

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

**Hanson Boardrooms
Centralia College Boardrooms
Centralia, Washington**

**Study Session/Regular Meeting
February 12, 2026
3:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

• **Study Session**

Enterprise Risk Management – Tariq Qureshi, Vice President of Finance and Administration and Linda Nordmann, Executive Assistant

Tariq Qureshi presented an overview of Centralia College's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework, defined as a comprehensive, organization-wide approach to identifying, measuring, and managing risks that may impact the achievement of strategic objectives.

The presentation outlined the primary categories of risk monitored by the college, including:

- Strategic and operational
- Legal and compliance
- Reputational
- Cyber
- Financial
- Health and safety

Mr. Qureshi discussed board oversight role in ERM, including governance structure and alignment of risk management activities with strategic objectives. The Board held an Executive Session in order to review specific risks identified by the college leadership team.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Board members present:

- Annalee Tobey
- Pretrina Mullins
- Chris Thomas
- Court Stanley

3. Introductions/Presentations:

Emmy Kreilkamp, Drama Professor, introduced the actors and described the winter play, *Holiday*; a comedy about a young man's quest to find love and happiness by making a fortune and retiring early.

Emmy Kreilkamp thanked everyone for the opportunity to perform Act 1 and encouraged attendance at the winter production. The play will open on Friday, February 27, and close on March 8, 2026, in Wickstrom Theater.

In addition, Emmy Kreilkamp read a statement from the Arts and Humanities faculty emphasizing the importance of the arts in higher education.

Open Forum

Sarah Thomas and Angela Dickson, representing Pope's Place, spoke to the board regarding their recent gala event hosted on campus. They praised Cari Skaar, Event's Services Specialist, on her exemplary customer service, proactive assistance, ease of communication, and dedication to ensuring smooth operations at their event.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Adoption of Minutes:

It was MOVED BY Pretrina Mullins THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE REGULAR MINUTES OF January 8, 2026, AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Policy Governance

Policy Updates

Dr. Mohrbacher reported the new policy 1.280 Risk Management was approved at the February 4, 2026, Institutional Effectiveness meeting. The policy outlines the framework for managing risk across the organization and has been posted on the college website for reference.

5. Trustee Reports

Chris Thomas reported that retirement has been treating him well and he has remained actively involved. Since the last meeting, he participated in "Trustee Tuesday," gaining valuable information and insights.

On January 21, he attended the Student Council Winter Involvement Fair, noting the high student engagement and informative presentations at various club tables. On January 23, he emceed the Chamber Banquet held at the college, which was a success with strong participation, excellent food, and collaborative support from colleagues, including Connie Smejkal, who assisted with last-minute math calculations.

Chris Thomas also celebrated the college's first men's and women's basketball wins on January 28 after a series of losses. He participated in the Seahawks tailgate event organized by Student Government, where he helped serve students and noticed high levels of student involvement and enthusiasm.

He attended the Futures Academy with Dr. Mohrbacher and engaged in discussions about the college's current environment and future direction. He attended the Pope's Place event, which he described as energetic.

Looking ahead, Mr. Thomas plans to attend the Blazer Bash next Friday. He noted that he will attend the March 12 board meeting via Zoom while in Arizona.

Pretrina Mullins reported that she attended the recent Trustee Tuesday meeting and participated in the Foundation Executive Board meeting earlier in the month. She had no additional updates to share.

Court Stanley reported his involvement with the Center of Excellence for Clean Energy under Monica Brummer's direction. He is currently helping organize a week-long STEM Field Trip program for students, with his specific responsibility being the Forestry Field Day, which he described as engaging and enjoyable.

He also attended the Wilcox Farms board meeting earlier in the day. He noted that he missed the recent Legislative Advocacy meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

Annalee Tobey reported she attended the Economic Alliance banquet last weekend and expressed enthusiasm for the new Executive Director, Todd Chaput. She noted Todd's dedication and commitment to advancing the Alliance's mission. She highlighted the longstanding collaboration with Todd Chaput and others through the United Way board, which led to the development of the Early Learning Center.

During the banquet, Larry McGee was honored with the Legacy Award for his longstanding contributions, including his instrumental role in establishing the BASM program at the college.

Ms. Tobey emphasized the collaborative efforts and community impact of these programs and recognized the leadership and dedication of key individuals, including Todd Chaput and Larry McGee.

Ms. Tobey also participated in the Future Academy session, where a small but highly engaged group had thoughtful discussions about the college's direction.

WA-ACT

No report provided.

