

MINUTES OF MEETING
WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD
JULY 8-9, 2025
NICOLET AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Members Present: Lindsay Blumer, Quincey Daniels, Jr., Douglas Holton, Sr., Dan Klecker, Timothy Nixon, Amy Pechacek, Sara Rogers, Dan Sperberg, Leslie Svacina, S. Mark Tyler, Jill Underly.

System Office Staff Present: Hilary Barker, Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Mandy Johnson, Tou Ya Khang, Christina Lorge, Ward Lyon, Colleen McCabe, Layla Merrifield, Jeremy Nichols, Katy Pettersen, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Lenard Simpson, Latisha Spence-Brookens, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Ann Westrich.

District/Others Present: Tracy Pierner, Blackhawk Technical College; Caleb Cornelius, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Morgan Phillips, Gateway Technical College; Dalia Samano, Lakeshore Technical College; Jennifer Berne, Madison Area Technical College; Anthony Cruz, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Bonnie Baerwald, Moraine Park Technical College; Jenna Allen, Alec Effinger, Kate Ferrel, Bobbi Fields, Megan Gerber, Al Javoroski, Dianne Lazear, Bob Martini, Kris Peeters, Tony Pharo, Heather Schallock, Scott Sievert, Jacob Wojcik, Gary Zarda, Nicolet Area Technical College; Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Laura King, Kristen Raney, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; John Will, Northwood Technical College; Mike Berry, Samuel Carpenter, SkillsUSA; Rich Barnhouse, Waukesha County Technical College; Roger Stanford, Western Technical College; Jake Mihm, Sharon Wendt, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Kendra Klein, Wisconsin Student Government; Diane Handrick, John Wyatt, Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association.

Board President Tyler called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

ITEM A: Approval of May 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Board Member Underly, seconded by Board Member Holton, that the May 20, 2025, meeting minutes be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM B: Report of the Board President

System President Tyler welcomed and introduced Board Member Timothy Nixon, UW System Board of Regents representative.

The Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents report for June was shared with Board Members on July 2, 2025.

ITEM C: Report of the System President

System President Merrifield shared System updates:

- The Wisconsin Leadership Development Institute (WLDI) has been run by the Chair Academy for 34 years. Since its founding in 1991, the Academy has been dedicated to developing transformational leaders who advance both academic and administrative excellence. Over 30,000 leaders have graduated from the program. While the Chair Academy announced earlier

this year that this is their final year, System leaders and college presidents are committed to evolving and supporting this program.

- There are many federal initiatives affecting the System that the policy team are closely monitoring and are ensuring that Wisconsin's congressional delegation are aware of and understand how they will affect their constituents. Workforce Pell was ultimately approved as part of reconciliation, opening the opportunity to design additional short-term programming to meet employer needs without sacrificing financial aid eligibility.
- On June 30, WTCS was informed that the Education Department is reviewing this year's Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding, along with a number of longstanding K-12 grant programs, previously appropriated by Congress, are now being withheld. This has severe ramifications for the System Office operations as well as serious implications for our colleges' adult education programs, which are mandated by state law but prohibited from charging tuition. The Board will be updated as this situation evolves.
- For the fourth straight biennial budget process, the colleges received net increases in operating dollars and additional grant funding, as well as a historic investment in WTCS student financial aid. Despite these positives, the System Office was ultimately funded at a level far below that of every other sector of education. We secured a last-minute one-time investment in System Office data systems. For every request we made, some portion was funded, so the strategy and messaging were effective. The policy team has already begun to revamp our approach to budget advocacy, to do whatever we can to improve these results going forward.

ITEM D: SkillsUSA National Results

Mid-State Technical College instructor and SkillsUSA Wisconsin College/Post-Secondary state director Mike Berry and Mid-State State Leadership Team student Sam Carpenter provided an overview of the SkillsUSA 2025 National Leadership and Skills Conference.

SkillsUSA is a professional leadership organization focused on skilled careers. It is built for students and led by students, connecting them with career opportunities and giving them the tools they need to succeed. This year's SkillsUSA Wisconsin State Leadership and Skills Conference had 168 college/post-secondary students competing across 25 contests, with 10 WTCS colleges participating.

There were 26 competitors from seven different colleges in 22 different competitions. Fifteen placed in the top 10 with 12 medal winners.

SkillsUSA Secondary (middle school and high school) State Director Jake Mihm joined virtually, applauding the connection between secondary and post-secondary SkillsUSA. They are anticipating 3,000 students next year who will travel around the state for regionals at Wisconsin's technical colleges. They had 90 competitors from 29 different high schools with 14 medalists in 59 different competitions.

