

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD  
NOVEMBER 4-5, 2025  
SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Members Present: Lindsay Blumer, Quincey Daniels, Jr., Eli Guthrie, Frances Huntley-Cooper, Dan Klecker, Timothy Nixon, Sara Rogers, Michael Rosen, Lee Sensenbrenner for Amy Pechacek, Leslie Svacina, Sharon Wendt for Jill Underly.

Members Absent: Douglas Holton, Sr., Dan Sperberg.

System Office Staff Present: Sarah Arneson, Hilary Barker, Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Stephanie Glynn, Paul Hammer, Christina Lorge, Ward Lyon, Colleen McCabe, Layla Merrifield, Carolann Nelson, Jeremy Nichols, Katy Pettersen, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Latisha Spence-Brookens, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Julie Tynik, Ann Westrich, Danika Woods.

District/Others Present: Sunem Beaton-Garcia, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Morgan Phillips, Gateway Technical College; Kendal Garrison, Jordan Keto, Milan Vanderka, Lactalis American Group; Paul Carlsen, Lakeshore Technical College; Jennifer Berne, Kristin Rolling, Madison Area Technical College; Shelly Mondeik, Mid-State Technical College; Bonnie Baerwald, Moraine Park Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; Heath Ahnen, Chuck Bolstad, Kent Enright, Chantel Hampton, Jeanne Jordie, Jake Mootz, Lori Needham, Lisa Schaefer, Maya Schroeder, Amy Seebot-Wilson, Stacia Stephenson, Holly Straka, John Troxel, Dan Wackershauser, Krista Weber, Caleb White, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College; Rich Barnhouse, Waukesha County Technical College; Roger Stanford, Western Technical College; Bryan Albrecht, John Wyatt, Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association.

**Board President Rogers called the meeting to order at 4:29 pm. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.**

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) Interim President Caleb White welcomed the Board.

Board President Rogers introduced and welcomed new Board Members:

- Eli Guthrie, new student member studying business management at Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) and 2025 WTCS Student Ambassador from CVTC.
- Frances Huntley-Cooper, former mayor of Fitchburg, administrator at DWD's division of Worker's Compensation and 15-year veteran as a trustee at Madison College.
- Dr. Michael Rosen, former economics instructor and faculty union president at Milwaukee Area Technical College and former member of the WTCS Board from 2004-2010.

**ITEM A: Approval of September 9-10, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

**It was moved by Board Member Nixon, seconded by Board Member Klecker, that the September 9-10, 2025 meeting minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

## ITEM B: Report of the Board President

The September and October reports from the Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents were distributed to Board Members on October 31, 2025. Board Member Nixon shared that the Board of Regents Annual Retreat will be held November 6-7, 2025 in Green Lake.

Board President Rogers visited Kenosha to engage in Workforce Development efforts and observe significant developments in Southeast Wisconsin – a key region for the state. She highlighted the substantial number of high-demand, high-paying jobs being pursued and the opportunity for strong collaboration among partners. During the visit, she met with Interim President Morgan Phillips of Gateway Technical College and noted the impressive partnerships between Gateway, UW-Parkside, Carthage College and the Kenosha Area Business Alliance.

Board President Rogers emphasized the need to strengthen transfer pathways between the System and other higher education institutions. While some colleges have established agreements, broader and more consistent partnerships are needed to support student success. Clear, program-to-program transfer agreements – such as seamless transitions from associate to bachelor's degrees – were highlighted as ideal. Additionally, flexible options for students still exploring their academic goals, including universally accepted general education credits, were encouraged. Rogers expressed confidence in System staff's ongoing efforts and stressed the importance of making this a strategic priority.

## ITEM C: Report of the System President

System President Merrifield welcomed the new Board members and shared System updates:

