# Board of Trustees

**Date:** September 8, 2026 **Start Time:** 5:45 PM MDT **End Time:** 7:45 PM MDT

## Attendance

| Name | Present |
|---|---|
| Jackie Van Mark | X |
| Kathryn Patrick | X |
| Rick Vonburg | X |
| Bob Baumgartner | X |
| Jim Willox | X |
| Kurt Sittner | X |
| Doug Mercer | X |
| Julie Newman | X |

# 1. Call Meeting to Order

**Led by:** Jackie VanMark

Chair VanMark called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM MDT.

# 2. Approval of the Agenda

**Led by:** Jackie VanMark

The agenda was presented with a notable modification: the Academic Calendars action item (7a) was amended to limit approval to Academic Year 2027–2028 only (Fall 2027, Spring 2028, and Summer 2028). The remaining calendars for 2028–2029 and 2029–2030 were pulled from tonight's agenda to allow for further internal process review and will be brought back at the October board meeting.

- Motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Kathryn Patrick and seconded by Bob Baumgartner.
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

# 3. Introductions

## 3a. AVCA Recognition of Volleyball Team

The volleyball coaching staff and team were introduced and recognized for several significant accomplishments from the prior season and early in the current season:

- Eastern Wyoming College is one of only **eight two-year colleges** nationally to receive the **AVCA/AT&T Academic Award**.
- Team GPA last year: **3.54**

- Academic honors: 4 First Team Academic All-Americans, 2 Second Team Academic All-Americans
- Returner **Lola Hughes** earned Third Team All-American honors last season.
- Current record is 5–9; however, 7 of those losses came against nationally ranked opponents. The team holds the **5th toughest schedule in the nation** per Massey Ratings.
- **Julia Rivera** was voted Region Offensive Player of the Week.
- A teammate was voted Region Defensive Player of the Week; Julia was also nominated for National Player of the Week.
- The team has been invited to top national tournaments, drawing attention from defending national champion Miami Dade.

Team members introduced themselves:

| Name | Hometown | Year | Position | Major |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lola Hughes | Las Vegas, NV | Sophomore | Setter / Captain | Vet Tech |
| Lauren Botters | Wisconsin | Sophomore | Middle Blocker / Captain | Biology |
| Piper | Las Vegas, NV | Redshirt Freshman | Outside Hitter | General Studies |
| Aman | Brazil | Sophomore | Setter | Interdisciplinary Studies (Computer Engineering) |
| Julie Rivera | Brazil | Sophomore | Outside Hitter | General Studies |
| Martha | Poland | — | Outside Hitter | Interdisciplinary Studies (Pre-Dentistry) |
| Kira | Lehigh, UT | Freshman | Setter | Interdisciplinary Studies |
| Taryn | Payson, UT | Freshman | Outside Hitter | Interdisciplinary Studies |
| Anna | Bosnia & Herzegovina | Freshman | Libero | Business |
| Maria | Romania | — | Middle Blocker | Business Administration |
| Ava | Maui, HI | — | Outside Hitter | General Studies |
| Thalia Diatola | Roy, UT / Hawaii | — | — | — (absent, ill) |

*Note: Thalia Diatola was absent due to illness. Her aunt is a two-time Olympian and was First Assistant Coach for the USA Women's National Team at the Paris Olympics; she is now Head Coach of the Salt Lake City professional team.*

EWC Foundation Director **Lisa Johnson** then introduced **Tessa Nichols**, an agribusiness student from Sumner, Nebraska, who (along with welding student Braden Durlan) received a **full-ride scholarship from 1876 Resources**, including resolution of any outstanding student debt. Tessa joined the meeting virtually and expressed her gratitude; she plans to become a farm and ranch loan officer after graduation.

# 4. Public Comment

No public comment was submitted or offered this evening.

# 5. Administrative Reports

## 5a. Human Resources Update — HR Director Catherine Conard

**CFO / AVP Search:**

- Virtual first-round interviews are scheduled for this Thursday and the following Monday.
- Strong candidate pool; committee members thanked for their service.
- Second-round campus interviews to follow; the board will have further visibility into the process.

