

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Technical College System Board

2021-23 BIENNIAL REPORT

October 2023



Wisconsin Technical College System Board

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Madison, Wisconsin 53705
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[Wisconsin Technical College System](#)

Morna K. Foy, President

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Mission and Purpose

Chapter 38, *Wis. Stats.*, provides that the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Board is responsible for the initiation, development, maintenance and supervision of programs with specific occupational orientation below the baccalaureate level. These include associate degrees, training of apprentices and adult education below the postsecondary level. In order to foster economic development and expansion of employment opportunities, the principal purposes of the System are to provide occupational education and training and retraining programs necessary for full participation in the workforce and to provide customized training and technical assistance to business and industry. Additional purposes of the System are to cooperate and contract with secondary schools, provide collegiate transfer programs, offer basic skills education, offer community service programs and self-enrichment activities, and address barriers created by stereotyping and discrimination.

WTCS Board

As the WTCS governing body, the WTCS Board is structured to reflect its mission and diverse responsibilities. The Board consists of 13 members, including three ex officio and ten members appointed by the Governor. As established in Chapter 38, *Wis. Stats.*, the three ex-officio members are the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary (or designee), the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) Board of Regents President (or designee) and the State Superintendent of Department of Public Instruction (DPI) (or designee).

Of the ten appointed board members, one represents employers, one represents employees, one represents farmers, one represents students and six represent the public as at-large members. Appointed board members serve staggered, six-year terms, with the exception of the student representative, who serves a two-year term. The WTCS Board is empowered to determine the organization, plans, scope and development of postsecondary technical and adult education; appoint a System President; approve the qualifications of district educational personnel and courses of study; establish System-wide policies and approve district proposals for facilities development and land acquisition. The Board establishes procedures and criteria for determining course credit, state aid, uniform accounting for financial programs and other data required of the colleges.

During the 2021-23 biennium, the following individuals served on the WTCS Board:

Member	Representing	Residence
Dr. Rodney Pasch, President, 2021-23	Public	Elroy
S. Mark Tyler, Vice President 2021-23	Public	Woodville
Douglas A. Holton, Sr., Secretary 2021-23	Public	Milwaukee
Megan Bahr	Student	Mount Pleasant
Paul Buhr	Agriculture	Viroqua
Dr. Quincey Daniels, Jr.	Public	Mindoro
Dan Klecker	Public	Deerfield
Alex Lasry	Public	Milwaukee
Becky Levzow	Farmer	Rio
Terrance McGowan	Employees	Pewaukee
Sara J. Rogers	Public	Milwaukee
Daniel Sperberg	Employees	Coloma
Leslie Svacina	Agriculture	Deer Park
Kelly Tourdot	Public	Waunakee
Stephen Willett	Employer	Phillips
Mary Williams	Public	Medford

The following ex-officio members served on the Board during the 2021-23 biennium:

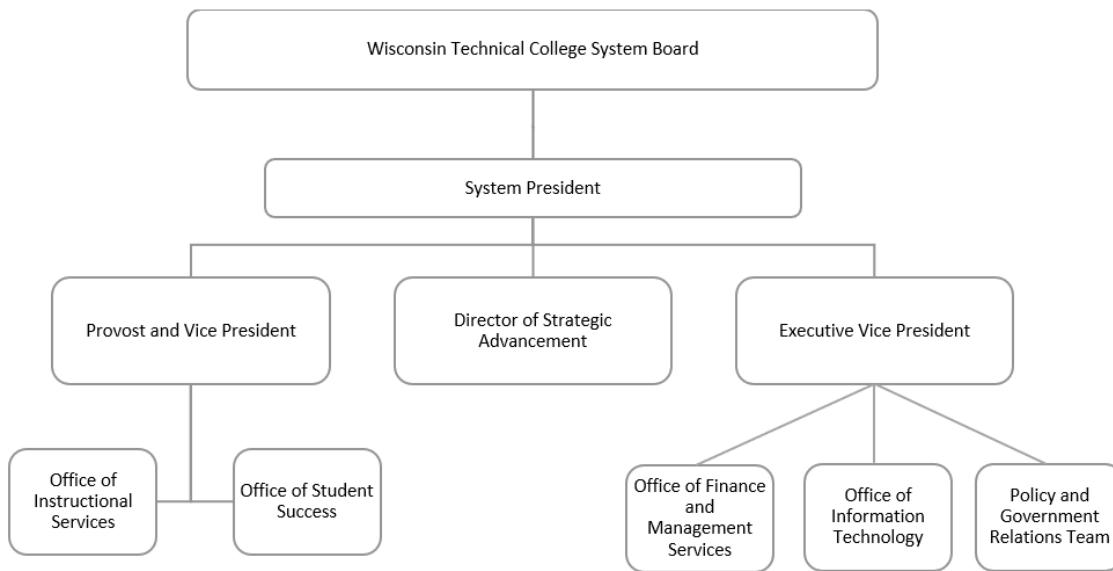
Member	Representing
John W. Miller	University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents Designee
Amy Pechacek	Secretary-Designee, Department of Workforce Development
Dr. Jill Underly	State Superintendent of Department of Public Instruction

