

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

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

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

**MINUTES**

- **Study Session**

Adjuncts and the COVID-19 Pandemic – Lessons Learned – Dr. Dan Taylor

Dr. Dan Taylor presented an overview of his recently completed doctoral dissertation. He began pursuing a Doctor of Education in Leadership in May 2022 and expressed appreciation to Centralia College for its support through a sabbatical and extended studies funding to assist with coursework.

Dr. Taylor explained that his dissertation, *United States Community Colleges' Adjunct Faculty Perceptions of Lived Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, examined the experiences of adjunct faculty during the transition from in-person instruction to online and remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study addressed two primary research questions:

- 1) the lived experiences of adjunct faculty during the transition from in-person to remote instruction, and
- 2) adjunct faculty experiences communicating with institutional leadership and the effects of those interactions on work engagement and perceptions of job security.

Using qualitative interviews with fifteen adjunct faculty members recruited through professional networks and online platforms, including the American Federation of Teachers in Washington State, interviews were conducted via video conferencing, transcribed, and analyzed using qualitative analysis software. Participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts to ensure the accuracy of their statements prior to analysis.

Analysis of the interview data identified five primary themes. First, access to transition resources influenced faculty adaptation; those with prior online teaching experience adjusted more easily, while others relied on institutional e-learning and educational technology support.

Second, teaching during the pandemic was significantly more challenging than prior instructional experiences, with increased workload related to course adaptation, technology issues, and supporting students new to online learning.

Third, faculty expressed strong concern for students, noting emotional and academic challenges such as stress, personal hardship, and reduced engagement. Many faculty adjusted course expectations and offered greater flexibility in response.

Fourth, interactions with institutional leadership were often described as primarily transactional and focused on administrative matters, though some faculty reported supportive relationships that contributed to higher engagement and job satisfaction.

Fifth, most faculty transitioned back to face-to-face instruction as campuses reopened, while also noting expanded opportunities for continued online and hybrid teaching.

Dr. Taylor noted that adjunct faculty who perceived stronger and more supportive relationships with institutional leaders reported higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement, even while recognizing the inherent limitations of adjunct employment such as lower compensation and reduced job security.

He also highlighted the importance of professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty transitioning to online teaching. Some participants noted that these opportunities were offered without compensation, which could limit participation due to time constraints and workload considerations.

Dr. Taylor emphasized that building positive relationships with adjunct faculty can improve engagement and institutional connection. While acknowledging the time demands on academic leaders, he suggested that intentional outreach and inclusive practices, such as inviting adjunct faculty to meetings or committees, can help foster stronger relationships and support faculty retention.

The research reinforced the importance of effective communication, supportive leadership, and institutional recognition of adjunct faculty contributions in promoting engagement and positive instructional outcomes.

#### **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:**

There were no introductions or presentations.

#### **3. Open Forum**

No one requested to speak in open forum.

#### **4. CONSENT AGENDA**

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

It was MOVED BY Court Stanley THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE REGULAR MINUTES OF February 12, 2026, AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Annalee Tobey expressed appreciation to Janet Reaume who prepares the meeting minutes, acknowledging the significant detail and effort that goes into their preparation each month. Board members echoed their appreciation for the quality of the work.

## **Policy Governance**

### **Policy Updates**

Dr. Mohrbacher reported there were eight policies approved at the March 4, 2026, Institutional Effectiveness meeting.

### **5. Trustee Reports**

Chris Thomas reported he attended the Blazer Bash and noted the event was enjoyable and appeared successful in support of the athletics budget.

Chris also attended the budget discussion event held earlier that same day and commended Fia Eliasson-Creek and the budget team for their work organizing the forum, noting it was well attended by faculty and staff.

Chris participated in the Winter Conference, where he assisted the kitchen staff in serving breakfast to attendees. He noted the Winter Conference went well and the conference sessions were well attended and informative.

Chris also reported attending the final home basketball games for both the men's and women's teams. Following the men's team victory, he attended the subsequent play-in game that advanced the team into the official playoffs, which he described as an exciting game to witness.

Court Stanley reported that he, Christine Fosset, and Dr. Mohrbacher, met for lunch with Robert "Bob" O'Neill, Sr., aged ninety-seven. Mr. O'Neill remains engaged and inquisitive about the college, and the lunch provided an enjoyable and meaningful visit.

Court Stanley asked board members to consider recognizing Mr. O'Neill with an honorary degree and inquired about the nomination process. It was noted that nominations may be submitted by anyone and need to be submitted to the Vice President of Instruction by April 15. A committee reviews the nomination and provides a recommendation to the board. Dr. Mohrbacher will work with Court to prepare the nomination materials for submission.

