EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 14, 2026

EWC Dolores Kaufman Board Room

Attendance

Present:

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

Absent:

Members: Katherine Patrick

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

   Chair VanMark called the meeting to order at 5:49 pm.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

   The Agenda was approved as presented.

3. **Introductions**

   Field Trip for Southwest exploration:

   Dr. Ellen Creagar and Students

   Immediately following graduation in May, a group of EWC students and faculty Ellen Creagar embarked on an 1,871-mile educational journey across Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah.

   - Students visited nine historic and cultural landmarks—including Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon, and Taos Pueblo—bringing classroom lessons on Indigenous history, architecture, and water conservation to life.
   - The trip was funded by the College Foundation with fee waivers provided by the National Park Service.

4. **Public Comment**

5. **Faculty Contracts:**

   Vice President of Administrative Services Patrick Korell and

   HR director Catherine Conard

   HR Director Catherine Conard formally welcomed four highly qualified professionals to the EWC team and introduced them to the Board:

- Zane Mackey (Agriculture): A passionate youth mentor and livestock expert who will coach EWC's agriculture show and judging teams. He has a background in livestock showing and judging, has volunteered at EWC events (including the Onyx and Gold show), and is pursuing a degree at the University of Wyoming.
- Dr. Andrew Lincowski (Director of Institutional Effectiveness): Transitioning from his role as math instructor, Dr. Lincowski (who holds a PhD in astronomy/astrobiology) will lead data analysis to guide smart, student-first campus decisions.
- Thomas Bakupog (Chemistry): A dynamic instructor holding a PhD from the University of Wyoming.
- Peggy Cheney (Anatomy & Physiology): A highly experienced Wyoming educator who will support EWC's nursing, health sciences, and veterinary technology students.

6. Administrative Reports

6.1 **Human Resources Director Catherine Conard and**
Vice President of Administrative Services Patrick Korell:
CFO / Associate Vice President Search

Director Conard presented a detailed recruitment and advertising plan for the open CFO/AVP position.

- The position has been posted on PeopleAdmin, Facebook, and is being distributed via JobElephant. Planned advertising includes Higher Ed Jobs (VIP upgrade), Chronicle of Higher Education Careers, NACUBO, LinkedIn, Indeed, Casper Star Tribune, and Cowboy State Daily.
- The timeline is candidate-dependent, with immediate screening upon application. A confidentiality agreement will be required of all search committee members.
- A total advertising budget was presented; the position has already received at least one application.

6.2 **Cyber Security Grant:**
Chief Information Officer Auke Daane and
Vice President of Administrative Services Patrick Korell

CIO Auke Daane presented details of a FEMA cybersecurity grant award.

- EWC applied for approximately \$600,000 and was awarded 100% — \$574,630 — representing about 60% of the annual IT budget. The grant is supplemental and will run for approximately three years, with an ambitious internal goal to complete all planned work within 12 months.
- The grant focuses on enhancing security posture and reducing total cost of ownership so EWC can sustain improvements after the grant period ends. A separate budget has been created for grant expenditures to maintain clean financial reporting.
- Specific plans were not disclosed publicly to avoid creating a security target. The CIO offered to present details in executive session or via one-on-one guided tours of the IT facilities for interested trustees.
- CIO Daane noted that 2025/2026 FEMA grant funds are becoming available and EWC will investigate applying for additional funds, potentially for security systems

such as cameras and access controls.

- Advisor Jim Willox commended the grant's focus on sustainability beyond the grant period..

6.3 **Facilities Update:**

Vice President of Administrative Services Patrick Korell

Vice President Patrick Korell presented a comprehensive update on the gymnasium roof and floor repair following storm damage.

- The roof has been replaced, new roof uses 18-gauge steel (sourced faster than originally planned 20-gauge), two layers of foam insulation, Densdeck, and 60-mil rubber membrane with heated seams. It features a built-in slope for drainage, is rated for 110 mph winds, and carries a 20-year (potentially 25-year) warranty.
- A floor replacement contract of approximately $335,000 was signed, covering tear-off, new floor installation, and bleacher removal/replacement. Insurance is expected to cover the floor and roof costs; the $250,000 deductible has been noted.
- Korell: The retractable bleacher system was removed as part of the floor contract. New bleachers are being sourced from three vendors.
- Floor design options (AI-generated concepts) were shared with the Board, featuring updated Lancer branding and Torrington, Wyoming markings. Final design recommendations will come from coaches and relevant staff.
- Director Tom Popilek saved approximately $40,000–$45,000 on the HVAC unit replacement by sourcing it for under $25,000 versus a quoted $77,000.
- Additional facilities work includes new carpet in Eastern Hall hallways, laminate flooring in the Student Center, IACUC compliance improvements in Vet Tech, and investigation of recurring weekend electrical phase loss affecting HVAC systems.

