MINUTES OF MEETING
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD
SEPTEMBER 1-2, 2026
MILWAUKEE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Members Present: Lindsay Blumer, Terry Craney, Eli Guthrie, Frances Huntley-Cooper, Dan Klecker, Timothy Nixon, Amy Pechacek, Michael Rosen, Daniel Sperberg, Leslie Svacina, Jill Underly.

System Office Staff Present: Rachel Colla, Julie Drake, Paul Hammer, Christina Lorge, Colleen McCabe, Layla Merrifield, Jeremy Nichols, Katy Pettersen, Katie Roberts, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Shreck, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo.

District/Others Present: Sunem Beaton-Garcia, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Veronique Tran, Gateway Technical College; Paul Carlsen, Lakeshore Technical College; Shelly Mondeik, Mid-State Technical College; Valencia Brown-Allen, Anthony Cruz, Mark Feldmann, Phillip King, Sarah Mercado, Daniela Reyes, Michael Rogers, Gabriel Schauf, Elizabeth Schultz, Michael West, Paul Zinck, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; Jeremy Pickard, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College; Rich Barnhouse, Waukesha County Technical College; Pat Goss, John Wyatt, Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association.

Interim Board President Blumer called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated a quorum was present.

Interim Board President Blumer introduced Dr. Anthony Cruz, president of Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), who provided opening remarks to the Board.

President Cruz introduced Daniela Reyes, MATC's 2026 WTCS Ambassador, who addressed the Board.

Board Members Underly and Svacina arrived at 4:40 p.m.

ITEM A: Approval of July 14-15, 2026, Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Board Member Sperberg, seconded by Board Member Klecker, that the July 14-15, 2026, meeting minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried.

ITEM B: 2027-2028 Board Meeting Schedule

It was moved by Board Member Svacina, seconded by Board Member Pechacek, that the Wisconsin Technical College System Board adopts the 2027-2028 meeting schedule as presented. Motion carried.

ITEM C: Report of the Board President

Interim Board President Blumer thanked Dr. Quincey Daniels and Sara Rogers who have resigned their positions on the WTCS Board.

Interim Board President Blumer thanked Dr. Michael Rosen for his acceptance of the vacant position on the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB).

The July report from the Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents was distributed to Board Members on August 28, 2026.

Interim Board President Blumer requested that, to maintain order and ensure Board members' questions are addressed, Board members direct their requests to her during or after presentations. She indicated she would recognize Board members and call on them to pose questions to presenters.

Interim Board President Blumer reminded attendees that, to maintain compliance with open meetings requirements, only individuals listed on the agenda may address the Board during the meeting. She noted that an exception may occur when a Board member calls upon a member of the audience to respond to a question.

On August 12, the Wisconsin College & Career Attainment Network (WisCCAN) held their first meeting in Madison at the Hill Farms State Office Building. The goal of this group is to provide assistance to students transitioning from high school to college, and their work will continue for the next six months. Interim Board President Blumer thanked WTCS Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo for his role in coordinating and facilitating the meeting.

The 2027-29 Budget Work Group held their final meeting earlier this afternoon and will present the full budget ask tomorrow.

Interim Board President Blumer gave an overview of the "WI Loves TechColleges" press release. She shared excitement for education during back-to-school season and gratitude for the work WTCS does on behalf of students and communities.

Board member Huntley-Cooper arrived at 4:45 p.m.

ITEM D: Report of the System President

System President Merrifield shared System updates:

- In late July, President Merrifield attended the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges Summer Meeting. It focused on Workforce Pell implementation across states, the Congressional appropriations process, community college operational shared services, and the latest guided pathways research.
- The System Office has hired two LTE positions to help with Rural Health Transformation Grants execution and monitoring and are in the process of reviewing the grant submissions. All public communications regarding this event must be

approved by DHS, so our office is laying out a plan to coordinate college communications as well.