Court volunteered to participate in a questionnaire for Geology 108, taught by Michelle Harris, related to the effects of landslides. He is awaiting contact from a student as part of that project.

He mentioned lunch with Dr. Mohrbacher is scheduled for March 16 and confirmed that it is on his calendar.

It was MOVED BY Court Stanley THAT THE BOARD AWARD AN HONORARY DEGREE TO ROBERT O'NEILL. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mark Scheibmeir reported that he attended the winter play performance *Holiday* and found it to be very enjoyable. He commented that it was a nice gathering for the smaller venue and expressed appreciation to those involved in organizing and presenting the performance.

Mark added that he was looking forward to attending the upcoming lunch with Dr. Mohrbacher on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>.

Pretrina Mullins reported that she participated in Trustee Tuesday and the Affinity Group for Trustees of Color. She noted that both discussions included considerable conversation regarding the governor's and the legislature's proposed budgets and related budget decisions affecting higher education.

Pretrina also reported that she attended the Foundation's executive meeting the previous evening.

Annalee Tobey reported that she attended the recent Trustee Tuesday webinar and agreed that the discussion focused on challenging topics related to legislative priorities and higher education funding. While she received valuable information, the topics were difficult at times.

Annalee attended the Blazer Bash and described the event as a positive and enjoyable experience. She commended Jason Moir, Interim Athletic Director, and the athletes for their work organizing the event and hoped that it would continue as an annual tradition. It was meaningful to see many student athletes in attendance representing the college.

Annalee recently spoke with a Centralia College student who was conducting interviews with community members regarding the Chehalis Basin Project for a class assignment. The conversation focused on community perspectives related to flood mitigation in the region.

Annalee reported on community developments related to the United Learning Center and the Discover Children's Museum in downtown Centralia. She noted that the United Learning Center ribbon-cutting is expected to take place on April 23 as an invitation event, and the Discover Children's Museum is scheduled to open to the public on April 25. She added that construction is nearing completion and that the project team recently launched a new website. The project has been many years in the making. The opening will be an exciting milestone for the community and for youth education opportunities in the area.

#### WA-ACT

The 2026 ACT Spring Conference is co-hosted by Bellingham Technical College and Whatcom Community College Board of Trustees. The 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 requested that any trustee who is interested in attending to coordinate with his office to get registered.

#### ACCT

No report provided.

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

Dr. Mohrbacher reminded the board that the All-Washington Academic Team Ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, at South Puget Sound Community

College. He noted that the event typically takes place in the late morning, around 11:00 a.m., and that additional details would be provided as the date approaches for those interested in attending.

He reported that the legislative session was concluding that day, marking sine die. Dr. Mohrbacher described the session as a challenging one for community colleges, noting that many legislators who typically support the sector faced greater constraints from legislative leadership regarding what they could advocate publicly.

Despite the difficulties of the session, Dr. Mohrbacher stated that the final outcome for community colleges could have been more severe given the state's overall budget situation. He explained that an administrative reduction had initially been discussed at approximately 1.5 percent and at one point appeared it might increase to 2 percent or more. However, based on current projections, the final administrative reduction was expected to be just under 1 percent, approximately 0.8 to 0.9 percent.

The state will continue the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) fund split, under which colleges are required to cover 21 percent of COLA increases using local funds. Dr. Mohrbacher explained that while this cost may be manageable in a single year, it becomes more challenging when applied over multiple years, as the fiscal impact compounds. The State Board is currently analyzing the long-term impact of this funding structure over five- and ten-year periods. He noted that the state had previously eliminated the COLA fund split five to six years earlier, funding COLAs at 100 percent for two biennia, but the cost-sharing requirement was reinstated in recent years.

Dr. Mohrbacher also discussed proposed changes to Running Start funding. He explained that the legislature had initially proposed reducing annual Running Start eligibility from 1.4 FTE to 1.2 FTE. However, the proposal was later amended to set the limit at 1.3 FTE. When the college analyzed the earlier 1.2 FTE proposal, it was estimated that the change would have resulted in a reduction of seven FTE overall.

Dr. Mohrbacher explained that even under the originally proposed reduction of Running Start eligibility to 1.2 FTE, the actual impact would have been minimal. Very few students typically enroll in more than a full-time load plus an additional third of a load in a single academic year, meaning the change is expected to have insignificant effect on participation.

He added that language in the legislation indicates the eligibility level could return to 1.4 FTE if a proposed millionaire's tax is implemented. However, the legislation uses conditional language because such a tax would likely face court challenges that could take years to resolve. Dr. Mohrbacher emphasized the importance of communicating clearly to students and families that Running Start remains available, including Summer Running Start, and that the program continues with only minimal changes. He noted that some media coverage may have caused confusion, leading some people to believe the program was being significantly reduced.