ACCT

The 2026 Association of Community College Trustees National Legislative Summit was February 8-11, 2026, at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, D.C. Both Dr. Mohrbacher and Dr. Cox attended.

Dr. Mohrbacher noted that the summit was well-organized and provided a valuable overview of current federal developments affecting higher education.

Dr. Mohrbacher met with Senator Cantwell, Representative Gluesenkamp-Perez, and staff from Maryann Strickland's office. Dr. Cox attended a separate meeting with Senator Murray. Both of them participated in several sessions addressing federal issues relevant to colleges and universities.

A major focus was Pell grants. Both emphasized the need for continued adequate funding and highlighted the implementation of Workforce Pell (short-term Pell grants),

which is set to begin on July 1st, while noting that overall Pell funding has not increased. They also urged Congress to stop taxing Pell grants, pointing out the inconsistency of providing federal aid while simultaneously taxing it. Congressional staff received these points well, although timelines for action remain uncertain.

Drs. Mohrbacher and Cox also advocated for federal grant programs such as TRIO and Upward Bound, emphasizing support for multicultural service institution grants that had been disbanded. They encouraged lawmakers to ensure that funds already allocated by Congress are used for their intended purposes.

Dr. Mohrbacher observed that, despite political gridlock, some progress is being made behind the scenes, including federal budget work and other operational matters. He recommended that board members consider attending next year's summit, scheduled for February, noting that it promises to be a productive event.

6. President's Report

Dr. Mohrbacher reported that meetings were held with Speaker Jenkins and Representative Reed to discuss the state's fiscal challenges. Speaker Jenkins emphasized that the state tax code, unchanged since the 1930s, no longer reflects the current economy. Without reform, budget deficits are expected to continue. While a comprehensive, bipartisan review of the tax code would be ideal, the likelihood of a full-scale overhaul is very low. Consequently, the legislature is expected to consider piecemeal tax proposals.

Discussions with legislators during visits to Olympia typically express dedicated support for community colleges, but fiscal pressures are increasingly shaping priorities. For example, proposals to reduce the Running Start allocation from 1.4 FTEs to 1.2 FTEs have been actively lobbied against. While such reductions are unlikely to resolve budget shortfalls, they remain under consideration as the legislature balances competing demands. Dr. Mohrbacher noted that proposed cuts in the governor's budget could range from 1.5% to 2%, potentially increasing depending on the success of revenue proposals, including the "millionaire's tax," which may take at least a year to generate revenue and could face judicial challenges.

Dr. Mohrbacher also addressed structural inequities in the state tax system, highlighting that large corporations pay little in taxes while lower-income residents bear a disproportionate burden through sales taxes. Although a comprehensive restructuring would be optimal, political concerns over potential voter backlash make such reform unlikely.

Dr. Mohrbacher reported on the Future Academy, noting participation of approximately thirty individuals across two sessions, with productive discussions on social disruptors and student preparedness for the evolving world.

Dr. Mohrbacher provided an update on the Centers of Excellence (COEs). Two proposals were considered to address the budget shortfall: one reducing the twelve industry sectors to five under State Board management, and the other reducing them to ten while retaining college-level management. WACTC voted in favor of the larger reorganization, sending it as a recommendation to the State Board for final determination. Despite the changes, summer programs will continue as planned.

7. SAALT

Alicia Jenkins, Student Advocacy Activities Leadership Team (SAALT) President, reported on the recent tailgate event, noting it was well-attended and enjoyable, with food provided by Portland Party Works and several inflatable games. The event was held outdoors with favorable weather.

SAALT also participated in Advocacy Day, where the team focused on two major topics: the Running Start program and Veterans Affairs. Ms. Jenkins and team member Heidi VanWinkle presented to legislators, including Representative Abbarno and Senator Braun, engaging in productive discussions, and taking photos with attendees, including the mascot "Vito."

Other student activities included:

- Be Mine Bingo, hosted in the TAC, with prizes of \$50 awarded to seven student winners.
- A painting session facilitated by local artist Emily Bryant.
- Valentine's Day crafting and a mocktail event which proved popular among students.

Ms. Jenkins noted the team is preparing for the upcoming SAALT meet-and-greet, designed to provide students with easier access to the SAALT team to discuss concerns, provide feedback, and share suggestions for future events.

She also highlighted three Field Trip Fridays events:

- Northwest African American Museum – February 27th.
- Lunar New Year celebration in Seattle – March 7th.
- Seattle Mariners game – April 17th.

The Students of Color Conference will be held virtually this year. SAALT is considering whether to organize a collective viewing for students on campus or have students participate individually from home.

