Board of Trustees Work Session

Date: October 13, 2026
Time: 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM MDT

Attendance

Name	Status
Jackie VanMark	Present
Rick Vonburg	Present
Robert Baumgartner	Present
Kurt Sittner	Present
Katherine Patrick	Present
Doug Mercer	Present
Julia Newman	Present
Jim Willox	Present

1. Call to Order

The work session was called to order by the board chair.

2. Construction Trades Curriculum Presentation — Vice President of the Douglas Campus Margaret Farley

Curriculum Overview

- New Technology AAS degree with two stackable certificates: Construction Management Certificate and Construction Technology Certificate.
- Certificates are designed as one-year programs, allowing students to enter the workforce and return later to complete the AAS.
- Curriculum was built using industry input along with academic input from Casper College and Sheridan College.
- Flexibility built in: students may take certain courses in the classroom or satisfy them through verified work experience.
- Construction Management Certificate transfers into Casper College's Construction Management AS, which transfers into the university's Construction Management BS — creating a clear academic pathway.
- An AAS-level Construction Management degree was intentionally avoided to prevent duplicating Casper College's program and to reduce commission approval risk.

Scheduling & Delivery

- Certificate courses will likely require evening sections, especially if adjunct instructors are used.
- Current course loads run 15–17 credit hours per semester; program will remain a one-year track to avoid overloading students.

- Both the AAS and certificates will launch in Fall 2027 (not ready for the current catalog cycle).
- A regional/county listening session with industry partners is scheduled for November 12 to gather input on spring semester course offerings and short-term/community ed opportunities ahead of the formal fall launch.

Expansion Potential

- Once approved, the curriculum is not campus-specific and could be replicated at other campuses (e.g., Torrington), provided equipment needs are met.
- Large equipment needs may be met through partnerships with local schools (e.g., wood shop equipment).

Facility Update -

- VP Farley provided a visual walkthrough of the new construction trades building, including exterior, parking, material storage areas, classroom space, mezzanine storage, and the connecting roadway (Gary Olson Way).
- A significant owner-driven change order added concrete flooring under the storage canopy (originally planned as gravel) — improves usability and supports future enclosure plans.
- Project remains under budget; contingency funds have not been fully used.
- Electrical work caused delays due to a nationwide shortage of 6-inch cable trays (driven by data center demand); the contractor substituted larger 18-inch trays to keep the schedule on track.
- Concrete and paving were completed during a favorable weather window with no frost delays.
- Rob Freeman was commended for serving as de facto on-site project manager and maintaining a strong working relationship with the site supervisor.
- Target completion remains December (Christmas).

Next Steps

- VP Margaret Farley to submit the first EDA reimbursement request now that budget amendment approval has cleared.
- VP Margaret Farley and team to finalize plans for the November 12 industry listening session.
- VP Margaret Farley to continue coordinating curriculum rollout for Fall 2027 and share event photos with the board/communications team.

3. Financial Presentation — Cheryl Heath, Financial Consultant

Board Fiscal Reporting Calendar

Cheryl Heath presented a proposed annual reporting calendar aligned to statutory board duties (reporting, levying, controlling funds, record-keeping, budget approval). Key proposed monthly touchpoints:

- February: Three-to-five year forecast and budget assumptions discussion
- March: Major maintenance expenditures and cost/productivity data review
- April: HLC Annual Update, including the Consolidated Financial Index (CFI)
- May: Budget work session; public hearing for BOCES/one mill (alternating years)
- June/September: Major maintenance expenditure reports
- July: Budget approval and public hearing
- August: Forecast review and capital construction project submissions
- October: Commission Annual Enrollment Report review
- November: Benchmarking/success measures (NCCBP)
- December: Major maintenance report and annual audit report (including single audit of federal funds)

Note: Major maintenance reports are required quarterly for submission to the Construction Management Division; the board can choose its own cadence for review.

