 - iHub ribbon cutting scheduled for August 11, 2026.
 - Summer retreat planning underway. Potential date is July 7, 2026.

7. Student Leadership Association (SLA) Report (11:30 a.m.)

[Student Leadership Association](#) update

 [Student Leadership Association-BoG May Meeting.pdf](#)

2026-2027 SLA Officers:

- Samuel Gibb, President
- Usiel Garcia, Vice President
- Emma Johansen, Secretary

SLA Member Achievements/Recognitions for 2025-2026 include:

- Participation in Phi Theta Kappa All-Nebraska Academic Team Ceremony at which Isaiah Saldana spoke during the luncheon.
- Isaiah Saldana: Mental Health Champion Award, President’s Award nominee.
- Sydni McConnell: Rising Star Award.
- Sam Gibbs: Culture of Care Award.
- Multiple members inducted into the TRIO honor society.
- Usiel Garcia: Qualified for HOSA Nationals (1st & 3rd place).
- Several members nominated for Honorable Hawks Award.

Leadership Trip to Chicago

- Visited cultural and educational sites including the Chicago Cultural Center, Millennium Park, museums, Color Factory, and Museum of Illusions.
- Key takeaways included:
 - Learned event planning and teamwork.
 - Explored leadership perspectives and cultural influences.
 - Focused on maximizing learning while using resources responsibly.

8. LUNCH - Lifelong Learning Center, Suite K

At 11:50 a.m., Chairperson Ellis declared the meeting recessed for lunch. Chairperson Ellis declared the public meeting back in session at 12:46 p.m.

Nicole Sedlacek arrived at 12:46 p.m.

9. BOARD EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

9.1. Administrative Services Report

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

CONSIDER the [Monthly Financial Report](#) for April 30, 2026, and the [Paid Bills Report](#) for April 2026. Board members who received reimbursement during the month abstain from voting on those items only:

Ames, Del - \$55.10
 Anderson, Steve - \$261.00
 Ellis, Donovan - \$55.10
 Nelson, Terry - \$63.80
 Scherer, Jeff - \$52.20
 Sedlacek, Nicole - \$114.55
 Sibbel, Carol - \$114.55

 [Monthly Financial Report-April 30, 2026.pdf](#)

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

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

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

Notable items within the paid bills include Arthur J. Gallagher Risk expenses relate to builder's risk insurance for the Cox Activities Center project and BambooHR LLC represents the institution's Human Resources software system. Calm Nights LLC costs cover student lodging for participation in the SkillsUSA competition. D & E Equipment Solutions Inc. purchases, funded through Perkins, include equipment and jacks. Ellucian Company LLC expenses reflect a significant software-as-a-service initiative, and Laerdal Medical Corp purchases support trainer supplies and allied health programs. Additionally, Matter Hackers Inc. was for the purchase of a 3D printer for the iHub, and Sterling Computers supplied computers that have been allocated across various programs.

Motion:

Motion to approve the April 30, 2026 Monthly Financial Report and the April 2026 Paid Bills Report as presented. Board members who received reimbursements during the month abstain from voting on those items only.

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

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

[2026-05-08 - YTD Budget v. Actual - FY26](#)


 [2026-05-08 - YTD Budget v. Actual - FY26.pdf](#)

Scott Gray provided a review of the year-to-date budget vs. actual performance as of May 8, 2026.

The preliminary budget plan for 2026-2027 will be reviewed at the June meeting.

9.1.3. Interlocal Agreement-College Center at South Sioux City, NE (Presenters: Scott Gray)

Discuss, consider, and take all necessary action regarding the renewal of the [Interlocal Agreement](#) with Wayne State College for governance and operation of the College Center at South Sioux City, NE.

 [Wayne State - Northeast Community College - South Sioux City Agreement.pdf](#)

 [Interlocal Agreement-College Center at South Sioux City, NE](#)

The Interlocal Agreement-College Center at South Sioux City is presented for renewal following discussion at the most recent Administrative Council meeting. Only minor revisions have been made to the agreement, including the addition of a provision requiring that at least one of the four annual meetings be attended by the College Presidents.

Motion:

Motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Wayne State College for governance and operation of the College Center at South Sioux City, NE.


