

MINUTES OF MEETING
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD
JANUARY 17, 2023
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM OFFICE

Members Present: Megan Bahr, Paul Buhr, Douglas Holton, Sr., Dan Klecker, John W. Miller, Rodney Pasch, Amy Pechacek, Sara Rogers, Dan Sperberg, S. Mark Tyler, Sharon Wendt for Jill Underly, Stephen Willett.

Members Absent: Quincey Daniels

System Office Staff Present: Judy Barbian, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Morna Foy, Mandy Johnson, Tou Ya Khang, Christina Lorge, Joel Mathis, Colleen McCabe, Nancy Nakkoul, Carolann Nelson, Jeremy Nichols, Katy Pettersen, Anna Richter, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Julie Tyznik, Ann Westrich, Angela White, Jim Zylstra.

District/Others Present: Tracy Pierner, Blackhawk Technical College; Sunem Beaton-Garcia, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chuck Bolstad, Layla Merrifield, District Boards Association; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Ritu Raju, Gateway Technical College; Paul Carlsen, Lakeshore Technical College; Jack Daniels, Sylvia Ramirez, Cody White, Madison Area Technical College; Shelly Mondeik, Mid-State Technical College; Vicki Martin, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; John Will, Northwood Technical College; Katrina Willis, Wisconsin Student Government; James Jelak, WTCS Marketing Consortium.

Board President Pasch called the meeting to order at 9:04 am. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

Board President Pasch attended virtually and turned the meeting over to Board Vice President Tyler to preside over the meeting. Board Vice President Tyler introduced and recognized Katrina Willis, President of Wisconsin Student Government (WSG), who joined the meeting on behalf of WSG.

Board Vice President Tyler introduced the new Board Members:

1. Paul Buhr, Agriculture Member with a farm near Viroqua. This is Board Member Buhr's first and last meeting as he has been appointed to the DNR Board effective January 20.
2. Dan Klecker, Public Member from ASE Education Foundation, representing multiple midwestern states, assisting accredited transportation programs and business affiliates.
3. Sara Rogers, Public Member, planning and policy analyst with Employ Milwaukee, the Workforce Development Board (WDB) representing Milwaukee County.

ITEM A: Approval of November 15-16, 2022, Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Board Member Holton, seconded by Board Member Sperberg, that the November 15-16, 2022, meeting minutes be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM B: Report of the Board President

The UW System Board of Regents reports for the November and December meetings were shared with Board Members on January 12, 2023.

There will be a time change for the May 16, WTCS Board meeting held at the System Office. The meeting will be held 10 am – 1 pm to avoid the need for hotel rooms the night prior to the meeting with a large conference taking place that week in Madison.

As part of the collaborative work WTCS has been doing with the UW System and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) working toward 60% of Wisconsin's adult population having a credential beyond high school, "Equity in the College Classroom – Implementation" Mini Grants were disseminated in December 2021. The purpose of these grants was to support faculty in implementing new equity and inclusion-related projects and practices in their classrooms to improve outcomes for their students as well as share successes and challenges with colleagues. The results of these innovative projects are being shared via short videos available online at 60forward.org/resources.

The Tuition Workgroup will be meeting the next couple of months to bring a recommendation on tuition for the 2023-24 school year to System President Foy at the March Board meeting. Members include Board Members Bahr, Holton, Tyler and Willett.

ITEM C: Report of the System President

System President Foy expressed sympathy for the family of Tim Weir, WTCS education director, who passed away suddenly on January 12 after complications from surgery. On behalf of WTCS we will miss him and appreciate all that he has done for the System.

Welcome Dr. Ritu Raju who started on January 5 at Gateway Technical College. She formerly served as vice president for Academic Affairs at Tarrant County College's Northeast Campus. Raju received her doctorate in Technical Communication and Rhetoric from Texas Tech University, a masters in English from Sam Houston State University and a bachelor's degree from University of Houston Downtown.

