

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Board**  
November 11, 2020  
Teleconference

Members Present: Eve Hall, Douglas Holton, Sr., Becky Levzow, Terry McGowan, Rodney Pasch, Cooper Richason, John Schwantes, Carolyn Stanford Taylor, Kelly Tourdot, S. Mark Tyler, Stephen Willett, Danielle Williams, Mary Williams.

System Office Staff Present: Dan Arneson, Judy Barbian, Terese Craig, Monique Currie, Julie Drake, Morna Foy, Stephanie Glynn, Nickelle Haffey, Mandy Johnson, Mark Johnson, Jim Mackey, Colleen McCabe, Katy Pettersen, Brenda Powles, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Lenard Simpson, Conor Smyth, Brandon Trujillo, Ann Westrich, Angela White, Jim Zylstra.

District/Others Present: Betty Bruski Mallak, Laverne Hays, Angie Lawrence, Layla Merrifield, District Boards Association; Justin Skubal, Queenie Weesen, Wisconsin Student Government; Tracy Pierner, Blackhawk Technical College; Bruce Barker, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Susan May, Fox Valley Technical College; Brian Albrecht, Gateway Technical College; Paul Carlsen, Lakeshore Technical College; Jack Daniels, III, Madison Area Technical College; Shelly Mondeik, Mid-State Technical College; Bonnie Baerwald, Moraine Park Technical College; Darren Ackley, Brandy Breuckman, Brady Cooper, Jon DeGroot, Robert Elliott, Katie Felch, Tom Felch (J & D Tube Benders), Vicki Jeppesen, Nikki Kopp, Shannon Livingston, Roxanne Lutgen, Angela Servi, Chet Strebe, Emily Stuckenbruck, Cher Vink, Lori Weyers, Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Jeff Rafn, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; Kaylen Betzig, Waukesha County Technical College; Roger Stanford, Western Technical College; Sharon Wendt, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; John Will, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.

**Board President Levzow called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.**

Board President Levzow introduced and recognized Queenie Weesen, Vice President of Wisconsin Student Government, who joined the meeting.

Board President Levzow introduced Danielle Williams of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, who will serve as the agency's representative for the WTCS Board until a new Secretary is named.

Board President Levzow thanked Northcentral Technical College (NTC) President Dr. Lori Weyers and her team for helping the Board feature NTC during the meeting. President Weyers greeted the Board and thanked military veterans for their service.

**ITEM A: Approval of the September 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

**It was moved by Board Member Stanford Taylor, seconded by Board Member Holton, that the September 16, 2020 meeting minutes be approved. Motion carried unanimously.**

**ITEM B: Report of the Board President**

Dr. Hall's Board of Regents report was included in the Board folders for review.

Board Chair Lezow noted that the meeting was taking place on Veterans Day and thanked active-duty personnel and military veterans for their service.

In October, the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment (CWI), which is chaired by Board Member Tyler, provided the Governor its budget recommendations on key workforce investments that will help Wisconsin employers find talent, while providing resources and training for workers so that they can access in-demand careers.

Board Member Tyler noted that Governor Evers will be attending the CWI November meeting to talk about engagement in higher ed and all issues impacting the workforce.

Board President Lezow congratulated the team who coordinated the WTCS Ambassador program, noting that hearing the stories of the Ambassadors is amazing. She specifically highlighted three Ambassadors who had made an impression on her during the virtual recognition event: Abdul Cole, Western Technical College, is a first generation college student from West Africa in the Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technician program; Megan Bahr, Gateway Technical College, has struggled with a disability but enrolled in Professional Communications and felt part of 'a family;' and Marina Candela, Nicolet Area Technical College, enrolled in the Associate of Arts program, discussing students' struggles with the high cost of education and how technical colleges make it affordable.

Board President Lezow thanked System President Foy for her keeping Board members updated between meetings on System Office activities.

Board President Lezow works in healthcare and recently encountered four Madison College students at the hospital where she works who were excited to be back in the clinical setting, sharing "I want to be here, and I want to keep learning".

Board Member Schwantes resigned his position effective as of December 2020, having served as a WTCS Board Member since December 2011. Board President Lezow noted that during his time as a Board Member, Schwantes served in leadership, including as Board President, and was an enthusiastic, consistent presence at meetings. She also noted that what has become the weekly WTCS-in-Brief e-newsletter resulted from his suggestion. Board Chair Lezow read a certificate of commendation and thanked Board Member Schwantes for his service.

