Board Retreat Notes July 27, 2026

1. How to Balance the Budget
   - Dr. Mohrbacher and Tariq Qureshi provided information on the FY27 proposed operating budget expenditures compared to the FY26 budget. Instruction continues to be the college's largest expenditure category, accounting for 40% of the operating budget. The proposed FY 27 budget reflects a decrease of $125,939 compared to FY 26.
   - Salaries and benefits comprise approximately 85% of the college's operating budget. The college's share of the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) totals $94,684, as well as funding for classified employee step increases and higher health insurance costs. These personnel-related expenses were identified as the primary drivers of the projected budget increase.
   - The FY27 Budget Reduction Target of $749,454 includes:
     - $116,198 decrease in funding resulting from the new allocation formula
     - $333,256 in increased personnel costs including the COLA, classified step increases, and higher health insurance premiums
     - A planned $300,000 reduction in the use of reserve funds to support the operating budget.
   - The importance of reducing the college's reliance on reserves while maintaining fiscal sustainability was emphasized.
   - The college continues to maintain a strong financial position as reflected in its clean audit. Centralia College is among the few institutions in the system with a consistent record of timely financial reporting and successful audit results.

2. Review of NWCCU Recommendations and Visit
   - Fia Eliasson-Creek explained that the purpose of the April 2027 visit is to evaluate the college's progress in addressing the four recommendations.
   - An ad hoc report is due to NWCCU in February 2027, approximately six to eight weeks before the Commission's scheduled 2027 visit.

3. TRIO Update
   - Dr. Cox reported on the success of the Student Support Services (SSS) program in meeting its annual service goal. The SSS program was required to serve 75% of its target population, or 165 students, and had served 176 students as of the date of the retreat. The hiring of three outreach staff members helped the program achieve its goals.
   - The SSS program has not yet received notification of its continuing grant award, and Upward Bound is also awaiting funding decisions. The current grant cycle ends August 31, creating uncertainty while renewal decisions are pending.
   - If funding is renewed, any reduction-in-force (RIF) notices issued due to the funding uncertainty would be rescinded.
   - The Request for Proposal (RFP) for Upward Bound has not yet been released.

4. Trustee Vacancy
   - Dr. Mohrbacher reported Rachel Mendez from the Chehalis Tribe has submitted an application or is in the process of submitting an application for consideration.
   - The governor's office has not yet confirmed whether Mark Scheibmeir will be allowed to serve an additional year as trustee.
   - The trustees are committed to supporting the successful onboarding and integration of the new trustee and will take the necessary steps to ensure a smooth transition and provide the information, resources, and support needed for the trustee to be successful in the role.

5. Legislative Outreach
   - Trustees discussed the importance of legislative outreach as a key component of their governance role. The Board is committed to building and maintaining productive relationships with local and state legislators and to advocating for the college's mission, priorities, and students.

6. Study Session Topics
   - Early Childhood Education
   - Guided Pathways
   - Human Resources
   - Mobile Classroom – Bill Sullivan
   - CCSSE

8. President's Evaluation
   - The trustees reviewed the president's evaluation.
   - The Board will act at the September 10, 2026, meeting on acceptance of the President's Evaluation and extension of the President's contract.

9. Board Evaluation
   - The trustees discussed the self-evaluation process. While a formal evaluation was not conducted, the trustees reflected on their performance and their commitment to fulfilling their governance responsibilities, active participation, and supporting the college's mission.

The July 27, 2026, board retreat adjourned approximately at **3:30** p.m.