

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT TWELVE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Centralia College**

**Room 101  
Centralia College East  
Morton, Washington**

**Study Session/Regular Meeting  
April 9, 2026  
3:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Study Session**

State and Local Budgets and Fiscal Health – Dr. Mohrbacher and Tariq Qureshi

Dr. Mohrbacher and Tariq Qureshi provided an overview of the institution's current budget outlook and key fiscal considerations for the year. All figures remain preliminary, as the State Board continues to work with the Legislature and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to finalize details, including implementation of a new allocation model scheduled to take effect July 1.

Dr. Mohrbacher outlined the major factors influencing the budget, including legislative changes, the new allocation formula, tuition, enrollment projections, and rising operational costs. While the direct reduction in state funding is modest (approximately \$78,000), additional costs increase the overall fiscal impact.

The college is required to contribute to the cost-of-living adjustments (COLA), currently set at 21%. The college is responsible for both prior and current year's COLA obligations, totaling approximately \$123,000. These costs are expected to compound annually if the policy remains unchanged, placing continued pressure on the operating budget. Additional financial obligations include classified staff salary increases.

A recent legislative "fund swap," in which dollars were shifted from the capital budget to the operating budget, is being routed through the college's local fund but treated as operating revenue. To offset this shift, the state issued additional bonds to replenish the capital budget. This was explained as a one-year adjustment; however, similar measures implemented in 2009 remain in effect, raising concerns about potential long-term implications.

Revenue projections are partially based on anticipated building fee collections, which are tied to student tuition. If actual collections fall short of projections, this could result in an additional budget shortfall. However, current enrollment trends appear stable or increasing, reducing this risk.

The combined impact of legislative changes and cost pressures is estimated to create a budget deficit of \$349,000, which the college will need to address through ongoing financial planning.

The institution's projected state allocation is approximately \$20.2 million; however, this figure will be temporarily reduced by approximately \$450,000 due to the previously discussed fund swap. While these funds are expected to be restored through the local fund (Fund 149) once state processes are finalized, the timing difference creates short-term budget uncertainty.

Changes to the state allocation formula are expected to result in an estimated \$116,000 annual deficit. When combined with other legislative changes, the total projected shortfall increases to approximately \$465,000.

Fortunately, several revenue increases are anticipated. A 0.3% tuition increase is projected to generate approximately \$164,000. Running Start enrollment is projected to grow by approximately 5%, generating an estimated \$302,000 in additional revenue. These increases total approximately \$466,000, offsetting the projected deficit and placing the college in a balanced position, though this depends on actual enrollment numbers.

Budget managers submitted one-time spending requests totaling approximately \$164,000. These may be covered by unspent current-year funds due to overall underspending.

Recurring cost increases total approximately \$388,000 include both personnel and non-personnel expenses. Among these are proposed faculty hires tied to new program development, which are expected to generate additional enrollment and revenue over time. Other rising costs include operational expenses such as postage. A significant recurring obligation is faculty professional improvement credits (PIC), totaling approximately \$80,000 annually. These credits, earned through ongoing professional development and service, enable faculty to advance on the salary schedule. Consistent funding of PIC supports faculty engagement and retention, particularly for those who have transitioned from higher-paying industry roles into teaching. It was clarified that PIC credits are not reimbursements for conference participation or professional development expenses but instead function as a mechanism for advancement on the salary schedule.

Current contract language allows the college to evaluate its ability to fund PIC advancements on an annual basis. Connie Smejkal emphasized that consistent annual funding is preferable to avoid compounding liabilities and to maintain positive labor relations. She noted that when PIC obligations were kept current in recent negotiations, the process was smoother, with fewer outstanding financial issues.

The budget development process has been redesigned to better align financial decisions with institutional planning priorities in response to accreditor feedback. The Budget Review and Planning (BRP) Committee will evaluate all new spending requests using a three-tier prioritization framework:

- High priority: Requests directly aligned with the strategic plan and demonstrate supporting enrollment growth or student retention.
- Medium priority: Requests partially aligned with strategic goals and offering moderate impact.
- Low priority: Requests with limited strategic alignment, which may be deferred or funded later as resources allow.

This prioritization process then makes recommendations to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, which will review and vote on the budget as a whole before it proceeds to the Board for final approval.

