

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
February 12, 2024 – 4:30 pm – BH 3rd Floor Board Room**

**Call to Order**

     Action      X   Information

  X   Action         Information

  X   Action         Information

  X   Action         Information

  X   Action         Information

     Action      X   Information

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     Action      X   Information

     Action      X   Information

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Recognition, Awards, and Information Items**

- Introduction of Mr. Bob Couch, Director of Operations (*Dr. Rittle*)
- 2024 COABE Scholarship Award Recipient (*Dr. Rittle*)
- Faculty member, Sean Fitzgibbon, receives Kirkus Star for graphic novel (*Dr. Rittle*)
- Practical Nursing receives Candidacy (*Dr. Rittle*)

**Attendance**

**Approval of Minutes**

- Annual Board Meeting – January 8, 2024
- Regular Board Meeting – January 8, 2024

**ENDS Monitoring Report**

- E-105: Testing Center (*Ms. Jennifer Ockinga*)

**Executive Limitations Monitoring Report**

- EL-200: Executive Constraint

**Committee Reports**

- Residential Housing Committee (*Mrs. Amber Latimer*)

**President's Report**

- Academic Program Updates
- Bentonville Campus Master Planning
- Enrollment
- ACCT Summit Recap

**Chairman's Report**

- ACCT Summit Recap
- March Board Retreat

**Other Board Action Items and Considerations**

- None

**Adjourn**

For upcoming events, please see the Board of Trustees Calendar of Upcoming Events document located in the front pocket of binder.

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEE ANNUAL MEETING  
Monday, January 8, 2024**

**MINUTES**

Chair Mark Scott called the Board of Trustees of NorthWest Arkansas Community College Annual Meeting to order on Monday, January 8 at 4:00 p.m. in the Burns Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Board Room.

**Members Present:** Mark Scott (Chair), Todd Schwartz (Secretary), Carolyn Reeves, Ron Branscum, Jonathan Woods, and Joe Spivey

**Members Absent:** Rachel Harris (Vice Chair), Amber Latimer

**Also in Attendance:** Dr. Dennis C. Rittle and Student Trustee Sammy Massri

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**OFFICIAL MEETING DATES FOR 2024**

Mr. Scott set the official meeting dates for 2024 as follows: February 12, March 11, April 8, May 20, June 10, August 5, September 9, October 14, and November 11.

**Approval of Official Meeting Dates for 2024**

Dr. Reeves moved and Mr. Spivey seconded the motion to name February 12, March 11, April 8, May 20, June 10, August 5, September 9, October 14, and November 11 as the official Board meeting dates for 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

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Mr. Mark Scott, Chair

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Mr. Todd Schwartz, Secretary

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING  
Monday, January 8, 2024**

**MINUTES**

Chair Mark Scott called the Board of Trustees of NorthWest Arkansas Community College meeting to order on Monday, January 8 at 4:04 pm in the Burns Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Board Room.

**Members Present:** Mark Scott (Chair), Todd Schwartz (Secretary), Carolyn Reeves, Ron Branscum, Jonathan Woods, and Joe Spivey

**Members Absent:** Rachel Harris (Vice Chair), Amber Latimer

**Also in Attendance:** Dr. Dennis C. Rittle and Student Trustee Sammy Massri

**MINUTES**

**November Regular Board Meeting**

Mr. Woods moved and Mr. Schwartz seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on November 13, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

**RECOGNITION**

**Faculty Emeritus**

Dr. Rittle announced that Professor Jerry Rose has been awarded the title of Faculty Emeritus and provided a few remarks about Jerry. He turned to Dr. Diana Johnson, who gave additional remarks about the fantastic job Jerry had done and continues to do throughout his service to NWACC. She presented him with the Faculty Emeritus Certificate. Jerry expressed his gratitude for the award and to NWACC. Mark Scott also gave remarks about Jerry and his service to NWACC.

**2024/2025 Sabbaticals**

Dr. Rittle announced to the Board that two faculty sabbaticals had been awarded. Professor James Laughton has been awarded a sabbatical for the Fall 2024 semester. He will use this time to research artificial intelligence to help educators navigate the challenges of a world with AI and harness the positive potential of AI. Dr. Sevin Gallo has been awarded a sabbatical for the Spring 2025 semester. She will use this time to create new, diverse, and more affordable study abroad programs through research, grant-writing, and travel for site visits. Dr. Diana Johnson provided some context into why these faculty members were chosen for sabbatical and how their contributions will better NWACC's offerings to students.

**Respiratory Therapy Program Success Rate**

Dr. Rittle announced that NWACC's Respiratory Program has seen a 90% success rate. This puts NWACC at #1 in the state for all AAS degrees.