## ITEM C: Report of the System President

System President Foy thanked veterans for their service and thanked Board Member Schwantes for his years of service on the Board.

President Foy noted that since the Board's September meeting, advancement of the System's commitment to progress in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion has included:

- System and college staff continuing to pursue professional development opportunities:
  - The Working as One webinar series, focused on equity and inclusion, averaged around 200 participants for each of four sessions in the series.
  - Attendance has also been strong for the first two in a three-part Equity in the Classroom webinar series, which are hosted by WTCS and sponsored by *60 Forward*.

- Colleges have been reviewing curriculum for Criminal Justice programs. Provost McCabe is facilitating the discussion along with Laurice Lincoln, Director of Bureau of Equity and Inclusion of the Wisconsin Department of Administration.
- In September, the U. S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education recognized Western Technical College and Literacy Services of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, a WTCS-supported program, for innovation in helping adult learners develop knowledge and skills, earn high school credentials and transition to further education and employment.
- WTCS Associate Vice President of Student Success Terese Craig presented during October’s National Career Pathways Network Conference as part of an Adult Ed State Director panel: *Pursuing Pathways with a Purpose ... in Spite of a Pandemic*. Craig and her fellow panelists focused on college and System efforts to address the effects of COVID-19 on students, and how pathways prepared colleges and students to deal with pandemic disruptions.
- Based in part on her leadership in developing Wisconsin’s Ability to Benefit plan, Craig was also asked to present during a national Adult Education event November 17 with U.S. Senator Patty Murray of Washington and the Department of Ed’s Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical and Adult Education.
- Open Educational Resources (OER) continues to further diversity, equity and inclusion efforts with textbooks and learning resources that better reflect learners’ lives and communities.

System President Foy congratulated Gateway Technical College as one of a small number of colleges invited to present during a recent virtual showcase of colleges’ pandemic response, hosted by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education.

Board Member Hall joined the meeting.

President Foy noted that a link to the 2020 WTCS Ambassador Recognition Event on the System’s YouTube channel was included in the November 10 WTCS-in-Brief. The event followed an adapted, virtual leadership development experience for the Ambassadors earlier that day. The 2021 Ambassador Recognition event will also be virtual.

The week of November 9 is National Apprenticeship Week. The earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship model is popular among both workers and employers. NTC is set to launch the first cohort of Medical Assistant apprentices in January 2021. This is the first healthcare apprenticeship in Wisconsin with related instruction through a technical college and the first Wisconsin apprenticeship program that awards a WTCS Technical Diploma as part of the apprenticeship program.

Board Members McGowan and Tourdot shared successes of their apprenticeship programs and how they are navigating through the pandemic to keep apprenticeships safe and healthy.

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

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association (DBA) Executive Director Layla Merrifield and Association Vice President and Mid-State Technical College Trustee Betty Bruski Mallak updated the Board on recent activities.

Nicolet Area Technical College hosted DBA’s second virtual meeting on October 23, which included the Marketing Consortium and how to educate parents and other influencers about technical colleges.

On Thursday, November 5 System President Foy and Executive Director Merrifield provided a virtual post-election legislative update for members along with detailed technical college budget talking points.

The next quarterly meeting will be held virtually January 15, 2021 to discuss the political landscape for 2021.

#### ITEM E: WTCS Presidents' Association

Mid-State Technical College President Shelly Mondeik recognized and thanked veterans and provided the Board with a brief update on recent activities of the Association.

The Association continues to meet virtually on a monthly basis. Meeting have been well attended with topics including:

- COVID-19 fatigue caused by the uncertainty pandemic, as well as associated expenses for the colleges.
- Staff morale and self-care, including virtual wellness walks, professional development, virtual potlucks and all-campus meetings.
- Legislative updates.

President Mondeik also provided an update on System-wide diversity, equity and inclusion efforts – including a new faculty and staff mentoring program – and thanked the Board for their support of the colleges.

#### ITEM F: Northcentral Technical College Presentation

Dr. Weyers greeted the Board on behalf of NTC.

Dr. Weyers noted that while the pandemic has increased online learning, it is not new to the college, which launched its “Virtual College” in 2012 and has been nationally recognized for its efforts. To accomplish this, NTC is using a variety of technology at their campuses and Dr. Weyers shared a video with the Board featuring campus updates and changes since the Board last visited.