**New Faculty Introductions & Ratifications:**

- **Ashley Nollette** — Full-Time Assistant Professor of Cosmetology: EWC alumna (graduated 2015); returning after completing her instructor certification approximately two years ago. Previously served on a three-quarter-time contract; promoted to full-time this year. From Hyannis, Nebraska; currently resides in Lingle, WY.
- **Blaine Magnuson** — Agriculture Technology Instructor: Background in equipment operation (industrial construction and agriculture), pen riding, and advisory roles with two local co-ops. Grew up near Lake McConaughy; resides between Torrington and Douglas with his wife and three children. Focused on developing the program to serve both new workforce entrants and existing workers looking to advance skills.
- **Wendy Cecil** — Three-Quarter-Time Agronomy Instructor: Local to Torrington; graduated from Torrington High School; received degrees from UW and UNL. Spent 20+ years at the University of Wyoming before taking early retirement and returning to the family farm. Extensive research background in agronomy; excited to contribute to the growing ag program at EWC.

## 5b. Board Policy Revisions — Lynda Dean

Three policy revisions were presented for first reading:

1. **Board Policy 3.14 — Compliance with Federal and State Laws:** Previous version served double duty as both a compliance policy and a no-smoking-on-campus policy. Revised to be a clean, focused statement of minimum compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations. Smoking regulations have been moved to an existing administrative regulation.
2. **Board Policy 4.4 — Transfer Credit:** A paragraph on "alternative options for credit" was removed because it did not align with current regulations. A typographical error was caught by a trustee (Wyoming Statute reference missing a digit); to be corrected before the 45-day public comment period opens. Key discussion: Trustees asked whether credit for prior learning (military service, life experience, work experience) would be preserved. VP Hanson confirmed that a formal Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) framework is being developed over the next six months, including an administrative regulation that fully outlines the process, documentation requirements, and how credits are transcripted. A trustee suggested that after the administrative reg is developed, the board may want to affirmatively adopt a policy statement endorsing (including military and life experience) to make clear the intent is not to eliminate the option but to implement it properly.

3. **Board Policy 6.12 — Animal Care:** Major structural revision prompted by work with the USDA IACUC process and the college's AVMA-accredited Vet Tech program. Previously, the policy extended USDA-regulated animal welfare protocols to every animal that touched campus—including dogs walked by community members, animals in dorms, and rodeo livestock—which was both unenforceable and unnecessary. The revised policy more precisely defines which animals are regulated (consistent with USDA/IACUC requirements) and which are not. Structural changes: Dr. Mitchell now serves as Program Director/facility DVM for the Vet Tech program; Dr. Bittner has been appointed as Attending Veterinarian (USDA/IACUC); Goshen Veterinary is under contract as an expanded resource. IACUC committee has been expanded to include Dr. Gobles (Goshen Veterinary), Dr. Steve Paisley (UW Extension), Dudley Booth, and the local high school principal as non-affiliated members. A separate animal use policy for the Ag department (outside USDA regulation) is being developed. Policy was reviewed by Dr. Bittner and aligned with USDA recommendations before coming to the board.

## 5c. Financial Report — Interim CFO Ron Laher

**As of August 31, 2026:**

- **Operational Fund:** Amended budget: $18,521,000 (reduced by $42,000 previously allocated to auxiliary bookstore support; deemed unnecessary after post-budget review). Revenue recorded year-to-date: $4,970,000 (~27% of budget). Expenditures year-to-date: $2,001,660 — on track, within budget. Next state aid installment expected in a few weeks (~$3,194,000). Tuition and fee revenue is approximately at par with the prior year, even factoring in the 66.6% tuition increase. Carryover budget: $155,000.
- **Auxiliary Fund:** Revenue and transfers year-to-date: $1,227,077 (~1% above prior year pace). Operational fund transfer to auxiliary: amended to $346,710. Expenditures year-to-date: $368,980 — approximately 27% under the prior year's pace.
- **Investments:** Approximately $5,500,000 in CDs maturing over the next few months. Current CD rate: ~3.6% with local banks. No funds in WyoStar at this time. Cash flow is healthy; sufficient funds on hand to meet payroll and operational expenses.