The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing funding to expand access to broadband, with focus on infrastructure and digital equity. The expansion of reliable, affordable broadband is essential for WTCS students, which is a continuing barrier for many, particularly those in rural areas. The System Office has been involved in conversations with the Public Service Commission as they engage in the planning process for this work. We are participants in the PSC's Digital Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group, which meets monthly, and recently WTCS Policy Advisor Megan Stritchko spoke as part of a workforce panel for the Governor's Task force on Broadband Access, highlighting the role that our colleges play in developing skilled talent in the state.

The latest Student Success Center Convening took place virtually on December 2, 2022, titled Increasing Enrollment and Completion through Guided Career Pathways. Nearly 170 people attended this follow up event from the work that began in 2017 when Wisconsin joined the National Student Success Center Network, and there were many more attending in person at each college. The overall goal of the national work is to increase student completion rates, close equity gaps and strengthen communities. The next event, titled Guiding our Way Forward, will be held virtually on February 27. Anyone interested in attending should contact Julie Drake for registration information.

WTCS Education Director Lenard Simpson attended a two-day Bridge the Path: Building a Precollege Bridge Program for Incarcerated Learners in early January. The workshop was a collaborative effort involving UW-Madison, UW System, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, MATC-Milwaukee, Madison College, Moraine Park and other higher education partners to identify the core instructional goals of a new pre-college bridge program. They explored five curricular areas: technology use, precollege math, precollege language arts, the "hidden" college curriculum and building a learning community in prison. WTCS will continue to support the work of Second Chance Pell with our prison

partners. In addition, we are also exploring how students incarcerated in County Jails could utilize the Second Chance Pell Expansion Grant. There is a Justice-Involved System-called meeting to discuss solutions to offer post-secondary courses in the jail system. Most of those in jail systems do not have a high school diploma or equivalent to start post-secondary education.

Dr. Colleen McCabe's Office of Student Success is working with students to develop initiatives that involve students:

- Members of student government and attendees of last year's WisCORE event expressed interest in creating a System-wide group for students interested in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB). A virtual meeting is set for this System-wide Committee on January 27. All current students and former students (within one year of enrollment) who have an interest in discussing DEIB with other students are invited to attend.
- The national group Advance CTE has invited WTCS to join colleagues from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to engage with a State Cohort on "Leveraging Learner Voice to Strengthen CTE Technical Assistance." Advance CTE is providing training, resources and support to help states identify opportunities to engage learners more meaningfully in the design and delivery of CTE programs and experiences.

ITEM D: Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association (DBA) Vice President and Southwest Tech Trustee Chuck Bolstad and Executive Director Layla Merrifield updated the Board on recent activities.

The winter meeting, held in Madison, January 12-13, focused on college leaders spending time with their local legislators to update them on DBA's work on behalf of WTCS students and communities, and to advocate on behalf of the WTCS budget request, bringing a unified voice to the Capitol. Remarks by Senator Marklein and Representative Born provided perspective on the state budget process as co-chairs of the Joint Finance Committee. They also heard a panel of state politics reporters, who discussed the political environment in Wisconsin. Mr. Bolstad thanked the WTCS Board, System President Foy, WTCS staff and Ms. Merrifield.

In February, trustees will travel to Washington DC to attend the Community College National Legislative Summit. They will use the time to learn about federal policy and remind Wisconsin's Congressional delegation about the importance of Pell Grants and Perkins CTE funding to the System.

The Association's next quarterly meeting is scheduled for April 21-22, hosted by Gateway Technical College. The planned in-service topic is Effective Board Governance.

System President Foy commented that the budget request forwarded to the Governor, put together by WTCS, DBA and the Presidents, was what the DBA shared with legislators, sharing a unified message.

ITEM E: WTCS Presidents' Association

Dr. Vicki Martin, President of Milwaukee Area Technical College and of the Association, provided a brief update on recent activities of the Association.

The Association met on November 16. Highlights included enrollments increasing since the pandemic. Though not back to pre-pandemic levels, increases are happening to meet employers' needs.

The Association discussed the Student Ambassador program and revealed inconsistencies between colleges on how they utilize their Ambassadors. The conversation included an increased interest in listening to the student voice when making decisions. The Presidents shared best practices and are

collecting documentation from the colleges on the student Ambassador programs and how involved the students are with each colleges' Board. The goal is to strengthen the process with more consistency between the colleges.