Dr. Mohrbacher reported that the legislature eliminated all funding for the Centers of Excellence, meaning the centers will cease operations after June 30. The college still has certain obligations extending into the summer and will work with Monica Brummer, Director of the Center of Excellence, to develop a plan for completing those responsibilities, rather than ending activities abruptly at the end of the fiscal year.

He reported that earlier legislative language would have required the State Board to recommend the closure of a college and identify additional system efficiencies; that

language was softened later. The State Board must now produce a report examining potential administrative efficiencies, including possible consolidation of districts, while avoiding reductions that directly impact student support services. Dr. Mohrbacher noted that the State Board is in the process of establishing a work group to begin the study, and an outside consultant may assist with portions of the analysis. The report deadline was also extended from November to December.

He explained that legislators appear particularly interested in examining the concentration of colleges in the central Puget Sound region where district boundaries overlap. Many colleges are already experiencing financial challenges and institutions will need to continue examining efficiencies moving forward.

The State Board is considering whether to declare fiscal exigency across the system. He noted that this step was taken previously in 2009 and again in 2011 during earlier budget crises. State statute includes a formula defining when the State Board can make such a declaration, and the State Board is currently coordinating with the Attorney General's office and the Office of Financial Management to determine whether the thresholds have been met. These thresholds relate to legislative budget cuts over multiple sessions and other specified criteria. If the State Board declares a financial emergency, individual college boards could then opt to declare fiscal emergency locally. He noted that there are no plans for Centralia College to request such a declaration, as the college's current budget reduction is manageable.

He noted that the primary effect of a fiscal exigency declaration is procedural: it allows colleges to streamline certain processes, such as reducing tenured faculty, by treating positions as a class rather than addressing each individually. This shortens timelines for hearings and related actions. Dr. Mohrbacher cautioned that some colleges may overestimate the practical impact of this declaration, and a meeting was scheduled the following day to discuss the topic further.

Dr. Mohrbacher reported on a recent meeting of the AI work group. The group is exploring philosophical and practical questions about artificial intelligence, including intellectual property issues associated with AI tools, and how purchasing AI differs from traditional products. Discussions included a range of perspectives, from concerns about AI being disruptive to excitement about its potential, and the group is considering what non-computer-science students will need to understand about AI in the near future.

Dr. Mohrbacher explained that the former kitchen facility is currently nonfunctional and does not meet code requirements. Renovating it into a functional commercial kitchen would require approximately \$3 million, largely for infrastructure upgrades such as a new walk-in, HVAC, and electrical systems. Alternatives, such as converting the space to storage or office use, could be slightly less costly but would not generate revenue. He noted that a full culinary program is unlikely to be financially sustainable, citing South Puget Sound Community College's recent closure of their program due to cost inefficiency. However, the facility could potentially support short-term continuing education classes or limited certificate programs, which might produce modest revenue.

Regarding the closure of the Centers of Excellence, Dr. Mohrbacher confirmed that the loss of funding from the centers would have a small but measurable impact on the college budget.

## **7. SAALT**

Katie Collins, Student Engagement Coordinator, for Alicia Jenkins, Student Advocacy Activities Leadership Team (SAALT) President, highlighted several recent events designed to promote engagement and wellness on campus.

- Mario Day (March 10): This event was highly attended and featured themed activities and games that encouraged student interaction and fun.
- Sleep Awareness Event: Held the following day, the program focused on educating students about healthy sleep habits and overall wellness for the quarter.
- Campus Spa: A recent event provided students with a relaxing environment to practice self-care and manage academic stress.

Katie noted plans for upcoming Spring Fest and Earth Week events, which will emphasize student engagement, community building, and sustainability initiatives. While specific dates for Spring Fest were not immediately available, both events are scheduled for the next academic quarter.

## **8. Faculty**

Mark Gorecki, faculty representative, Centralia College Federation of Teachers President, provided a faculty update, noting that the end of the quarter is a busy period with many instructors already reviewing term papers. He also reported on the conclusion of interest-based bargaining discussions, stating that the process was conducted efficiently and yielded productive ideas. Mark emphasized that faculty remain mindful of board perspectives when considering agreements and outcomes from these discussions.

## **9. Classified**

J Mott, Vice President of the Classified Union, for Emil Parke-Fagerness, classified representative, reported that the fourth annual Spring Egg Hunt is scheduled for April 2. The event will feature small eggs filled with candy and larger “golden eggs” with bigger prizes. The event will take place while students and faculty are away, so participation will primarily involve classified and exempt staff.

