
MINUTES

**Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
Apothecary/Ridnour Building, 5th Floor, North Loft
140 North 8th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska
Friday, December 5, 2025
9:30 a.m. (CT)**

Public notice of meeting

Public notice of this meeting was given by posting notice on the Commission's website; posting notice on the State of Nebraska's online public meeting calendar; e-mailing news media; and keeping a current copy of the agenda in the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education's office, listing the date, time, and location of the meeting. A copy of the current Open Meetings Act was posted beside the table containing the documents for the meeting.

NOTICE OF MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION WILL HOLD A MEETING ON DECEMBER 5, 2025. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 9:30 A.M. AND ADJOURN AT APPROXIMATELY 12:00 P.M.

AN AGENDA IS MAINTAINED IN THE COMMISSION OFFICE, 140 N. 8TH STREET, SUITE 300, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA.

TIM DANIELS, CHAIR

Meeting called to order at 9:30 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Daniels called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and asked for introductions.

Commissioners Present

Tim Daniels
Dr. Dennis Headrick
Dannika Nelson

Dr. Paul Von Behren
Tami Weber
W. Scott Wilson

Commissioners Absent

Dr. Deborah Frison
Dr. LeDonna Griffin

Mary Lauritzen
Molly O'Holleran

Commission Staff Present

Dr. Michael Baumgartner
Dr. Kathleen Fimple
Jill Heese
J. Ritchie Morrow

Helen Pope
Matthew Roque
Celeste Thompson
Gary Timm

Minutes of October 27, 2026, Special meeting approved

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 27, 2025, SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Headrick made a motion to approve the October 27, 2025, Special Commission meeting minutes as written.

Commissioner Weber seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, and Weber. Commissioner Wilson abstained. The motion carried.

Chair's Report

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Daniels stated the Executive Committee met on November 18th to discuss and approve bringing the Budget Lines Adjustment for Fiscal Year 2026 agenda item to the full Commission.

Executive Director's Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Baumgartner stated that the staff has been active participants in several events and organizations recently and upcoming.

Dr. Baumgartner reported on staff activities and meetings

Dr. Kathleen Fimple, Academic Programs Officer, attended the Higher Learning Commission State Partners meeting in November, Joe Velasquez, Database Manager, attended the Microsoft.net conference.

J. Ritchie Morrow, Financial Aid Officer, has been selected by the U.S. Department of Education as a primary negotiator representing State grant agencies and other state and non-profit higher educational financing organizations for the upcoming Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-driven Workforce Pell (AHEAD) Committee. The committee will negotiate federal rules related to the workforce Pell program and new accountability measures evaluating the earnings of students who complete a degree program.

Mr. Morrow attended the annual National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs meeting in Washington, DC, and led training on The One Big Beautiful Bill Act for the Nebraska Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. He recently completed his annual audits of our financial aid programs at each participating college and university. Mr. Morrow and Dr. Baumgartner will continue to meet with other members of the planning committee for a Nebraska College Access and Attainment Network.

In November Mr. Morrow and Celeste Thompson, ETA Specialist, staffed a table at a "Pathways to Purpose" job fair at the University of Nebraska at Omaha to spread the word about our ETA programs and other scholarships.

Gary Timm, Chief Finance Officer, along with Mr. Morrow and Dr. Baumgartner, attended the annual Nebraska Lottery beneficiaries briefing in November.

Dr. Baumgartner noted he has been meeting once a month since June with a small group of education sector representatives to look at ways to increase credential attainment, improve workforce readiness, and increase efficiency and accountability. The group has completed preliminary work and developed a short paper outlining areas of need that include reengaging adult learners, expanding Nebraska student pathways, expanding work-based learning and employer engagement, using data to empower Nebraska students and employers, and improving systemwide accountability and efficiency. He stated one thing that has come out of the effort of the group is a Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant application to implement a credential registry and talent marketplace and develop new workforce Pell programs.

Commissioner Frison and Dr. Baumgartner attended the annual meeting of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) in November. There were presentations on quantum computing, Gallup's most recent surveys of public perceptions of postsecondary education, regional use of Postsecondary Student Employment Outcomes, and a federal policy update by Dr. Thomas L. Harnisch, Ed.D., Vice President for Government Relations, State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO).

Dr. Baumgartner noted that the Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS) has completed an evaluation of the Access College Early (ACE) scholarship program and Dr. Alex Broderson will be presenting the report at the January CCPE Commission Meeting.

Dr. Baumgartner stated that the CCPE was given a new responsibility by last year's legislature, the Foreign Adversary Funding Report. Guidelines have been drafted and submitted to the Attorney General's office for review, and he will be meeting with the Assistant Attorney General for their suggestions. The first reports from institutions are due January 31, 2026.