System Office

A System President, who serves at the pleasure of the WTCS Board, leads the WTCS Office. The WTCS Office ended the biennium with 55 full-time equivalent (FTE) authorized positions. Major staff responsibilities are as follows:

- The *Offices of Finance and Management Services and Information Technology* have oversight responsibility for operations including accounting, budgeting, procurement, payroll, human resources, facilities and information technology. The offices distribute state aid and provide guidance to the technical colleges in developing financial policies and standards. In addition, the offices assist the Board in determining student fees and tuition rates and in approving district facility development projects. The offices are also responsible for the management of information and oversight of district budgets and enrollments.
- The *Office of Instructional Services* has responsibility for program definition, approval, evaluation and review. It oversees instructional offerings in agriculture, food and natural resources; architecture and construction; arts, audiovisual technology and communications; business, management and administration; manufacturing; science technology, engineering and math (STEM); information technology; apprenticeship; transportation; marketing; law, public safety and security; fire service; health sciences; general education; business administration; finance; hospitality; human services; education; and personnel certification. It also serves as a liaison to secondary schools.
- The *Office of Student Success* is responsible for the coordination of state and federal grant programs, student financial aid, federal projects for people with disabilities or that are disadvantaged, adult and continuing education outreach, adult basic education, English language learning and Workforce Investment Act projects. It also serves as a liaison to business and industry.
- The *Policy and Government Relations Team* provides leadership for System-wide policy analysis and development, public outreach and federal and state government relations. It is responsible for the coordination of System-wide budgeting and planning, research and labor market information.
- The *Director of Strategic Advancement* serves as a member of the agency's leadership team. The Director is the WTCS Public Information Officer and functions as the liaison between WTCS and a wide variety of internal and external partners.

Wisconsin Technical College System Board and Office



WTCS Board Policies

The WTCS Board has the authority to establish System-wide policies. The WTCS Board uses a two-step process to consider policy changes and ensure the opportunity for member input. Draft policy recommendations are first developed by the WTCS Office in consultation with various stakeholders. The System President presents the draft recommendations to the Board for discussion. System Office staff incorporate the comments of the Board into the draft recommendations. At a subsequent Board meeting, the System President presents the final recommendations to the Board for its action. Policies approved by the WTCS Board are published in its [policy manual](#).

WTCS Strategic Directions

The WTCS Board has adopted the following strategic directions and action steps for the five-year period, 2021-2025.

Transform the delivery of postsecondary education and training

- Position the colleges to best meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve, with a particular focus on students and employers, by making clear the purpose and value of a broad range of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.
- Increase awareness that the statutory mission of the Wisconsin Technical College System is exceptionally broad by design, uniquely positioning Wisconsin's technical colleges to meet shifting stakeholder demands in times of rapid change.

Innovate to increase college access, inclusion and success for all students

- Identify, advance, support and continuously improve teaching and learning strategies that meet the needs of each student.
- Emphasize delivery of student support services that make Wisconsin's technical colleges consistently inclusive and student ready.
- Assure colleges' facilities proposals align with goals for meeting student and employer needs.