## **10. Instruction**

Connie Smejkal, Vice President of Instruction, reported that the Nurse Pinning Ceremony for the first spring cohort will be held on March 20, 2026. The second pinning ceremony, for students who began in the fall, is scheduled for June 17, the Wednesday before commencement.

Connie reported on developments related to the Early Learning Center (ELC). The college’s director and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) team met with the ELC’s new director to explore potential collaboration. The goal is to provide families, particularly those just above the ECEAP income threshold, with access to high-quality early learning and reading opportunities. The partnership is expected to be mutually beneficial, with families referred between programs as appropriate. The ELC will operate from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., complementing the college’s full-day program schedule and providing additional options for working families.

Connie reported there are several new programs that have completed feasibility studies and are now moving through the approval process. These programs cannot yet be publicly marketed, as final approval from the State Board and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) is required before promotion. The new programs are expected to complete the approval process by May.

She addressed questions regarding program demand, particularly in nursing and allied health fields. Community demand fluctuates, but allied health consistently shows strong interest due to abundant career opportunities. Massage therapy is an example of a program attracting individuals pursuing a second career, illustrating that some programs appeal to nontraditional students seeking new career paths. Short certificate options within these programs allow students to achieve partial credentials and continue their education.

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

Joy Anglesey, Vice President of Human Resources and Equity, reported on the Winter Conference, noting it was well attended and received highly positive feedback, with a 21% survey response rate reflecting strong participant satisfaction. She described it as one of the best conferences the college has hosted in recent years.

Joy also introduced the Centralia College CARES Fund, designed to support inclusion and belonging initiatives using state-provided funds. A process has been implemented allowing staff and faculty to submit funding requests for projects, and twelve proposals have been received to date. She indicated that while the fund is still in its preliminary stages, the response has been encouraging, and she plans to provide further updates in next month's report.

### **12. Student Services**

Dr. Robert Cox, Vice President of Student Services, reported several office relocations and program consolidations. He and his assistant, Nicole Zock, moved to the third floor, while Blazer Central and student support programs are being consolidated on the second floor to centralize services and improve accessibility.

Dr. Cox highlighted the involvement of students in advocacy, specifically regarding the Running Start legislation. Students testified both in person and online to support the program, contributing to the legislature's decision to adjust the annual eligibility from 1.2 to 1.3 FTE.

He also described the college's participation in the Economic Alliance bowling tournament in Morton. Dr. Cox noted it was a fun and enjoyable event that provided visibility for the college in the eastern part of Lewis County.

Dr. Cox discussed the state's request to take a hard look at the Guided Pathways Program. Dr. Cox explained that while the college and system have made considerable progress, there has not been a consistent way to report student outcomes across all colleges. Currently, colleges report on program changes and initiatives, but the legislature is now asking for clear data on student results. A work group is working to standardize outcomes so that all colleges can report in a unified way, allowing the system to demonstrate the impact of Guided Pathways.

Cox also noted that the college is surveying Running Start students in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), about their experiences,

with 125 student responses collected so far. Results are expected in June, which will provide insights on student perceptions of the program.

### **13. Administrative Services**

Tariq Qureshi, Vice President of Finance and Administration, reported the monthly budget update shows that year-to-date, the college is \$2.2 million under budget, which is about 12% below projections, and that trend is continuing.

On the construction/project side, the college was awarded a solar panel grant and is now working with the Department of Commerce to implement it. The solar panels will be installed on the Tech building later this year.

### **14. Foundation**

Christine Fossett, Associate Vice President of Advancement, reported that scholarship applications opened on March 1 and as of March 12, the college had received 131 completed applications, including thirty-one from bachelor's degree students. She noted that W. F. West High School has six valedictorians and one salutatorian this year, which will require adjustments in the scholarship review process.

Ms. Fossett reported that the award season is underway. A small number of applications have been received for the Hanke Mini-Grant Awards, and three applications have been submitted for the Hanke Faculty Achievement Awards. In addition, nine nominations have been received for the Exceptional Faculty Awards, and nominees have been invited to complete the application process. She noted that historically approximately 60 percent of nominees submit completed applications.

Ms. Fossett stated that the next *Lunch with the President* event is scheduled for the following Monday, with a follow-up breakfast event planned for April. Invitations will be sent and attendance confirmed in the coming days.

The Foundation recently received an anonymous gift of \$25,173 in stock. Because the donor has not yet been identified, the funds have been temporarily allocated to the Teacher Education Family Development Fund. Once the donor is identified, the college will direct the gift according to the donor's wishes.

