

**LOWER COLUMBIA COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

# **MINUTES**

**April 15, 2026**

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## **1. CALL TO ORDER (DETERMINATION OF QUORUM)**

Chair Kim called the regular meeting of the District 13 Board of Trustees to order at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, in the Heritage Room 100 in the Administration Building of Lower Columbia College. The LCC Board of Trustees meeting was also offered virtually via Zoom. When the meeting was called to order, the following individuals were present, ensuring a quorum.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** Bogi Kim, Chair  
Alice Dietz, Vice Chair  
Liz Cattin  
Mike Karnofski  
Marc Silva

**COLLEGE PRESIDENT:** Kristen Finnel, Interim President

## **2. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:**

Guests: Henry Brewster, Samantha Orth, Angie Rogers, Mindy Leasure, Michaela Jackson, Fox Leavens, and Amber Lemiere.

Others in Attendance: Nolan Wheeler, Wendy Hall, Stefanie Gilberti (late arrival), Dan Ruiz, Shelley Williams, Mara Slabu, LCC Heritage Room/Thomas Herold, and Tracy Powell.

Virtual Attendees: Allegra Taft, Ted Sprague, NA, Minka Atkinson, Paula Stepankowsky-CCCA, Griffin, Bryanna Doumit, and LCC Chat Moderator/Laura Sampson.

## **3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Kim called for a motion to approve the agenda. Trustee Karnofski moved to approve the agenda as presented, and Trustee Silva seconded.

**MOTION:** By Trustee Karnofski, seconded by Trustee Silva

**OUTCOME:** **The motion carried unanimously**

## **4. CONSENT ITEMS**

The following consent items were offered for the Board's consideration.

**4.a. Minutes of the March 11, 2026, Special Executive Session**

**4.b. Minutes of the March 18, 2026, Regular Board Meeting**

**4.c. FY27 Miscellaneous Fee Schedule**

The miscellaneous fee schedule outlined proposed new and revised fees, along with supporting rationale. Fee increases were based on course spending levels and were calculated using the State of Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) growth rate factor of 6.51%.

**4.d. FY27 Tuition Schedule**

The standardized tuition schedule, authorized by the Washington State Legislature and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), will be effective beginning Fall quarter 2026.

**4.e. FY27 Tuition Waiver Schedule**

The tuition waiver schedule, authorized by the Washington State Legislature, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and LCC Board Policy, outlined the tuition waivers to be implemented beginning Fall quarter 2026. A new optional waiver, introduced by SBCTC, is intended to honor tribal elders, age 55 and older, from eligible Indian tribes.

**4.f. ECEAP Expansion**

Due to state budget reductions to Transitional Kindergarten (TK), local school districts are expected to lose funded slots, which will impact the early learning system. To help address this, LCC has an opportunity to apply for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families ECEAP Expansion Request for Application. Board approval is requested to accept eligible expansion slots if awarded under the July 1, 2026, ECEAP contract.

**4.g. Head Start Budget Revision to FY25 Nutrition Supplement - \$6,900**

The initial Head Start One-Time Nutrition Supplement (FY25) project came in under budget. If approved, the remaining funds would be used to purchase additional appliances and supplies. Requesting Board approval to submit the 2025-2026 Head Start Budget Revision for the Nutritional Supplement in the amount of \$6,900.

Chair Kim called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Trustee Cattin requested a correction to the March 18, 2026, minutes (President's Report, page 2) to accurately reflect the Head Start nutrition services donor as PeaceHealth.

Trustee Dietz moved, and Trustee Cattin seconded, to approve the consent agenda as presented, including the noted revision to the March 18 minutes.

**MOTION:** By Trustee Dietz, seconded by Trustee Cattin

**OUTCOME:** The motion carried unanimously

## 5. COLLEGE INPUT (REPORTS)

### 5.a. President's Report

Kristen Finnel, Interim President, provided a brief overview. Highlights included:

- During the second week of spring quarter, enrollment (FTE) increased compared to neighboring institutions, supported in part by visiting students and the addition of course sections to accommodate high waitlists.
- Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees are now an allowable program activity for WorkFirst students.
- Applications for the 2026-27 Exceptional Faculty and Foundation Grants, which support projects that drive innovation and enhance student or staff learning, will be open from March 17 to April 30.
- Attended the Opportunity Can't Wait: Campaign Celebration: On April 3, the Foundation hosted 35 guests at the College's new Softball Batting Cage and Futsal building to celebrate the historic conclusion of the colleges largest fundraising effort, raising over 15.6 million!