Presidents shared how they are each using the WTCS State Leadership Grants for Enrollment. There are many innovative programs being implemented. Some examples include targeted digital marketing programs, researching stop-outs, hosting recruitment events, connecting rural high schools with high tech classrooms through dual enrollment and adding additional emergency assistance funds.

The strategic focus committees shared updates:

- The Financial Stability/Transfer Improvement Task Force is collecting information from the presidents on childcare initiatives at each college.
- The Design and Deliver Programs and Services committee is intentionally working with standing committees at the colleges to assist in advancing initiatives.
- The Attract and Retain Talent/Workforce Diversity committee is surveying colleges to gain an understanding of pain points in recruitment and retention.
- The Budget Development committee shared the WTCS Budget Overview with the presidents and asked for support when talking with legislators.

Alex Nock, representing Rebuilding America's Middle Class (RAMC), shared a presentation with an overview of priorities.

The presidents shared a farewell with Bryan Albrecht as he retires from Gateway Technical College, and they welcomed Dr. Ritu Raju who started in early January.

Board Member Rogers asked what the gap is in enrollments pre-pandemic to now. The gap is approximately 15% with bringing back students of color that they had lost during the pandemic.

Vice President Tyler is interested in childcare data. A lot of WTCS colleges are in childcare deserts. Tyler would like a presentation on what our colleges are doing at a future Board meeting. If he could pick one short term universal impact, it would be childcare. System President Foy shared that the Presidents Association will be discussing the topic at their meeting. Childcare is one example of how some general aid funds are being used by some of the colleges. The solution to childcare concerns varies greatly, whether rural or urban, and there are childcare issues preventing students from joining the workforce.

ITEM F: Consent Agenda

It was moved by Board Member Pechacek, seconded by Board Member Bahr that the Board approve the program and facilities development requests as presented, with the exception of the program discontinuance for Gateway Technical College. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Board Member Wendt, seconded by Board Member Sperberg that the Board approve the program discontinuance for Gateway Technical College. Motion carried 11-1. Board Member Bahr abstained.

ITEM G: Apprenticeship Completion Report

Nancy Nakkoul, WTCS education director for architecture, construction and apprenticeship, provided an overview of the most recent Apprenticeship Completion report highlighting high earnings and apprentices' strong level of satisfaction with on-the-job training and related instruction they receive. The median annual earnings reported for all apprentices who completed the program in 2021 is

\$84,238. Median earnings ranged from \$108,500 for electrical and instrumentation apprentices to \$77,214 for the construction electrical sector.

Registered Apprenticeship combines structured, on-the-job training with classroom instruction. Apprentices learn the theory and practice of a highly skilled occupation in one to six years and are paid for their time on the job and in the classroom. Wisconsin's technical colleges work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD)-Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS) to meet employer needs in apprenticeship, providing classroom instruction for apprenticeship programs in industrial, construction and other industries. New sectors have been added more recently, including apprenticeships in cosmetology and information technology. Highlights of the report include:

- 92% of apprentices were satisfied with their on-the-job training, and 95% reported they were satisfied with their related instruction.
- As Wisconsin employers struggle to attract and retain talent, it is important to note that 97% of employed apprentices were working in Wisconsin after their completed training. Of those, 53% worked in the district where they received training, and apprenticeship participation has increased about 17% over the past five years.
- The average age of apprentices is 27.

Board Vice President Tyler commented that Wisconsin is viewed as a leader in apprenticeship programs, having received calls from Illinois wanting to work with us on apprenticeship.

Board Member Pechacek shared that they use apprentices at their office who can earn while they learn, without college debt. They promote this great partnership with the technical colleges and will be sharing this report.

This is the first survey with the change in asking responders to share hourly and yearly earnings with actual reported earnings for more consistency in reporting.

Board Member Holton asked which sector public safety programs are in. Ms. Nakkoul shared that there is an apprenticeship for firefighting, but only one is registered. Holton asked how law enforcement agencies that go through the academies are counted. Ms. Nakkoul said that while law enforcement academies closely mirror the apprenticeship model, it is outside of apprenticeship standards.