Multiple sabbatical requests are currently under review, with decisions pending based on BRP Committee feedback.

Budget managers proposed approximately \$126,000 in reductions, with an additional \$60,000 in potential savings identified by the Budget Office. Total estimated

savings are approximately \$186,000. The college faces approximately \$587,000 in remaining budget decisions. While significant, this gap is considered manageable.

Preliminary analysis of the current fiscal year indicates significant underspending, estimated to be between \$1.3 million and \$2 million. These carryforward funds may help mitigate upcoming budget pressures.

The student-to-employee ratio has declined from approximately 10:1 in 2018 to 8:1 in the most recent year. As institutional revenue is driven by student enrollment, this shift contributes to a growing imbalance between revenue and operating costs. The decline is attributed to enrollment losses during the pandemic, which were not matched by proportional reductions in staffing levels, aside from decreases in adjunct faculty.

Certain staffing increases have been driven by legislative mandates. For example, the college was required to hire a benefits navigator position, with partial state funding provided. While such roles add value to student services, they also contribute to ongoing cost pressures.

The projected shortage, estimated at \$560,000 to \$600,000, represents approximately 2% of the institution's total operating budget of approximately \$30.7 million.

Overall, enrollment continues to increase modestly, but growth remains below system averages. Fall and winter quarters showed year-over-year gains; however, spring enrollment has remained flat.

Key budget management strategies moving forward:

- Targeted reductions: Avoiding across-the-board cuts in favor of strategic decision-making based on program need and institutional priorities.
- Staffing approach: Anticipating minimal or no layoffs, with potential delays in filling vacant positions.
- Program review: Limiting program closures while continuing to phase out low- or no-enrollment certificates.
- Instructional efficiency: Reducing low-enrolled course offerings while optimizing adjunct faculty utilization.
- Program development: Investing in new, high-demand programs to drive enrollment growth.
- Retention focus: Continuing efforts to sustain and improve student retention.
- Revenue diversification: Hiring a grant writer to expand external funding opportunities.
- Outreach efforts: Enhancing targeted marketing and recruitment strategies.

Tariq Qureshi provided an annual update on the financial performance and outlook of the Running Start program, including prior-year results, current-year projections, and reserve trends.

For the prior fiscal year, Running Start enrollment totaled approximately 497 FTE, generating \$4.6 million in revenue. Total program-related expenditures were approximately \$3.3 million, including administrative costs, instructional distributions to divisions, counseling services, student activities allocations, faculty salary increments, technology (ctcLink), staffing (business analyst), security, and employee tuition. The program generated a net surplus of approximately \$1.3 million, which was added to reserves.

For the current fiscal year, enrollment is projected at approximately 504 FTE, with an estimated revenue of \$4.7 million. Projected expenditures total approximately \$4.49 million, reflecting increases in several areas, including a higher allocation to student activities (ASCC), ongoing faculty increments, and other operational costs. This results in an estimated net of approximately \$199,000. After accounting for \$137,000 in capital-related expenditures (bleachers and press box projects), the projected net contribution to reserves is approximately \$61,700, with potential for a higher final amount depending on actual year-end expenses.

A multi-year trend analysis shows that over the past five years, Running Start revenue has increased by approximately 57%, while associated expenditures have risen slightly faster at approximately 60%.

Over the past decade, reserves have grown from approximately \$1.2 million to a projected \$6.28 million by the end of the current fiscal year. The prior year alone contributed approximately \$1.3 million to this total.

Discussion clarified that Running Start reserves function as a financial safeguard and strategic resource. These funds may be used to support institutional priorities, such as increasing required operating reserves, funding capital commitments (e.g., the Teachers' Education Building), or addressing future budget needs.

It was noted that the college maintains a strong liquidity position across cash and investment holdings, including both operating funds and reserves. This overall position contributes to financial stability and supports the college's ability to absorb budget fluctuations, including the currently projected budget gap. Reliance on annual underspending and reserve balances is not a sustainable long-term strategy if structural imbalances persist.

The reserve represents cumulative net funds generated from Running Start program revenues after covering direct program costs and college allocations. It is maintained separately to preserve transparency regarding its funding source and to track how Running Start revenues are utilized over time.

