



**Board of Governors  
Northeast Community College Area  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Thursday, November 14, 2024**

## ATTENDANCE

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Jeffrey Scherer, Chairperson.....	Present
Donovan Ellis, Vice-Chairperson .....	Present
Nicole Sedlacek, Secretary .....	Absent-Excused
Del Ames .....	Present
Steve Anderson .....	Absent-Excused
Diane Davies .....	Present
Dr. Terry Nelson .....	Present
Dirk Petersen.....	Absent-Excused
Julie Robinson.....	Absent-Excused
Carol Sibbel .....	Present
Pat Wojcik.....	Present

### OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Leah A. Barrett, President  
 Scott Gray, Vice President, Administrative Services  
 Dr. Charlene Widener, Vice President, Educational Services  
 Dr. Tracy Kruse, Vice President, Development and External Affairs  
 Amanda Nipp, Vice President, Student Services  
 David Cone, Chief Information Officer  
 Mike Walkowiak, Vice President, Human Resources and Organizational Development  
 Lindsay Spiegel, Director, Institutional Effectiveness  
 Jerry Guenter, Director, Public Relations  
 Diane Reikofski, Executive Assistant to the President and Board Recording Secretary  
 Dirk Petersen, via Zoom  
 Jerrett Mills, Athletic Director  
 Wendy Swenson, Secretary, Faculty Association secretary  
 Tee Bush, President, Faculty Association  
 Allison Lambert, College Engagement Coordinator  
 Parker Clausen, Student Leadership Association  
 Jordan Mosel, Student Leadership Association  
 Jaylyn Spencer, Student Leadership Association  
 Neila Muminovic, *Norfolk Daily News*  
 Kerry Gustaffson, Dana F. Cole & Company  
 Renee Peters, Executive Director of Security and Technology Services  
 Jake Locke, Security and Network Analyst  
 Field May, Senior Director of Network and Infrastructure

1. The Northeast Community College Board of Governor met for its regular session Board Meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2024, in Suite 197 of the Lifelong Learning Center,

located on the campus of Northeast Community College, 801 East Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE. Chairperson Jeff Scherer convened the regular meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

2. Chairperson Scherer led the assembly in pledging their allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

### 3. **OPEN MEETINGS ACT**

Chairperson Scherer advised that a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted on the table in the meeting room, along with a copy of the October 10, 2024 Board of Governors Meeting agenda and all printable supporting documents.

### 4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

**MOTION** by Carol Sibbel, **SECONDED** by Diane Davies to **APPROVE** the Consent Agenda as follows:

- 4.1 Adopt Agenda of the November 14, 2024 meeting.
- 4.2 Approve Minutes of the October 10, 2024 Board of Governors Meeting.

**Voting Yes:** Ames, Anderson, Davies, Ellis, Nelson, Scherer, and Wojcik

**Voting No:** None

**Absent:** Anderson, Petersen, Robinson, and Sedlacek **MOTION CARRIED**

### 5. **COLLEGE REPORTS**

#### 5.1 Student Leadership Association (SLA) Report

SLA members Parker Clausen, President; Jordan Mosel, Vice President; and Jaylyn Spencer, provided highlights of activities and events that they have sponsored or participated in during the past month:

- SLA sponsored a booth for Spooktacular, a community event that is hosted by Student Activities. SLA's theme this year was 'Harry Potter Mad Potions'. In total Northeast had 17 organizations sponsor a booth, along with three outside organizations from the Norfolk community. Free tickets to Spooktacular are provided to local daycares and schools, providing opportunities for low-income students in the region.
- SLA sponsored 'Hawk the Vote' to encourage students to participate in the November 5<sup>th</sup> election.
- Melanie Thompson, Northeast's Director of Risk Management, provided SLA with information on Bluebolt Outdoor as a possible service project. Bluebolt Outdoor offers free benches to colleges across the U.S. The benches are solar powered and are 100% off of the grid. In addition, the benches provide light, have covers, Wi-Fi, and provide free charging to students. They are funded through panel advertisements that can be personalized by the institution and does not include sensitive material. The benches would also be a great opportunity for the extended campuses. SLA and sponsor, Alissa Gubbels, will continue to research this opportunity.
- October's Monthly Forum was focused on the importance of student activities. Participation in student activities helps to build connections, promotes accessibility, etc. SLA has brainstormed accompanying international students to the Henry

Doorley Zoo. They are also considering serving as the sponsor of a color run or marathon, goat yoga, or possibly a concert every other year.