**NWACC Eagle View Students Receive National Honors**

Dr. Rittle announced that NWACC's Eagle View won 3 national honors; first place in Best Breaking News for Two-Year College Division for their Special Election Coverage, second place in Best Breaking News for Two-Year College Division for their story "Former Governor announces Presidential Run," and third place in Best News Package for their printed coverage of the Spring Arts and Culture Festival in 2023. He introduced Debbie Miller, who shared her experience and

introduced her Eagle View students, Delaney, Samantha, and Morgan. The three students all expressed gratitude towards NWACC for the opportunity to participate in such a great experience.

### **NWACC ACUE Course Completers**

Dr. Rittle passed to Dr. Diana Johnson, who congratulated all of the faculty members who completed their Association of College and University Educators (A.C.U.E.) Online Certification. She explained what A.C.U.E. is and how it has helped NWACC faculty over the past three semesters.

### **Accreditation Update**

Dr. Rittle passed to Laura Cates, who informed the Board that on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, NWACC is scheduled for a site visit with Accreditation. NWACC's reaffirmation isn't until 2030, however, this visit serves as a touch base to identify any areas of improvement before then.

### **ENDS MONITORING REPORT**

#### **E-101: Learner Community Update**

Dr. Jennifer Swartout presented the Board with information on Faculty Development. She explained the goals are to provide high-quality professional development to a larger portion of NWACC faculty, support excellence in teaching and learning, and improve student engagement. She continued with information on the partnership with the Association of College and University Educators (A.C.U.E.) Online Certification which is a certification for NWACC faculty to participate in that promotes effective teaching, improves retention, and supports student success and faculty well-being. A few paths A.C.U.E. offers include Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environment, Promoting Active Learning, Promoting Active Learning Online, Inspiring Inquiry, and Preparing Lifelong Learners. Dr. Swartout continued with information about another partnership with ON Course Workshop, which is a one-day, in-person workshop that aims to improve student learning, retention, and completion rates. The current projects being worked on are recruiting new faculty mentors and establishing online and hybrid teaching via digital learning.

Ms. Frank asked Dr. Swartout about the demographics of NWACC's faculty; to which, Dr. Swartout replied by stating that NWACC's demographics are overwhelmingly white. Ms. Frank asked what NWACC is doing to remedy this and Dr. Johnson replied that while NWACC does reach out to diverse groups for job opportunities, the main focus is to hire the candidate who has the most appropriate credentials according to HLC Standards. Ms. Frank said that hiring more diverse individuals should be a goal for NWACC moving forward. Dr. Swartout agreed and reassured that NWACC wants the faculty base to reflect that of the community, particularly in the adjunct faculty, which NWACC is currently recruiting. Every time NWACC recruits for a position, all candidates from all backgrounds locally and nationally are carefully considered. Dr. Swartout continued by saying that NWACC is working towards becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and acknowledged the importance of having faculty that reflects the community it serves by focusing on recruiting locally. Mr. Spivey noted that he's seen a great improvement in the diversity of NWACC's staff, faculty, and students throughout the years. Dr. Reeves added that she was reminded of another board on which she served that battled the same issue of trying to diversity the employees and suggested that maybe the individuals NWACC is looking for haven't been prepped and educated on how to find these opportunities. She suggested possibly reaching out to alumni and providing resources at NWACC to help funnel students onto the path of becoming future NWACC employees.

#### **Approval of E-101 Monitoring Report**

Mr. Spivey moved and Mr. Branscum seconded the motion to approve the ENDS-101 Monitoring Report. The motion passed unanimously.

## **EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS MONITORING REPORT**

### **EL-204: 204 Treatment of Staff**

Dr. Rittle stated that with respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the President shall not cause or allow conditions, which are unfair, undignified, and unclear or present a conflict of interest. The President shall not operate without written personnel policies, which clarify personnel rules for staff, provide for the effective handling of grievances, and protect against wrongful conditions, fail to make available to staff in a timely manner all personnel rules that affect them, or continue in employment or employ any person serving on the Board. He reviewed and responded to each section of EL-204 and reported compliance with the policy.

### **Approval of EL-204 Monitoring Report**

Mr. Branscum moved and Dr. Reeves seconded the motion to approve the Executive Limitations Monitoring Report. The motion passed unanimously.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Land Use Committee**

Al Massri shared with the Board that the Land Use Committee met to discuss a grant proposal for master planning, Trail Blazer project update, prescribed burn for the Outdoor Living Laboratory update, and water tower project update.

Al continued by sharing that Liz Anderson informed the committee that NWACC has been invited to apply for a grant that will cover the campus master planning project and gave us a timeline of when NWACC's application will be submitted and when we expect to hear back. He said that Rachel gave a brief update on the delays in the Trail Blazer project and we expect the project to wrap up in early Fall 2024. He said that Laurie Scott shared an update on the prescribed burn for the Outdoor Living Laboratory, which has been scheduled for December 1<sup>st</sup> so long as the weather conditions are right for a burn. Al concluded by explaining that Jack Thompson gave an update on the water tower project, which is expected to be completed by early fall of 2024.