Running Start revenues are not exclusively reinvested in Running Start-specific expenditures. They are integrated into the broader institutional budget to support overall operating needs, with remaining balances contributing to reserve growth. As operating costs have increased over time, a larger portion of Running Start revenue has been used to offset general fund expenses, though reserves have continued to grow due to overall net positive contributions.

A sizable portion of reserves is held in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP), which provides interest income while maintaining compliance with public fund investment regulations.

While Running Start FTE enrollment has increased by approximately 42% over the past decade, associated reserves have grown by approximately 238%, reflecting sustained net positive contributions and prudent fiscal management. Running Start maintains a strong fiscal position and contributes to institutional liquidity and flexibility.

## **1. Call to Order**

Board Chair Annalee Tobey called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Board members present:

- Annalee Tobey
- Pretrina Mullins
- Mark Scheibmeir
- Chris Thomas (Teams)
- Court Stanley

## **2. Introductions/Presentations:**

John Holmgren, CC East Program Manager, highlighted recent updates, staffing changes, instructional offerings, and community engagement initiatives at CC East.

He noted the retirement of Lauri Dennis, the appointment of a new dean, Julie Nurse, and the hiring of Vanessa Monroe as program coordinator. Ms. Monroe introduced herself and stated that she is a recent Centralia College graduate and local resident.

Operational updates included the expansion of testing center services at CC East. The testing center is currently open one day per week with plans to expand to two or three days weekly to reduce the need for students to travel to the Centralia campus.

CC East typically supports two to three academic classes per quarter, consistent with enrollment demand. While expansion is limited by enrollment numbers, course offerings span multiple terms and include both credit-bearing and continuing education classes. Cross-listed offerings, such as digital photography and printmaking, support intergenerational learning by enrolling both traditional and continuing education students.

Community education programming remains a significant component of CC East's mission. Recurring offerings such as Better Bones and Balance and Tai Chi continue to run each quarter, while community choir and orchestra programs have expanded across multiple terms. Additional programs include hiking courses in the South Cascades and driver's education. Driver's education is not consistently offered each quarter due to demand variability and is scheduled in response to community need.

The collaboration with the Fire Mountain Arts Council and the Roxy Theater, the summer theater production drew strong attendance, with performances reaching full or near-full capacity across multiple performances.

The second annual student and community art exhibit received solid participation despite weather-related constraints. The exhibit is scheduled to continue in early June and is supported through a grant partnership with the Cowlitz River Project (Tacoma Public Utilities), including funding for student awards and instructional materials such as easels and supplies.

CC East regularly participates in community events hosted by Arbor Health, including youth and senior programming events in collaboration with other Centralia College departments. Additional engagement includes partnerships with the White Pass area and ongoing coordination with the three primary feeder school districts: White Pass, Morton, and Mossyrock.

CC East continues to support Running Start pathways and healthcare-related training, including CNA preparation. Several White Pass students are currently participating in certification training, with transportation supported through district arrangements rather than public transit.

A recent request from the Packwood Fire Department for support in providing flagging and traffic control training resulted in coordination with multiple local fire departments to support shared training efforts.

Board members expressed support for continued expansion of arts opportunities for Running Start and high school students, noting the importance of balanced opportunities across athletics and the arts.

John reported that CC East is in the process of hiring a grant writer. Staff are compiling a departmental “wish list” of potential funding needs, including equipment, facilities improvements, and programmatic support. Once onboard, the grant writer will assist in identifying external funding opportunities aligned with institutional priorities.

### **3. Open Forum**

No one requested to speak in open forum.

### **4. CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **Adoption of Minutes:**

It was MOVED BY Mark Scheibmeir THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE REGULAR MINUTES OF March 12, 2026, AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### **Policy Governance**

##### **Policy Updates**

Dr. Mohrbacher reported two policies passed at the April 8, 2026, Institutional Effectiveness (IE) meeting. He noted that the class office disruptions policy was tabled to determine the distinction between disruptions caused by students versus those caused by non-students.

He reported ongoing work to revise the volunteer policy with required Labor & Industries (L&I) coverage requirements for volunteers. The college must ensure appropriate tracking and documentation of volunteer activity in the event of injury, including verification that proper paperwork has been completed.