Ms. Jenkins noted that these activities reflect SAALT's commitment to engaging students, supporting advocacy, and providing enriching experiences throughout the term.

8. Faculty

Mark Gorecki, faculty representative, Centralia College Federation of Teachers President, acknowledged the dedication to students and supporting the college community from the faculty advisors. He noted that the faculty counselors have excelled in providing career counseling, mental health support, and leadership in CC101.

9. Classified

Emil Parke-Fagerness, classified representative, provided two brief updates.

Heather Beaird, Program Coordinator, reported all available student job positions for both fall and winter quarters, totaling 106 across various areas of the campus, have been filled.

Gina Sterner, IT Customer Support, returned from a mission to Mexico, where she helped distribute over 640 pairs of eyeglasses to people in need.

10. Instruction

Connie Smejkal, Vice President of Instruction, noted significant activity in allied health and industrial trades pathways, with several feasibility studies completed and additional program development underway.

Ms. Smejkal explained the competitive nature of the nursing program. For the most recent cohort, approximately one hundred students applied for twenty-five available spots, though not all applications were complete or met the program requirements. She noted that high-demand funding has allowed the college to expand capacity and serve more students than ever, reflecting trends across other institutions.

A key challenge remains securing clinical placements for nursing students. With multiple colleges increasing their student numbers, competition for precepting opportunities has intensified. Clinical experiences are distributed across a broad geographic area to ensure students are exposed to varied practice settings beyond hospitals. Ms. Smejkal commended program staff for maintaining strong relationships with clinical partners and managing the increased student presence effectively.

She also noted individual student progress, emphasizing examples of students completing prerequisites in preparation for future cohorts, demonstrating the program's structured support for student success.

11. Human Resources & Equity

Joy Anglesey, Vice President of Human Resources and Equity, presented an overview of turnover costs across Centralia College. She explained the methodology used to calculate these costs, which includes separation costs (administrative time, payroll finalization, vacation payouts, exit interviews, and unemployment considerations), vacancy costs (overtime for existing staff and reduced productivity), recruitment costs (advertising, background checks, HR and committee time, and executive interviews), as well as onboarding, training, and productivity loss during the initial months of a new hire.

Ms. Anglesey provided preliminary estimates for the previous year's turnover:

- Classified staff: \$606,000 – \$1,000,001
- Faculty: \$379,000 – \$632,000
- Exempt staff: \$4,000,000 – \$5,300,000

Total turnover costs were estimated to be between \$4.9 million and \$6.9 million, highlighting the significant, often hidden, fiscal impact of employee transitions. She emphasized that even a 15% reduction in turnover could result in savings of \$830,000 to \$1.16 million.

Ms. Anglesey stressed the importance of effective hiring processes, engaging onboarding, and employee retention efforts to reduce turnover and maintain a productive and satisfied workforce.

12. Student Services

Dr. Robert Cox, Vice President of Student Services, distributed copies of student stories compiled by Tony Holm, Director of Upward Bound, highlighting individual experiences within the TRIO program, noting that these illustrate the positive outcomes and opportunities the program provides.

Dr. Cox addressed ongoing challenges related to fraudulent student accounts. The State Board, in collaboration with IT staff and registrars, has identified a tool to help prevent fraudulent applications through the Common App. While implementation may take time, this tool is expected to significantly reduce the workload associated with fraudulent applications. Centralia College currently mitigates this risk by issuing paper checks, which ensure funds are returned if sent to invalid addresses.

Dr. Cox noted that managing these accounts has consumed approximately 75% of one enrollment services position, although the financial risk to the college remains low compared to other institutions.

He mentioned two common strategies adopted by other colleges: mandatory intake advising, which Centralia College already requires, and application fees, which the college has not implemented.

Dr. Cox provided an update on the Workforce Pell Program, which will be available on July 1. Programs must first be approved by the governor's office before submission to the U.S. Department of Education, based on criteria including program duration, completion standards, job placement statistics, and minimum wage requirements. Although funding begins in July, disbursement to students may not occur until fall or winter quarter.

Dr. Cox provided some positive TRIO student achievement testimonials. One TRIO student has been accepted to Stanford University with a full scholarship, and three current juniors are preparing to participate in the national college match process. He also mentioned the October Expanding Your Horizons Conference, noting its STEAM focus, which integrates arts with STEM education, providing valuable experiences for students.

13. Administrative Services

Tariq Qureshi, Vice President of Finance and Administration, reported that the monthly budget is trending favorably, with actual expenditures approximately \$2.2 million under budget, representing 14% below the projected amount.