- The Board received an article highlighting fast-growing entry-level careers that are at low risk of being replaced by AI due to the need for human judgement – nearly all of which are offered through at least one WTCS college. On November 3, System President Merrifield was interviewed by the *Daily Cardinal* regarding how WTCS colleges are integrating AI into education. While AI is a valuable tool, the emphasis remains that real work requires real skills and human judgement.
- On September 18, Moraine Park Technical College held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Advanced Manufacturing Center at the West Bend Campus, a project made possible through their successful referendum. On September 23, System President Merrifield toured the facility with Senator Baldwin and employer partners.
- System President Merrifield attended the investiture of Dr. Anthony Cruz at Milwaukee Area Technical College - the first in the college's history since its founding in 1912. President Cruz emphasizes a students-first philosophy, and his strategic vision for the college aligns perfectly with the System's mission. He is a strong advocate for technical education, and WTCS is fortunate to have his leadership at MATC.
- System President Merrifield attended WRTP | Big Step's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on September 18. The organization, founded in 1975 and rooted in efforts initiated in 1967 by Vince Toran – the first Black carpenter apprentice in Wisconsin – marked this milestone. Board Member Blumer expressed appreciation to System President Merrifield and Board Member Pechacek for their attendance and remarks at the event.
- The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) released its [2023-2025 Biennial Report](#) highlighting the progress made in strengthening Wisconsin's workforce and economy.

Board Member Sensenbrenner noted that the report covers efforts from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025, reflecting collaborative work. He emphasized the Workforce Innovation Grant which funded workforce housing at Northwood as a point of pride and referenced 2024 as the “Year of the Worker,” marked by numerous promising developments. Sensenbrenner also mentioned the impact of the federal government shutdown on funding.

- Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) hosted a community celebration for its Aspen Prize achievement, attended by System President Merrifield. Recently, the Top 200 colleges invited to apply for the 2026 Aspen Prize were announced, with nine WTCS colleges included:
  - Chippewa Valley Technical College
  - Madison Area Technical College
  - Mid-State Technical College
  - Moraine Park Technical College
  - Nicolet Area Technical College
  - Northcentral Technical College
  - Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
  - Northwood Technical College
  - Waukesha County Technical College
- System President Merrifield spoke at Southwest Tech’s Hospital-to-Hospital event on October 17, highlighting:
  - Healthcare programs offered across WTCS colleges;
  - Partnerships with rural dentists to expand oral healthcare through targeted dental program funding;
  - The EMS bill providing funding to address the shortage of skilled emergency medical professions statewide;
  - WTCS’s recent application for a Department of Health Services grant to expand rural healthcare training through mobile labs and other resources.
- Wisconsin Act 35 was signed into law, requiring WTCS to provide grants to colleges offering EMS courses that prepare students for initial certification/licensure as Emergency Medical Responders or Emergency Medical Services practitioners. A request has been submitted to the Joint Finance Committee for the release of funds.
- On September 30, WTCS hosted a legislative summit for college presidents and key leaders from the colleges. The agenda included learning around the state budget process, media relations, legislative relationships, a simulated Capitol visit, federal legislation on Workforce Pell and a presidents panel. Collaboration, especially when it comes to legislative advocacy and System-wide messaging, is extremely important.
- System President Merrifield met with advisors from Michael Best & Friedrich’s policy team on October 8 to provide an overview of WTCS. She emphasized the importance of employer partnerships and the need for policymakers to understand the System’s impact on families and communities statewide. Merrifield requested support for key policy initiatives and highlighted the role of program advisory committees in guiding System programs.
- WTCS held an in-person all-staff meeting on October 30 to review results from the latest employee engagement survey. Despite budget challenges and evolving federal regulations, staff expressed strong commitment to the WTCS mission. Key highlights include:
  - 98% strongly agree or agree they are assigned realistic goals and expectations in their position (up from 75% in 2020).

- 96% strongly agree or agree they feel respected by their supervisor (up from 75% in 2020).
  - 100% strongly agree or agree they feel respected by co-workers (up from 78% in 2020).
  - 98% strongly agree or agree that overall, WTCS is a good place to work (up from 93% in 2020).
  - 100% understand how their job provides value to WTCS stakeholders.
- System President Merrifield attended the District Boards Association's fall meeting, where Ron Wanek, founder and chairman of Ashley Furniture Industries, was presented the prestigious Technical Education Champion (TECh) Award. This award honors community and industry leaders who demonstrate outstanding partnerships with local technical colleges to advance technical education and economic development. The Wanek family has been a strong supporter of Western Technical College and a dedicated advocate for technical education.
- Southwest Wisconsin Technical College is one of only three colleges in the state with a clay target shooting team. Team member Maya Schroeder was recognized. The team recently completed its final meet of the season, earning 4<sup>th</sup> place at the national competition. WTCS Multimedia Specialist Jeremy Nichols visited the team earlier this season to produce a [feature video](#).

