[Board of Governors Meeting](#) Minutes

Board of Governors-Northeast Community College Area

8/20/2026 9:30 AMCDT
@ Northeast Community College, Lifelong Learning Center, Suite O197, 801 E. Benjamin Ave., 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, 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, Pat Wojcik - Member, Board of Governors, 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, Mike Walkowiak - Vice President, Human Resources & Organizational Developmentand, Lindsay Spiegel - Director, Institutional Effectiveness, Jennifer Greve - Executive Director of Marketing and Recruitment, Diane Reikofski - Executive Assistant and Board Recording Secretary
Guests: Muminovic-*Norfolk Daily News*, Kristi Rastede-English professor, Janel Walton-Executive Director of Student Services

Absent-Excused:
Members: Dirk Petersen - Member, Board of Governors

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 leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. OPEN MEETINGS ACT

   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, located on the Northeast Community College website. Also available in Suite 197 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:

- Agenda of the August 20, 2026 meeting. Official Notice of the meeting is posted on the Northeast Community College website, and published in the Norfolk Daily News on Saturday, August 15, 2026.
- Minutes of the June 11, 2026 Board of Governors meeting.

Consent Agenda - August 20, 2026

Motion:

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

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

EL-04, Planning
Monitoring Report Summary

EL-04, Planning.pdf

Review of the monitoring report, EL-04, Planning, was provided by Dr. Leah Barrett. The report demonstrates that the College uses a comprehensive five-year budget plan aligned with student success, workforce development, affordability, facilities, technology, and strategic priorities; incorporates documented assumptions regarding enrollment, inflation, labor costs, and state funding; maintains strong financial health with appropriate reserve levels; and has succession plans in place for vice presidents and the president to ensure continuity of operations. Overall, the report finds that planning practices are financially sound, strategically aligned, and designed to support the College's mission and future sustainability. In conclusion, Northeast Community College is in compliance with Board policy requiring long-term planning that supports the Board's End while maintaining fiscal stability.

Pat Wojcik arrived at 9:44 a.m.

The Board of Governors assessed EL-04, Planning, and determined that evidence supports compliance with a reasonable interpretation.

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

President's Monthly Update 08.2026
A National Call to Action to University Presidents and Governing Boards
AACC Guidance on U.S. Department of Education's Directive

A National Call to Action to University Presidents and Governing Boards .pdf

AACC Guidance on U.S. Dept of Education's Directive.pdf

President's Monthly Update 08.2026.pdf

Student Success & Institutional Outcomes

- Six-year graduation rate is 54%, exceeding the national average.
- Retention and graduation rates for first-time, full-time students remain above national benchmarks.
- Dual enrollment continues to grow, increasing nearly 11% over the previous year.
- Northeast's low-income students complete at a 56% rate, significantly above national averages and Aspen Prize comparison institutions.
- Employer satisfaction with Northeast graduates remains strong.

Recognition & Achievements

- Northeast received the 2026 Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Western Region Impact & Success Award and will be recognized during the ACCT Leadership Congress that will be held in Chicago, IL in late October. .
- Pat Wojcik was featured in Siouxland Woman.
- Nicole Sedlacek has completed her leadership role on the Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) Board of Directors.
- The new iHub opened and welcomed more than 325 visitors.
- The academic year began with more than 1,000 first-year students and full residence halls.

Strategic Priorities The college's strategic work is centered on:

1. Workforce alignment and career readiness.
2. Organizational adaptability and innovation.
3. Student success and support.

Major Focus Areas

1. Adult Success

- Workforce Development Operations Team realignment.
- Launch of SNAP Employment and Training (E&T).
- Expansion of stackable credentials and pathways.
- Workforce Pell and adult learner initiatives.

2. Guided Pathways Accomplishments include:
   - Fields of study organization for credit and non-credit programs.
   - Enhanced website with program sequencing and career outlook information.
   - Mandatory first-year advising.
   - Transfer program mapping.
   - Credit for prior learning initiatives.

3. Enterprise Systems & Operations Modernization
   - Banner SaaS implementation.
   - Increased use of data insights, intelligent processes, and artificial intelligence (AI).
   - Focus on improving operations and proactive student support.

4. Employee Development & Engagement
   - Transition to BambooHR.
   - Enhanced employee benefits.
   - Student loan repayment assistance through Savi.
   - Faculty rank structure established.
   - Leadership development programs expanded.
   - Ten internal promotions/transfers completed.

5. Financial Stability and Strategic Growth Key considerations include:
   - Anticipated reductions in state funding.
   - Enrollment management.
   - Increased foundation and grant support.
   - Position management and strategic budgeting.
   - Comprehensive fundraising campaign.
   - Strong financial health, including a primary reserve ratio above benchmark levels.

Partnerships and External Engagement

- Hosted the Tech Nebraska Micro Summit and Nebraska Manufacturing and Advisory Council (NeMAC) meeting.
- Participation in Harvard's Strategic Data Program Fellowship.
- Engagement with elected officials and education leaders.
- Collaboration with the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE), Wayne State College, industry partners, and community organizations.