- November's Monthly Forum will be focused on mental health. They have invited Student Health/Counseling and the Active Minds Club to participate.
- Due diligence will be conducted regarding the addition of pickleball lines to the outdoor tennis and basketball courts.
- SLA is planning a Christmas social to grow together as a group.
- An event is being planned in January to prepare for officer elections for the 25-26 year.
- To become better acquainted with board members, SLA representatives posed two questions to which board members individually responded.
  1. What is your favorite holiday or season?
  2. How do you keep the same level of motivation throughout the changing seasons and stressors?

Chairperson Scherer commended the SLA officers for their leadership, involvement, and presentation.

- 5.2 With respect to the schedule of and travel time for Dana F. Cole & Company representative, Chairperson Scherer called upon Kerry Gustafsson to provide a review of the Northeast Community College Area Financial Statement Audit Report as of June 30, 2024 and 2023.

Dana F. Cole & Company conducted the Audit of Financial Statements for Northeast Community College. It is their opinion that the financial statements were presented fairly, in all material respects, and issued an unmodified report, or the highest level of assurance that they can give as auditors that the financial statements are accurately reported. As would be expected with an institution of higher education, the largest area of expense is in the area of instruction, followed by institutional support.

Ms. Gustafsson advised that they identified no material weaknesses in internal controls, and no significant deficiencies were identified during the audit. She further reported that during the audit, there were no adjustments that were auditor driven. Any adjustments that were made were provided by management. There were also no incorrect or misstatements noted. No disagreements with management occurred during the audit process. There were also no significant issues discussed with the management and no difficulties encountered. Ms. Gustafsson stated that staff provided excellent support and courtesy during the audit process.

Mr. Ellis inquired if there was any comparable information. Ms. Gustafsson indicated that the other colleges are also currently finishing their audit reports but stated that Northeast is very comparable to Southeast Community College. Audit reports are due to the State of Nebraska tomorrow, so the information should be available shortly.

Chairperson Scherer stated that as a former CPA, Ms. Gustafsson's comments speak highly of our accounting department and expressed his appreciation to those involved in the audit process.

## 6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### 6.1 Monitoring Report: EL-06, Asset Protection

Asset protection relates to the systems we have in place to protect our assets and physical plant resources. The hiring of Melanie Thompson as our Director of Risk Management within the past year has proved beneficial. In her brief time on campus, she has already conducted multiple training sessions and reviewed and updated multiple plans.

The President's Cabinet didn't feel it was a good use of funds to hire an outside agency to update the Master Site and Facilities Plan (MSFP) so members at the Cabinet level are meeting to discuss the changes that need to be made to the MSFP and the Board of Governors will soon be engaged in those discussions.

Further, Northeast remains in alignment with state statutes related to procurement, record retention and contract administration. It is noted that employee training has not yet been conducted, however, training plans are currently being developed, and it is anticipated that the plans will be implemented by July 1, 2025 for the new fiscal year. Northeast also has a draft procedure for Minors on Campus. It is in the process of being reviewed by appropriate personnel for consideration by the College Operations Standing Committee. This procedure would reduce the institution's overall risk to limit the instances in which Northeast employees are in contact with minors who attend events on campus.

Student and employee complaint processes are in place and the complaint logs continue to be monitored and handled at the level most directly able to make an impact. Information received through the complaint process is used in continuous quality improvement efforts.

The Board assessed the monitoring report, EL-06, Asset Protection, and determined that there is evidence of compliance with a reasonable interpretation.

### 6.2 President's Monthly update

A complete copy of the President's monthly update can be found within today's Teams site and is also available on the Northeast website.

Dr. Barrett explained that Dirk Petersen was unable to attend today's meeting in person but wanted to hear some of the discussions. Because today's meeting was not advertised as a Zoom meeting, Mr. Petersen is not participating as a voting member of the board.

