

MINUTES OF MEETING
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD
MAY 12, 2020
TELECONFERENCE

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

Members Absent: Terry McGowan.

System Office Staff Present: Dan Arneson, Judy Barbian, Terese Craig, Monique Currie, Julie Drake, Morna Foy, Nickelle Haffey, Ben Konruff, Colleen McCabe, Katy Pettersen, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Lenard Simpson, Conor Smyth, Kyle Stahl, Brandon Trujillo, Angie White, Jim Zylstra.

District/Others Present: Betty Bruski Mallak, Angie Lawrence, Layla Merrifield, District Boards Association; Ann Ilagan, Wisconsin Student Government; Bryan Albrecht, Gateway Technical College; Bonnie Baerwald, Moraine Park Technical College; Bruce Barker, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Kaylen Betzig, Waukesha County Technical College; Paul Carlsen, Lakeshore Technical College; Jack Daniels, Kristin Rolling, Howard Spearman, Mark Thomas, Madison Area Technical College; Vicki Martin, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Susan May, Fox Valley Technical College; Shelly Mondeik, Mid-State Technical College; Kate Ferrell, Richard Nelson, John Van De Loo, Nicolet Area Technical College; Tracy Pierner, Blackhawk Technical College; Roger Stanford, Western Technical College; Lori Weyers, Northcentral Technical College; John Will, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College; Jason Wood, Southwest Technical College; Sharon Wendt, Department of Public Instruction.

Board President Lezow called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

Board President Lezow explained that the meeting was changed to a virtual format as the System continues to respond to concerns related to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Board President Lezow congratulated Ann Ilagan, Mid-State Technical College student, who was voted in for a second term as President of Wisconsin Student Government. Ms. Ilagan will join the Board for another year, including participating in the System's biennial budget development process.

ITEM A: Approval of the March 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Board Member Stanford Taylor, seconded by Board Member Tyler, that the March 18, 2020 meeting minutes be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM B: Report of the Board President

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

The July 7-8, 2020 WTCS Board meeting scheduled to be hosted by Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) will be convened in a virtual format on July 8, 2020 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Mr. Smyth and Ms. Drake will work with WITC President John Will and his team to assure that the college is featured throughout the agenda.

Board President Levzow also noted that going forward, WTCS will provide meeting materials in a digital format only for virtual meetings.

Two Board Work Groups are underway throughout 2020. Mr. Smyth will provide updates for the Strategic Directions Work Group, and the Biennial Budget Development Work Group will meet May 8 to begin the uniquely collaborative process of developing the System's 2021-23 biennial budget proposal.

Board President Levzow thanked Board Member Tyler for facilitating the March meeting, as well as System President Foy and WTCS staff, college presidents, District Board members and fellow Board members for quickly adapting to a virtual format.

ITEM C: Report of the System President

System President Foy shared updates on WTCS changes due to COVID-19, including restricted staff travel for meetings planned by others and shifting in-person meetings planned by System staff to a virtual format effective through July 2020, regardless of Safer-at-Home orders. Any WTCS planned events that cannot be held virtually are being postponed. This keeps the WTCS team safe and helps to control costs. The decision for meetings and events through the remainder of 2020 will be evaluated in early July.

Agency leadership has taken a number of steps to ramp up communication and support for the WTCS team, including monthly all-staff meetings, routine email updates, smaller groups convening weekly or bi-weekly, and emphasizing a number of wellness activities. In addition to IT support, the team has initiated a number of peer-to-peer technology learning sessions.

The WTCS Ambassador program has been postponed from April to November. In the meantime, WTCS staff connected the 2020 Student Ambassadors on Facebook and are planning a virtual meet and greet. The Ambassadors were featured in a press release recently and will be featured at upcoming Board meetings.

The System-wide response to COVID-19 has been nothing short of inspiring. Colleges contributed PPE and other vital equipment, gave aid to their community partners, all while completely shifting instruction to a virtual format and sustaining critical student services. Three important messages have been shared with all audiences, including policymakers and the media:

- Technical college graduates are Wisconsin's essential workforce.
- Wisconsin's technical colleges are investing millions to adapt operations and ensure essential workers earn their credential and enter the workforce as soon as possible.
- The colleges have also invested in their local communities to help Wisconsin stay safe, healthy, and moving forward.