Draft Monthly Cash & Accounts Receivable Report

- Report would show bank balance vs. book balance monthly, with explanations for significant variances.
- Pledged securities for all deposits must be listed (statutory requirement).
- Key recommendation: Major maintenance funds (an estimated $2–2.5M of the current ~$8M operating/CD balance) need to be segregated into separate general ledger accounts within the plant fund (Fund 71), even if not held in separate bank accounts.
- The college currently holds accounts across multiple banks; Cheryl Heath recommended the college consider consolidating accounts, potentially through a competitive bid process for banking services.
- Student accounts receivable are in good shape, with nearly 50% reserved via allowance for doubtful accounts.

Draft Monthly Budget-to-Actual Report

- Designed to mirror the format used during budget work sessions for consistency and easier trend analysis.
- Includes variance highlighting for any line exceeding 25% deviation from the expected time-elapsed percentage, with required explanations.
- Would be produced for each fund: operating, one mill, auxiliary, restricted, plant, and (eventually) endowment.
- Report can be automated using Colleague's Financial State Report Writer (FSRP) once format is finalized.

Three-to-Five Year Forecast

- Focuses specifically on the unrestricted operating fund.
- Model uses adjustable percentage assumptions (revenue growth, raises, program changes, scholarship strategy) that automatically recalculate forecasted figures.

- Supports scenario planning: conservative, most-likely, and aggressive cases.
- Recommended process: CFO and executive staff develop initial assumptions, then bring them to the board for discussion.

Cost Data & Benchmarking (NCCBP)

- Two components: the traditional NCCBP survey (enrollment/success data, due Nov–Dec) and the Cost & Productivity Project (due Jan–Feb), which the college has not previously participated in.
- Cost & Productivity data will provide detailed instructional cost by discipline, separating full-time vs. part-time faculty costs, plus administrative/student services efficiency benchmarking.
- Key issue identified: salary and benefits are currently recorded only by broad location/type (full-time/part-time, academic/vocational) rather than by department or discipline, limiting cost analysis accuracy.
- Cheryl Heath is working with Lori Moore to restructure how staffing costs are coded in Colleague so costs can be tracked by department going forward.

Next Steps

- Cheryl Heath to incorporate board feedback into finalized report templates before transitioning materials to the incoming CFO.
- Board members to send any additional feedback on report formats to Doctor Hawes.
- Cheryl Heath and Lori Moore to continue restructuring salary/benefit coding by department ahead of Cost & Productivity Project submission.

4. Board Policy 5.17: Readmission of Service Members and Reservists — Dr. Hawes, VP John Hansen

Background

- Policy was drafted in response to a VA audit corrective action finding: the college lacked a formal readmission policy for service members called to active duty.
- The policy has already been implemented at the president's office level on an emergency basis to restore compliance; it must be fully adopted by the board within 120 days per legal requirement.
- A more detailed Administrative Regulation (AR) is being developed to cover specifics: notification timelines, readmission procedures, and cost treatment upon return.

Discussion Highlights

- Policy commits the college to a good-faith effort to reinstate returning service members to their prior academic status, especially relevant for cohort-based programs (e.g., nursing) where exact timing of re-entry may be constrained by cohort cycles.
- Federal financial aid rules (150% credit-hour completion cap) apply independently of this policy and will interact with readmission timing in practice.

- No defined statutory time limit exists for how long a service member may be away before returning — the college will handle long absences via good-faith reinstatement rather than a hard cutoff.
- Trustee Willox raised a related question about whether a similar formal policy exists for deployed employees (not just students). Patrick confirmed state statute already governs this for National Guard/military employees, and copies of the statute will be distributed to the board.
- Dr. Hawes clarified that compliance is expected regardless of whether a written board policy exists, but a formal policy becomes mandatory once a compliance finding is issued.

Next Steps

- VP John Hansen to send the full Administrative Regulation (AR) to the board for review.
- Topic to be scheduled on a future work session agenda for deeper board review of the AR and procedures.
- VP Patrick Korell to distribute relevant state statute language regarding employee military leave protections to the board.
- Policy evidence (including this adopted policy) to be uploaded as part of the VA corrective action compliance documentation.

5. Adjourn Meeting

With no further business, the work session was adjourned.



_Jackie VanMark, Chairman



Robert Baumgartner, Vice Chairman

Lynda Dean, Executive Assistant