- President Merrifield attended the inaugural address of Gateway Technical College's new president, Dr. Veronique Tran.
- September is Student Parent Month, and we will be highlighting all that our colleges do to serve students who also happen to be parents. Tomorrow's tour includes a look at one of MATC's newest additions to support student parents, Little Stormers Village. We produced a story when the Village opened that shares the importance of this service to students like April, showcased in this video.
- Last week, President Merrifield participated in a short interview with Wisconsin Public Radio's Wisconsin Today show, focused on what's new for our System this school year. She discussed Rural Healthcare grants, Workforce Pell, subpar investment from the legislature, long waiting lists in many of our most costly programs, and how we regularly cut programs but prefer to do so when demand recedes, rather than a lack of funding.
- Earlier in August, President Merrifield also participated in an on-camera interview with Spectrum News, regarding the need for investment in our System. The reporter will also be interviewing Madison College at a later date.
- President Merrifield attended the Western Wisconsin Workforce Solutions Roundtable discussion at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, at the invitation of President Beaton-Garcia, joining Secretary Pechacek, Board Member Guthrie, as well as John Miller from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and Governor Evers. Board Member Guthrie shared this was a rewarding experience; Board Member Pechacek further emphasized this discussion was crucial for supporting both students and Wisconsin's work force.
- The latest video feature from one of our colleges was shared, about a nursing student from Northwood Technical College who is also a competitive powerlifter.

ITEM E: Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association (DBA) President and Lakeshore Technical College Trustee John Wyatt and DBA Executive Director Pat Goss updated the Board on recent activities.

- DBA President Wyatt thanked System Office leadership for their balanced response to the CROWE report. Pat Goss has been tasked to work with DBA and WTCS on delivering speaking points to use when communicating with the legislature.
- The DBA Executive Committee is working with the Presidents Association on multiple ongoing advocacy initiatives and are closely watching election campaigns this fall; this includes educating trustees on how best to interact with the Legislature and government in the future.
- The Fall Trustee meeting will be held on October 6; programming will focus on the federal student loan program and will feature a presidents panel on current System-wide issues. The Association is excited to welcome Jee Hang Lee of the Association

of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to the fall meeting to address the trustees. All are welcome to attend this meeting if interested.

ITEM F: Teaching & Learning – Funeral Service at MATC: Program Sustainability Using Shared Agreements

WTCS Associate Vice President of Instructional Services Chrystal Seeley-Schreck and Director-Hospitality, Human Services and Education Dr. Katie Roberts provided an overview of Human Services programs and Shared Programs offered throughout Wisconsin. MATC Funeral Service Program Director and Instructor Gabriel Schauf highlighted the Funeral Service program's distinctive structure as a Shared Program Agreement collaborative model and the ways in which partnerships among participating colleges contribute to its continued success.

It was moved by Board Member Rosen, seconded by Board Member Pechacek, to recess the meeting until Wednesday, September 2, 2026. The Board adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Wednesday, September 2, 2026

Members Present: Lindsay Blumer, Terry Craney, Eli Guthrie, Frances Huntley-Cooper, Dan Klecker, Timothy Nixon, Amy Pechacek, Michael Rosen, Daniel Sperberg, Leslie Svacina, Jill Underly.

System Office Staff Present: Sarah Arneson, Hilary Barker, Chevon Bowen, Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Stephanie Glynn, Brandon Graf, Paul Hammer, Mandy Johnson, Tou Ya Khang, Christina Lorge, Chris Martin, Colleen McCabe, Layla Merrifield, Carolann Nelson, Jeremy Nichols, Cristina Parente, Katy Pettersen, Anna Richter, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Brent Simmons, Lenard Simpson, John Smigleski, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Julie Tyznik.

District/Others Present: Alexandra Bittner, Marcus Evans, Tracy Pierner, Blackhawk Technical College; Sunem Beaton-Garcia, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Veronique Tran, Gateway Technical College; Paul Carlsen, Lakeshore Technical College; Jennifer Berne, Madison Area Technical College; Brad Martinson, Shelly Mondeik, Chris Severson, Mid-State Technical College; Valencia Brown-Allen, Anthony Cruz, Mark Feldmann, Jeffrey Jensen, Phillip King, Emilia Meinhardt, Daniela Reyes, Michael Rogers, Michael West, Paul Zinck, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Bonnie Baerwald, Mike Chevalion, Roy Marquez, Moraine Park Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Chet Strebe, Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; Jeremy Pickard, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College; Rich Barnhouse, Waukesha County Technical College; Pat Goss, John Wyatt, Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association; Paul Cutting, Wisconsin Professional Agriculture Students; Mike Berry, Dani Casperson, WI SkillsUSA; Dianne Carroll, WI Business Professionals of America.