6.4 **Vice President of Student and Academic Services John Hansen:**

Rural Healthcare Initiative

Vice President John Hansen provided an overview of Wyoming's Rural Health Initiative grant opportunity.

- Wyoming received $205 million in federal funds for a rural health initiative. Approximately 20% ($40 million) is expected to be directed to higher education. EWC's application deadline is August 2nd.
- EWC's primary focus areas are workforce education pipelines (nursing: CNA → LPN → RN; behavioral health; EMS/EMT/firefighting) and community health promotion (5K/10K events, walking pathways, wellness programs).
- EWC covers approximately one-third to one-fourth of the state and is well-positioned as a major partner. A sub-awardee management structure will be established within approximately one year for community health promotion funds.

Financial Report:

Interim CFO Ron Laher

Interim CFO Ron Laher presented the FY2026 financial results.

- Operating fund revenue reached 98% of the $18,046,000 budget ($17.37 million recorded).

State appropriation (62% of revenue) was slightly short due to recapture redistribution. Tuition and fees (26% of budget) were at 99.98%. June local revenue receipts had not yet been recorded.

- Operating fund expenses were at 97% of budget ($17.5 million recorded), with approximately $50,000 in additional bills expected. The college may finish FY2026 at or near revenue-neutral or slightly positive.
- Auxiliary fund revenue was at 99.8% of the $1,974,000 budget, boosted by $161,000 in bookstore revenue (budgeted at $13,000). Motor pool was $86,000 over budget due to major bus repairs.

President's Report:

Dr. Jeffry Hawes

Dr. Hawes presented a review of the Board-approved strategic goals from August 2025 and associated dashboard data.

- Three strategic pillars were reviewed: (1) Increase graduation and certificate obtainment by 5%; (2) Increase community interaction and engagement by 40%; (3) Implement innovative technology to automate 20 processes.
- Pillar 1 — Enrollment dashboards show a closing gap between fall and spring semester credit hours over the past 4–5 semesters, with significant positive trends in course success rates (86.8%) and fall-to-fall retention rates. The college is up 5% in enrollment for fall 2026 compared to the same point last year, and up 12% over the past two years.
- Pillar 2 — Community engagement initiatives include CDL programming in 4 counties, hosting regional basketball tournaments, prom and homecoming events, and expanded K-12 partnerships.
- Pillar 3 — Over 20 Colleague system processes have been automated. Approximately 80% of identified processes remain to be automated.
- The $1 million Foundation matching funds goal was achieved under Director Lisa Johnson's leadership.
- Grant development goal of $2 million per year with 10% overhead was not fully met, though overhead targets were achieved. Grant totals have grown from a base of approximately $3 million in federal grants annually.
- HLC accreditation visit is scheduled for 2030–2031. Dr. Farley is working on assessment findings with Dr. Ochsner and VP Hansen.
- Class waitlist management has been identified as a barrier to enrollment; Dr. Ochsner is actively reviewing and uncapping waitlisted classes.
- Dr. Andrew Lincowski will work with faculty and staff to analyze data and identify the specific causes of enrollment and retention trends.
- A brief overview of a Memorandum of Understanding with Converse County was provided. The MOU allows canvassing and voting to occur on the Douglas campus. It was pending legal review at the time of the meeting.
- Advisor Jim Willox clarified that the MOU covers both the upcoming primary (approximately 30 days away) and the fall general election.

7. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Chair VanMark called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Moved by: Bob Baumgartner; seconded by: Doug Mercer

Motion Carried

7.1 Ratification of Board of Trustee Minutes June 9, 2026:
Administrative Regulation 1.2.1
Minutes Special Session June 9, 2026.pdf
Minutes Board of Trustees Work Session - Jun 09 2026.pdf
Minutes Board of Trustees June 9, 2026.pdf

7.2 Ratification of Expenditure Report:
BR #1.pdf

7.3 Ratification of Reviewed and Updated Administrative Regulations:
Board Policy 1.11
AR 1.0.1 Strategic Pillars, Objectives and Goals.pdf
3.2.1a Determining Faculty Qualification Guidelines.pdf
3.3.1 Continuing Contract Tenure.pdf
AR 4.4.2 Accepting Transfer - Alternative Credit.pdf
AR 5.0.1 Admission of Students.pdf
5.0.2 Validation of Transcripts.pdf
5.1.1 Satisfactory Academic Progress.pdf
5.1.2 Return to Title IV.pdf
AR 5.2.1 Withdrawal from Individual Classes and College.pdf
AR 5.7.1 FERPA Process.pdf

7.4 Ratification of Zane Mackey - Show / Judging Coach
BR #2.pdf

7.5 Ratification of Dr. Andrew Lincowski - Director of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
BR #3.pdf

7.6 Ratification of Contract for Thomas Bakupog for Chemistry Instructor
BR # 4.pdf

7.7 Ratification of Peggy Cheney for Anatomy & Physiology Instructor
BR # 5.pdf

8. Board Approval of Action Items

8.1 Approval of Fiscal Year 2027 Budget
BR #6.pdf

Chair VanMark called for a motion to approve the FY 2027 Budget.
Moved by: Rick Vonburg; seconded by: Julie Newman

Motion Carried

8.2 Approval of Fiscal Year 2026 Transfers of Unexpected/Unencumbered Appropriations and Requested Budget Authority Increases: Prepared by Interim CFO Ron Laher

BR #7.pdf

Chair VanMark called for a motion to approve the transfers of FY 2026 funds.

Moved by: Bob Baumgartner; seconded by: Doug Mercer

Motion Carried

8.3 Approval for the Purchase of Nursing Training Aids to be Purchased, Not to Exceed $45,000.00 Utilizing WIP Grant Funds

BR # 8.pdf

Chair VanMark called for a motion to approve the purchase of nursing Aids using WI Grant funds.

Moved by: Doug Mercer; seconded by: Rick Vonburg

Motion Carried

8.4 Approval of Master Lease with Goshen County School District

BR #9.pdf

Chair VanMark called for a motion to approve the Lease agreement with Goshen County School District.

Moved by: Julie Newman; seconded by: Bob Baumgartner

Motion Carried

8.5 Approval of Converse County MOU

BR #10.pdf

Chair VanMark called for a motion to approve the MOU with Converse County, pending Legal Review.

Moved by: Rick Vonburg; seconded by: Doug Mercer

Motion Carried

9. Election of Board Secretary

The Board will elect a Secretary to replace Randy Adams

Chair VanMark called to opened the floor for nominations. Trustee Vonberg nominated Trustee Baumgartner.

Moved by: Rick Vonburg; seconded by: Doug Mercer

Motion Carried

10. Department Reports

10.1 **Construction Trades Update**

Converse County Advisor: Jim Willox

Converse County Advisor Jim Willox provided a brief update on the Douglas campus construction project.

- The project remains on schedule and on budget. Two change orders were processed within contingency: (1) relocation of a fire hydrant to meet city code; (2) addition of concrete to a covered storage area on the northwest side of the building (enabling forklift use and vehicle protection from hail).
- Economic Development Administration approval was delayed approximately 5 months due to internal federal review but has been resolved. Covenants have been located and need to be recorded; the legal description was accepted by EDA.
- Jim Willox commended On-site project manager Rob for representing EWC's interests effectively.

11. Trustee Topics

12. Recommendation: Move into Executive Session for the Purpose of Evaluating the College President:

(a) A governing body of an agency may hold executive sessions not open to the public:

(ii) To consider the appointment, employment, right to practice or dismissal of a public officer, professional person or employee, or to hear complaints or charges brought against an employee, professional person or officer, unless the employee, professional person or officer requests a public hearing.

(x) To consider accepting or tendering offers concerning wages, salaries, benefits and terms of employment during all negotiations including meetings of the state loan and investment board to receive education regarding and to interview investment managers;

Chair VanMark called for a motion to move into Executive Session
Moved by: Kurt Sittner; seconded by: Bob Baumgartner

Motion Carried

Chair VanMark called to move out of Executive Session at 8:16 pm.

13. Adjournment

Chair VanMark called for a motion to adjourn at 8:17 pm.
Moved by: Rick Vonburg; seconded by: Doug Mercer

Motion Carried

Jackie Van Mark, Chairman

Robert Baumgartner, Secretary

Lynda Dean, Executive Assistant