Mr. Qureshi noted that the monthly cash and investment position maintains a strong liquidity position. This was discussed in the context of statewide concerns, and he stressed that the college remains in a healthy financial state.

The Board of Trustees reserve requirement, which currently stipulates maintaining two months of operating expenses on hand, meets current board policy, but trustees expressed concern that it may be insufficient. Mr. Qureshi noted that the college currently has approximately five times the required reserve, providing a comfortable buffer, but emphasized the importance of having a clear policy structure in place to safeguard against future budgetary risks.

Mr. Qureshi reported the college is in a stable financial position with ongoing positive budget trends and sufficient reserves to support institutional needs.

14. Foundation

Christine Fossett, Associate Vice President of Advancement, reported that the Foundation is performing very well this year across multiple areas and continues to experience strong engagement with donors.

Upcoming events include *Lunch with Bob* in March and a breakfast event in April. RSVPs for the luncheon have already begun to come in.

Ms. Fossett announced that Charlie Albright will be performing in Corbet Theater on May 2nd and tickets are available. She also noted the ongoing promotion of the Blazer Bash event.

Ms. Fossett highlighted that the Foundation's net assets have more than doubled over the past nine and a half years, increasing from \$16 million in 2016 to over \$34 million currently. She emphasized the strong financial growth and the continued impact of donor engagement during her tenure, which began in 2018, noting her prior role as Chair of the Foundation Board.

Chris Thomas commented that he recently became aware that all digital signage across the campus is being updated; he was previously unaware of those televisions.

Monica Brummer, Director of the Center of Excellence for Clean Energy, provided additional information on the upcoming STEM Academy program.

Monica noted that the June session typically accommodates twenty-four high school students, which has proven to be the optimal group size. Last year, thirty students applied, with twenty-four attending regularly.

Recruitment efforts target high schools in Lewis County, South Thurston County, and parts of Cowlitz County, with Cowlitz County PUD assisting in outreach. Marketing efforts include distributing flyers to schools and community partners.

The week-long program offers a variety of firsthand activities and site tours. Highlights include:

- Touring Port Blakely and TransAlta (the latter's final tour).
- Building hydrogen-powered cars.
- Visiting Tacoma Power and handling fish at a local fish hatchery, including touring their dams.
- Touring the Centralia Yelm Project, which features updated operations within a historic 1925 building and equipment dating to 1931.
- Engaging with a broad range of professionals, including engineers, plant operators, and plant mechanics.
- Participating in a joint day hosted by Lewis County and Cowlitz County, where students experience activities such as climbing utility poles, splicing fiber optics, learning GIS and mapping systems, and safety demonstrations with arc flashes.

Program hours run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., providing a full immersive experience. Students are transported to and from the program, with the college staff conducting tours.

Outreach and publicity are coordinated with The Chronicle, both online and in print, and the college works with Amanda Haines on program promotion. Additional support comes from Lewis County PUD, which dedicates staff to running stations and interacting directly with students. Monica stated that the primary goal of the program is to increase awareness of careers in the energy industry while providing a fun and educational experience for the students.

15. New Business

Trustee stipend

The board discussed the current trustee per-meeting stipend. It was noted that the stipend of \$99 per meeting is one of the lowest in the state and has not changed in several years. Cliff Frederickson, Budget Director, recommended increasing the stipend to \$150 per meeting, acknowledging that while it is still low, it is more respectable. Cliff emphasized the importance of treating trustees appropriately and competitively, noting that the adjustment has already been factored into this year’s trustee budget.

Board members agreed to accept Cliff Frederickson’s recommendation of \$150 per meeting, retroactive to the start of the current fiscal year in September 2025.

It was MOVED BY Chris Thomas THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE PER MEETING STIPEND INCREASE FROM \$99 TO \$150 RETROACTIVE TO THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2025, BOARD MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ACT Award Nominees

The Board reviewed the slate of nominees for the annual ACT Awards. The proposed nominees are as follows:

- Mark Scheibmeir – Trustee of the Year
- Fia Eliasson-Creek – Professional Board Staff Member
- Sharon Mitchler – Faculty Member
- Dr. Bob Mohrbacher - CEO Award

Board members agreed to move forward with the slate and authorized Annalee Tobey to sign the official letter from the Board.

It was MOVED BY Chris Thomas THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE SLATE OF NOMINEES FOR THE ACT AWARDS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Diversity Wall Nominees

Dr. Mohrbacher reported that the Diversity Committee has approved two nominees for the Diversity Wall: Rikkey Outumoro and Helen Sanders.