Interim Board President Blumer called the meeting to order at 9:39 am. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated a quorum was present.

ITEM G: WTCS Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO)

Board members received highlights from Mid-State Technical College Precision Machining Technician Instructor and State Director of SkillsUSA Mike Berry; Northcentral Technical College Marketing & Business Technology Instructor and State Director of Business Professionals of America Dianne Carroll; and former Southwest Wisconsin Technical College Agribusiness Instructor and current State Director of the Professional Agriculture Students Paul Cutting of the successes students achieved through involvement in the CTSOs.

ITEM H: Consent Agenda

It was moved by Board Member Pechacek, seconded by Board Member Rosen, that the Board approves the program and facilities development requests, with the exception of the Chippewa Valley Technical College program development requests as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Board Member Klecker, seconded by Board Member Craney, that the Board approves the program development requests for Chippewa Valley Technical College as presented. Board Member Guthrie abstained. Motion carried 10-1.

ITEM I: Moraine Park Technical College – Project Review – Construction of Additional and Remodeling of Existing Facilities in Horicon

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon provided an overview of the project for the Moraine Park Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10) Stats., requesting approval to construct additional and remodel existing facilities at the Horicon Regional Center Campus.

It was moved by Board Member Nixon, seconded by Board Member Svacina, to grant approval to the Moraine Park Technical College district to construct additional and remodel existing facilities in Horicon at a cost of $5,006,000. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM J: Mid-State Technical College – Project Concept Review – Construction of Facilities for a Public Safety Center in Stevens Point

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon provided an overview of the project for the Mid-State Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10) Stats., requesting approval to construct additional facilities at the Stevens Point Campus.

It was moved by Board Member Huntley-Cooper, seconded by Board Member Klecker, to grant approval to the Mid-State Technical College District to construct additional facilities at the Main Campus in Stevens Point. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM K: 2027-29 Biennial Budget Request

Interim Board President Blumer thanked the Biennial Budget Workgroup members for their time and work on this year's budget request.

WTCS Executive Vice President Paul Hammer thanked Board Members Blumer, Klecker and Rosen for serving on the Biennial Budget Workgroup with other stakeholders including representatives from the District Boards Association, Wisconsin Student Government, one college president and a faculty member along with WTCS staff members.

Mr. Hammer outlined the next steps in the process upon Board approval:

- Budget is due to the Governor and Department of Administration on September 15, 2026.
- Fall 2026 the Governor/DOA Budget staff develops the Governor's budget proposal based on agency requests, administration priorities, projected revenue and fiscal conditions.
- In January/February 2027, the Governor submits the 2027-29 budget proposal to the legislature.
- In late winter 2027, the legislature and interested parties assess the initial bill. The Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) holds statewide budget hearings including presentations by WTCS, other state agencies and the public.
- A DRAFT one-page budget paper was shared with the Board, which highlights talking points from each of the papers that can be shared with legislators.

Mr. Hammer further explained there are six budget papers which are due to the Governor's office September 15. Advocacy pieces will be finalized and shared with the Board to use while talking with legislators and policy makers when discussing budget priorities. The total request for FY28 is $42 million and $125 million for FY29, for a total of $168 million across the biennium.

WTCS Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo provided the Board with an overview of the General Aid for Wisconsin's Technical Colleges budget request for $19.7 million GPR in FY28 and $39.7 million GPR in FY29 for state aid for technical colleges under s. 20.292(1)(d). This funding will provide colleges with the flexibility to expand their capacity to deliver a talent pipeline that is positioned to thrive. FY2025 total operating revenues for WTCS colleges were nearly $1.57 billion, including property tax operating levies, federal aid, contract training revenue, Property Tax Relief Aid and General State Aid. General state aid is one of four primary revenue streams for an increase in funding, the others being tuition and fees, operational levy and Property Tax Relief Aid. This year's tuition increase was the largest in over a decade at $157.45 per credit for occupational tuition and $196.05 per credit for Associate of Arts/Associate of Science tuition for in-state residents.