2025 Legislative Priorities will include the Nameplate Capacity Excise Tax, funding for NSWERS, and additional dollars for Dual Enrollment. Dr. Barrett continues to have conversations with Nebraska Senators regarding these topics. The Nameplate Capacity Excise Tax is an unintended consequence of community colleges no longer receiving general levy funds.

During the NCCA Annual Meeting, Courtney Wittstruck and Matt Hastings provided a session related to dual enrollment. In addition, Courtney provided a training session on how board members can develop talking points about dual enrollment so that they can have conversations with legislators. Our current funding for dual enrollment is \$500,000 annual but will end on June 30, 2025. Community colleges are asking the governor and legislature to fund \$10MM for all six community colleges. This would provide 75% of the cost of dual enrollment being paid by the state.

Professional engagements that Dr. Barrett has participated in during the past month include the Nebraska Chamber Policy Council and Nebraska Manufacturing Alliance meetings. Northeast Community College also recently hosted Leadership Nebraska to campus.

Dr. Barrett attended the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Leadership Congress in Seattle, WA, along with Northeast board members, Steve Anderson, Dirk Petersen, and Pat Wojcik. Mr. Petersen was recognized during the Leadership Congress with the Western Region Award for Trustees. Dr. Barrett attended a session related to board governance. In 2008, an institution had their Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation visit and they were dinged on policy governance. The institution worked with the Board Governance Institute and 10 years later, during their next accreditation visit, HLC commended the institution on the great strides the college had made in building and restoring a sense of trust in leadership through their work with policy governance.

Northeast is embarking on Phase II of the Rural Guided Pathways Project, along with 15 other institutions. This opportunity provides access to people who are important to our work as Northeast continues on our culture sharing work.

Dr. Barrett also recently attended the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) meeting in Lincoln. She had the opportunity to lift up Northeast as she explained the internet service providers through our data center as well as the work of Renee Peters who provides tabletop exercises related to cyber security to support our region and learners.

Activity highlights that occurred over the past month include the Veterans Day Event with special guests, Del Ames and Doug Barrett. Fall sports are coming to a close with the men's soccer team headed to the national tournament in Huntsville, AL. Northeast's volleyball team made it to the regional finals and the women's soccer team made it to the regional semi-finals.

Dr. Barrett commended the FBLA students for placing first in the national case competition in Des Moines, IA, and the TRIO-CSP Students of the Month for September and October were Elizabeth Kersch from Spencer, NE and Emma Wubben from Fordyce, NE.

Work is in progress to migrate the Board of Governors from Microsoft Teams to OnBoard as the board management software. The December meeting information will be mirrored in Teams and OnBoard and a representative from OnBoard will join the meeting via Zoom to provide training for board members.

Northeast has hired its first Early College Navigator who will work in the Sioux City Public Schools.

Construction on the iHub has restarted and fundraising is underway.

In the next month or so, the Board of Governors will have an opportunity to review the Ends as the first step in creating Northeast's Strategic Plan. Feedback will also be sought from our stakeholders.

Brief discussion was held on changing the April 2025 board meeting to O'Neill and November 2025 in West Point. We will use these as opportunities to connect with stakeholders from those regions.

## 7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### 7.1 Governance Committee

- The Governance Committee met on October 30, 2024 via Zoom.
- Content review was conducted of EL-08, General Executive Constraint. No suggestions for revision. The Governance Committee recommends moving the policy monitoring report review to December, beginning in December 2025.
- Content review was conducted of EL-02, Access to Education. No suggestions for revision. The monitoring report was excellent and contained good data, evidence, and interpretation.
- Content review was conducted of BPD-00, Global Board President Delegation. No suggestions for revision recommended.
- Content review was conducted of BPD-01, Unity of Control, with no suggestions for revision.
- Board Self-Evaluation of BPD-00, Global Board President Delegation was completed and discussed.
- Board Self-Evaluation of BPD-01, Unity of Control was completed and discussed.
- Policies recommended for First Reading for Deletion include:
  - BP-6125, Check Signature Policy. Policy content was incorporated into a new administrative procedure, AP-6125.0, Check Signature.
  - BP-6130, Building Maintenance Funding Policy. Content was incorporated into a new administrative procedure, AP-6130.0, Building Maintenance Funding.
  - BP-5210, Statement of Student Responsibility. Item 1 of the policy content has been incorporated into the preamble of the Student Code of Conduct; however, a question arose as to whether Item 2 of the policy is covered. Scott Gray advised that he has reviewed the Code of Conduct and concluded that Item 2 is properly covered.
- Board Agenda Worksheets. The Governance Committee reviewed and discussed the worksheets and reported that the agenda has been following the one-page worksheet and is working well. The agenda needs to remain flexible so it can change as needed. The Governance Committee also recommends that items on the agenda that require a decision should be placed together on the agenda to accommodate the press. The Governance Committee also recommended the January 2025 Board of Governors meeting agenda include the Conflict-of-Interest