Federal & Regulatory Updates
Topics being monitored include:

- Schedule of reductions.
- Digital accessibility requirements.
- Accreditation rulemaking changes.
- National discussions around affordability, student outcomes, free speech, academic rigor, and AI.
- National Call to Action: Northeast Community College's Board of Governors can associate its governance policies to the U.S. Secretary of Education's concerns. Review was given to the monitoring reports that provide evidence to the National Call to Action.

Upcoming Board Activities

- September 24: Board Meeting and Public Hearing. Board survey for EL-08, Communication and Support to the Board will be distributed soon.
- October 4-5: NCCA Annual Meeting, Scottsbluff, NE
- October 8: Annual Achievement Awards
- October 15: Board Meeting and Aksarben Emerging Talent Awards
- October 21-24: ACCT Congress
- November 19: Board Meeting in O'Neill
- December 10: Board Meeting and Holiday Luncheon

6. BOARD EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

6.1. Administrative Services Report

6.1.1. Budget discussion (Presenters: Scott Gray)

- Preliminary discussion of proposed general fund and capital fund budgets. (Discussion only)

FY27-General Fund-5-yr Planning Document(Prelim).pdf

FY27General Fund-5-yr Planning Document.pdf

Building Fund_FY27 thru FY31 Projections.pdf

Preliminary discussion of proposed general fund and capital fund budgets was held. No action was taken. The 2027-2028 budget will be considered in September.

6.1.2. Budget limit authority (Presenters: Scott Gray)

Consider, discuss, and take all necessary action regarding an additional one percent (1%) increase in the total 2026-2027 restricted funds authority.

Additional one percent (1%) increase in the total 2026-2027 restricted funds authority

State aid and property tax revenue are considered restricted funds under Nebraska statute. While the College currently operates well below its restricted fund authority limit, requesting an additional 1% in restricted fund authority is a prudent measure that preserves future flexibility.

Approval of this increase does not commit the College to receiving or spending additional restricted funds. Rather, it provides the authority, as allowed by state law, to access those funds if needed in future years. By seeking this additional authority now, the College avoids unnecessarily limiting its options and ensures it can respond effectively to future financial needs and opportunities.

This action helps position the College to remain flexible and proactive while maintaining compliance with statutory requirements.

Motion:
Motion to approve and additional one percent (1%) increase in the total 2026-2027 restricted funds authority.

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

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

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

Ames, Del - $44.95
Anderson, Steve - $56.55
Davies, Diane - $49.30
Ellis, Donovan - $27.55
Nelson, Terry - $84.10
Petersen, Dirk - $26.10
Sedlacek, Nicole - $94.25
Sibbel, Carol - $94.25
Wojcik, Pat - $104.40

Paid Bills Report-July 2026.pdf

Monthly Financial Report-July 2026.pdf

Monthly Financial and Paid Bills Report-August 2026

Scott Gray presented a review of the Statement of Changes and Balance Sheet, including the corresponding entries, and provided a comprehensive overview of the College's monthly financial activity. Notable items included in the Paid Bills Report were equipment purchases, insurance premium payments, and payments to Huff Construction for work completed on the Cox Activities Center.

Motion:
Motion to approve the July 31, 2026 Monthly Financial Report and the July 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 Diane Davies. Voting yes: Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Nelson, Robinson, Scherer, Sedlacek, Sibbel, and Wojcik. Absent-Excused: Petersen. MOTION CARRIED.

6.1.4. Board of Governors budget (Presenters: Scott Gray)

Consider, discuss, and take all necessary action regarding the 2026-2027 Board of Governors budget.

Board budget 2026.pdf

Board of Governors budget

Motion:

Following a review of the 2026-2027 Board of Governors budget, motion was made to approve as presented.

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

6.1.5. Black Hills Energy (BHE) Easement (Presenters: Scott Gray)

Consider, discuss, and take all necessary action regarding the Black Energy (BHE) Easement.

- Temporary Construction and Access Agreement.pdf
- Easement for Gas Pipelines and Appurtenances.pdf
- Consideration Agreement.pdf
- Easement Areas_Black Hills Energy.pdf
- Black Hills Energy (BHE) Easement

Black Hills Energy (BHE) has received approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to install the pipeline beneath the flood control structure. Scott Gray provided an overview of the easement areas. Prior to installation, the pipe will be staged and laid out above ground before being inserted beneath the flood control structure. The project is expected to be completed within two to three days.

Motion:
Motion to approve the Black Hills Energy (BHE) Easement.

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

6.2. Development/External Relations Report

6.2.1. Achievement Award nominees (Presenters: Tracy Kruse)

Consider, discuss, and take all necessary action regarding the 2026 Alumni Hall of Success, Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) Distinguished Alumni, and Northeast Community College Foundation Emeritus nominees.

[Achievement Award Nominees](#)

Motion:
Motion to approve the 2026 Alumni Hall of Success, Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) Distinguished Alumni, and Northeast Community College Foundation Emeritus nominees as presented.