In response to a question from a trustee, Tony Holm provided an update on the TRIO program event held earlier that day. He reported that sixty students attended out of sixty-nine expected participants, representing eleven school districts. Chris Brewer provided welcome remarks in his first public appearance as Mayor of Centralia.

Mr. Holm reported that this was his first time overseeing the event and credited the solid foundation established by Kathleen Vodjansky-Ward, who managed the program for approximately 30 years. He stated that the established relationships with participating schools and students helped ensure the event ran smoothly.

### **15. New Business**

There was no New Business report.

## **16. Old Business**

### **Strategic Planning**

Fia Eliasson-Creek, Executive Director of Institutional Research, provided an update on key student success performance indicators (KPIs), focusing on first-year students pursuing a degree or certificate. The analysis included both full- and part-time students, excluding Running Start, corrections, and BAS program students. The tracked student groups were all students, students of color, and white students.

Regarding first-term course completion, which measures students completing all enrolled courses with a minimum GPA of 2.0, the data shows notable progress. Students of color improved their completion rate from 49% to 56% in the most recent fall term, despite the challenges faced by the Fall 2020 cohort that began during the pandemic.

Retention rates, both from fall to winter and fall to fall (or credential completion), also demonstrated positive trends. Latinx students experienced a significant increase in fall-to-fall retention from 78% to 83%, which contributed to the overall improvement for students of color. Overall retention for all students rose to 57%, with students of color increasing from 55% to 57%. While white student retention from fall to winter has decreased slightly over the last two years, the overall trends indicate progress across the student body.

Several initiatives have been implemented to support these outcomes. The College and Career Success course, now mandatory, has served approximately 1,900 students over the past three years. Additional measures, such as a four-day schedule and two-quarter registration, have contributed to increased student engagement and registration. Efforts are also underway to realign advising around areas of study and enhance student support services. Early feedback from surveys shows that many students are unfamiliar with the concept of “area of study,” highlighting a need for further communication and guidance.

Graduation rates have shown improvement as well. The state three-year graduation rate stands at 36%, above the state average of 30%. Students of color improved from 32% to 37%, while white student rates declined slightly in the past year. These figures reflect progress toward closing equity gaps and supporting student completion.

Additional data collection and analysis through the new ConexED software will allow the college to better track student outcomes and assess the impact of success initiatives. Continued focus on advising, targeted support services, and student awareness of program pathways will remain key strategies for improving retention and graduation rates.

### **Accreditation**

No report provided.

## **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 5:10 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 5:50 p.m. unless notified that the time is extended.

The Board has adjourned the Executive Session and reconvenes in Open Session. The time is 5:55 p.m.

The Board will proceed with the final agenda items.

**18. Action from Executive Session**

**TENURE/CONTRACT RENEWAL MOTIONS.**

It was moved and unanimously passed, that the Board of Trustees, after having considered the recommendation of the president and probationary review committee of Centralia College, award tenure to ELLEN JUNG, effective with the 2026-27 academic year.

It was moved and passed, that the Board of Trustees, after having considered the recommendation of the president and probationary review committee of Centralia College, award tenure to KELLEY SIMMONS JONES, effective with the 2026-27 academic year.

It was moved and passed, that the Board of Trustees, after having considered the recommendation of the president and probationary review committee of Centralia College, award tenure to ALEXANDER USHMAN, effective with the 2026-27 academic year.

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Pretrina Mullins moved that The Board of Trustees direct the president to notify JEFFREY BIRKENSTEIN that the Board authorizes continuation of the probationary review period.

Mark Scheibmeir moved that The Board of Trustees direct the president to notify JUSTIN HARRIS that the Board authorizes continuation of the probationary review period.

Chris Thomas moved that The Board of Trustees direct the president to notify ANGELA PECK that the Board authorizes continuation of the probationary review period.

Court Stanley moved that The Board of Trustees direct the president to notify LORI SIRS that the Board authorizes continuation of the probationary review period.

Annalee Tobey moved that The Board of Trustees direct the president to notify LENORE MONTALBANO that the Board authorizes discontinuation of the probationary review period.

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Pretrina Mullins moved that The Board of Trustees direct the president to notify SHAUNALEE MARTIN that the Board authorizes continuation of the probationary review period.

Mark Scheibmeir moved that The Board of Trustees direct the president to notify NATHANIEL LESLIE that the Board authorizes continuation of the probationary review period.

Chris Thomas moved that The Board of Trustees direct the president to notify TIM MALROY that the Board authorizes continuation of the probationary review period.

ALL MOTIONS PASSED.

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

The next board meeting will be Thursday, April 9, 2026, via Teams and Centralia College East, Morton, 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*