## 5d. President's Report — Dr. Jeffry Hawes

- **1876 Resources Scholarships:** Highlighted the significance of the full-ride awards to Tessa Nichols and Braden Durlan, including resolution of any existing debt. Credited Foundation Director Lisa Johnson and the student services team. Noted similar donor-driven, student-centered investment has occurred before and expects more as these stories are shared appropriately.
- **Concurrent & Dual Enrollment:** Flagged this as a major opportunity. Approximately 82% of Torrington High School students are already enrolled in concurrent/dual enrollment courses. Outreach center high schools have significantly lower participation. The Legislature has invested in expanding access, and guidance on implementation was only issued weeks ago. Advertising and promotion for spring semester is planned once funding access and compliance details are finalized.

- **Enrollment Update:** Overall fall enrollment: up 6% on the first day of classes. Agriculture department: up 25% in headcount and up 56% in credit hour generation across all AGRA-prefix courses. A press release on ag enrollment growth is expected within the next one to two weeks.
- **Policy Recordkeeping:** Noted ongoing work to verify accurate adoption and revision dates for all board policies. Inconsistencies in historical records are being researched through the document vault; dates will not be changed without proper documentation.
- **Homeschool Outreach:** A vet tech student from Wheatland was identified as coming from a large homeschool family (seven siblings). Dr. Hawes intends to connect the family with information on legislative dollars available for homeschoolers to access college courses.

# 6. Board Approval of the Consent Agenda

**Led by:** Jackie VanMark

Before voting, Trustee Mercer noted a clerical error in the August 11 minutes: a trustee's attendance was incorrectly recorded. Chair VanMark confirmed the error will be corrected.

The consent agenda included the following items:

- **6a.** Approval of August 11, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes (with noted attendance correction)
- **6b.** Ratification of August 2026 Expenditure Report
- **6c.** Ratification of contract with **Ashley Nollette** — Assistant Professor of Cosmetology (*Owner: Catherine Conard*)
- **6d.** Ratification of contract with **Blaine Magnuson** — Agriculture Technology Instructor (*Owner: Catherine Conard*)
- **6e.** Ratification of contract with **Wendy Cecil** — Three-Quarter-Time Agronomy Instructor (*Owner: Catherine Conard*)

- Motion to approve by Kathryn Patrick
- Second by Rick Vonburg
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

# 7. Board Approval of Action Items

**Led by:** Jackie VanMark

## 7a. Approval of Academic Calendars for Academic Year 2027–2028

*Note: Per the agenda amendment approved at the start of the meeting, only the following three calendars were brought forward tonight. Calendars for 2028–2029 and 2029–2030 will return at the October board meeting.*

- Fall 2027 Academic Calendar
- Spring 2028 Academic Calendar
- Summer 2028 Academic Calendar

- Motion: Trustee Newman | Second: Trustee Baumgartner
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

## 7b. Approval of Letter of Financial Responsibility

Formal statement demonstrating financial responsibility in compliance with federal regulations.

- Motion: Trustee Baumgartner | Second: Trustee Mercer
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

## 7c. Approval of First Reading — Board Policy 3.14: Compliance with Federal and State Laws

- Motion: Trustee Patrick | Second: Trustee Baumgartner
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

## 7d. Approval of First Reading — Board Policy 4.4: Transfer Credit

- Motion: Trustee Newman | Second: Trustee Patrick
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

## 7e. Approval of First Reading — Board Policy 6.12: Animal Care

A trustee commented that the prior policy language was both inappropriate and unenforceable, and expressed support for the revised, properly scoped approach developed collaboratively with the IACUC committee and USDA guidance.

- Motion: Trustee Baumgartner | Second: Trustee Vonburg
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

## 7f. Approval of Direct Negotiation with ATI for Nursing

Authorization to directly negotiate and execute a sole-source contract with **Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI)**, not to exceed **$51,000**, for specialized nursing assessment and learning analytics software. ATI provides standardized practice tests and proctored exams that mirror the NCLEX licensure exam format.