The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law March 27.

WTCS colleges received \$42.2 million; however, 50 percent (\$20.1 million) had to be used for emergency grant aid to students for support including food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare (dual enrollment, Adult Ed and ELL students are not eligible). The remaining 50 percent of funding for colleges is somewhat more flexible; however, it can only be used by institutions to cover costs associated with significant changes to the delivery of instruction due to COVID-19.

All 16 WTCS colleges applied for and have quickly disbursed the funding for students and are in process of applying for institutional funds, which is not new funding, but intended for colleges to reimburse students with a no net gain.

Dr. McCabe and her team, as well as the college Presidents and their teams, have been working diligently on two transfer agreements with private college and university partners:

- a Universal Transfer Agreement with the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), similar to the existing agreement with the University of Wisconsin (UW) System; and
- a System-wide program-to-program transfer agreement with the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) that will allow graduates of certain technical college programs entry to the MSOE technical sales bachelor's degree program.

In other transfer actions, UW System has assured its institutions will accept a technical college course graded as "Pass" or "Credit" as long as "Pass" equals a "C" or higher and the scale is annotated on transcripts.

Board Members Hall, Stanford Taylor, and Pasch praised System President Foy and the WTCS team for the System's commitment to the Career Pathways model, giving students many options and creating avenues for lifelong learning.

ITEM D: Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association (DBA) Executive Director Layla Merrifield updated the Board on recent activities.

The DBA Board held a virtual meeting on April 3 to conduct essential business, including annual elections of officers. Congratulations to Vernon Jung who was elected as President for a second one-year term. Betty Bruski Mallak was elected as Vice President Chuck Bolstad as Secretary.

The DBA Board is scheduled to meet July 23-25, 2020 at Mid-State Technical College in Marshfield, with contingency plans for a virtual option.

Ms. Merrifield thanked System President Foy and the System Board for including DBA on Budget Development Workgroup.

ITEM E: WTCS Presidents' Association

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) President Jason Wood, and President of the Association, provided the Board with a brief update on recent activities.

Many colleges are planning virtual graduation ceremonies. Planning for summer and fall classes is underway, which includes the need to plan for social distancing and keeping buildings clean.

In early June, Shelly Mondeik, President of Mid-State Technical College, will become President of the Association for the following year.

Board President Lezow commended the colleges for keeping the public informed through links on the colleges' website.

System President Foy recognized and thanked President Wood for taking time out of his own leadership responsibilities at SWTC to do this work and bring the Presidents together in his role as President of the Association, particularly over the past few months with Presidents needing to make so many changes in these very challenging times.

Board Member Holton asked about COVID-19 contingency planning at the colleges for the fall semester. President Wood shared that each of the colleges are creating their own and approaching it differently.

Board Member Pasch inquired if there have been discussions on additional ways to reach out to students, with many feeling the most unsettled right now. President Wood shared that the colleges have made a significant effort to connect with students.

ITEM F: Blackhawk Technical College – Record of Decision – Environmental Impact Statement for the Construction of a Public Safety and Transportation Center in Town of Rock

Dan Scanlon, WTCS Facilities Director, provided an overview of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the construction of a Public Safety and Transportation Center at Blackhawk Technical College (BTC).

In response to a question from Board Member Holton, Mr. Scanlon explained that the EIS process looks at future development and while the developments may change, they are forward-looking, and building may not begin immediately.

It was moved by Board Member Tyler, seconded by Board Member Holton, to adopt the proposed decision on the Environmental Impact Statement of April 30, 2020, for the construction of a Public Safety and Transportation Center Protective Services adjacent to the Main Campus in the Town of Rock, Rock County, Wisconsin. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM G: Chippewa Valley Technical College – Project Review – Construction of Additional Facilities in Eau Claire and Acquisition of Land and Facilities in River Falls

Dan Scanlon, WTCS Facilities Director, provided an overview of the Project Review for Chippewa Valley Technical College's (CVTC) construction of additional facilities and acquisition of land which will be funded through District borrowing as approved in a \$48,800,000 April 7, 2020 referendum.