Thomas Harnisch, SHEEO, federal update

SPEAKER

Thomas L. Harnisch, Ed.D., Vice President for Government Relations, at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), stated SHEEO's focus is on policy research, leadership, and advocacy. SHEEO is the leading national nonpartisan association representing states in higher education. His PowerPoint presentation focused on recent federal updates, including fiscal year 2026 appropriations, The One Big Beautiful Bill Act regarding higher education provisions, the Federal Medicaid cuts package, workforce Pell Grant implementation, and the Compact for Academic Excellence. Mr. Harnisch answered questions from the Commissioners.

Public Hearing on Matters of General Concern

PUBLIC HEARING ON MATTERS OF GENERAL CONCERN

There was no testimony on Matters of General Concern.

Chair Daniels closed the public hearing on Matters of General Concern.

Public Hearing on Academic Programs Committee Items

PUBLIC HEARING ON ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE ITEMS

There was no testimony on Academic Programs Committee Items.

Chair Daniels closed the public hearing on Academic Programs Committee Items.

*Academic Programs Committee
Commissioner Nelson*

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Commissioner Nelson, Committee Chair, opened the Academic Programs Committee and introduced Dr. Fimple to present the agenda items.

*Existing Program Review
Dr. Kathleen Fimple*

Existing Program Review

Dr. Fimple provided information on the following programs that were up for review and approved by the Executive Director:

Information Items:

Central Community College

- Dental Hygiene, AAS
- Dental Assisting, AAS

Mid-Plains Community College

- Dental Assisting, AAS

Southeast Community College

- Dental Assisting, AAS

Chadron State College

- English, BA, BSE

Peru State College

- English, BA, BS
- English Teaching, BS
- Language Arts, BA, BS
- Language Arts Teaching, BS

Wayne State College

- English, BA, BS
- Spanish, BA

University of Nebraska at Kearney

- English, BA
-

Existing Program Review continued

- English 7-12, Language Arts 7-12, BAE
- Modern Languages, BA
- Modern Languages 7-12, BAE
- Spanish Translation and Interpretation, BS
- Spanish Education, MAE
- Spanish, Graduate Certificate

University of Nebraska – Lincoln

- English, BA, BS, Graduate Certificate, MA, PhD
- Digital Humanities, Graduate Certificate
- German, BA, BS
- Spanish, BS, BS
- French, BA, BS
- Classics and Religious Studies, BA, BS
- Modern Languages and Literature, MA, PhD

University of Nebraska at Omaha

- English, BA, BMS, Certificate, MA
- Advanced Writing, Graduate Certificate
- Literature and Culture, Graduate Certificate
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Graduate Certificate
- Writers Workshop, MFA
- World Languages & Literature, BA, BMS
- Language Teaching, MA
- Spanish, Graduate Certificate
- Heritage/Bilingual Learners, Graduate Certificate

*Report on Institutional Activities
Related to Existing Programs*

Dr. Fimple discussed program changes

Report on Institutional Activities Related to Existing Programs

Dr. Fimple discussed existing program changes.

Reasonable and Moderate Extensions

- NECC – Physical Therapist Assistant, AAS

Program Name Changes

- UNL – Agronomy, MS was changed to *Agronomy and Horticulture, MS*

Discontinued Programs

- UNK – Industrial Technology, BS (will retain the minor and degree in Industrial Distribution)
- UNL – Horticulture, MS (low enrollments)

*Public Hearing on Budget,
Construction, and Financial Aid
Committee Items*

**PUBLIC HEARING ON BUDGET, CONSTRUCTION, AND
FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE ITEMS**

There was no testimony on Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee Items.

Chair Daniels closed the public hearing on Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee Items.

*Budget, Construction, and Financial
Aid Committee*

Commissioner Weber

*Career Readiness and Dual Credit
Grant 2024-25 Annual Year-End
Report*

*Celeste Thompson presented the
report*

BUDGET, CONSTRUCTION, AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE

Commissioner Weber chaired the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee in Commissioner O'Holleran's absence.

**Career Readiness and Dual Credit Grant 2024-25 Annual Year-End
Report**

Celeste Thompson, ETA Specialist, presented the report noting this program awards current teachers with tuition and mandatory fees as they pursue the 18-credit hour requirements to teach dual-enrollment courses for high school students. There were 50 recipients for the 2024-25 grant year. The report shows the participating institutions, number of grants awarded, number of recipients who have completed the requirements, and the total amount of funds disbursed.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: The Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee recommends approval of the 2024-25 Career Readiness & Dual Credit Grant Annual Year-End Report.

*Career Readiness and Dual Credit
Grant 2024-25 Annual Year-End
Report approved*

Commissioner Weber, on behalf of the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee, moved to approve the Career Readiness and Dual Credit Grant 2024-25 Annual Year-End Report. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*Nebraska Career Scholarship 2024-25
Annual Year-End Report – Community
and Tribal Colleges*

J. Ritchie Morrow presented the report

**Nebraska Career Scholarship 2024-25 Annual Year-End Report -
Community and Tribal Colleges**

Mr. Morrow presented the report stating the report has been divided into two separate reports for the legislature: one for the Community and Tribal Colleges, and the other for the Private Colleges and Universities. It is required by statute to submit the Nebraska Career Scholarship reports to the Legislature on even years. This is the first year the CCPE administered the scholarships as they were previously administered by the Department of Economic Development. The scholarship provides financial assistance to students pursuing degrees in programs of study leading to high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: The Budget, Construction and Financial Aid Committee recommends approval of the 2024-25 Nebraska Career Scholarship Year-End Report – Community and Tribal Colleges.