Inspire learners of all ages to engage in technical education

- Consistently and actively seek to ensure that all students feel safe, welcome and included and have the opportunity to pursue lifelong learning, achieve academic success and prepare for careers.
- Create broad awareness of college offerings and outcomes and elevate the image of Wisconsin's technical colleges as a first-choice postsecondary option supported by data and student success stories.

Collaborate to efficiently, effectively advance student and employer goals

- Maintain affordability for students, balanced with a lasting commitment to rigor and quality.
- Assure that course and program curriculum is industry-aligned, flexible and responsive, meeting the needs of employers and providing value for learners at all stages of life and career.
- Engage policymakers, educators, employers, workforce and economic development partners and community organizations to create a lifelong learning continuum and position Wisconsin for economic growth and stability.
- Actively and strategically coordinate state and federal grant finance and administration with instructional and student support objectives.
- Align Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and services and leverage data to drive improvements in identifying and addressing student achievement gaps.
- Work together with WTCS colleges in the areas of professional development, System finance and advocacy with a consistent focus on student outcomes and maintaining quality workplaces.

WTCS College Districts

Currently with 52 campuses, the 16 WTCS colleges deliver career and technical education to meet the needs, interests and abilities of their students and the demands of the labor market. To assist the colleges in their missions, WTCS Office staff provide the colleges with technical assistance and help to coordinate activities and support services.

Each WTCS college has unique demographic, geographic and economic characteristics. Programs are tailored to meet local needs within the uniform program standards established by the WTCS Board. Each technical college is governed by a district board appointed by local elected officials. Similar to the WTCS Board, district board membership is intended to reflect the diversity of district stakeholders. Excluding the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), membership for each of the remaining 15 district boards comprises nine members who must be residents of their respective districts: two members representing employers, two representing employees, a local K-12 school administrator, a state or local elected official and three at-large members.

MATC's District Board also comprises nine members, seven of which must reside in Milwaukee County. Membership in the MATC District Board is as follows: five representing employers, three representing employers with 15 or more employees and two members representing employers with 100 or more employees. In addition, at least two members must represent employers that are manufacturing businesses. A person representing an employer must have at least two years of experience managing a business entity, non-profit, etc. with at least 15 employees or at least two years of experience managing the finances or hiring of personnel of a business entity or non-profit, etc., with at least 100 employees. Finally, MATC's Board includes a school district administrator, a state or local elected official and two at-large members.

District boards are empowered to levy taxes on property, provide facilities and equipment, contract for instructional services and appoint a college president who serves as chief executive officer for the

district. Additional information and a map for Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges can be viewed on the [WTCS college webpage](#).

Engagement and Partnerships

The WTCS Board and System Office are committed to working with internal and external partners to improve the quality, availability and cost-effectiveness of WTCS education and workforce training programs.

The WTCS Office and individual colleges participate in a variety of collaborative projects involving outside educational and workforce development agencies to:

- improve college transfer opportunities;
- enhance college access and affordability; and
- develop career clusters and pathways.

Partner institutions involved with these projects include the Wisconsin Departments of Workforce Development and Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the University of Wisconsin System, Wisconsin tribal colleges and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Additional information about WTCS is available on the [WTCS website](#).

Review of Performance and Operations

Wisconsin's technical colleges strive to provide graduates with the education and training that develops skills to compete in today's competitive job market. WTCS regularly publishes data on enrollment, costs and graduate outcomes. The data is available on the [WTCS publications and resources page](#).

Operational Costs

In order to provide the instruction, services and activities necessary to carry out their mission and achieve their goals, WTCS colleges rely on a combination of federal, state and local revenues. In 2021-22, the latest year for which complete financial information is available, WTCS colleges enrolled 274,203 individuals at an operational cost of \$1.2 billion.

Actual 2021-22 cost allocation data show that 62.2% of operational costs were for instruction while the next highest amounts were for general institutional (15.5%), student services (12.6%) and physical plant (7.6%). Instructional resources accounted for the remaining 2.2% of operational costs. Data on college costs is published annually, with the most recent year of complete data available in the [cost allocation summary report](#).

