

# Whatcom

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MINUTES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

237 W. Kellogg Road, Bellingham

Phyllis & Charles Learning Commons 160

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

2:00 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER** Chair Jeff Fairchild officially called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Present in addition to the chair were trustees Wendy Bohlke and Rebecca Johnson, constituting a quorum. Trustees John Pedlow and Teresa Taylor were absent. Others present included President Justin Guillory; Nate Langstraat, Executive Vice President for Business & College Operations, Kerri Holferty, Interim Vice President for Student Services; Steven Thomas, Vice President for Instruction, Kerena Higgins, Assistant Attorney General; and Rafeeka Kloke, Executive Director for the Office of the President.

Chair Fairchild began with a land acknowledgment to recognize and pay respect to the Coast Salish Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

## ACTION TO ACCEPT AGENDA

- Trustee Bohlke moved to accept the agenda. It was seconded by Trustee Johnson and the motion was approved.
- Chair Fairchild announced that there is a designated time for public comment on the agenda.

## WORK SESSION

- **New Allocation Model – Choi Halliday, SBCTC Deputy Executive Director of Business Operations and Nate Langstraat, Executive Vice President for Business & College Operations**

Halliday provided historical context for the new allocation model, explaining its development over the past two years. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has statutory authority to allocate state funding to the 34 colleges in the system.

Langstraat outlined the four key components of the new allocation model:

- Minimum Operating Allocation (MOA): An increase to account for inflation.
- District Enrollment Allocation Base (DEAB): A shift to a 4-year rolling average, with funding split

- 50/50 between FTE and headcount, excluding international and corporate enrollments.
- Performance Funding (SAI): A fixed 5% of state appropriations for performance funding, with current metrics preserved.
  - Priority Enrollments: 5% of appropriations for Basic Education for Adults (BEaA) and Skills Gap enrollments, with a revised Skills Gap list based on workforce demand and job growth projections.

Langstraat highlighted the potential impacts on Whatcom Community College (WCC), noting that depending on WCC's enrollment numbers relative to other colleges in the system, its allocation could either increase or decrease. The final recommendations to the State Board also include various earmarks and maintaining the four-year safe harbor provision.

Halliday shared that the State Board requested additional input from college presidents on the implementation timeline, as extending it to six years presents some risks. A proposal for a six-year, evenly distributed implementation was submitted and will be revisited by the State Board for final approval.

Langstraat concluded by thanking Halliday and his team for their support during WCC's business office staff transitions.

## CONSENT AGENDA

### ➤ Consent Agenda

- Minutes of August 19-20 Board of Trustees Retreat.
- Spring and Summer 2025 Graduates

Chair Fairchild stated: "If there are no objections, the items in the consent agenda will be adopted." As there was no objection, these items were adopted.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

### ➤ Chair Fairchild called for public comment. The following individuals provided public comments:

- There is no public comment.

### ➤ **Accreditation Year Seven – Anne Marie Karlberg, Director for Assessment and Institutional Research and Steven Thomas, Vice President for Instruction**

Karlberg and Thomas presented a PowerPoint providing an overview of our current stage in the accreditation cycle.

Highlights included:

- The Year 6 Report on Policies, Procedures, and Financial Resources was submitted in March 2025 and received no findings. Although no findings were issued, the College identified several areas for improvement and developed a plan to address them—demonstrating our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.
- The Year 7 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Report is due on February 14, 2026 with the NWCCU evaluators visit scheduled on April 15-17, 2026.
- In preparation for the visit, an accreditation webpage created on the public web – [whatcom.edu/accreditation](http://whatcom.edu/accreditation) for campus to access information, and Karlberg and Thomas will conduct 10–20-minute accreditation sessions at each Board of Trustees meeting leading up to the visit.
- Chair Fairchild and Trustee Johnson will represent the board in meetings with the accreditation visiting team.

## **PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

- President Justin shared that he WCC Foundation hosted the President’s Circle event on September 10, which was a successful gathering and provided an opportunity for him to meet with donors and community supporters.
- President Justin thanked Board Chair Jeff Fairchild for sharing brief remarks on All College Day. The day included kickoff sessions, including *Whatcom 101* for new employees and introductions to college committees. During the morning session, institutional priorities for the 2025–26 academic year were announced: Year 7 Accreditation, the Institutional Sustainability Review (ISR) process, Title II accessibility compliance, and progress on the TEC Building project
- Fall quarter classes began on September 23. The Fall Welcome Back BBQ drew 414 students, staff, and faculty—an increase from 311 participants the previous year. Enrollment remains flat compared to fall 2024.
- On September 26, 2025, President Justin met with representatives from Western Washington University to finalize a guaranteed transfer agreement, followed by a joint press release.
- On September 30, President Justin met with Bellingham Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Greg Baker to strengthen the partnership between the college and the school district.
- President Justin attended the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges (WACTC) meeting at Clark College on October 2–3. During the meeting, participants met the new State Board Executive Director, Nate Humphreys, who began his role in August, and received several system-wide updates.
- President Justin shared that the Institutional Sustainability Review officially began on October 1. The purpose of this process is to ensure the long-term financial health of the college. While budget considerations are a factor, the primary goal is to strategically position Whatcom Community College for ongoing financial sustainability and institutional success.

- WCC has been awarded a \$1.9 million National Science Foundation (NSF) S-STEM grant to support low-income students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

## REPORTS

- **ASWCC** – Coco Lavelle, President

Lavelle shared the ASWCC 2025-26 work plan with the board. Student leaders held several events including info. session, Wayfinder tabling, and Welcome Back BBQ.

- **WCCFT** – Barry Maxwell, President

Maxwell shared that faculty were glad to be back on campus teaching. The ISR process has understandably brought up a range of emotions and concerns, but it has also shown deep engagement and commitment across our community. He shared that it is important to reflect on how we arrived here so that hindsight can guide our foresight allowing us to learn from the past and move forward together.

The Board Chair has asked the President to address these concerns directly.

- **Student Services** – Kerri Holferty, Interim Vice President

Holferty shared that the college has implemented mandatory advising for all students, noting that new students are now required to meet with an advisor. This change has significantly reduced fraudulent applications. She thanked Tawny Townsend, Director of Academic Advising and Career Services, for her leadership. She also shared that she is excited to work with ASWCC student leaders.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS OF THE BOARD

- **Proposed 2026 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule**

Chair Fairchild asked board members to review the schedule. Members noted that the February date may need be adjusted due to a national conference.

- Trustee Bohlke shared that she is serving as president of the Association of College Trustees (ACT), noting that trustees across the system devote significant time to developing their leadership skills and pursuing ongoing professional education. She announced that the ACT Conference in November will feature Danny Heck as the guest speaker and that the Spring 2026 ACT Conference will be held in Whatcom County.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 2:50 p.m. the meeting was adjourned for an executive session of the Board for approximately twenty minutes, as provided in RCW 42.30.110 and 42.30.140 (4) (a), to discuss collective bargaining, to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to the agency enforcement action or potential

litigation...

Chair Fairchild announced that action was not anticipated. Guests included President Justin Guillory, Executive Vice President for Business & College Operations Nate Langstraat, Interim Vice President for Student Services, Rafeeka Kloke, Executive Director for Office of the President, and Assistant Attorney General Kerena Higgins.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 3:10 p.m. and the Board reconvened into open session at p.m.

### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.



11/12/2025

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Chair of the Board

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Date



11/12/2025

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President and Secretary of the Board

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Date