Statement for discussion regarding the purpose of the statement, situations that may create a conflict of interest, proper channels for disclosure of a conflict of interest, as well as acquiring signatures from the members of the Board of Governors.

- A copy of the Hawkeye Community College's Ends policy was reviewed at the ACCT Leadership Congress meeting that Dirk Petersen attended and the same copy was provided to the Governance Committee. The policy specifically mentions the community, training for community members, and providing learning opportunities to prepare students to enter into their community. The Governance Committee will bring forth their suggestions to pursue adding an item to Northeast's Ends policy that mentions the community and focuses on the region it serves.

7.1.1 Review was given to Item #6 of GP-14, Special Rules of Order, related to the Board annually electing from among its members a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary, each to serve for one year. Nominations may be submitted to the Chairperson in writing prior to the meeting or may be submitted orally at the meeting. No member may serve more than three successive one-year terms in any one officer position. Officer elections will occur during the December 12, 2024 Board of Governors meeting.

## 7.2 Ownership Linkage Committee

- Del Ames, Chairperson of the Ownership Linkage Committee, provided the following written reports:
  - 2024 Ownership Linkage Committee Annual Overview.
  - West Point Roundtable Discussion Overview.
  - South Sioux City Roundtable Discussion Overview.

The reports, in their entirety, are included in today's Teams site.

## 7.3 NCCA Report

Northeast Community College did an excellent job of serving as the host for the 2024 NCCA Annual Meeting. Sunday evening's dinner and awards ceremony was special with Donovan Ellis being recognized with Northeast's Governors Award. The NCCA Annual Meeting on Monday provided informative presentations on NSWERS and Dual Enrollment.

Del Ames has stepped back from serving as one of Northeast's representatives on the NCCA Board of Directors. Pat Wojcik has volunteered to serve in that role for the remainder of 2024. Nicole Sedlacek is currently Northeast's second representative on the NCCA Board of Directors, with the remainder of Northeast's Board of Governors serving as alternates.

Pat Wojcik serves on the ACCT Governance and Bylaws Committee and attended the Leadership Congress in Seattle. Pat accompanied Steve Anderson to the ACCT Board Meeting, which provided an opportunity for Steve to introduce Pat to fellow board members. Dr. Leah Barrett, Steve Anderson, and Dirk Petersen, along with Hawkeye Community College president, Dr. Todd Holcomb, presented on *Cultivating Excellence in the Board/President Relationship*. The presentation focused on the Carver Model of Policy Governance. The presentation was excellent and well received.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENT on Monitoring or Committee Reports**

Chairperson Scherer advised that individuals commenting on Monitoring or Committee Reports are allowed three minutes each. No constituents were in attendance to address the board with a public comment.

**9. BOARD EDUCATION AND INFORMATION****9.1 Technology Services Report****9.1.1 Security strategy update**

Projects that have been completed this past year include:

- Implemented additional security features for the Northeast website.
- Deployed Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution for log collection, analysis, and threat detection.
- Added Defender for Identity which provides event correlation between on premise and cloud services.
- Deployed immutable, encrypted data backups.
- Deployed new internet service for the residence halls that includes authentication and personal area networks.
- New, more secure remote access solutions for staff and vendors.
- Completed GLBA and PCI DSS security assessments.
- Overview of upcoming strategy initiatives.