Advisor Willox confirmed the contract covers all nursing program locations, including Torrington and outreach sites.

- Motion: Trustee Patrick | Second: Trustee Baumgartner
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

## 7g. Approval of Direct Negotiation with Forkardt Hardinge for Gunsmithing

Authorization to directly negotiate and execute a sole-source contract with **Forkardt Hardinge**, not to exceed **$35,000**, for high-precision chucks for the Gunsmithing Program's lathes. Forkardt

Hardinge is the sole manufacturer capable of providing chucks meeting the exact technical specifications and mounting compatibility for the program's existing machinery.

- Motion: Trustee Baumgartner | Second: Trustee Vonburg
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously.

# 8. Department Reports

## 8a. Update on the Construction Trades Project — Converse County Advisor Jim Willox

**1876 Resources & Legislative Tour:**

- 1876 Resources has been a strong community partner in Converse County.
- The Wyoming County Commissioner Association's annual Legislative Tour (bringing DC staffers from both parties to see Wyoming's multiple-use landscape) was completed in early August, covering Converse, Campbell, Crook, and Sheridan counties. 1876 Resources participated as a sponsor.
- A DC reunion event for tour alumni is held each February to maintain relationships.

**New Building Construction — Douglas Trades & Workforce Development Center:**

- **Proposed building names:** Existing facility to be called the Main Campus; new building to be called the Trades and Workforce Development Center. Donor naming recognition to be incorporated on signage as fundraising efforts continue.
- Construction is on track for **completion by Christmas 2026**.
- Change orders have been minimal and within contingency budget: North-side storage overhang was upgraded from gravel/crushed asphalt to concrete for forklift accessibility and hail protection. Water pit relocation required coordination with the City of Douglas. Additional 220V/3-phase electrical outlets added to the mezzanine level.
- Budget expected to come in **under contingency allowance**.
- Bi-weekly construction coordination meetings continue with Trustee Farley, Advisor Willox, and others on-site in Douglas.

**Curriculum Development — Construction Trades AAS (Update via Dr. Margaret Farley):**

- Curriculum is moving through the Wyoming Community College Commission review process.
- Proposed credential structure: Applied Associate of Science (AAS) in Construction Technology; Certificate in Construction Technology (stackable); Certificate in Construction Management (stackable; designed to transfer into Casper College's Construction Management AS, which transfers to UW's BS program).
- Students can earn credit through coursework or through industry work experience.
- Curriculum is intentionally flexible and stackable to meet workforce and transfer needs.

**Regional Economic Development & Workforce Demand:**

- **Eight Rivers** has publicly announced a 423-megawatt natural gas-generated power plant adjacent to the Dave Johnson site; a $30 million deposit has been placed, signaling serious

commitment.

- A second power plant (Dutchman Solar Project) is also in development nearby.
- These projects will drive significant demand for construction trades, electrical engineering, and management talent.
- Casper College President Dr. Khosla attended EWC's recent open house; Dr. Hawes encouraged alignment and non-duplication of programs across institutions to serve the shared regional workforce.
- **Potential Housing Concept (Early Stage):** One or more companies expected to bring large workforces to the Douglas area have raised the concept of building temporary workforce apartments on EWC-owned land, which would then revert to the college for student housing use. No formal plans exist; conversations are ongoing. Similar discussions are occurring with the State Fair (dorm modernization) and the Law Enforcement Academy.
- An **NSF grant opportunity** is currently being pursued through a consortium; EWC was moved to the top of the applicant list after a strong conversation with program officers. Grant writing support has been secured. Partners are being identified from northern and central Wyoming colleges.

## 9. Trustee Topics

No trustee topics were raised this evening.

## 10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Trustee Baumgartner | Second: Trustee Vonburg

**Vote:** Approved unanimously.

**Meeting adjourned.**

Jackie VanMark, Chairman

Robert Baumgartner, Secretary

Lynda Dean

Lynda Dean, Executive Assistant