ITEM E: Minority Student Retention Plan Statutory Requirement

Board Member Daniels shared comments regarding Statute s. 38.04(8), which requires Wisconsin Technical College System Board to develop and implement a plan to increase the participation and retention of minority group members in the technical college system. Daniels stressed the importance of ensuring that every student, no matter their background, has access to succeed in our colleges. Board discussion ensued. Staff will develop and provide the plan to the Board at the January 2026 meeting.

ITEM F: Election of Officers

Board President Tyler asked WTCS Executive Vice President Paul Hammer to oversee the election of officers.

Mr. Hammer called for nominations for President.

Board Member Underly requested a secret ballot if there is more than one nomination per office.

Board Member Daniels nominated Board Member Holton for President. Board Member Blumer nominated Board Member Rogers for President. Secret ballots were distributed.

Executive Vice President Paul Hammer called for nominations two additional times and hearing no other nominations, asked for a vote.

Board Member Rogers received the majority of the votes. Board Member Rogers will serve as Board President for a one-year term.

Executive Vice President Hammer called for nominations for Board Vice President.

Board Member Sperberg nominated Board Member Blumer for Board Vice President. Board Member Holton nominated Board Member Daniels for Vice President. Secret ballots were distributed.

Board Member Blumer received the majority of the votes. Board Member Blumer will serve as Board Vice President for a one-year term.

Executive Vice President Hammer called for nominations for Board Secretary.

Board Member Underly nominated Board Member Klecker for Board Secretary. Board Member Klecker will serve as Board Secretary for a one-year term.

Motion carried unanimously.

Board President Tyler turned the gavel over to Board President Rogers.

It was moved by Board Member Klecker, seconded by Board Member Sperberg, to recess the meeting until Wednesday, July 9, 2025. The Board adjourned at 5:46 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Members Present: Lindsay Blumer, Quincey Daniels, Jr., Dan Klecker, Timothy Nixon, Amy Pechacek, Sara Rogers, Daniel Sperberg, Leslie Svacina, Jill Underly.

Members Absent: Douglas Holton, Sr., S. Mark Tyler.

System Office Staff Present: Hilary Barker, Rachel Colla, Danielle Cook, Julie Drake, Heather Dunne, Stephanie Glynn, Paul Hammer, Tou Ya Khang, Christina Lorge, Ward Lyon, Chris Martin, Joel Mathis, Amanda Mayek, Colleen McCabe, Layla Merrifield, Jeremy Nichols, Cristina Parente, Katy Pettersen, Anna Richter, Dan Scanlon, Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Brent Simmons, Lenard Simpson, John Smigleski, Latisha Spence-Brookens, Megan Stritchko, Brandon Trujillo, Julie Tyznik, Ann Westrich.

District/Others Present: Tracy Pierner, Blackhawk Technical College; Caleb Cornelius, Chippewa Valley Technical College; Chris Matheny, Fox Valley Technical College; Morgan Phillips, Gateway Technical College; Paul Carlsen, Dalia Samano, Lakeshore Technical College; Jennifer Berne, Sylvia Ramirez, Madison Area Technical College; Anthony Cruz, Milwaukee Area Technical College; Bonnie Baerwald, Moraine Park Technical College; Alec Effinger, Herb Daniels, Jr. (Forest County Potawatomi), Patrick Daniels, Kate Ferrel, Bobbi Fields, Brian Frank (Forest County Potawatomi), Megan Gerber, Cory Hammer

(Sokaogon Chippewa Community), Dianne Lazear, Ellen Mathein, Marilyn Miller, Kris Peeters, Felicia Rachal (Sokaogon Chippewa Community), Una Ross (Forest County Potawatomi), Heather Schallock, Melissa VanZile, Winter Waukau (Lac du Flambeau), Marion Wauke (Forest County Potawatomi), Nicolet Area Technical College; Jeannie Worden, Northcentral Technical College; Mark Hansel, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College; John Will, Northwood Technical College; Rich Barnhouse, Waukesha County Technical College; Roger Stanford, Western Technical College; Sharon Wendt, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Kendra Klein, Wisconsin Student Government; Diane Handrick, John Wyatt, Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association.

Board President Rogers called the meeting to order at 9:34 am. Julie Drake read the open meeting statement and roll call indicated that a quorum was present.