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

6.2.2. Foundation Board of Directors (Presenters: Del Ames, Donovan Ellis)

Quarterly Foundation Board of Directors update

Foundation Board of Directors update.pdf

The Foundation Board of Directors met on July 28, 2026. The meeting focused on board leadership transitions, the appointment of new directors, recognition of long-serving members, establishment of an iHub endowment fund, and approval of routine Foundation governance and financial matters.

- Approved the slate of Weller Foundation directors, including new directors Greg Rentschler and Amy Shane. Amy Shane will eventually assume the representative role currently held by Clark Gotschall when his term concludes.
- Reappointed five current directors to additional three-year terms (2026-2029).
- Approved the 2026-27 Foundation officer slate:
  - Paula Havranek, President
  - Courtney Schmidt, Vice President
  - Brian Chapman, Treasurer
  - Matt Hoesing, Secretary
- Four new Foundation Board of Directors were approved for three-year terms:
  - Corey Gerdes, Bloomfield
  - Shane Greckel, Bloomfield
  - Eric Hazuka, Sout Sioux City
  - Bret Younkin, Ainsworth

- Informative presentation regarding the iHUB was provided by Erin Sharpe, Director of iHUB and Brad Ranslem, Dean of Applied Technology.

7. COLLEGE REPORT(S

7.1. Student Leadership Association (SLA)

No report provided.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT on Monitoring Report or Board Education and Information

Individuals commenting on Monitoring Report 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.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1. Governance Committee

Governance Committee notes-August 4, 2026
Content Review:

- EL-09, Organizational Integrity
- GP-17, Recognition

Board Self-Evaluation Action Plan

Board Governance Committee Meeting - August 4, 2026 Notes.pdf

EL-09 Organizational Integrity.pdf

GP-17 Recognition.pdf

Governance Committee met on August 4, 2026 via Zoom.

- Content Review was conducted on:
  - EL-09, Organizational Integrity. No suggestion for revisions.
  - GP-17, Recognition. The Committee whether the amount for a recognition meal should be increased from $50 to $60 due to inflation. Scott Gray reported that he was not present during the Governance Committee discussion and stated that the dollar amount is tied to state statute so an increase cannot be made. No suggestion for revision.

- The next meeting of the Governance Committee is scheduled for September 9, 2026.

9.2. Ownership Linkage Committee (Presenters: Pat Wojcik)

Ownership Linkage Committee meeting notes-August 3, 2026

Ownership Linkage Committee Notes 08.03.26.pdf

The Ownership Linkage Committee met on August 3 via Zoom.
Dr. Leah Barrett, along with NCCA Board of Directors representatives, Nicole Sedlacek and Pat Wojcik participated in the discussion to prepare the NCCA Strategic Planning Session that was held on August 10.
Discussion was held on future opportunities for the Ownership Linkage Committee.
The next meeting of the Ownership Linkage Committee will be scheduled to prepare for the November Board of Governors meeting that will be held at the O'Neill Extended Campus.

9.3. Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) update (Presenters: Nicole Sedlacek, Pat Wojcik)

Quarter 3 NCCA Board of Directors Meeting

Q3, 2026 NCCA BOD meeting & Strategic planning workshop.pdf

The NCCA Board of Directors met on August 10 in Kearney for a strategic planning session that featured productive and meaningful discussion focused on the future of Nebraska's community colleges. The Board also conducted its third-quarter meeting and, after careful review, is not recommending any changes to the Community College Future Fund at this time. Board members emphasized the importance of remaining agile, proactive, and responsive to the evolving needs of students, communities, and workforce partners across the state.
The NCCA Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 4-5, 2026, in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Jee Hang Lee, President and CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), will serve as the keynote speaker.

9.4. Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) update (Presenters: Pat Wojcik)

The ACCT Board Retreat was held at the end of July at Lake Tahoe Community College. Pat Wojcik reported that serving on the ACCT Board has provided an opportunity to gain a broader national perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing community colleges. This experience continues to foster professional growth, benefiting not only her, but also Northeast Community College, its students, and the communities it serves.

The retreat included strategic planning discussions and thoughtful dialogue on a variety of issues affecting community colleges nationwide, including funding and advocacy priorities. ACCT represents approximately 1,050 community colleges across the United States, supported by more than 6,500 trustees dedicated to advancing student success and institutional excellence.

A particularly impactful presentation was delivered by a speaker from Montana on the Dignity Index. The session explored how communication, body language, tone, and word choice can influence how messages are perceived by others. The discussion served as a valuable reminder of the importance of self-awareness in leadership and communication, and how our interactions reflect not only on ourselves but also on Northeast Community College.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT on Committee Reports:

Individuals commenting on Committee Reports or Items for Decision 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 (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

Other announcements and birthdays for the month.

Chairperson Ellis recognized staff members observing birthdays during the month of August.

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

Board Meeting Self-Evaluation-August 20, 2026

13. ADJOURNMENT (Presenters: Donovan Ellis)

At 11:53 a.m., there being no further business to discuss, it was UNANIMOUSLY PASSED by VOICE VOTE to adjourn the meeting.