### **Finance Committee**

Ron Branscum shared with the Board that the Finance Committee met to review investment opportunities. He explained that Jaclyn Henderson and Nick Oliver from Regions Bank gave a presentation on the investment of funds and the committee conversed the whole meeting time.

### **Residential Housing Committee**

Dr. Justin White shared with the Board that the Residential Housing Committee met to finalize their recommendation for campus housing. He explained the committee discussed that 800-1,200 occupants in village-style housing using a "Utopian Model" of residents. He explained the Committee defines the "Utopian Model" as being made up of 75% students and the rest consisting of staff, faculty, alumni, short-term workforce, and essential community members such as police, firefighters, EMS, etc. Dr. White also included the Committee will include essential amenities such as feed establishments, transportation logistics, laundry facilities, and security in the proposal. He concluded by informing the Board the proposal will be presented during the Regular Board Meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Rittle informed the Board that NWACC will be taking on a Master Planning project to help find the best way to expand NWACC's Bentonville Campus. He explained that NWACC has received a grant and will be working with a consultant throughout the process and residential housing is one of the items they will focus on during the process.

Dr. Rittle then informed the Board that budget planning is going on now and they can expect to see the tuition and fees in the March Regular Board Meeting and a more in-depth budget review in April.

He concluded informing the Board that NWACC is also working on a rebranding project in which the Marketing Department and Athletic Director Brooke Brewer have been working together with a consultant. He expects to have an update on the rebranding project during the March Board Retreat. Jonathan Woods asked Dr. Rittle what the main driver was in pursuing the rebranding project; to which, Dr. Rittle responded by saying the introduction of Athletics and the lack of a unified brand identity were the reasons why NWACC felt it necessary to rebrand.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Scott reminded the Board of the Statement of Financial Interest forms which were mailed to the Board and are to be signed, notarized, and given to Sammantha by January 24<sup>th</sup>.

He then referred to the Board Evaluation summary page in their books for their reference and informed them to identify any item in which the average is below 4.0 as areas to consider improving throughout the year. He emphasized Board involvement of campus activities an area to heavily consider.

Mr. Scott concluded by announcing the Committee Chair Appointments as follows: Dr. Reeves as the Chair of the Honorary Degree Committee, Mr. Woods as the Chair of the Finance Committee, Mrs. Latimer as the Chair of the Residential Housing Committee (to be discontinued in February), Mrs. Latimer as the Chair of the Land Use Committee with Mr. Spivey as the Vice Chair, Mr. Branscum as the Advocacy Liaison, Dr. Reeves as the Accreditation Liaison, Mrs. Harris as the Master Planning Liaison, and Mr. Schwartz as the Athletics Liaison.

#### **OTHER ACTION ITEMS**

##### **Approval of Provisional Position**

Dr. Rittle stated that in response to the FEMA grant awarded to NWACC, the administration recommends the authorization of the following provisional position Project/program Specialist (1) for the ICPS Workforce program.

##### **Approval of Provisional Position**

Mr. Spivey moved and Ms. Frank seconded the motion to approve the provisional position as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

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Mr. Mark Scott, Chair

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Mr. Todd Schwartz, Secretary

**POLICY TITLE: GLOBAL EXECUTIVE CONSTRAINT**

**Policy 200:** The President shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decisions, or organizational circumstance, which is either unlawful, imprudent or in violation of commonly accepted business and professional ethics or Board of Trustee policy.

**Definition:** Practice or activity refers to events of the college. These events cannot violate law or NWACC's Ends and Executive Limitations.

**Organizational circumstance** refers to any event occurring that involves the college.

**Unlawful** refers to violation of local, federal, and state statutes.

**Imprudent** refers to actions taken without regard to outcome or consequential results to the college.

**Commonly accepted business and professional ethics** refers to truthfulness and avoidance of conflicts of interests.

**Narrative:** NWACC elects to be audited by the Division of Legislative audit. The result of tests performed during the 2022 financial audit disclosed an audit finding. This finding affected the College's reported net position on June 30, 2022, by \$536,145. This finding also affected the College's reported Statement of Revenues by \$473,481. The financial statements were subsequently corrected by college personnel during audit fieldwork. The audit finding was presented to the Board of Trustees at the October 2023, board meeting.

The 2023 financial audit has not yet begun; therefore, no reporting has been presented for the 2023 financial audit period. As an approved Title IV granting institution, NWACC's federal financial aid program is monitored through internal local controls, the Arkansas Department of Legislative Audit, and the Department of Education. NWACC recently underwent an ERP system change from Banner to Workday, Phase I was completed during 2020, Phase II started Fall 2021 and completed December, 2023.

I am reporting compliance with Executive Limitations, Policy 200.

Dennis C Rittle, Ph.D.  
President