Confirmation has been received from Rikkey Outumoro’s family indicating their acceptance. The committee is currently awaiting confirmation from Helen Sanders that she approves of the recognition.

The plaque production and installation process require advance coordination, as it involves engraving in granite. The goal is to have the first plaque installed in October (Global Diversity Awareness Month). Centralia Monument, which has partnered on previous projects, has the granite prepared for the first plaque, allowing that installation to proceed without delay. Once the order is placed for Helen Sanders’ plaque, the additional granite will need to be ordered. The vendor has been notified that a second plaque is forthcoming.

Plans are underway to schedule a recognition ceremony. The committee hopes to honor both nominees together, though separate ceremonies may be necessary depending on timing and availability.

It was clarified that Diversity Wall recognitions are not awarded annually. Rather, nominations are brought forward as individuals are identified who meet the established criteria. Nominations are submitted to the committee for review and discussion before final approval. Rikkey Outumoro's nomination originated from committee members, while a member of the Foundation Board submitted Helen Sanders' nomination.

16. Old Business

Strategic Planning

Dr. Mohrbacher for Fia Eliasson-Creek, Executive Director of Institutional Research, reported several work groups were formed to address enrollment-related issues and associated strategic planning goals. One work group specifically focused on increasing enrollment and has established a task force to realign services and processes around the areas of study model. Current initiatives include hosting an Areas of Study Fair and reorganizing advising structures to align with this framework. While the work is not yet complete, these efforts are actively in progress.

significant activity is expected over the next month and a half. This period will provide an opportunity to update the Board on ongoing Guided Pathways work, with a more comprehensive progress update anticipated later in the spring.

Dr. Mohrbacher reported that another work group is currently evaluating how to best support students outside the classroom, including tutoring, library services, and other academic support resources. The group is reviewing how these services should be organized, where they should be located, and how they can most effectively serve students. This work remains ongoing, and the inclusion of mental health services is part of the broader conversation regarding student support.

Progress has also been made into revising the process for dropping students for non-payment. While significant headway has been achieved, implementation is not yet fully complete. Once finalized, the college will monitor outcomes to determine effectiveness and identify any needed adjustments.

Additional review is underway regarding waitlist processes and policies, including how students are moved into full classes and how data can be better utilized to inform those decisions. The college is also examining strategies to address high-demand courses by improving distribution scheduling rather than offering multiple sections at the same time.

Work Group Three has been focused on increasing retention. This has included development of a microloan and credit-builder initiative in partnership with Gesa Credit Union. Feedback from Gesa Credit Union regarding the partnership has been positive.

The Foundation added an extra scholarship cycle this year, which was considered successful. There is hope that this will become regular practice, providing students with scholarship opportunities beyond the traditional fall cycle.

Accreditation

Dr. Mohrbacher for Fia Eliasson-Creek, Executive Director of Institutional Research, reported the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) is in the process of revising its accreditation standards and a draft of the proposed revisions is now

available on its website. The college will review the draft to assess the extent of the changes and determine potential institutional impact.

Accreditation reform was discussed multiple times at the Legislative Summit. “Accreditation reform” carries varied meanings depending on the audience. For some, it signals an interest in increased accountability, particularly related to student outcomes. For others, it reflects a desire to simplify or streamline the accreditation process for institutions. The broader national conversation may influence future policy or structural changes.

In conjunction with these discussions, NWCCU is exploring a proposed name change. Since accreditation is now national rather than strictly regional, institutions are permitted to seek accreditation from agencies outside their traditional geographic region. The potential name change would reflect this national scope.

At this time, the college does not plan to pursue accreditation through a different agency and does not see a current advantage in doing so, but leadership will continue to monitor developments.

It was also noted that NWCCU has appointed a new Executive Director, Dr. Selena Grace.

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 5:28 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 40 minutes. The Board will be in Executive Session until 6:10 p.m. unless notified that the time is extended.

The Board extended Executive Session an additional ten minutes to reconvene at 6:20 pm.

The Board extended Executive Session an additional ten minutes to reconvene at 6:30 pm.

The Board extended Executive Session an additional twenty minutes to reconvene at 6:50 pm.

The Board has adjourned the Executive Session and reconvenes in Open Session. The time is 6:52 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, March 12, 2026, via Teams and Centralia College Boardrooms, Centralia, WA.

20. Comments

21. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

APPROVED:

Annalee Tobey, Board Chair

Dr. Bob Mohrbacher, Board Secretary