

**COCONINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD**

**WORK SESSION**

**FEBRUARY 24, 2025**



**MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION  
OF THE  
DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD  
FEBRUARY 24, 2025**

A Work Session of the Coconino Community College District Governing Board was held in person in the Board Room at Coconino Community College, 2800 S. Lone Tree Rd., Flagstaff, AZ. Board Chair Joey Smith called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

PRESENT: Mr. Joey Smith, Board Chair  
Mr. Patrick Hurley (Zoom), Board Vice Chair/Secretary  
Mr. Eric Eikenberry  
Ms. Patricia Garcia  
Dr. Nat White

ABSENT: None

**Also Present:** President Eric Heiser, Ms. Kirsten Mead, Dr. Adriana Flores-Church, Ms. Dianna Sanchez, Dr. Jami Van Ess, Dr. Sandra Hinski, Mr. Tony Williams, Ms. Alexis Polley-Knapp, Ms. Alyssa Sergent, Mr. Ben Marcus, Ms. Colleen Carscallen, Mr. Doug Friedman, Ms. Janelle Indian, Ms. Kay Leum, Mr. Keith Becker, Mr. Kurt Stull, Mr. Nolan Begaye, Ms. Randi Axler, Ms. Rosa Mendoza-Logan, Mr. Ryan Bouwhuis, Ms. Sonni Marbury, Ms. Tama Kott, Ms. Tanya Buckley, and Mr. Van Walker.

The February 24, 2025 documents file contains reports, summaries, background material, and other documents referred to in these minutes.

**1. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Federal Policy Updates – President Eric Heiser**

With the recent U.S. Department of Education "Dear Colleague" letter and Executive Orders being delivered, President Heiser will provide federal policy updates at each District Governing Board meeting. The letter suggests race-related college initiatives may interpreted as conflicting with the law. However, this letter states its opinion and is being challenged in court. He assured the Board that the institution would not react hastily. He also reported that Senate Bill 1694, targeting DEI initiatives, has passed the Senate but is unlikely to be signed by Governor Hobbs.

**Board Discussion:**

- Senate Bill 1694 could impact the College's ability to teach history
- Clarification was sought on the College's responsibility if someone takes action based on the "Dear Colleague" letter
- The Board reaffirmed that the "Dear Colleague" letter is an opinion, not a law
- The President will address federal policy updates at the All-Employee Federal Policy Update Open Forum on February 26, 2025
- Chair Smith expressed appreciation for Dr. Heiser's leadership in addressing these issues

**B. Follow-Up to Budget Retreat – Dr. Jami Van Ess**

Dr. Van Ess addressed the information the Board requested at the January 27, 2025 Budget Retreat. For additional information, see the February 24, 2025 documents file.

- The College continues to review differential tuition (course) fees to better align them with actual costs
- The PTOC has reduced the College's property tax assessment pending a tax court decision, expected within 30 days
- Data on the percentage of students paying full tuition will be presented at a future meeting
- Staff salary comparisons were conducted using salary data released in mid-February by the State of Arizona and the College and University Professional Association (CUPA)
- Cost of living data for Arizona cities was analyzed, showing that Flagstaff is 17.7% above the national average

The Board discussed:

- Consideration of the merits of assuming the worst-case outcome in the tax court decision, noting that the proposed budget remains conservative
- Market salary adjustments will be made as necessary
- The impact of one-time rural funds and property tax revenue on the overall budget
- How tuition and fee increases affect both students and the College's financial outlook

**C. Path2Purpose Update – Ms. Dianna Sanchez**

Ms. Sanchez provided an overview of the Path2Purpose program, led by Ms. Alexis Knapp Polley, highlighting its successes and impact. The first cohort includes 62 students supported by four success coaches, with 68% identified as first-generation students. Participants have shown improved grades and behavior after engaging with their coaches.

Program activities include a tour of NAU, a day of service on the Arizona Trail, family workshops, and employer engagement opportunities. Expansion options for the program are currently being explored.

**D. Acknowledgement of Change to Page Housing Project Master Plan – Chair Joey Smith**

President Heiser and Mr. Nathan Schott, the College's attorney, recommended that the Board acknowledge receipt of the Page Housing Project Master Plan. Dr. Heiser will acknowledge on behalf of the Board.

**E. Retreat Dates Confirmation (June 4-5, 2025) – Chair Joey Smith**

Chair Smith led a discussion on potential retreat locations. The Board expressed interest in The Colton House, High Country Conference Center, and VRBO as possible venues. Mary Spilde, ACCT, will facilitate the retreat.

Proposed Agenda Topics:

- Housing
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Strategic planning for the next five years

- Messaging to the community regarding the tax reset and the College's future direction
- Capital improvements
- Board self-assessment and interactions
- How to schedule and facilitate meetings with elected state representatives

Additionally, the Board expressed interest in visiting Helios before the June DGB retreat. Ms. Mead will check availability for April 23-24, 2025.

**FOLLOW UP:**

- Data on the percentage of students paying full tuition will be presented at a future meeting

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Work Session adjourned at 5:32 pm.

**MINUTES PREPARED BY:**

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Ms. Kirsten Mead  
Board Recorder

**ATTEST and APPROVED:**

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Mr. Patrick Hurley  
Vice Chair/Secretary of the Board

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Mr. Joey Smith  
Board Chair