

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2026
12:30 p.m., MTC 102/Boardroom**

The Board of Trustees of Wor-Wic Community College held a regular meeting on September 10, 2026. Board Chair Anna Newton presided.

PRESIDENT

Dr. Deborah Casey

TRUSTEES

Chair Anna Newton
Vice Chair Bill Turner - Absent
Mr. Russell Blake
Dr. Charles Dolan
Mrs. Kim Gillis
Mr. Marty Neat
Ms. Lorraine Purnell-Ayres

VICE PRESIDENTS

Karen Berkheimer
Dr. Michael Hutmaker
Dr. Deirdra Johnson
Mrs. Jennifer Sandt
Dr. Karie Solembrino

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Stefanie Rider

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Mr. Ayman Idress

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

Ms. Katrina Terrell

PRESIDENT, WORCESTER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LIAISON

Mr. Chip Bertino

WICOMICO COUNTY EXECUTIVE, LIAISON

Ms. Julie Giordano - absent

ATTENDEES

Dr. Stacey Hall

ROLL CALL

Ms. Katrina Terrell took roll and recorded minutes.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Russell W. Blake

Dr. Charles Dolan

Kimberly C. Gillis

Martin T. Neat

Anna G. Newton

Lorraine Purnell-Ayres

Bill Turner

PRESIDENT

Deborah Casey, Ph.D.

In the absence of Chair, Anna Newton, Mrs. Kim Gillis, serving as Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW FACULTY & ADMINISTRATORS

Dr. Deirdra Johnson introduced the following... Leslie Hall – Outreach & Transition Services Coordinator and Montez Hopkins – Career Coach

Dr. Karie Solembrino introduced the following... Dr. Preeti Sharma – Mathematics & Science Department Head, Dr. Taylor Rupp – Instructor of Biological Science, Jacyne Conner – Instructor of Nursing, Tracy Belcher – Instructor of Nursing and Kacey Wilson – Instructor of Nursing

Ayman Idrees introduced the following.... Casey McLaughlin – Programmer/Analyst

Following introductions, Chair Anna Newton assumed the chair and began presiding over the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the June 11, 2026 & August 24, 2026, meeting minutes by Mr. Russ Blake and seconded by Mr. Marty Neat. The motion passed unanimously.

STUDENT SUCCESS REFORMS

Student Success Reform 1: Transfer

Student Success Reform 2: Dual Enrollment

Student Success Reform 3: Workforce Pathways*

Dr. Stacey Hall presented an overview of workplace pathways related to quantum computing and discussed the importance of ensuring the College is well positioned to prepare students for emerging career opportunities and provide them with current industry knowledge.

Dr. Hall reported on her attendance at a conference in New Mexico and subsequent visit to the Alliance for Innovation and Transformation (AFIT) conference. Highlighting several emerging areas of opportunity, including post-quantum cryptography, quantum sensing and instrumentation, and aerospace electronics assembly.

Long-term goal is to establish a certification pathway for quantum technicians. She also discussed opportunities related to wiring harness assembly through the CEWD pathway, including soldering training and certification, with a separate space-related addendum.

Dr. Hall reported that planning is underway for the establishment of a Quantum Advisory Board. Noting that the College is shifting from a traditional model in which industries approach the College to a more proactive approach of reaching out to industry partners to identify workforce needs and opportunities. She also noted that quantum computing is currently the second-least-developed area among the emerging pathways discussed and will require additional infrastructure to support future programming.

Dr. Hall also discussed regional collaboration with College of Southern Maryland and Carroll Community College, representing a three-campus regional partnership. The institutions have jointly applied for an AFIT grant to support the development of quantum-related workforce pathways. Noting that the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) hopes the participating institutions will serve as a model for regional collaboration. Each college is evaluating its respective areas of expertise and institutional niche to identify opportunities for alignment and collaboration across the region.