Board President Rogers thanked Nicolet College President Ferrel and the culinary students and instructors for the dinner served on Tuesday evening. The Board recognized [Superior Diesel](#) for their outstanding collaboration with Nicolet College, hiring graduates, interns and apprentices, engaging in specialized training and a long-time donor to the Nicolet College Foundation.

ITEM G: Teaching & Learning – Innovation Across a System Through Grant Funding and Partnership-Stoking the Fire Culinary Innovation at Nicolet Area Technical College

WTCS Associate Vice President for Student Success Dr. Christina Lorge and Associate Vice President for Instruction Chrystal Seeley-Schreck highlighted WTCS grant opportunities, including their types, requirements and timelines. Nicolet Area Technical College's Dean of Business and Entrepreneurship Ellen Mathein and Culinary Arts Instructor Mitch Below highlighted their culinary program, which resulted from a Core Industry grant.

The Board reconvened at 10:40 after a short break.

ITEM H: Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

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

Outgoing Association President Chuck Bolstad was unable to attend, but asked Ms. Handrick to relay the message that he, along with the presidents, trustees and System Board sees the value in the DBA trustee organization that influences and impacts growth statewide. We must work together to evolve to keep our students supported and successful.

On June 18, the Wisconsin State Senate recognized Southwest Wisconsin Technical College as the 2025 winner of the prestigious Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.

The Association is currently onboarding new officers and Board members with new Association President John Wyatt of Lakeshore Technical College

Board Member Pechacek joined the meeting at 10:45 am.

ITEM I: WTCS Presidents' Association

Dr. Jeannie Worden, president of Northcentral Technical College and chair of the Association, updated the Board on recent activities.

- New Executive Positions for the Association:
 - Jeannie Worden, Chair
 - Kate Ferrel, Vice Chair

- Tracy Pierner, Secretary
- Roger Stanford, Treasurer
- Rich Barnhouse, Past Chair
- The Association has welcomed new members:
 - Interim President Caleb White, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
 - Interim President Morgan Phillips, Gateway Technical College
 - President Jennifer Berne, Madison Area Technical College
- The Presidents Association met June 5-6, 2025 for strategic planning which included a SWOT-like analysis, which identified short- and long-term goals for the presidents in alignment with the WTCS Strategic Plan. Themes and goals related to student success, advocacy, innovation, including AI, and continued responsiveness to local employer and student needs; and commitment to working together, sharing resources and continued focus on outcomes.

ITEM J: Consent Agenda

It was moved by Board Member Klecker, seconded by Board Member Nixon that the Board approve the program and facilities development requests and interim district board appointment as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM K: Northeast Wisconsin Technical College – Project Review – Remodeling to Improve Facilities at the Main Campus in Green Bay

WTCS Facilities Director Dan Scanlon provided an overview of the project. The District proposes to remodel existing facilities at the Main Campus in Green Bay.

It was moved by Board Member Sperberg, seconded by Board Member Daniels, that the Board grants approval to the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College district to remodel existing facilities at the Main Campus in Green Bay at a cost of \$1,956,700. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM L: Strategic Directions Development 2026-2030

WTCS Director of Strategic Advancement Katy Pettersen provided the Board with an update on the System's efforts to advance the Board's Vision and Strategic Directions and shared results from the stakeholder survey. Final edits will be made to the 2026-2030 Strategic Directions with the final draft presented at the September 2025 meeting for Board approval. Board discussion ensued, and the Board's directive to staff was to update the Strategic Directions to include values, directions and goals on sharing student and employer success stories.

Board Member Underly left the meeting at 11:02 am.

ITEM M: State Grant Guidelines

WTCS Grants Manager Tou Ya Khang provided an overview of the guidelines for the distribution of funds made available through the state of Wisconsin for fiscal years 2026-27.

System President Merrifield reported ongoing challenges in receiving the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding from the Department of Education. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the release of these funds, she indicated that it may become necessary to revise the current grant guidelines. In the event that AEFLA funding is not received, the Board may consider adding a new grant category to support students who would otherwise have been assisted through AEFLA. Further updates regarding potential changes to the grant guidelines may be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

It was moved by Board Member Daniels, seconded by Board Member Nixon to adopt the funding categories for the State of Wisconsin grant programs for fiscal year 2026-27. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM N: Legislative Update

WTCS Executive Vice President Paul Hammer, joined by WTCS Policy Advisor Brandon Trujillo and District Boards Association Executive Director Diane Handrick, 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 held September 9-10, 2025, at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire.

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Drake