### **5. Trustee Reports**

Chris Thomas reported that he has completed the required Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) filings due April 15 as part of his obligations as a state appointee. He has signed up for upcoming trustee events and offered to help with historical “time capsule” items, specifically tracking down the four missing pennies needed to complete the collection.

Court Stanley reported that he attended the President’s Lunch presentation by Dr. Mohrbacher, which he described as productive and enjoyable.

Court attended a recent presentation by Dr. Mohrbacher to the American Association of University Women (AAUW), noting that the feedback was positive and that the session included active participation and questions from the group.

Court will be participating in an upcoming Trustee Tuesday session.

Mark Scheibmeir reported he also attended the American Association of University Women (AAUW) presentation and described it as well received. He reiterated that the presentation generated strong attention from attendees, who asked thoughtful questions and demonstrated genuine interest in the college's operations.

Mark also attended a recent Foundation meeting and noted that Foundation staff have begun coordinating trustee participation in scholarship presentations at local high school graduations. He encouraged trustees to participate in these events, emphasizing the value of direct engagement with incoming students and families. He described scholarship presentations as a highly positive and energizing experience, noting strong student enthusiasm and appreciation.

Pretrina Mullins reported that scheduling conflicts during spring break, including overlapping commitments, limited her ability to attend college events. She described the past month as particularly busy but expressed her intent to increase participation in the coming weeks.

Pretrina outlined several upcoming commitments, including participating in an Affinity of Color Trustees meeting, Trustee Tuesday, and a Foundation meeting. She has also registered to attend the upcoming ACT Spring Conference.

Annalee Tobey reported attending the President's Lunch, noting strong community attendance and engagement. She thought that participants appreciated receiving institutional updates and valued the opportunity to maintain ongoing connection with college leadership. She also attended the President's Breakfast event, which was well attended and an effective forum for the community.

Annalee also participated in a discussion facilitated by Katie Daily regarding a potential entrepreneurship program. The meeting included representatives from several local organizations, including the Alliance, the Main Street Program, the airport, and the city manager's office. The meeting discussed opportunities to support entrepreneurship, small business development, and individuals seeking to launch or expand small business ventures.

She has also registered to attend the upcoming ACT Spring Conference.

Dr. Mohrbacher noted that he brought the time capsule for display. It remains in the collection phase, with additional contributions still being solicited.

Ideas for displaying the time capsule include incorporating it into the Diversity Wall or housing it within a vault-like structure to support preservation. Placement, signage, and branding have yet to be determined.

## WA-ACT

The 2026 ACT Spring Conference theme is Strength in Partnership: Trustees and Presidents Advancing Vision with Purpose. The dates are May 7-8, 2026, at the Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine, WA.

Dr. Mohrbacher, Annalee Tobey, Pretrina Mullins, Chris Thomas and Janet Reaume will be attending.

## ACCT

No report provided.

### **6. President's Report**

Dr. Mohrbacher provided an overview of student enrollment patterns and program data for CC East. Most students enroll in a mix of modalities, with East County students more likely to take hybrid and online courses. This trend reinforces CC East's role as both an instructional site and a hub for support services, including advising, financial aid, and general assistance, particularly given the region's wide geographic distribution. Students are primarily from Mossyrock and Morton.

Questions were raised regarding certification offerings such as firefighting and CDL. It was explained that the firefighting program, while offered exclusively at CC East, is non-credit and therefore not included in the data. Other programs, such as CDL and nursing assistant, are offered as short-term cohorts, with students completing certification and exiting upon completion.

Capturing any student interaction with CC East throughout their academic journey was identified as a more accurate reflection of its value. Given the high number of students enrolled in online and hybrid courses, CC East's function as a support and resource center was emphasized, with students utilizing the facility for studying, advising, and accessing services.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that broadband access may be improving, as fewer students rely on campus-provided hotspots. However, reliable internet access remains critical. Students occasionally access Wi-Fi from the parking area, further underscoring the site's importance as a technology access point.

Current enrollment for the quarter reflects approximately 1 FTE student attending classes on-site at CC East, 15 FTE attending the main campus, and 48 FTE enrolled fully online. This distribution highlights the varied ways students engage with the college and the importance of flexible access points such as CC East.