Stefanie Gilberti, Interim Vice President of Instruction, provided a brief overview. Highlights included:

- A new adjunct Drama instructor was hired, effective Fall 2026.
- The Welding program successfully renewed its Washington Association of Building Officials (WABO) accreditation.
- LCC hosted a Career and Technical Education (CTE) summit with faculty and high school instructors to align dual-credit course offerings.
- LCC received full approval from the Washington State Board of Nursing (WABON) for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.

Wendy Hall, Vice President of ECR and Student Access, provided a brief overview. Highlights included:

- Enrollment report: Spring enrollment is up 2.4% for state and 8.6% for total FTE; annual enrollment is up 8.1% for state and 9.6% for total FTE.
- Assessment Day (April 2) was successful; faculty celebrated the accreditation commendation for a strong culture of instructional assessment and shared commitment to student learning.
- ELT continues reviewing employee budget forum feedback using a shared tracking spreadsheet.
- Outreach engaged 1,013 prospective students in the winter quarter, hosted the Brothers in Power conference, and launched Senior Success to support 104 high school seniors transitioning to LCC.

Nolan Wheeler, Vice President of Administration, provided a brief overview. Highlights included:

- LCC achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification for the Center for Vocational and Transitional Studies (CVTS) building project.
- The new BAS programs are helping to recruit student-athletes by enabling them to complete a bachelor's degree locally.

### **5.b. ASLCC Report**

Mara Slabu, Executive Director of the Associated Students of LCC, shared a brief overview.

Highlights included:

- LCC Speech & Debate achieved national success, earning 1st place in the community college division in both the AFA and IPDA season-long sweepstakes, placing 15th of 184 overall in IPDA, winning bronze in speech, debate, and overall sweepstakes at Phi Rho Pi in the largest division (first time in program history), and achieving a program-best 9 breaks.
- Welcome Week events are in progress.
- ASLCC has 18 active student clubs.

### **5.c. LCCFAHE Report**

Lucas Myers, President of the Faculty Association of Higher Education of LCC, was unable to attend but submitted a written report in advance, which was distributed to the Board.

Highlights included:

- Early Childhood Education faculty participated in the Celebration of Young Children at Youth and Family Link, helping organize the event and hosting a booth with information, toys, and giveaways, including two bicycles; Kirc Roland provided swag for drawings.
- LCC Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) faculty and advising staff are preparing for the second STEM Advising Night on May 13, funded through the RAISE grant in collaboration with WSU-V and Clark College.
- Faculty payroll deductions have contributed over \$9,000 to the LCC Food Pantry this year (approximately \$12,000 annually), with efforts underway to increase participation in collaboration with the classified union; Armando Herbelin leads the initiative.

### **5.d. WFSE Report**

Tracy Stanley, President of the Washington Federation of State Employees/LCC, was unable to attend.

### **5.e. Head Start/ECEAP/EHS Written Report, Budget Status, and Program Report**

A written report was provided to the Board.

#### **5.e.i. Head Start Biannual Presentation**

Director Mindy Leasure provided the biannual Head Start report, highlighting school-readiness progress and goals, the program goal-setting process, monitoring and audit results, and advocacy efforts.

School Readiness data comparing Fall 2024 to Fall 2025 showed an 18% decline in literacy. In response, targeted literacy activities were implemented in late winter and spring, and a new parenting curriculum was adopted to strengthen home routines and expectations.

Following Board approval of the consent agenda authorizing the ECEAP expansion, if awarded, LCC will partner with the Kelso School District to add up to three classes for the 2026-27 school year.

The federal Head Start review site visit is scheduled for the week of May 18. Activities include classroom observations (health, safety, and hygiene), staff discussions, management team interviews, data reviews, a fiscal audit, a review of child and family records, and interviews with the Policy Council, Board of Trustees, and Executive Leadership Team. Trustees Dietz and Silva volunteered to participate in the Board interviews.