Northeast's servers are protected through a series of located doors with limited accessibility, security cameras with triggers, sensors, etc.

Equipment in our server rooms provides backup for other schools/institutions, ESU's, etc. and Dr. Barrett reported that this has helped to drive down the cost of internet for Northeast Nebraska.

Renee Peters advised that controls have been put in place for data loss prevention, including creating policies and providing training to employees.

**9.2 Student Services Report****9.2.1 Annual Enrollment Report**

Review was given to regional, national, and statewide enrollment trends. Over the past ten years, Northeast has had a single digit decline in enrollments while the other community colleges have had double digit declines. Northeast Community College also has one of the highest retention rates of community colleges. In addition, Northeast's graduation rate remains consistently higher than the other Nebraska community colleges.

The County Fact Sheets are available in today's Teams site.

Amanda Nipp will go into more detail regarding enrollment during the December meeting.

**9.3 Administrative Services Report****9.3.1 Monthly Financial Report and Paid Bills for October 31, 2024**

Review was given to the Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes, and corresponding entries providing a comprehensive review of the monthly financial activities.



Expenditures of significance within the Paid Bills report include payments to Sterling Computers for computers used across campus; Applied Connective Technology for new internet access in the residence halls; Blackbaud, Inc., which is accounting software for the Foundation; and Embers, Inc., a travel reimbursement software; and HCI and Hausmann for construction payments.

9.3.2 Nebraska Community College Insurance Trust (NCCIT) membership

The Nebraska Community College Insurance Trust (NCCIT) is a risk management pool that was organized in May 1995 and formed to self-insure, on a group basis, coverage for property, general liability, errors and omissions, and worker's compensation. NCCIT is operated by a Board of Trustees consisting of one representative from each signatory College, utilizing a committee structure for governance, operation, and oversight providing involvement by all members of the Board. The Trust contracts with the Nebraska Risk Management Association (NRMA) to administer the program.

9.3.3 2025-2026 tuition, fees, room, and board rates

Review and discussion regarding tuition and fee rates, along with peer institution comparative data was held during the October meeting. Recommendation is to increase the tuition rate by \$2.00 per credit hour and increase the Technology Fee by \$1.00 per credit hour.

These increases represent a 1.85% increase in the tuition rate for resident and border state students, and a 1.32% increase in the tuition rate for non-resident students. Total tuition and fee cost increases are 2.34% for resident and border state students, and 1.75% for non-resident students. These increases will help offset projected decreases in tuition and fee revenue due to projected decreases in credit hours for non-dual credit students.

Recommendation to increase the average housing and meal plan rates from \$4,570 to \$4,707 for 2025-2026. This represents an average housing and meal plan increase of 3.01%. The College incurs an annual 4% increase in the cost of meals provided by Chartwells pursuant to a contractual provision which caps the annual cost at that amount. There has been no increase in the average housing and meal plan cost since 2022-2023. The College has been able to absorb the annual Chartwells increase for the last three years by reducing housing rates and increasing meal plan rates while keeping the overall cost to the student the same. An increase is needed to maintain current funding levels as we plan for necessary preventive maintenance and the replacement of equipment for the residence halls and cafeteria in the next several years. The cost of living on campus is comparable with the cost of living off campus.

Board members discussed not losing the site of affordability but to also position the College to be able to increase tuition in the future should the State be unable to uphold its funding commitments. We also want to maintain the quality of instruction and services that we currently provide. It is important to educate our service area that we are not receiving property taxes and that the College's funding is coming from the State's Community College Future Fund (CCFF).

Board members reasoned that small, gradual increases to tuition and fees are preferable to large hikes. It was also noted that while inflation has driven up the cost of most goods and services, the recommended tuition and fee increases for 2025-2026 are relatively low in comparison.

Dr. Barrett explained that Northeast's enrollment has remained steady, which has provided stability for Northeast Community College. However, other community colleges in the state are now seeing enrollment growth following years of decrease and the Community College Future Fund provides additional funding if enrollment growth exceeds 3.5%.