Dr. Hall reported that the College has achieved NSA Program of Study Validation. She advised that the validation process is rigorous and discussed plans to communicate the program's status as nationally recognized and industry aligned. The next step will be to pursue institutional recognition, with a focus on K-12 engagement, industry partnerships, faculty development, and research. Dr. Hall noted that these areas will be further developed as the College progresses to the second phase of recognition.

Student Success Reform 4: Shortened Academic Terms

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Deborah Casey provided an update regarding the National Call to Action issued by the Secretary of Education. Advising that the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is conducting research in Washington, D.C., to determine how community colleges should respond to the initiative. Additional information will be distributed electronically once the College's response is aligned with the national effort. Responses are required by December 1.

Dr. Casey also reported that the College was selected to participate in the ACCT Complimentary Retreat after applying for the opportunity this year. The retreat will be held in the spring, with topics to be reviewed and selected in advance. Participation will be at no cost to the College and represents another professional development opportunity.

Reminder was provided to the Board that tomorrow 9/11/26, at 8:30 a.m., the College will host a 25th anniversary commemoration of September 11 in the auditorium. A Celebration of Life for Dr. Beth Jones will also be held at 1:00 p.m. Board members were invited to attend either event.

Dr. Solembrino provided an update on the Rural Health Transformation Acceleration Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and the State. The grant will support the hiring of a director and support staff, with an initial focus on the College's health professions programs.

Dr. Solembrino also discussed plans to establish a Center of Excellence for Apprenticeships. The College will initially focus on developing and demonstrating successful apprenticeship programs, with the goal of using the results to pursue a larger grant opportunity in the future. As part of this initiative, the College is reaching out to local employers to identify opportunities for developing apprenticeship programs. Two apprenticeship programs are currently being explored with daycare providers. Dr. Solembrino noted that TidalHealth has also been supportive of the initiative.

Dr. Johnson explained a new initiative "Dining with Deb", which will be held every other month and will bring together representatives from various sectors of the community. The gatherings will provide an opportunity to discuss the College's strategic plan and vision, hear directly from community partners regarding local needs, and identify areas in which the College is performing well as well as opportunities for improvement.

Dr. Johnson reported that the first series will focus on K-12 partners, including superintendents, principals, and assistant principals from both public and private schools. Dr. Johnson emphasized the importance of bringing community leaders to campus to provide them with an opportunity to hear directly from the President and learn more about the College's priorities and initiatives. Board members were invited to participate in the sessions. Please advise in advance if plan to attend.

Mrs. Jen Sandt provided an update on the planned expansion of the maintenance building. Reporting that the initial design exceeded the project budget and is therefore being redesigned. The revised plan will include a change in the building's configuration and renovation of the existing building to accommodate offices. The redesign also resulted in a reduction in the overall square footage. The project is anticipated

to be completed before June. Discussion followed regarding the anticipated construction start date and whether construction should begin during the winter or be deferred until after the winter season.

Ms. Stefanie Rider provided an update regarding the upcoming donor appreciation event scheduled for October 27 in Ocean City. She noted that invitations will be distributed soon and encouraged Trustees to attend and show their support and appreciation for the College's donors. The event will be held from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the penthouse at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Ocean City, a "Save the Date" notification for the event was added to Trustees' calendars in August.

REPORTS TO THE BOARD

Treasurer's Report

Mrs. Jennifer Sandt presented Treasurer's report through July 31, 2026. No questions from board members.

FY 27 New initiative funding

Mrs. Jen Sandt presented Strategic Budget Initiative Funding request specific to FY 2027 for Professional Development Innovation Funds (i.e. professional conferences, such as ATD and other industry-related events). Discussion around additional initiatives may be presented for consideration. The Board previously approved a partial-year budget allocation for the Athletic Director position.