#### ITEM D: Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

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

Diane Handrick resigned effective October 10. An Interim Executive Director has been appointed while a nationwide search for a permanent replacement is underway. Key goals and initiatives include:

- Engaging all 144 members.
- Hosting two in-person meetings hosted by colleges and two virtual meetings annually.
- Launching monthly virtual meetings called Trustee Tuesdays, focused on single topics impacting multiple colleges; sessions will be recorded and archived.
- Creating a resource library accessible to all trustees.
- Reviving the legislative committee and strengthening collaboration with the WTCS Board, Presidents' Association, Wisconsin Student Government and other partners to speak with one voice.
- Exploring new collaborative opportunities in areas such as cybersecurity and AI.

Interim Executive Director Albrecht expressed appreciation to President Wyatt for his leadership of the Association and thanked the WTCS Board for their continued advocacy and support. Albrecht also recognized Presidents' Association colleagues for their efforts in advancing strategic goals and stated pride in representing the District Boards Association.

#### ITEM E: WTCS Presidents' Association

WTCS Presidents' Association Chair and Northcentral Technical College President Dr. Jeannie Worden, provided an update on recent activities.

The Presidents' Association outlined short- and long-term goals, aligned with the WTCS Strategic Plan, focusing on student success, advocacy, innovation (including AI), and responsiveness to employer and

student needs. Presidents continue regular virtual meetings with the System Office to coordinate funding and policy advocacy.

Key initiatives include:

- Transition of the Wisconsin Leadership Development Institute (WLDI) program to new coordination under Rose Sloan, with full presidential support.
- Renewal of a five-year partnership agreement with Department of Corrections (DOC), led by Moraine Park Technical College.
- Ongoing work to transition the Marketing Consortium to the WTCS Marketing Council, with governance and communication plans forthcoming.
- Development of a System-wide strategy for Workforce Pell access for short-term training and creating an aligned and systematic, effective approach to access the funds.
- Expansion of Open Educational Resources (OER) to reduce student costs while maintaining quality.

The association also plans to encourage attendance at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) National Legislative Conference in February and welcomes Bryan Albrecht as Interim DBA Executive Director.

#### ITEM F: TCS 10 Special Circumstances Policy

System President Merrifield noted that TCS 10 is an administrative rule that has been in place for 31 years. She stated that when programs exceed capacity, colleges are required to maintain a waiting list and serve students accordingly. Merrifield emphasized the need for System-level guidance to ensure consistency in implementing this policy.

WTCS Provost and Vice President Dr. Colleen McCabe, Associate Vice President for Student Success Dr. Christina Lorge and Associate Vice President for Instruction Chrystal Seeley-Schreck provided a review of relevant provisions from TCS 10.07 and outlined the special circumstance admission policies submitted by district boards for state Board consideration. In accordance with TCS 10.07(5m), district boards may adopt policies to reserve a reasonable number of program spaces for students facing special circumstances. These may include hardships, participation in school-to-work programs, special needs and efforts to promote enrollment diversity. All such policies require review and approval by the WTCS Board.

**It was moved by Board Member Nixon, seconded by Board Member Daniels, to accept an amended motion that going forward, the WTCS Board delegates approval and management of the Special Circumstances Policy to System administration.**

#### ITEM G: Futuremaker Partner Award

The Board recognized [Lactalis American Group](#) for their decades-long collaboration with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College. Lactalis consistently hires Southwest Tech graduates and invests in workforce development through contract training. Their commitment to the college and its students is unwavering and their impact is felt across campus and the broader community.

**It was moved by Board Member Wendt, seconded by Board Member Svacina, to recess the meeting until Wednesday, November 5, 2025. The Board adjourned at 6:03 pm. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Wednesday, November 5, 2025**

Members Present: Lindsay Blumer, Quincey Daniels, Jr., Eli Guthrie, Frances Huntley-Cooper, Dan Klecker, Timothy Nixon, Sara Rogers, Michael Rosen, Lee Sensenbrenner for Amy Pechacek, Leslie Svacina, Sharon Wendt for Jill Underly.

Members Absent: Douglas Holton, Sr., Dan Sperberg.