Enrollment

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled annually increased 0.6% from 58,255 in FY 2020-21 to 58,595 in FY 2021-22. The number of individual students enrolled increased 10.3% from 248,534 in FY 2021-22 to 274,203 in FY 2021-22.

In 2021-22, enrollments across WTCS colleges included 134,777 males (49.2%), 132,377 females (48.3%) and 7,031 individuals for whom gender was not reported (2.5%). The average student age across all credit types was 31. Data on enrollment is published annually in the [Fact Book](#) with the most recent year of complete data available.

Services for Students with Special Needs

WTCS provides specialized services for:

- students with physical or mental disabilities;
- students who are disadvantaged, including academically or economically disadvantaged individuals; and
- students with limited English proficiency.

In 2021-22, 12,370 students with disabilities received specialized services. These services were supported with funds from General Purpose Revenue (GPR), WTCS districts, the federal Perkins Act and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within DWD. These services enable students with disabilities to enroll and succeed in technical education programs and courses. Services include specialized guidance and counseling, needs assessment and evaluation, support services, remedial instruction, career development, adaptive equipment and career placement.

In 2021-22, WTCS colleges provided services to 73,504 disadvantaged students (unduplicated), of whom 37,907 were academically disadvantaged, 47,531 were economically disadvantaged and 7,945 had limited English proficiency. Services provided to disadvantaged students – including academically or economically disadvantaged individuals and those with limited English proficiency – are supported with funds from WTCS general state aid, local funds, targeted state GPR funds and federal funds provided through Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Services provided include remediation services such as specialized reading and mathematics laboratories, note-taking instruction and staff and peer tutors.

Grant Programs

WTCS provides several grants to individual technical colleges using funds received from GPR, the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

These programs are intended to assist WTCS districts in providing educational and economic development services to individuals and high priority industry sectors. Grants also help promote innovative or successful practices related to priorities identified by the WTCS Board, such as:

- strengthening career and technical education programs through multi-college collaborative efforts to develop measures of technical skill attainment; and
- promoting and supporting high school-to-college transitions for career and technical education students through multi-college collaborative efforts to develop programs of study.

Graduate Outcomes

WTCS colleges regularly survey program graduates to measure employment and wage outcomes. The latest survey results for 2022 graduates were available in May 2023. Of the 23,456 graduates, 14,112 (60.2%) responded to the survey.

Among the respondents:

- 97% were satisfied or very satisfied with their WTCS training;
- 93% of those in the labor force were employed;
- 91% of graduates were working in Wisconsin; and
- 80% of employed graduates were working in a job related to their WTCS training.

The median salary six months after graduation, regardless of degree type, for 2022 WTCS graduates was \$51,070. Median salaries six months after graduation range from \$46,796 for 2022 graduates with a one-year technical diploma to \$53,431 for 2022 associate degree graduates.

The number of programs with median salaries of \$50,000 to \$60,000 six months after graduation grew from 46 in 2020 to 74 in 2022, an increase of 61%. The number of WTCS programs with a median salary of over \$60,000 six months after graduation more than doubled, increasing from 22 programs in 2020 to 55 programs in 2022. These high-wage programs include examples ranging from short-term technical diplomas in Truck Driving to Associate Degrees in Nursing, Manufacturing Operations Management, and IT Software Development. Data on graduate outcomes are published annually in the [Graduate Outcomes Report](#) with the most recent year of complete data available.

Major Program Goals and Objectives

Expand the Pool of Skilled Workers in the State's Labor Force

The WTCS Board continues to approve demand-driven, cutting-edge career and technical education and training programs developed by Wisconsin's technical colleges in collaboration with Wisconsin's businesses and industry, labor and other partners. The colleges look to offer state-of-the-art programs in emerging industries like biotechnology, manufacturing robotics and renewable energy while continuing to deliver graduates in core industry-aligned programs that meet Wisconsin's ongoing demand for agriculture, construction, health care, information technology, and public safety. To accomplish this and operate with the highest degree of efficiency, the WTCS Board discontinues about the same number of programs as it approves each year.