#### 10. PUBLIC COMMENT on Board Education, Information, and Items for Decision

Chairperson Scherer advised that individuals commenting on Board Education, Information, and Items for Decision are allowed three minutes each. No constituents were in attendance to address the board with a public comment.

#### 11. ITEMS FOR DECISION

11.1 **MOTION** by Donovan Ellis, **SECONDED** by Del Ames to **APPROVE** the Monthly Financial Report for October 31, 2024.

**Voting Yes:** Davies, Ellis, Nelson, Scherer, Sibbel, Wojcik, and Ames

**Voting No:** None

**Absent:** Anderson, Petersen, Robinson, and Sedlacek **MOTION CARRIED**

11.2 **MOTION** by Terry Nelson, **SECONDED** by Pat Wojcik to **APPROVE** the claims paid in October 2024, with board members abstaining from payment to themselves.

**Voting Yes:** Ellis, Nelson, Scherer, Sibbel, Wojcik, Ames, and Davies

**Voting No:** None

**Absent:** Anderson, Petersen, Robinson, and Sedlacek **MOTION CARRIED**

11.3 **MOTION** by Donovan Ellis, **SECONDED** by Pat Wojcik to **APPROVE** the Resolution for the Northeast Community College Area to continue its membership in the Nebraska Community College Insurance Trust (NCCIT) for a three-year period commencing on July 1, 2025 and continuing to June 30, 2028.

**Voting Yes:** Nelson, Scherer, Sibbel, Wojcik, Ames, Davies, and Ellis

**Voting No:** None

**Absent:** Anderson, Petersen, Robinson, and Sedlacek **MOTION CARRIED**

- 11.4 **MOTION** by Terry Nelson, **SECONDED** by Del Ames to **APPROVE** the 2025-2026 tuition, fee, room, and board rates as follows:

**Increase tuition rates by \$2.00/credit hour.**

- Resident and border state tuition rate will be \$110.00/credit hour.
- Non-resident tuition rate will be \$153.00/credit hour.

**Increase the Technology Fee by \$1.00/credit hour.**

- Student Services Fee will remain at \$5.00/credit hour.
- Facility Fee will remain at \$9.00/credit hour.
- Facility Fee will be \$7.00/credit hour.

**Housing and Meal Plans.**

- Increase the average housing and meal plan rates from \$4,570 to \$4,707 for 2025-2026.

**Voting Yes:** Scherer, Sibbel, Wojcik, Ames, Davies, Ellis, and Nelson

**Voting No:** None

**Absent:** Anderson, Petersen, Robinson, and Sedlacek **MOTION CARRIED**

- 11.5 **MOTION** by Diane Davies, **SECONDED** by Pat Wojcik to **ACKNOWLEDGE** the Northeast Community College Financial Audit of June 30, 2024 and 2023.

**Voting Yes:** Sibbel, Wojcik, Ames, Davies, Ellis, Nelson, and Scherer

**Voting No:** None

**Absent:** Anderson, Petersen, Robinson, and Sedlacek **MOTION CARRIED**

- 11.6 **MOTION** by Diane Davies, **SECONDED** by Carol Sibbel to **APPOINT** Pat Wojcik as the Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) Board of Directors representative along with Nicole Sedlacek for the remainder of 2024, with the remainder of the board serving as alternates.

**Voting Yes:** Wojcik, Ames, Davies, Ellis, Nelson, Scherer, and Sibbel

**Voting No:** None

**Absent:** Anderson, Petersen, Robinson, and Sedlacek **MOTION CARRIED**

12. **Board of Governors Meeting Self-Evaluation**

A self-evaluation of today's meeting was conducted and is recorded in the November 14th Board of Governors Teams site.

13. **OTHER**

Chairperson Scherer acknowledged board member birthdays for the month of November. He also extended his appreciation to staff for their involvement in today's meeting.

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 4:48 p.m., there being no further business to discuss, it was **UNANIMOUSLY PASSED BY VOICE VOTE** to **ADJOURN** the meeting.

*Minutes prepared by Diane Reikofski, Recording Secretary.*

---

Jeff Scherer, Chairperson  
Northeast Board of Governors

---

Donovan H. Ellis, Vice-Chairperson  
Northeast Board of Governors