Dr. Weyers noted that NTC leaders have shared a number of lessons learned during the pandemic:

- college staff quickly demonstrated a flexibility that may otherwise have remained obscured;
- staff also demonstrated a “can do” attitude in shifting more than 30,000 learning elements and 1,000 faculty and staff members to a virtual environment in three days.
- Communication – frequent and consistent – has responded to the campus community’s interest in “hearing from the top.”
- The college created a new position for instructional design with a virtual faculty innovation center.
- It has been important to show kindness and grace and treat others with support, both students and staff.
- Technology is a significant equity issue for NTC, with broadband lacking in Northern Wisconsin. It is easier for faculty to connect with individuals in other states or countries than it is to connect with those in Northern Wisconsin. It was relatively easy to get laptops to 300 students, but access is a significant issue. Some cannot afford internet and some just cannot access it. NTC parking lots are accessible with

high-speed internet and were routinely filled with students and staff working in their cars. As the weather warmed, NTC added picnic tables and made regional hubs at NTC campuses to increase access, not only for students but for community members as well.

- Different personnel are needed given significant changes in learning delivery, such as additional help desk staff with more people working and learning virtually and remotely, as well as expanding videography and lab resources. To discuss these changes, Dr. Weyers was joined by:
  - Dr. Darren Ackley, Vice President for Learning;
  - Brandy Breuckman, who oversees flexible learning, personalization of learning and NTC Flexible Initiatives;
  - Emily Stuckenbruck, who discussed Flexibility in Action and Academic Excellence; and
  - Jon DeGroot, who oversees IT and Learning.

Board President Levzow presented the WTCS Board's *Futuremaker Partner* award to J & D Tube Benders, with owner and NTC Board Member Tom Felch on hand to receive the award. He thanked the Board and NTC for its long-standing and committed partnership.

The Board took a break and reconvened at 10:26

## ITEM G: Consent Agenda

**It was moved by Board Member Tyler, seconded by Board Member Hall, that the Board approve the program and facilities development requests as presented, with the exception of Western Technical College's program discontinuance and Interim District Board Appointment. Motion carried unanimously.**

**It was moved by Board Member Mary Williams, seconded by Board Member Schwantes, that the Board approve the program discontinuance and Interim Board Appointment for Western Technical College. Motion carried 12-0; Board member Richason abstained.**

Board Member Tyler highlighted three programs: Career and Technical Education Instruction at Fox Valley Technical College with a pathway to UW-Oshkosh, and the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science degrees at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College in partnership with UW-Superior. He thanked Presidents May and Will for their work on pathways.

Board Member Tyler remarked how well the technical colleges add, change and discontinue programs based on what is important in the communities they serve, including to employers. This is a continuous process and a key to the System's strength.

Board Member Holton requested that additional information on Program discontinuance be provided, such as how many years the programs have been offered.

## ITEM H: 2020-23 WTCS Facilities Plan

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon provided an overview of the 2020-23 WTCS Facilities Plan, including a three-year summary of the technical colleges' capital maintenance budgets and planned facility development projects.

Since 1985, voters have approved \$672,900,000 in referenda. System-wide, technical college facilities total 14 million square feet with a combined value of \$2.7 billion.

**It was moved by Board Member Tyler, seconded by Board Member Stanford Taylor, that the Board accept the 2020-23 WTCS Facilities 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.**

#### **ITEM I: Blackhawk Technical College – Concept Review**

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon introduced the project and Blackhawk Technical College President Tracy Pierner provided an overview of the proposed construction of a Public Safety & Transportation Center at the main campus in Janesville.

The Center will provide essential training for safer communities, building a multi-purpose training and workforce development hub directly adjacent to Central Campus. Additionally, a 25-foot-deep retention pond will be used for underwater rescue training and different rooftops will be used for fire training. Programming challenges were identified in 2016 and land was purchased, and a plan developed in 2019. The college's \$32 million referendum was approved by voters in November 2020. The project will be fully funded by the referendum.