Historically, CC East students have accessed Services and Activities (S&A) funds for initiatives such as transportation assistance and supplemental programming. While some efforts, including subsidized bus passes, saw limited utilization, funding remains available for proposals that demonstrate need.

Efforts to reestablish a student government presence at CC East have faced participation challenges, due to the high proportion of Running Start students already engaged at their high schools. It was noted that student government maintains available funding and would support initiatives aimed at improving access and services, though low utilization continues to present challenges in sustaining such efforts.

## **7. SAALT**

Alicia Jenkins, Student Advocacy Activities Leadership Team (SAALT) President, reported on student government and campus engagement activities for spring quarter, noting that efforts are focused on resuming initiatives following break while launching new programming.

Student leadership is preparing outreach and tabling efforts related to SAALT, as current members transition out of their roles and recruitment begins for new members. Alicia reported updates to the student government constitution, including revisions to wording and provisions, which will be presented to students for review and voting.

Upcoming events include Earth Week activities scheduled for mid-April, incorporating games and events in partnership with campus sustainability efforts. Alicia also noted a mini-involvement fair aimed at encouraging club participation and leadership transitions for the coming year.

Additional initiatives include Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Mental Health Awareness Month activities, including plans to bring back the “Amazing Wellness Race” and related events. Collaboration with regional colleges was also noted, including coordination with Clark College for participation in the Students of Color Conference and efforts to engage additional campuses due to current participation constraints.

Alicia reiterated that spring quarter planning is in initial stages but includes a range of planned events focused on engagement, wellness, sustainability, and leadership development.

## **8. Faculty**

No report provided.

## **9. Classified**

No report provided.

## **10. Instruction**

Connie Smejkal, Vice President of Instruction, reported on updates in transitional studies, including programming within the Department of Corrections and transfer pathways. She also mentioned the college’s Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program, which pairs content instructors with basic skills instructors in the same classroom to support student acceleration.

I-BEST, in its current form, has been operating for approximately one year and is showing early positive outcomes. Examples were provided in which students enrolled in pre-college English sequences (98, 99, and 101) demonstrated sufficient progress within a five-credit course to earn English 101 credit.

Approximately 20 I-BEST courses have been offered this year, with a goal to double offerings in the coming academic year. Faculty engagement has been strong, and the college is pursuing grant funding to further support program expansion. I-BEST is intended primarily for introductory-level coursework to build foundational skills and is not designed for upper-level courses or full program sequences. There is interest in expansion, but implementation is expected to remain focused on early-college coursework where the model is most effective.

Connie reported that contract negotiations were formally completed earlier in the week following a final review of contract language. She noted that the agreement will now be taken to the union membership for ratification, after which it will be presented to the Board. She acknowledged the work of the negotiation team and stated that the process was conducted efficiently, with established negotiation time blocks maintained throughout.

In response to questions, Connie will provide follow-up information regarding enrollment figures for the transitional studies programs. Discussion also included recognition of a faculty member's application for a Fulbright Scholarship, with the trustees requesting an update once a decision is known.

### **11. Human Resources & Equity**

Joy Anglesey, Vice President of Human Resources and Equity, reported the Centennial College Cares funds support inclusion and belonging across campus. She reported that seventeen projects have now been funded through the program, an increase from fourteen, as awareness of the funding opportunity continues to grow. She noted that projects are reviewed and approved through Cabinet and that the guidelines are intentionally accessible.

She provided an update on wellness initiatives, including an all-staff fitness challenge. Early participation was mentioned, with activity tracking showing individuals logging significant mileage during the first week.

In response to questions, she noted that the career pathways initiative is in development to support internal career progression, particularly for classified staff, by clarifying pathways between roles. Transitions across broader classifications are more complex and require alignment with job duties and classification processes. She is developing the program framework and templates, with an initial training plan expected in the near term, followed by phased implementation.

The initiative aligns with institutional goals for retention and employee development and will comply with collective bargaining agreements and union requirements.

### **12. Student Services**

Dr. Robert Cox, Vice President of Student Services, reported that Garrett Wenrich has accepted an offer for a combined ConexED Coordinator and men's soccer coach position. His anticipated start date is the first of May. Dr. Cox expressed enthusiasm for his dual role supporting both the men's soccer program and ConexED implementation.

