

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

SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

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, June 10, 2026, in the Heritage Room 100 in the Administration Building of Lower Columbia College. The meeting was also available virtually via Zoom. The following individuals were present, constituting a quorum.

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

COLLEGE PRESIDENT: Kristen Finnel, Interim President

2. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Guests: Michael Morris

Others in Attendance: Nolan Wheeler, Wendy Hall, Stefanie Gilberti, Samantha Orth, Shelley Williams (AAG), Mercedes Musser, Amber Lemiere, and LCC Heritage Room/Tracy Powell.

Virtual Attendees: Griffin S., Bart, 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 Cattin seconded.

MOTION: By Trustee Karnofski, seconded by Trustee Cattin

OUTCOME: The motion carried unanimously

4. CONSENT ITEMS

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

4.a. Minutes of the July 30, 2026, Special Board Meeting

4.b. Head Start Key Hire - Fiscal Analyst 4

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

MOTION: By Trustee Silva, 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:

- 2026-27 Goals shared at the September 14, 2026, All-Staff Event:
 - Culture and Morale: Rebuild internal trust, open communication, and campus confidence.
 - Brand and Reputation: Reshape public perception and highlight the college's value
 - Student Retention: Help current students stay, succeed, and graduate.
 - Enrollment Growth: Attract new, adult, and returning students across all programs.
 - Financial Health: Protect the budget and secure new revenue streams.
 - Community Partnerships: Connect and collaborate with local employers, schools, and community members
 - Modern Campus: Improve physical facilities, technology, and student services.
 - Forward Leadership: Foster data-driven decisions, accountability, and continuous improvement.
 - Shared Governance: Advance collaboration through a culture of trust and a unified purpose.
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Advance inclusive excellence, embed equity in institutional decisions, and foster a welcoming campus climate.
- The GiveMore24! Campaign begins September 24, 2026. Proceeds will fund the Finish Line Scholarship.

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

- Listening and feedback sessions for students, faculty, and staff will begin soon. Results from the previous year's sessions are available on the college's Diversity webpage.
- LCC is in the final stages of hiring a new TRIO Student Support Services Director. The federally funded program, which provides additional support to low-income, first-generation, and students with disabilities, was recently renewed for five years.
- Fall enrollment is down 0.2% year over year for both state and total FTE. Annual enrollment is down 2.6% for state FTE and 1.5% for total FTE, primarily due to a planned, one-time adjustment in the coding of College and Career Preparation (CCP)

students. Academic transfer enrollment is up nearly 5%, and professional/technical enrollment is up 7% year over year.

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

- The Workforce Education Center (WEC) project is going well, with noticeable progress on the construction of the new WEC building. Separately, hazardous materials abatement in the Science Building is complete, and the building is ready for demolition. The Board expressed interest in touring the WEC building site.
- The Baseball Grandstand and Lighting Project is on schedule, with footings and geo piers currently underway. Funds donated by Bob Fox were used to purchase turf for the Athletic Training Facilities (Future Fox Fieldhouse).
- Red Devil Athletics reported a strong start to the season, with women's soccer undefeated and in first place, and volleyball off to a positive start. Student Athlete Orientation was also held.

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

- The Head Start Improper Payment Study has been completed, and no findings were identified.
- During the summer quarter, 56 students earned Dean's List honors.
- The Rural Nursing Education Program launched its LPN-entry pilot, with the first three students beginning classes this fall; planning is underway for the first two-year RNEP cohort in Fall 2027.
- LCC is expanding student learning opportunities through an upcoming study abroad program in El Salvador and the SBCTC-approved expansion of I-BEST support in the Machine Trades and Welding Technology programs.

Sam Orth, Executive HR Director, provided a brief overview. Highlights included:

- At the Fall Employee Reception and Recognition Luncheon, LCC honored 69 employees for years of service and celebrated their longevity with LCC. The Sunshine Awards, recognizing employees who demonstrate a positive and encouraging attitude, contribute as inspiring team members, and provide professional customer service, were presented to Tanya Pisarchuk (Registration Program Specialist 2) for Classified staff and Sarah Kirton (Financial Aid Advisor) for Exempt staff.
- Jeremy Martin will join LCC as the new People Relations Specialist on October 1. HR is also in the final stages of filling another open position.
- Unfortunately, there have been several recent resignations, and the HR team has been very busy recruiting for those positions. We are very excited to fill these positions to provide support and relief to the teams.

5.b. ASLCC Report

Mercedes Musser, Executive Director of the Associated Students of LCC, shared a brief overview. Highlights included:

- The Executive Board attended Student Leadership Training at Green River College.
- Welcome Week events were well attended.
- Governing Board meetings will resume to address matters impacting students.