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

9.1.4. Interlocal Agreement for Cooperative Public/Governmental Purchasing with the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) (Presenters: Scott Gray)

Discuss, consider, and take all necessary action regarding the [Interlocal Agreement](#) with the [Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council \(ESUCC\)](#).

 [Northeast Community College-ESUCC Interlocal.pdf](#)

 [Resolution - Northeast Community College.pdf](#)

 [Interlocal Agreement for Cooperative Public/Governmental Purchasing between the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council \(ESUCC\) and Northeast Community College](#)

The Interlocal Agreement with the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) is to leverage its collective purchasing power, specifically to obtain discounted Zoom licensing rates.


Motion:

Motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement for Cooperative Public/Governmental Purchasing between the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council (ESUCC) and Northeast Community College.

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

9.1.5. Weller building program statement

Discuss, consider, and take all necessary action with regard to the [Weller building program statement](#).

 [Northeast Community College Weller Remodel - Program Statement - 2026-0507.pdf](#)

 [Weller building program statement](#)

Review was given to the Program Statement for the Weller Building Renovation. Programs housed within the Weller Building are strategically aligned to support enrollment growth. Renovation of the Weller facility has been identified as the most cost-effective approach to accommodate expansion, with phased implementation details outlined. Additionally, the institution continues to emphasize industry-aligned credentials, including participation in the National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3), and the development of stackable credentials within programs such as Diesel, HVAC, and Wind Energy to enhance student pathways and workforce readiness.

Motion:

Motion to approve the Weller Building Renovation program statement for submission to and consideration by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE).

Motion moved by Nicole Sedlacek and motion seconded by Steve Anderson. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Nelson, Scherer,

Sedlacek, Sibbel, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Petersen and Robinson.
MOTION CARRIED.

9.2. Development and External Affairs Report

9.2.1. Foundation Board of Directors' Report (Presenters: Del Ames, Donovan Ellis)

Foundation Board of Directors update-[April 2026](#)

 [BoG quarterly Foundation board meeting update.pdf](#)

The Foundation Board of Directors met on April 30, 2026, and approved the FY27 Foundation budget. Due to timing constraints, several items were approved in advance by electronic vote, including Weller Foundation scholarship awards and new Board member appointments. A total of 75 new scholarships were awarded, with 42 recipients attending Northeast Community College. Two new board members, Amy Shane and Greg Rentschler, were approved through the vote, bringing total board membership to seven. The Board continues to seek nominations to ensure broad representation across the 20-county service area.

The Scholarship Luncheon, held the same day as the Foundation Board of Directors meeting, was highly successful and marked the largest event to date, with over 250 attendees. The luncheon provided a meaningful opportunity for students, donors, and Board members to connect, followed by tours of the iHub and Maclay facilities.

9.2.2. Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) Report (Presenters: Nicole Sedlacek, Pat Wojcik)

[NCCA BoD meeting-Q2, 2026](#)

[2026 Strategic Planning Workshop](#)

 [NCCA BOD meeting Q2, 2026.pdf](#)

 [2026 Strategic Planning Workshop - prework.pdf](#)

The Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) Board of Directors meeting was held on May 11 in Lincoln. Highlights included:

- Preliminary approval was granted for the upcoming fiscal year budget, with no changes to membership dues.
- The association plans to utilize existing cash reserves.
- Discussion included updates on the current legislative session
- The NCCA office introduced 15 fiscal notes during the session.

- Preparations are underway for strategic planning in August in Kearney.
- Initial planning has also begun for the next legislative session.
- NCCA has sufficient funding to cover the impact study, eliminating the need to bill individual community colleges.

10. 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 public comment.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

11.1. Governance Committee (Presenters: Carol A. Sibbel)

- Governance Committee Meeting Notes-[April 28, 2026](#)
- Content Review:
 - [EL-01, Treatment of Students](#) - no recommendations for revision.
 - [BPD-04, Monitoring President Performance](#) - no recommendations for revision

[Board Self-Evaluation Action Plan](#)

 [Board Governance Committee Meeting - April 28, 2026 Notes.pdf](#)

 [EL-01 Treatment of Students.pdf](#)

 [BPD-04 Monitoring President Performance.pdf](#)

The Governance Committee meeting was conducted via Zoom on April 28, 2026.