Performance Accountability Indicator Report

Mrs. Jen Sandt presented the 2026 Performance Accountability Report that was submitted to MHEC by Carol Menzel – It was noted that the report this year set benchmarks for the college. Discussion was around what MHEC actually does with the report. MHEC uses the information reported by institutions to compare performance and establish benchmarks among Maryland colleges. The data can also be used to identify institutional "points of pride" that may be highlighted in press releases, on the College's website, and in other communications. Benchmarks are established every five years.

Legal Entity Alignment and Status Clarification – Wor-Wic Community College

This topic was tabled for discussion during closed session meeting following open session.

Sole Source Purchase: Criminal Justice Virtual Reality Training System

Mrs. Jen Sandt presented that the criminal justice department is requesting a new virtual reality law enforcement tactical training system funded by the Workforce Readiness Grant.

PURCHASES GREATER THAN \$50,000

Mrs. Jen Sandt presented purchases over \$50,000 that were not required to be formally bid.

STANDING REPORTS

ENROLLMENT REPORT

Dr. Michael Hutmaker shared the enrollment report as of September 2, 2026, and provided an up-to-date number on credit headcount as of 9.10.26.

Welcome Fins Day: A redesigned first-day experience was implemented to function more like an orientation, with the goal of making the transition to college easier for new students.

Dual Enrollment Bootcamp: A Dual Enrollment Bootcamp was held for approximately 40–50 students and was designed specifically to support new dual-enrollment students as they begin their college experience.

Dr. Solembrino gave an overview of enrollment and applicant demand for health professions programs that Dr. Casey shared at Rotary Club Meeting.

- **Nursing:** Approximately 200 students applied, with 60 accepted and more than 40 additional qualified applicants placed on the waitlist. For the CPN program, 16 students are planned for the fall and another 16 for the spring.
- **Radiologic Technology:** Approximately 170 students applied, with 20 accepted and 44 qualified applicants placed on the waitlist. Discussion was held regarding opportunities to increase enrollment capacity.
- **Clinical Placements:** Dr. Solembrino noted that clinical placement capacity remains a significant consideration, particularly in radiology, where there is currently only one radiology department available for placements. Supervision requirements and the need for a one-to-one ratio between students, technologists, and equipment were discussed, along with the various modalities involved in clinical training.
- **Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) and Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA):** Applicant numbers have increased from 16 to 28. Sixteen students were accepted into each program, with five applicants placed on the waitlist.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACTION ITEMS REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

1. Treasurer's Report
2. FY 27 New Initiative Funding
3. Performance Accountability Indicator Report
4. Sole Source Purchase – Criminal Justice Virtual Reality Training System

Mr. Marty Neat made a motion to approve the board action items, with Dr. Charles Dolan seconding the motion. The Board of Trustees unanimously approved all meeting action items.

TRUSTEES ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board was reminded of its prior decision not to mail paper documents. Trustees who wish to receive paper copies of reports in advance may notify Katrina, who will prepare the requested materials for pickup.

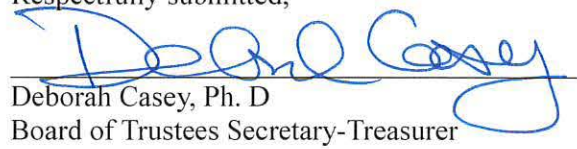
Karen Berkheimer provided an overview of the College's Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) coverage and advised that the Maryland State medical insurance program will take effect in January. The College is collaborating with other organizations as part of the process. Several vendors declined to submit bids; however, vendors have agreed to provide individual quotes through the RFP process. Quotes are expected by the end of September. The current vendor's proposed quote represents approximately double the current cost. The College is awaiting additional bids and will evaluate the options to determine the most favorable plan for the upcoming year.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will hold a retreat on September 21–22, with a focus on establishing and prioritizing key institutional priorities.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Kim Gillis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:47PM and was seconded by Mr. Russ Blake. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Deborah Casey, Ph. D
Board of Trustees Secretary-Treasurer

Accepted


Anna Newton, Board Chair