Board Member Holton asked if there is targeted recruitment to get more women as apprentices? Board Member Pechacek stated that they closely track minorities and women and have broadened these groups. They are seeing an increase as they continue to diversify. With so many different pathways, the workforce continues to emerge in Wisconsin, as the first state in the nation to pass an apprenticeship law.

Board Member Sperberg shared that they have more than 850 apprentices, the largest in the state and across the nation.

Board Member Klecker asked what the measurement is to be included in the report. Ms. Nakkoul said that there needs to be five or more respondents in each sector for anonymity.

Nakkoul noted there is a new design protocol when developing apprenticeships in new sector occupations, and when cyclically reviewing existing apprenticeship programs, to engage stakeholders in value of aligning apprenticeship instruction with attainment of an embedded post-secondary technical diploma credential and/or associate degree.

The Board reconvened at 10:30 after a short break. A change in agenda items occurred to ensure the ethics training could take place.

ITEM I: Ethics Training

WTCS Executive Vice President Jim Zylstra facilitated Ethics for Public Officials training that must be completed by members of boards to state agencies.

ITEM H: Teaching and Learning – Program Approval Process

WTCS Provost and Vice President Dr. Colleen McCabe and Associate Vice President-Office of Instructional Services Chrystal Seeley-Schreck provided the Board with an overview of the program development process from concept to approval, program maintenance process, including assessment, modifications and discontinuances; and 2022 program activity. In 2022, the Board approved 57 new programs.

Ms. Seeley-Schreck reviewed the concept approval of programs and gave an overview of the demonstration of need for programs and employer support. The advisory committees play a critical role in the process. We want to ensure employers are ready to hire graduates upon completion.

Board Member Klecker inquired about some of the low potential salaries for program concept reviews. Dr. McCabe shared that salaries are always a concern, questioning if someone would want to choose that as a career if the salary is low. Though they are above minimum wage, the district needs to fulfill that need and we need to make sure there is a pathway for these programs. Conversations take place about what is crucial, making sure we're supporting careers when approving programs. These programs allow students to move up the ladder which is important for student success. System President Foy added that we take advantage of the opportunity to talk about appropriate compensation when talking to employers, DWD, and others, when we get requests from employers to produce more of what they want to employ. We have shared the student outcome data and told employers they have the responsibility to ensure compensation. We have also been engaged at the federal level. It's a constant conversation at the two-year level. We're as honest as we can be with students.

Board Member Rogers asked if every technical college has access to Lightcast. Each college decides independently who they want to use, with most using EMSI.

Board Member Tyler commented that some may wonder why we even bother offering programs in hospitality and cosmetology areas. But, if you want to own your own shop, you need to get credentials and work for someone else, and then you get your credential to get your own shop.

Board President Pasch feels that the importance of WTCS focus groups aren't emphasized enough. They are occupational experts in the programs we are offering, creating competencies for the curriculum the program can be developed upon. The competencies the employer is expecting technical colleges to use to articulate it into a program. The work that is done in the program development is the heart of the success of the technical college system in a relatively short time. We discontinue programs, which means it's part of the culture of our System, and why our employer satisfaction surveys show successful results.

Board Member Holton asked how we know which programs are suspended for 1-3 years to be considered for discontinuance. Ms. Seeley-Schreck stated that on the technical side, we know how long a program has been suspended, but if there are enrollments, we won't discontinue it.

Board Member Holton asked that if there is low enrollment in a program, is there an assumption that the need is still there even if there are not many students. Dr. McCabe said that we can create an environment for a program to thrive, but when there aren't students who enroll, we can reconfigure or

at times reinstate programs. Every situation is unique, and we can do major shifts in how we do what we do.

Board Member Pechacek shared that there has been a 12% increase in wages across all occupations, which is outpacing inflation. There are some occupations where the model does not allow for continued wage growth, such as childcare where you can't pass those costs on to the consumer.

Board Member Tyler commented that we constantly review our programs, which is part of our success. At the University, they were working to approve engineering programs, reviewing them every five years.