Director Leasure also shared a parent story illustrating the positive impact of the home visitor program on a family experiencing adversity. The Board had no questions.

#### **6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

An opportunity for public comment was provided; none was received.

#### **7. INSTITUTIONAL MONITORING**

##### **7. a. Preparation for College-Level Studies Monitoring Report**

Stefanie Gilberti, Henry Brewster, and Michaela Jackson presented Cycle 27 of the Monitoring Report. This item was for discussion only; no action was required.

#### **8. BOARD BUSINESS/INFORMATION ITEMS**

##### **8.a. Emeritus Consideration (ACTION)**

The Emeritus and Sabbatical Review Committee met to review the recommendation for Emeritus status for retired faculty member Alex Emerson and unanimously supported the request. The recommendation was forwarded to the Board for consideration. Additional comments were provided at the Board meeting by Stefanie Gilberti, Wendy Hall, and Amber Lemiere.

Trustee Cattin moved, and Trustee Dietz seconded, to confer the title of Faculty Emeritus upon Alex Emerson, as recommended by the Emeritus and Sabbatical Review Committee and in accordance with Administrative Policy 319.

**MOTION:** By Trustee Cattin, seconded by Trustee Dietz

**OUTCOME:** The motion carried unanimously.

##### **8.b. FY25 Audited Financial Statements**

Vice President Nolan Wheeler shared the FY25 Financial Report and the accompanying audit letter, which summarized the results of the recent financial audit conducted by Davis Farr, LLP.

The materials outlined the auditor’s findings and provided an overall assessment of the College’s financial position and internal controls.

**8.c. Presidential Search**

Chair Kim opened the discussion regarding the process and potential timeline for the Presidential Search. Samantha Orth, Director of Human Resources, noted that a typical presidential search process takes approximately one year to complete. She also shared that several Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges (WACTC) institutions are currently engaged in searches, and that LCC may be able to utilize an existing state Request for Proposal (RFP) to streamline the process and reduce both time and costs.

Orth further noted that in prior searches, LCC has used a hybrid model in which the search firm leads listening sessions while Human Resources manages logistics, resulting in a more cost-effective approach than the fully outsourced model used in the most recent recruitment.

The Board requested a cost comparison of search models, processes, and firms and asked that this information be provided prior to the next meeting. A special meeting may be scheduled if needed to review the materials.

**8.d. July 29, 2026 Board Workshop Planning (ACTION)**

The Board approved the 2026 meeting schedule on November 19, 2025, noting that the July 29 Board Workshop may be adjusted if conflicts arise.

Chair Kim called for a motion. Trustee Silva moved, and Trustee Dietz seconded, to reschedule the Board Workshop to July 2, 2026.

**MOTION:** By Trustee Silva, seconded by Trustee Dietz

**OUTCOME:** The motion carried unanimously.

**9. POLICY GOVERNANCE (ACTION)**

**9.a. Policy 4.01 - General Executive Constraints**

**9.b. Policy 4.02 - Treatment of People**

Trustee Karnofski recommended a minor revision to policy 4.01 to remove redundancy. Chair Kim called for a motion. Trustee Dietz moved, and Trustee Cattin seconded, to approve the Board policies as presented, including the recommended revision.

**MOTION:** By Trustee Dietz, seconded by Trustee Cattin

**OUTCOME:** The motion carried unanimously.

**10. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 5:59 p.m., Chair Kim called for an Executive Session to review the performance of a public employee, and to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential

litigation to which the agency or the Board is likely to become a part. The Executive Session was anticipated to end at 6:30 p.m.

**11. ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 6:30 p.m., Chair Kim reopened the public meeting.

**12. RESULT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

No action was taken during the Executive Session.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Chair Kim called for a motion to adjourn at 6:31 p.m. Trustee Dietz moved to adjourn the meeting, and Trustee Silva seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** By Trustee Dietz, seconded by Trustee Silva

**OUTCOME:** The motion carried unanimously.

**On May 20, 2026, the Board of Trustees of Community College District 13 approved the minutes of the April 15, 2026, regular meeting.**



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Kristen Finnel, Interim Secretary to the Board