Dr. Cox provided an update on anticipated federal higher education policy changes noting potential impacts to programs such as TRIO, Pell Grant funding, and Federal Work-Study, as well as possible increases in institutional costs. He indicated that the proposals are in initial stages but may require increased advocacy and engagement at the congressional level through organizations such as ACT, including potential coordinated visits with students and institutional representatives.

Dr. Cox provided an update on accessibility compliance, noting that student services staff completed required training ahead of the April 24 state deadline. Participation was strong across departments and staff were commended for prioritizing accessibility improvements in documents, forms, and web content.

Current outreach and retention efforts are expected to positively impact enrollment, particularly in combination with the student success class, which may produce compounding gains in retention and enrollment trends.

He acknowledged the pending retirement of Shelley Bannish, Director of Student Programs, following 39 years of service to the college, and expressed appreciation for her longstanding contributions. The position is generating external interest, as it requires a rare and highly experienced skill set, and is expected to attract a strong applicant pool.

Annalee Tobey raised a question regarding the Running Start application process, specifically the requirement for students to select a major at the point of application. She described an anecdote from assisting her son, noting that the requirement can cause confusion and concern for students who are not yet certain of their academic direction. She asked about the purpose of the requirement and its implications, including whether later changes create administrative or advising challenges.

Dr. Cox explained that the application system is state-managed and not controlled by the college. He noted that while the requirement to select a major can cause confusion, it is primarily used for data purposes and is not binding, as most students change their intended pathway following initial advising. Advising practices under Guided Pathways are intended to support exploration of career interests, and students typically refine or revise their selections during these conversations.

He added that the college is working to better align intake processes with the Guided Pathways framework to support exploratory decision-making and improve data accuracy. Running Start advising is currently provided by a dedicated team of four advisors in the counseling center. Future efforts will focus on integrating Running Start students more fully into disciplinary advising structures to strengthen career exploration and faculty-student connections.

### **13. Administrative Services**

Tariq Qureshi, Vice President of Finance and Administration, reporting that approximately 92% of funds are invested, with 8% held in cash and operating accounts. He explained that the cash balance supports monthly operations, including payroll, and is maintained to cover approximately two months of expenses to ensure liquidity. The remaining funds are held in investment vehicles designated as reserves.

In response to questions, he estimated total reserves at \$14 million out of a \$20 million total pool, including designated and restricted balances. He explained that portions of the reserve are encumbered for specific purposes, including board-required designations, grant-related reserves, and other set-asides such as the teacher education funding.

Investment earnings are deposited into reserve accounts, contributing to overall reserve growth rather than supporting ongoing operational expenditures. The college's investment portfolio is currently yielding an approximate weighted average return of 4%, reflecting a favorable position relative to cash holdings.

Broader discussion highlighted inconsistencies in how community and technical colleges define and report "cash on hand" versus "reserves," which can complicate systemwide fiscal health assessments and benchmarking.

It was noted that maintaining appropriate investment balances is important both for maximizing returns and for managing public perception, as excessive cash holdings may be misinterpreted as unutilized funding, and create unfavorable optics with state policymakers.

A prior system example was cited in which a college held approximately \$20 million in cash, which was reported to the Legislature and resulted in concerns about excess unspent funds and perceptions that additional state funding was not needed. This led to scrutiny and the perception that additional state funding may not be necessary, underscoring the importance of careful cash and investment management to avoid negative fiscal optics.

The State Board now requires annual reporting from colleges on reserves, cash on hand, and related financial positions to ensure consistent systemwide reporting and transparency to the Legislature.

#### **14. Foundation**

Christine Fossett, Associate Vice President of Advancement, reported on Foundation activities, noting that the Board met recently and reviewed plans for the Teacher Education fundraising campaign. Campaign materials, including documents and promotional flyers, were reviewed and approved with minor revisions. The Foundation plans to launch an intensive fundraising effort beginning in May.

She outlined proposed naming opportunities associated with the project, including naming rights and named spaces such as classrooms and playground areas. Proposed gift levels include approximately \$1 million for building naming rights, with additional tiers for interior spaces ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000. The Foundation has identified and prioritized prospective donors and will engage them with tailored proposals based on prior giving history and areas of interest.