5.c. LCCFAHE Report

Amber Lemiere, President of the Faculty Association of Higher Education of LCC, shared a brief overview. Highlights included:

- Introduction of the 2026-27 faculty leadership team and positive engagement with administrative and executive leadership.
- Faculty reported a positive start to the academic year, including strong participation in In-Service activities and increased campus engagement during Welcome Week.
- Faculty negotiations are scheduled to begin on October 1, following summer preparation and contract review activities.

5.d. WFSE Report

Tracy Stanley, President of the Washington Federation of State Employees/LCC, was unable to attend but provided the following highlights:

- Classified staff are actively supporting the start of the fall quarter and have reached a tentative agreement on the Community College Coalition collective bargaining agreement.
- WFSE is engaging members in the ratification process for the tentative agreement.

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

A written report was provided to the Board. Some of the highlights included:

- June Program End-of-Month Report - Final FY25
- June Budget Report - Final FY25
- July Program End-of-Month Report - First FY26
- July Budget Report - First FY26
- Program Information Report FY25
 - Head Start Services Snapshot
 - Early Head Start Snapshot

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

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

7. INSTITUTIONAL MONITORING

7. a. Fiscal Year 2026 Year-End Budget Status Report

Vice President Nolan Wheeler presented the college's FY26 year-end budget status report, including a summary of fund equity and operating revenue and expenditure activity. The item was presented for discussion only; no action was required.

Financial Position: Funds Equity

The LCC Funds Equity Summary reflects fund balances at period-end based on net activity for FY2026. Overall, the college experienced a net decrease in fund equity of \$2.7MM for the fiscal year-to-date.

Historically, fund revenue lags expenditures throughout the fiscal year due to the reimbursable nature of higher education funding. This is particularly evident in Financial Aid (Fund 846), Grants (Fund 145), and Contracts (Fund 146), which rely on monthly reimbursements.

While the Bookstore (Fund 524) continues to operate at a deficit, it closed the fiscal year with strong revenue totals, and that positive performance has continued into the new fiscal year. Efforts to improve Food Services have also produced positive results, with the fund generating net revenue of \$2.6K.

The balance in Fund 148 includes \$3.7MM designated as the Board Reserve.

Results of Operations: Operating Revenue & Expenditure Activity

Total operating revenues collected for FY2025 were \$1.5MM higher than budgeted, primarily due to additional allocations from the state legislature earmarked for specific purposes and pass-through expenses from SBCTC. These earmarked funds, totaling approximately \$412K, along with additional one-time expenditures incurred mid-year, contributed to FY2026 ending \$310K over budget.

An annualized increase in total enrollment of 8.9% is reflected in year-to-date tuition collections of \$7.2MM. However, continued inflationary pressures, rising utility rates, and negative budget messaging from the Governor's Office underscore the need for a more comprehensive analysis and ongoing monitoring of goods and services expenditures throughout FY2027.

Wheeler informed the Board that Student Housing generated a net revenue of \$22,206. He noted that revenue in this area will need to increase to support the program's long-term viability.

8. BOARD BUSINESS/INFORMATION ITEMS**8.a. Committee Assignments for Trustees**

The Board reviewed the 2025-26 committee assignments and confirmed 2026-27 Board representation on college and state committees. Vice President Wendy Hall advised that one

committee on the 2025-26 list had been phased out. The Board made no assignment changes, except to remove the Transforming Lives Selection Committee assignment.

Chair Kim called for a motion. Trustee Karnofski moved, and Trustee Silva seconded, to approve the 2026-27 Trustee committee assignments with the noted change.

MOTION: By Trustee Karnofski, seconded by Trustee Silva

OUTCOME: The motion carried unanimously.

8.b. Review Board Self-Evaluation Results and Next Steps

The Board reviewed and discussed the results of the July self-evaluation and requested that the topic be added to the February Board Workshop. The additional time will allow the Board to thoughtfully review the evaluation questions, including both individual and group components; examine evaluation materials from other colleges; consider Board goals and priorities; and develop an evaluation process that supports deeper reflection, discussion, and goal setting.

8.c. 2026-27 Board Calendar and 2027 Board Meeting Schedule

The Board reviewed the proposed 2026-27 Board Calendar and 2027 Board Meeting Schedule for potential conflicts. Shelley Williams, AAG, provided guidance on the process for changing a future meeting date, if needed.

Chair Kim called for a motion. Trustee Karnofski moved, and Trustee Silva seconded, to approve the 2026-27 Board Calendar and 2027 Board Meeting Schedule as presented.

MOTION: By Trustee Karnofski, seconded by Trustee Silva

OUTCOME: The motion carried unanimously.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no executive session.

10. ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no executive session.

11. RESULT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no executive session.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kim called for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Karnofski moved, and Trustee Silva seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

MOTION: By Trustee Karnofski, seconded by Trustee Silva

OUTCOME: The motion carried unanimously.

On October 14, 2026, the Board of Trustees of Community College District 13 approved the minutes of the September 23, 2026, special meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Kristen Finnel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristen Finnel, Interim Secretary to the Board