ITEM J: Legislative Update

WTCS Executive Vice President Jim Zylstra shared with the Board that on Wednesday, January 25, WTCS will host an open house and legislative presentation at the Capitol to share WTCS recent reports and share the WTCS budget request overview. The open house is planned for all legislators with a focus on freshman legislators.

DBA Executive Director Layla Merrifield gave an overview of the current legislature in Wisconsin, with split control of a democratic Governor and a republican controlled legislature.

WTCS Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo provided an overview of Wisconsin Student Government (WSG) and the role that they play. The WSG comprises student representatives from the 16 Wisconsin Technical College System districts and is organized as a 501(c)(6) organization under tax codes of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. It is a nonpartisan organization that meets five times a year and will be holding a legislative seminar on February 20 and meeting with legislators on February 21. Every year they develop legislative priorities. This year's priorities are:

- Support of the WTCS Wisconsin Grants Request
- Funding Open Educational Resources

The WSG voice is important as they assisted in identifying the legislative sponsor for the statutory authority that related to the approval of AA/AS, and initiated the OER budget initiative that was later adopted by WTCS.

Policy Advisory Megan Stritchko provided a federal update:

- Appropriations Bill FFY23 passed in December in the last session – omnibus bill.
 - Federal fiscal year runs October 1 - September 30, so this is the budget for the year that began October 1, 2022 and will end on September 30, 2023.
- Bill includes increases to several federal funding programs:
 - Modest 3.6% for both the Perkins V CTE Basic State Grants and Adult Education State Grants - federal grants that come through the System Office, with the majority passed onto the colleges.
 - Increases in several programs that provide student support and increases to financial-aid programs, most notably increases to the maximum Pell Grant amount by \$500 to \$7,395 (7.3% increase).
- Looking ahead, in the new congressional session, there is a divided Congress (House changed from Democratic control to Republican; Democratic-controlled Senate and White House) which will require bipartisan support for initiatives to move forward which will be monitored closely.

WTCS Director of Strategic Advancement Katy Pettersen and Statewide Marketing Consortium Director Jim Jelak provided an update on a recent WTCS Marketing Consortium Perception Survey. The Marketing Consortium had been doing a parent perception survey every three years, which would

inform a lot of decisions at a state level as well as at district levels, using that data. In the last strategic plan, a statewide opinion survey was created to broaden the reach of who was being surveyed.

In 2022, more than 1,300 completed surveys were received from adults, 18 years or older, living in Wisconsin. Close to three in four residents believe the state benefits from the education the technical colleges provide. Attitudes towards technical education are favorable in Wisconsin:

- 75% agree that higher education can be a big investment and now more than ever, students and parents need to consider the long-term costs when thinking about college (or higher education).
- 71% agree that not all students benefit from a four-year college education.
- 16% agree that a student who gets a liberal arts degree is more likely to have stable employment over the long term than a student with a skills-based degree.
- Most agree that transferring to a four-year public school from a technical college is a good option and disagree that technical colleges are better for adult learners than for recent high school graduates.
- 60% agree that the technical colleges are a good option for students who want to transfer into a four year public university.
- 22% agree that technical colleges are a good option for adult learners but not for students right out of high school.

Highlighting the “state of the art” facilities the colleges offer and messaging the value of the education both improve recommendation ratings.

- No significant loans to pay back – recommendation ratings improve as importance of this feature increases.
- State of the art technology – recommendation ratings improve the more people believe this to be true of their technical college.

System President Foy shared that ten years ago when she became President of the System, legislators were asking why the technical colleges are such a secret and why more students aren’t enrolling? WTCS has done very intentional outreach to change that image and you’re seeing the results of that through this survey. The Presidents Association will also have a conversation on this.

Board President Pasch commented that Wisconsin’s technical colleges don’t just meet the standards, we set the standard.

ITEM K: Announcements/Adjourn

Board Vice President Tyler recognized Northwood Technical College for becoming a certified family friendly workplace by the Family Friendly Workforce.

The next meeting of the Board will be held March 14-15, 2023, at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay.

It was moved by Board Member Sperberg, seconded by Board Member Klecker, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Drake