WTCS graduates continue to connect with jobs related to their training at high rates due, in part, to targeted outreach efforts and strong partnerships with local employers. Conducted every four years since 1980 and most recently completed in 2021, the Employer Satisfaction Survey measures employer satisfaction with the skills and abilities of WTCS graduates. Feedback from employers has consistently shown that WTCS graduates meet or exceed employer expectations across several areas, including:

- mastery of knowledge in their fields (86%);
- ability to perform technical skills (89%);
- ability to communicate effectively (88%);
- relevance of skills and knowledge (85%);
- mastery of "STEM" (i.e., science, technology, engineering and mathematics) (83%); and
- overall preparedness for employment (89%).

Ninety-five% of employers said they would hire a WTCS graduate again, and 98% of employers felt that their local technical college was important or very important to the success of their business. The complete results from the latest survey are available on the [WTCS website](#).

The WTCS Board continues efforts to close achievement gaps. The enrollment of students of color, as a proportion of the overall student body, continues to climb, increasing from approximately 18% in 2012-13 to more than 23% in 2021-22. Among 2021 graduates, 20% were students of color. WTCS colleges also serve student populations with unique needs, including, but limited to, veterans, single parents, individuals with disabilities and students with limited English proficiencies. Technical colleges continue to lead effective student services and support strategies to remove barriers to program completion and produce strong graduate outcomes.

Increase Access with Career Pathways

WTCS is continuing its work with a wide variety of internal and external partners to develop pathways “to and through” postsecondary education that seamlessly link education and work throughout an individual’s career, creating several points of access that support lifelong learning.

For middle and high school students, career pathways increase awareness of the academic preparation needed for postsecondary education. High school students can earn technical college credits that also fulfill graduation requirements — “dual credit” — at no cost to the student or their family. More than 57,000 high school students earned almost 257,000 technical college credits in 2021-22, with growing demand expected in future years.

For adult students, career pathways created by WTCS colleges commonly include remedial education “bridges” that allow students who need basic instruction, including English language learning, to address those needs without postponing their entry into postsecondary occupational programs. One strategy for bridge programs pairs basic education and occupational instructors in the same classroom so that students can improve their basic academic abilities and at the same time earn a certificate-level credential that will help improve their employment outcomes.

At the postsecondary level, WTCS is working in partnership with employers to “stack” technical college credentials: short-term certificates, technical diplomas and associate degrees in a way that supports career advancement based on employer-identified needs and an individual’s career goals and timeline. Each step along the career pathway provides opportunities for students to add credentials with multiple on- and off- ramps to smooth transitions between education and the workforce.

Increase Postsecondary Educational Opportunities

Employer-specific worker training is a critical component to meet the needs of new and expanding businesses in Wisconsin. Technical colleges’ customized instruction and technical assistance continues to provide upskilling and talent development opportunities for local employers and their workforce. In 2020-21, the most recent year with data available, technical colleges served almost 57,000 individuals with instruction in technical and productivity skills, providing learning opportunities on-site or on campus. Surveys of employers identify customized instruction results such as cost savings and improvements in employee retention, work environment and employee skills.

In partnership with University of Wisconsin System and Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities institutions, all 16 technical colleges offer Associate of Arts and Associate of Science programs, allowing for a more direct, clear academic path for those interested in furthering their education. More than 4,500 students completed a WTCS program in 2020-21 and continued their education outside of WTCS within one year. Importantly, credit transfer also creates opportunities for students that transfer to WTCS colleges. More than 12,000 students transferred to a technical college in 2021-22, pursuing education in health sciences, business management, information technology, and public safety.

Alternative Work Patterns

WTCS Office policies have permitted alternative work patterns since 1976. In 2005, the WTCS Office adopted a revised policy that permits any employee of the agency to request an alternative work pattern. Alternative work patterns include, but are not limited to, part-time, shared-time and flex-time schedules. Employee and agency work needs are accommodated through the use of non-standard work weeks and straight shift work. During the 2021-23 biennium, the WTCS continued a telecommuting policy developed in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. In the same period and currently, all employees participate in some type of alternative work pattern.