EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WORK SESSION

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

EWC Dolores Kaufman Board Room

Attendance

Present:

Members:Kurt Sittner, Rick Vonburg, Jim Willox, Bob Baumgartner, Katherine Patrick, Jackie VanMark, and Doug Mercer

Absent:

Members:

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairman VanMark called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

2. Approval of the Work Session Minutes as Presented

The minutes were approved as presented.

Minutes Board of Trustees Work Session May 12, 2026.pdf

3. Strategic Planning for EWC

3.1 **Financial Planning to Support Strategic Priorities:**
Vice President of Administrative Service Patrick Korell
CPA Cheryl Heath

Vice President of Administrative Services, Patrick Korell opened the session by reviewing EWC's mission, values, and three strategic pillars. Rhetorical questions were posed to trustees about institutional identity, direction, and legacy.

- Pillar 1 focuses on cultivating student success, with sub-pillars covering academic outcomes, student support frameworks, and facilities/technology investment. The goal is a 5% increase in graduation and certificate attainment.
- Pillar 2 addresses community engagement, aiming to strengthen regional partnerships and become a cultural/recreational hub, with a 40% increase in community interaction as the target.
- Pillar 3 covers employee attraction, retention, and development, including hiring a full-time HR professional, implementing Vector Solutions training, and automating

20 processes.

- Policy 1.1 affirms that the Board of Trustees manages the business and affairs of EWC, connects the community to the college, and is committed to transparent, inclusive governance.
- Regulation 1.9 requires an annual Board retreat to review the strategic plan, linking planning directly to the budget process.

Financial Consultant Cheryl Heath presented a multi-slide financial analysis covering revenue/expenditure trends, peer comparisons, auxiliary fund performance, CFI ratios, and risk assessment.

- The preliminary FY2027 budget is $18,925,055, with carryover just under $19,000. Overall revenue has increased only 6% over four years, effectively flat when accounting for enrollment and cost increases.
- Using NACUBO functional categories, Cheryl explained that EWC's instructional expenditures (28% of Fund 10) are below the system average (~35%), while scholarships and remote location costs are above average.
- EWC's completed credit hour rate (91%) exceeds the system average (86%), indicating strong student success outcomes.
- Advisor Jim Willox raised the question of per-capita cost implications given EWC's status as the smallest enrollment institution in the system. Cheryl Heath confirmed that fixed costs divided over fewer students inflate overhead ratios, but noted that percentage-based comparisons remain valid for structural analysis.
- EWC's CFI analysis shows a viability ratio well above benchmark, net operating revenue ratio at benchmark, and a slightly low return on net assets ratio. Recommended monitoring viability ratio and ROA as key indicators.
- Cheryl Heath's Auxiliary fund analysis revealed a net surplus of $117,664 across all auxiliaries. Food service has a healthy fund balance despite a $137,000 loss in FY25 and a $320,037 transfer in from Fund 10. The student center carries a deficit of approximately $293,382.
- Chairman VanMark questioned whether the $320,000 transfer into food service should have been allocated to the student center, given the co-mingling of meal plans and staff across both operations
- Cheryl Heath clarified that the recommendation is to reallocate fund balances (e.g., from food service surplus to student center deficit) rather than injecting general fund money, pending auditor consultation.
- Ms. Heath's recommendation is to move budget entry into Colleague at the start of the fiscal year to enable robust forecasting and reporting tools, rather than the current practice of entering budgets post-board approval.
- VP Korell confirmed the shift to zero-sum budgeting over the past several years has improved expense classification, reducing over-expenditures from approximately $1M+ to near-balanced.

VP Patrick Korell reviewed Policy 2.15 and Administrative Regulation 2.15.2, outlining the annual budget cycle and its alignment with the strategic plan.

- Policy 2.15 states the budget's purpose is to align annual operations with the strategic plan, optimize limited resources, and serve as the college's formal financial plan. The Board holds final authority for budget adoption.
- The annual budget cycle includes department-level preparation, VP prioritization, presidential review, preliminary budget presentation, and final adoption by the third Wednesday of July.
- AR 2.15.2 outlines that August–September is used for budget material preparation, September–October for strategic initiative review with the Board at a retreat, and subsequent months for budget development aligned to those directives.
- VP Korell emphasized that the budget is the financial expression of strategic priorities — where resources are allocated reflects institutional values and board direction.

3.2 Chairman VanMark called for a 10 minute break at 2:39 pm.

Chairman VanMark called the meeting back to order at 2:51 pm.

3.3 **Strategic Goal Setting:**

President Dr. Jeffry Hawes

President Dr. Hawes presented a restructured goals framework developed with input from Cheryl Heath and VP Korell.