It was moved by Board Member Pasch, seconded by Board Member Tyler to grant approval of the Chippewa Valley Technical Colleges construction of an addition in Eau Claire and acquire land and facilities in River Falls at a cost of \$5,542,650. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM H: Consent Agenda

It was moved by Board Member Williams, seconded by Board Member Schwantes, that the Board approve the program and facilities development requests as presented, as well as verifying the Annual District Board appointments, with the exception of those for Western Technical College. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Board Member Hall, seconded by Board Member Tyler, that the Board verify Western Technical College's District Board Appointments. Motion carried 11-0; Board member Richason abstained.

ITEM I: Outcomes for 2019 WTCS Graduates

WTCS Associate Vice Presidents Terese Craig and Chrystal Seeley-Schreck provided an overview of the Outcomes for 2019 WTCS Graduates. WTCS surveyed nearly 25,800 graduates, with 64.6 percent responding. Of those who responded and were in the labor force, 93 percent indicated they were employed within six months of graduation, including 81 percent who reported employment in a field directly related to their technical college program and 93 percent working in Wisconsin.

Board Member Hall asked if information is available on outcomes for students of color when they graduate and what type of employment they seek, including their salaries. Ms. Craig shared that WTCS is tracking and analyzing more detailed demographic information than is included in the report.

Board Member Pasch liked the format and detail of the report and commended the phenomenal response rate.

ITEM J: Teaching and Learning – Adult Education/ELL Scorecard

WTCS Education Director for Performance Analysis and Continuous Improvement Ben Konruff provided the Board an overview of how the System monitors the success of individuals enrolled in Adult Education and English Language Learning as part of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) performance accountability.

System President Foy applauded Mr. Konruff and Dr. Hilary Barker for their work in creating and providing operational tools like this dashboard, that the colleges are using to assess data and take action to improve student outcomes.

ITEM K: Strategic Directions Development – 2021-2025

WTCS Director of Strategic Advancement Conor Smyth shared an update on progress in renewing the System's Strategic Directions for the period 2021 to 2025.

Conor thanked Board Work Group members Frostman, Hall, Pasch, Schwantes, Stanford Taylor, Tourdot and Tyler for their work in guiding this process. Timeline and tactics were reviewed, along with an overview of the WTCS mission and values exercises held with the Board and System Office working groups.

Board Member Tyler shared that even though the System's core mission is the same, the System continuously adapts to how it fulfills that mission and delivers outcomes.

Board Member Stanford Taylor expressed that the System's mission is a strong one, helping the Board and System office to maintain focus even during events like the pandemic.

Board Member Tourdot shared that technical colleges are built to adjust and change more quickly than other education providers and transitioned very well to online delivery.

Board Member Pasch expressed that current events make this an optimal time for strategic planning.

ITEM L: Legislative Update

WTCS Policy Advisor Monique Currie provided information on two smaller programs under the federal CARES Act.

Additionally, Ms. Currie is monitoring a competitive federal grant program through the Department of Education, called the "Reimagining Workforce Preparation." It is expected to provide funding to states to create new educational opportunities, including offering short-term postsecondary programs.

WTCS Executive Vice President Jim Zylstra and DBA Executive Director Merrifield provided an update on key legislative issues affecting the System, including the "Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund." Congress will set aside approximately \$3 billion of the \$30.75 billion allotted to the Education Stabilization Fund through the CARES Act for formula grants to Governors.

Mr. Zylstra reported that Wisconsin's response to the COVID-19 pandemic extended tax filing deadlines from April 15 to July 15, which will delay colleges' receipt of property tax revenue from July until October, affecting cash flow.

WTCS Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo provided an overview of CARES Act provisions providing flexibility for certain financial aid and related provisions under the Higher Education Act (HEA). He continues to meet weekly with the colleges' financial aid directors.

System President Foy commended the legislative team for the increasingly difficult task of monitoring activities, both in Wisconsin and Washington, and trying to reach legislators.

Board Member Stanford Taylor inquired about updates on Title IX, the federal law that prohibits discrimination in programs that receive federal funding. Ms. Currie will provide an update at a future Board meeting.

ITEM M: Announcements/Adjourn

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board is scheduled for July 8, 2020 beginning at 8:30 a.m., and it will be hosted in a virtual format.

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Drake
Recording Secretary