Christine requested Board approval of the overall process for offering naming opportunities, noting that individual naming decisions would continue to be brought forward for Board review and approval prior to finalization. The Board discussed the appropriate level of approval, including whether to approve individual naming requests or the overall process framework. Consensus supported proceeding with the proposed process, with the understanding that specific naming agreements will return to the Board for formal approval.

Additional discussion included the option of installment payments of up to five years to meet naming contribution levels, which was affirmed as an existing practice. The Foundation will provide monthly updates on prospective donors and proposed naming opportunities for Board awareness and approval as the campaign progresses.

#### **15. New Business**

Dr. Mohrbacher noted that at the previous meeting, the Board approved a motion to nominate Robert O'Neill for an honorary degree. The nomination has been forwarded for faculty review, and a committee has been convened to evaluate the nomination. The recommendation will be returned to the Board at a future meeting for final approval.

Additional discussion addressed recognition logistics, including coordination with the nominee and consideration of an appropriate venue for presentation. Options include

recognition at commencement or, if more appropriate, at a Board meeting, depending on accessibility and participation preferences.

## **16. Old Business**

### Strategic Planning

There was no Strategic Planning report.

### Accreditation

Fia Eliasson-Creek, Executive Director of Institutional Research, reported that the college is preparing for an ad hoc accreditation report and site visit scheduled for next year, with leadership teams beginning to review prior recommendations and align efforts accordingly. The accrediting commission is also revising its standards, with anticipated implementation in 2027.

Fia Eliasson-Creek introduced Dr. Cox to explain how financial aid process improvements align with accreditation and strategic planning efforts. Dr. Cox provided an overview of a recent comprehensive financial aid assessment conducted by an external consultant, stating that improving the speed and efficiency of aid processing is critical to supporting enrollment, as timely award notifications help students plan and commit.

The assessment identified several immediate priorities, including correcting and fully developing Academic Advisement Reports (AARs) to ensure enrollment in eligible coursework and maintain compliance with federal requirements. Additional actions include improving access to federal data systems through enhanced IT infrastructure, eliminating noncompliant institutional forms, automating communications, and strengthening monitoring of satisfactory academic progress.

Short-term priorities include transitioning from paper check disbursements to electronic payment methods to improve efficiency and provide faster access to funds. The assessment also highlighted the need to strengthen capacity for federal consumer information disclosure requirements, noting that the college is in good standing.

The long-term recommendation from the financial aid assessment focuses on transitioning away from paper-based processes to a more efficient document imaging system. The reliance on paper files was identified throughout the report as a key source of inefficiency. The proposed approach is to first develop a scalable model within a selected department and then expand that system to financial aid once established.

This initiative is part of a broader, campus-wide effort to modernize processes and improve operational efficiency. While financial aid staff are focused on immediate priorities, the longer-term strategy is intended to support streamlined workflows and improved access to information across departments.

The assessment was described as clear and actionable, with recommendations aligning closely with existing institutional observations. No major surprises were identified; the report affirmed both strengths and areas for improvement. The financial aid team was recognized for its stability, strong collaboration, and effective leadership, which were identified as significant assets compared to peer institutions.

Discussion also acknowledged trade-offs in current practices, such as the use of paper checks, which, while inefficient, may reduce exposure to certain types of fraud.

However, it was agreed that transitioning to electronic systems would better support students and improve overall service delivery, with appropriate safeguards in place.

**17. Executive Session**

Under RCW 42.30.110, the Board may hold an executive session for the purpose of reviewing the performance of a public employee and current or potential agency litigation or to review professional negotiations.

At 5:45 pm Board members moved into executive session to consult with legal counsel about current or potential litigation and to review the performance of public employees. The Board expects Executive Session to last approximately 15 minutes. The Board will be in Executive Session until 6:00 p.m. unless notified that the time is extended.

The Board has adjourned the Executive Session and reconvenes in Open Session. The time is 6:00 p.m.

The Board will proceed with the final agenda items.

**18. Action from Executive Session**

There was no action from executive session.

**19. Announcement of Upcoming Meeting Date and Place:**

The next board meeting will be Thursday, May 14, 2026, via Teams and Centralia College Boardrooms, Centralia, WA.

**20. Comments**

**21. Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

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*Annalee Tobey, Board Chair*

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*Dr. Bob Mohrbacher, Board Secretary*