- Dr. Hawes explained his goals framework is organized around three categories: aggressive growth, rigorous compliance, and financial viability.
- Enrollment goals include a 10% FTE/headcount increase by FY2030 (approximately 2.5% per year), improved fall-to-spring retention, and high school conversion rates.
- Grant development goal is set at $10 million over four years. A $570,000 grant has already been secured, and a healthcare component of a $200M state grant could yield $1M–$5M annually.
- Compliance goals were simplified to a blanket standard of maintaining all accreditations and improving management strategies across the college.
- Financial viability goals include a fee structure review process, regular RFP practices, operating reserves (1% unrestricted revenue expansion, days of cash-on-hand tracking), self-funded innovation (3% of expenditures allocated to innovation), and a 50% reduction in operating subsidies to auxiliary/other areas by FY2030.
- Dr. Hawes announced that "President's Goals" will transition to "Board/Organizational Goals," to be vetted with both the board and internal staff before August presentation.
- Financial Consultant Cheryl Heath recommended that KPIs be standardized units of measure reported to the board, with dashboards built around the most critical indicators rather than exhaustive lists.

3.4 **Internships and Library Services Plan:**

President Dr. Jeffry Hawes

Executive Dean of Academics Dr. Debbie Ochsner

Executive Dean of Academics, Dr. Debbie Ochsner presented the current state and future vision of EWC's internship programs across agriculture, business, marketing, and other disciplines.

- Agriculture internships launched in Spring 2026 with variable credit (1–7 credit hours). Four interns accepted full-time employment with their internship sponsors.
- Marketing internships produced 12 students generating dozens of live and recorded broadcasts, providing approximately $4,000 in billable services.
- Each credit hour of internship includes 3 faculty contact hours and 37 field hours (up to 259 hours for a 7-credit internship), with structured learning agreements, site visits, midterm/final evaluations, and reflective presentations.
- New courses being developed include Business Administration 2470 (variable credit, 1–7 hours) and a Professionalism in the Workplace course (HMDB 1510 updated; new BSAD 1491 as a prerequisite/co-requisite for all internships). Employers report satisfaction with technical skills but cite dependability, communication, work ethic, professional behavior, and attire as key deficiencies — directly addressed by the new professionalism course.
- The library is being reimagined as a 21st-century hub with internship opportunities in information management, business (coffee station model), and technology support. A large component of this upgrade will be dependent on the use of interns to bring new visions of the library's future possibilities.
- Advisor Jim Willox noted the ACT Ready Communities initiative in Douglas/Goshen County as a parallel workforce readiness effort and suggested connecting with that program. He highlighted the new workforce training facility in Douglas as well-suited for internship integration, particularly for trades and two-year degree programs.
- Dr. Hawes suggested the board consider requiring all programs to have internship components as a strategic goal.

3.5 **Eastern Wyoming College and EWC Foundation Advancement: Director Lisa Johnson**

EWC Foundation Director Lisa Johnson presented the Foundation's current status and three strategic advancement strategies.

- The Foundation total assets have grown from $15.5M (2019) to $25.8M. Staff has grown from 2 to 3 employees. Scholarship awards have doubled from $160,000 to $350,000, with an additional $233,625 in outside awards passed through.
- The ATEC building campaign is complete. The Douglas workforce training facility campaign has raised 47% of its $1.5M goal. The rodeo campaign (Phase 1: $4M) is 25% complete.
- The state matching fund of $1M was received, with $100,000 designated for CDL, Ag, Nursing, and Rodeo scholarships.
- Director Johnson defined "advancement" as broader than fundraising — encompassing philanthropy, workforce/economic partnerships, marketing/communications, alumni/community engagement, and grant development.
- She listed three proposed strategies: (1) Secure high-impact investments through

project feasibility analysis before launching capital campaigns; (2) Optimize scholarship resources for maximum student impact, targeting 100% disbursement of budgeted scholarship funds (currently at 80%); (3) Cultivate a major gift pipeline using data-driven prospect dashboards.

- Dr. Hawes referenced the foundation's 100% scholarship disbursement rate as a formal goal under financial viability in the President's Goal Sheet. Jim Willox asked whether 80% disbursement is already an improvement over prior years; Lisa Johnson confirmed it is trending upward.

3.6 Dr. Hawes briefly reviewed the formal annual strategic review cycle as defined in AR 1.9.1.

- The four-step cycle includes: (1) Fall Board retreat to review prior year accomplishments and set strategic priorities; (2) Strategic action plans from functional areas due by February 28; (3) June Board retreat to review the Strategic Plans; (4) July, Budget presentation aligned to new strategic priorities.
- Dr. Hawes acknowledged the process has not been fully executed in prior years due to internal readiness gaps, but the goal is to run the full cycle beginning this year.

4. Adjournment

Chairman VanMark called for a motion to adjourn.

Moved by: Rick Vonburg; seconded by: Katherine Patrick

Motion Carried

Jackie Van Mark

Jackie Van Mark, Chairman

Rick Vonburg

Rick Vonburg, Vice Chairman

Lynda Dean

Lynda Dean, Executive Assistant