WTCS Policy Advisor Megan Stritchko provided the Board with an overview of the Dual Enrollment budget request for an increase of $4 million GPR and 1.0 FTE position in FY28 and $50 million and 1.0 FTE position in FY29 and thereafter in s. 20.292(1)(f) to support

high-quality dual enrollment opportunities at technical colleges. In FY28, colleges would receive funds to support planning activities, and the new grant program would begin in FY29. Dual enrollment provides high school students an opportunity to earn college credit while in high school; this better prepares them for the social and academic requirements of college while building confidence and gaining exposure to career and academic planning.

Ms. Stritchko provided the Board with an overview of the Industry Sector Grants budget request for an increase in GPR funding and the creation of 1.0 FTE position; this would be $2.5 million in FY28 and $20.1 million in FY29 per s. 20.292(1)(f). This is to allow the colleges to better respond to high demand workforce needs around the state through a new grant program for specific industries including healthcare, oral health, law enforcement, fire service, manufacturing and education, including early childhood. In FY28, colleges would receive funds to support planning activities, and the new grant program would begin in FY29.

Ms. Stritchko provided the Board with an overview of the Adult Education budget request for an increase in GPR funding to support and expand adult education capacity at all colleges; this would be $11.6 million in both FY28 and FY29. Colleges are statutorily prohibited from charging tuition for adult education courses and served more than 33,500 students in 2024-25. Approximately 326,000 Wisconsin adults lack a high school diploma, which leaves them twice as likely to live in poverty, experience higher unemployment and earn substantially less than adults who have completed high school. The only dedicated funding stream to support adult education in Wisconsin is federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding. There have been several attempts over the last few years to eliminate the federal funding in entirety.

Mr. Hammer provided the Board with an overview of the System Office – Critical IT Infrastructure budget request for $4 million and 1.0 FTE position in both FY28 and FY29 to address IT security deficiencies and improve operations in three areas: WTCS portal, data management and grants management. This investment will protect sensitive information while providing better and more secure access to WTCS data users.

Mr. Hammer provided the Board with an overview of the System Office – General Counsel budget request for $202,000 and 1.0 FTE position in both FY28 and FY29 to serve as WTCS General Counsel. This function will ensure the System Office and the colleges receive timely and consistent legal guidance. It would supplement, but not replace, the need for each college to contract their own legal counsel.

Mr. Hammer emphasized that even though these two budget requests are focused primarily on internal System Office operations, there are impacts to the colleges as well and college operations will benefit from investments to the System Office in many ways, including statewide data management, cybersecurity to protect student, faculty and industry partner information, and legal consultation and guidance from within the System.

Interim Board President Blumer summarized the request by emphasizing how data-driven every decision in the Budget Workgroup's process was, and accompanied by robust, thorough discussion.

It was moved by Board Member Rosen, seconded by Board Member Nixon, to approve the submission of the 2027-29 WTCS budget request to the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Motion carried unanimously.

Board member Rosen left the meeting at noon.

Board member Nixon left the meeting at 12:03 pm.

ITEM L: State Workforce Advancement Training (WAT), Apprentice-Related Instruction, Leadership and Federal Perkins Grant Guidelines

WTCS Grants Manager Tou Ya Khang presented an overview of the guidelines for FY2026-27 for State WAT, Apprentice-Related Instruction, Leadership and Federal Perkins Grant Guidelines recommendations.

A video highlighting Apprenticeship was queued-up but in the interest of time was not shared with the Board. That video is available here: Apprenticeship video highlighting Western Technical College

It was moved by Board Member Underly, seconded by Board Member Guthrie, to adopt the funding categories for the State of Wisconsin WAT, Apprentice-Related Instruction, Leadership and Perkins V Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century grant programs for fiscal year 2026-27. Motion carried unanimously.

Board member Underly left the meeting at 12:07 pm.

ITEM M: Board Policy Manual Updates – Finance & Facilities

WTCS Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo presented an overview of the System Board's Policy Manual updates on Finance and Facilities Development, outlining recommended changes by System Office staff, where applicable.

It was moved by Board member Sperberg, seconded by Huntley-Cooper, to adopt the staff-recommended revisions to, and rescissions of, policies within the Finance and Facilities sections of the WTCS Board Policy Manual. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEM N: Legislative Update

WTCS Executive Vice President Paul Hammer and Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo provided an overview of state legislative items affecting the System.

WTCS Policy Advisor Megan Stritchko shared federal updates affecting the System.

ITEM O: Announcements/Adjourn

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be November 10-11, 2026 at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton.

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Colla