System Office Staff Present: Sarah Arneson, Hilary Barker, Chevon Bowen, Victoria Chung, Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Stephanie Glynn, Paul Hammer, Mandy Johnson, Tou Ya Khang, Colleen Larsen, Betsy Leonard, Christina Lorge, Ward Lyon, Joel Mathis, Colleen McCabe, Layla Merrifield, Carolann Nelson, Jeremy Nichols, Denise Perkins, Katy Pettersen, Anna Richter, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Brent Simmons, Lenard Simpson, Latisha Spence-Brookens, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Julie Tyznik, Ann Westrich.

District/Others Present: Sunem Beaton-Garcia, Lynette Livingston, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Morgan Phillips, Gateway Technical College; Paul Carlsen, Lakeshore Technical College; Jennifer Berne, Fred Brechlin, Madison Area Technical College; Shelly Mondeik, Mid-State Technical College; Anthony Cruz, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Bonnie Baerwald, Moraine Park Technical College; Kate Ferrel, Nicolet Area Technical College; Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; John Will, Northwood Technical College; Heath Ahnen, David Blume, Chuck Bolstad, Christena Bowers, Stephanie Brown, Holly Clendenen, Brianna Fortney, Dave Friesen, Katie Glass, Cynde Larsen, Lori Needham, CoraBeth Schmitz, John Troxel, Dan Wackershauser, Pauline Wetter, Caleb White, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College; Rich Barnhouse, Waukesha County Technical College; Roger Stanford, Western Technical College; Bryan Albrecht, John Wyatt, Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association.

**Board President Rogers called the meeting to order at 9:32 am. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.**

Board President Rogers expressed appreciation to SWTC Interim President Caleb White for graciously hosting an enjoyable evening.

#### **ITEM H: Teaching & Learning – Embedding Success – Southwest Tech’s Journey to Transformational Tutoring**

WTCS Director of Student Success Stephanie Glynn shared information on how the System implements holistic student support. Southwest Tech Chief Student Services Officer Holly Clendenen and Disabilities/Support Services Manager Christena Bowers shared how clearly defined roles for students, tutors and faculty, and an emphasis on trust and relationship-building, lead to students experiencing meaningful academic gains across Nursing, General Education and Technical programs. This intentional approach reflects Southwest Tech’s commitment to fostering deeper learning and improving outcomes through personalized, embedded support.

#### **ITEM I: Consent Agenda**

**It was moved by Board Member Rosen, seconded by Board Member Huntley-Cooper, that the Board approves the program and facilities development requests and interim district board appointment, with the exception of the Chippewa Valley Technical College facility development requests as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

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

#### ITEM J: 2025-28 WTCS Facilities Plan

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon presented the 2025-28 WTCS Facilities Plan, summarizing capital maintenance budgets and planned projects.

**It was moved by Board Member Nixon, seconded by Board Member Huntley-Cooper, that the Board accepts the 2025-28 WTCS Facilities Plan with the exception of the Chippewa Valley Technical College's plan. Individual projects included in the Plan are subject to the Board's review and approval, pursuant to s. 38.04(10) Stats. Motion carried unanimously.**

**It was moved by Board Member Klecker, seconded by Board Member Svacina, that the Board accepts the 2025-28 WTCS Facilities Plan for Chippewa Valley Technical College. Individual projects included in the Plan are subject to the Board's review and approval, pursuant to s. 38.04(10) Stats. Board Member Guthrie abstained. Motion carried 10-1.**

#### ITEM K: Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) Update

Board Member and Secretary of the Higher Educational Aids Board Dr. Quincey Daniels provided an overview of HEAB's funding sources. HEAB is the state agency responsible for managing and overseeing Wisconsin's student financial aid system for residents attending higher education institutions. The agency administers grant, scholarship and loan programs, as well as tuition reciprocity agreements and tuition capitation contracts.

The Board reconvened at 11:08 after a short break.

#### ITEM L: 2024 Fact Book

WTCS Director of Strategic Advancement Katy Pettersen provided an update on the latest information from the [2024-25 Student Data Fact Book](#). WTCS compiles student data from the colleges and reports information annually on student demographics, headcount, full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment, program and apprenticeship outcomes information.

#### ITEM M: Legislative Update

WTCS Executive Vice President Paul Hammer, joined by WTCS 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 N: Announcements/Adjourn

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held January 20, 2026, at the Hill Farms State Office Building in Madison.

**It was moved by Board Member Huntley-Cooper, seconded by Board Member Wendt, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Drake