Content review was conducted on:

[EL-01, Treatment of Students](#), with no recommendations for revision.

Following the Governance Committee meeting, Dirk Petersen submitted additional questions, and the following responses were provided to the Board of Governors.

1. Regarding the 47% metric referenced in Table 1-9d, the College acknowledged the importance of improving outcomes for students balancing academic and non-academic responsibilities. Efforts are focused on reducing barriers through a comprehensive support

system, including basic needs assistance (food pantry, emergency aid, and professional clothing resources), expanded Student Health and Counseling services, targeted programs such as TRIO for vulnerable populations, flexible scheduling and academic support options, and strengthened community partnerships. These initiatives collectively support student success by addressing both academic and life challenges.

2. In response to tracking engagement with the Student Code link, it was noted that precise measurement would require implementing trackable links in future communications. While the College ensures that information is distributed, students are responsible for reviewing it. Website analytics from May 8, 2025, to May 7, 2026, show 939 page views by 668 unique users, with a notable spike following the distribution of the link by the Dean of Students, indicating active student engagement at that time.
3. Regarding the small percentage of employees who do not complete required training, extensions have been granted in certain cases due to individual circumstances, with follow-up conducted by supervisors. Moving forward, the College plans to align this training with the cybersecurity training process, where failure to complete results in loss of computer access. This approach is expected to ensure full compliance, addressing completion gaps that emerged following changes to the Title IX training format in recent years.
 - [BPD-04, Monitoring President Performance](#), no recommendations for revision.

The next meeting of the Governance Committee is scheduled for June 2, 2026.

11.1.1.1. President's Contract (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Discuss, consider, and take all necessary action with regard to the [President's Contract](#).

 [Contract 2026-2031-tracked changes.pdf](#)

 [President's Contract](#)

The Board of Governors expressed a high level of satisfaction with the visionary leadership demonstrated by Dr. Leah Barrett.

Motion:

Motion to approve a five-year contract with Dr. Leah A. Barrett, effective July 1, 2026.

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

11.2. Ownership Linkage Committee (Presenters: Pat Wojcik, Del Ames, Jeffrey Scherer, Donovan Ellis)

Recap of May 1st workforce development meeting in Ainsworth.

Members of the Ownership Linkage Committee thanked staff for their organization of the Ainsworth visit on May 1st.

- Noted the strong level of engagement and quality discussion with participants.
- Ainsworth community was welcoming, engaged, and responsive to proposed program additions and changes.
- Emphasized the shared goal of enhancing opportunities for students in the region.
- Positive feedback was shared regarding dual credit, with one example highlighting significant tuition savings.
- Observed increased community engagement compared to five to ten years ago.
- Commended efforts to clearly explain service areas, navigators, and available resources to support regional growth.
- Expressed enthusiasm for upcoming fall offerings in career and technical education in Ainsworth.
- Noted a missed opportunity for broader awareness, suggesting greater media coverage through radio or print.

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.

Chairperson Ellis acknowledged board members observing birthdays during the month of May.

Provided a reminder that the June 11th meeting will be held at the South Sioux City Extended Campus and looking forward to the opportunity to meet constituents.

In other business, Dr. Barrett reported that she, along with Pat Wojcik, will be presenting on policy governance with Central Wyoming College at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Leadership Congress in October. The presentation will provide practical examples of engaging with ownership at a strategic level without becoming overly operational and will highlight both challenges and successes to foster meaningful discussion among attendees.

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

Board Meeting Self-Evaluation-[May 14, 2026](#)

Board members reviewed, discussed, and completed the meetings self-evaluation for the May 14, 2026 meeting.

15. CLOSED SESSION

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

 [Closed Session - Legal Advice - May 14, 2026](#)

Motion:

At 3:01 p.m. motion was made to enter in 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 Pat Wojcik and motion seconded by Diane Davies. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Nelson, Scherer, Sedlacek, Sibbel, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Petersen and Robinson. MOTION CARRIED.

Reconvened to the public meeting at 3:24 p.m.

16. ADJOURNMENT

At 3:24 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, it was UNANIMOUSLY PASSED by VOICE VOTE to ADJOURN the meeting.