**It was moved by Board Member Mary Williams, seconded by Board Member Pasch, that the Board finds the concept for Blackhawk Technical College's proposed construction of a Public Safety & Transportation Training Center at the main campus in Janesville as reasonable. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **ITEM J: Teaching and Learning – Virtual College**

WTCS Education Director for Student Support Stephanie Glynn and WTCS Education Director for Manufacturing Jim Mackey provided an overview of System-wide virtual learning efforts and highlighted recent support the System office has provided to the colleges.

An NTC panel consisting of Dr. Darren Ackley, Vice President for Learning; Dr. Brandy Breuckman, Dean, School of Business, Community Services + Virtual College; Dr. Emily Stuckenbruck, Executive Dean of Academic Excellence; Jon DeGroot, Dean of Academic Technology; Dr. Jeannie Worden, Executive Vice President and Dr. Shannon Livingston, Dean of Student Success shared how they support student success and provided the Board with a hands-on virtual learning experience, built in-house by NTC's academic team.

While the volume of online learning has increased this year with COVID-19, all of Wisconsin's technical colleges had already been offering online learning.

NTC is a part of the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP).

- NTC's course completion rate for online courses is higher than the national average.
- A significantly higher number of NTC students earn As or Bs when compared nationally.
- NTC's fall to spring retention of Virtual College students, went from 70% in 2018-2019 to 74% in 2019-2020.
- At-risk students identified by predictive analytics increased their course completion rate from 64% to 70%.

Dr. Worden shared that NTC is the recipient of a nearly \$2.2 million U. S. Department of Education Strengthening Institutions grant to expand initiatives that support enrollment, retention and graduation of NTC low-income students through predictive analytics, advising and career services over the next five years.

## ITEM K: Strategic Directions Development – 2021-2025

WTCS Director of Strategic Advancement Conor Smyth summarized results for the 2020 Future Priorities survey and provided an overview of the final draft of the System's Strategic Directions for the period 2021 to 2025.

Board President Lezow recognized Board Members Frostman, Hall, Pasch, Schwantes, Stanford Taylor, Tourdot and Tyler who participated in the Strategic Directions development work group. Additionally, Mr. Smyth thanked the WTCS staff workgroup members, which included staff from each division of the office to include perspectives.

The Directions include:

- **Innovate** to increase college access, inclusion and success for all students
- **Collaborate** to efficiently, effectively advance student and employer goals
- **Inspire** learners of all ages to engage in technical education
- **Transform** the delivery of postsecondary education and training

Additionally, Values were added for the 2021-2025 plan and include: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Innovation, Collaboration, Inspiration and Transformation.

Board Members Tyler, Pasch, Hall, Schwantes and Stanford Taylor shared words of support and congratulations to Mr. Smyth and the team for their work on the 2021-2025 development of the Strategic Directions.

**It was moved by Board Member Schwantes, seconded by Board Member Stanford Taylor, to approve the System's 2021-2025 Strategic Directions, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

## ITEM L: Public Records Training

Due to time constraints, the Public Records Training has been tabled to the January 2021 Board meeting.

## ITEM M: Legislative Update

District Boards Association Executive Director Layla Merrifield provided an update to the Board on how the recent election may affect WTCS.

Ms. Merrifield shared that nine of 33 Senate seats will change, including two Democratic seats that flipped to Republican: Eric Wimberger (R) for Dave Hansen (D-ret.) in Senate District-30, and Rob Stafsholt (R) for Patty Schachtner (D-inc) in Senate District-10. The Republican-Democrat split will be 21-12.

Two seats flipped in the Assembly: Sarah Rodriguez (D) defeated Rob Hutton (R-inc.) in Assembly District-13 and Deb Andraca (D) defeated Jim Ott (R-inc.) in Assembly District-23. The Republican-Democrat split will be 61-38.

## ITEM N: Announcements/Adjourn

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will convene in a virtual format on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. hosted by the System office.

Board Members were asked to watch for communication from Mr. Zylstra or Ms. Drake regarding a special meeting in December to take action on redistricting requests.

System President Foy extended her appreciation to Board Members for the perspectives they have shared over the past many months in renewing the System's Strategic Directions. The course these Directions set for the System is exciting.

Board President Levzow echoed President Foy's sentiments and thanked the Board members and staff for their time and vision in moving ahead. She also thanked Dr. Weyers and NTC for their presentation. Additionally, she asked that everyone be safe and to keep all front-line workers in their thoughts.

**It was moved by Board Member Mary Williams, seconded by Board Member Pasch, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Drake  
Recording Secretary