*Nebraska Career Scholarship 2024-25
Annual Year-End Report – Community
and Tribal Colleges approved*

Commissioner Weber, on behalf of the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee, moved to approve the Nebraska Career Scholarship 2024-25 Annual Year-End Report - Community and Tribal Colleges. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*Nebraska Career Scholarship 2024-25
Annual Year-End Report – Private
Colleges and Universities*

Mr. Morrow presented the report

Nebraska Career Scholarship 2024-25 Annual Year-End Report - Private Colleges and Universities

Mr. Morrow presented the report, noting the report illustrates the total number of enrolled scholarship recipients, the retention rate of students in several academic programs, and the number of graduates for the prior academic year.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: The Budget, Construction and Financial Aid Committee recommends approval of the 2024-25 Nebraska Career Scholarship Year-End Report – Private Colleges and Universities.

*Nebraska Career Scholarship 2024-25
Annual Year-End Report – Private
Colleges and Universities approved*

Commissioner Weber, on behalf of the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee, moved to approve the Nebraska Career Scholarship 2024-25 Annual Year-End Report – Private Colleges and Universities. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*2024-25 Programs of the Excellence in
Teaching Act Report*

Ms. Thompson presented the report

2024-25 Programs of the Excellence in Teaching Act Report

Ms. Thompson presented the report on the three programs under the Excellence in Teaching Act: the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program (AETP), the Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program (EETP), and the AETP-Student Teaching Program (AETP-ST). The AETP program provides forgivable loans in an amount of \$3,000 to eligible students on an annual basis who are enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate teacher education program at an eligible Nebraska institution working towards initial certification to teach in Nebraska. The AETP-ST loan provides a \$3,000 loan to students in teacher education programs during their student teaching term. EETP provides loans to graduate students in the amount of not more than \$175 per enrolled credit hour, up to a maximum of \$3000.

Ms. Thompson explained the three tables on the report showing a list of institutions that had students awarded one of the three ETA programs, the number of students awarded at each institution, and the total amount of funds awarded at each institution.

*FAFSA Completion 2024-25 Annual
Yea-End Report*

Mr. Morrow presented the report

FAFSA Completion 2024-25 Annual Year-End Report

Mr. Morrow gave a report on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The report included graphs of the number of tracked FAFSAs by high school 12th graders, completed FAFSAs, percentages of submitted and completed FAFSAs, percentages of completed vs submitted FAFSAs, and total number of submitted FAFSAs by sex.

*Community College GAP Assistance
Program 2024-25 Annual Year-End
Report*

Mr. Morrow presented the report

The class of 2025 students being tracked included 13,391 males and 11,804 females.

**Community College GAP Assistance Program 2024-25 Annual
Year-End Report**

Mr. Morrow presented the report, stating the Gap Assistance Program for the community colleges is in its ninth year and shows an increase in both applications and participants accepted into the program. The program is designed to provide financial aid to low-income community college students enrolled in credit or non-credit programs that do not qualify for federal Pell Grants, preparing them for jobs in high-need areas. Mr. Morrow discussed eligible programs, in-demand occupation areas, funding, and required reporting by the community colleges. The report also lists all the programs of study at each of the community colleges.

Executive Committee

Chair Daniels

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair Daniels asked Gary Timm, Chief Finance & Administrative Officer, to present the agenda item.

*Adjust Budget Lines in Fiscal Year
2026 Agency Budget*

Gary Timm presented the proposal

Adjust Budget Lines in Fiscal Year 2026 Agency Budget

Mr. Timm stated that the Commission was notified by the University of Nebraska at Omaha that the financial aid office had erroneously cancelled several Career-Readiness and Dual Credit (CRDC) grants totaling \$31,000 due to a miscommunication between the financial aid office and the Bursar's office. The CCPE staff believe these grants should be funded as originally approved. To accomplish this, with Commission approval, the staff suggests moving that amount from the Door-to-College program to the CRDC program.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve an increase of \$31,000 to the budgeted amount for the Career-Readiness Dual-Credit grants and a decrease of \$31,000 to the budgeted amount for Door-to-College Scholarships and grant staff authority to reallocate spending authority within program 692 as necessary for fiscal year 2026.

*Adjust Budget Lines in Fiscal Year
2026 Agency Budget approved*

Chair Daniels, on behalf of the Executive Committee, moved to approve Adjustment of Budget Lines in the Fiscal Year 2026 Agency Budget. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*Public Hearing on Planning and
Consumer Information Committee
Items*

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PLANNING AND CONSUMER
INFORMATION COMMITTEE ITEMS**

There was no testimony on Planning and Consumer Information items.

Commissioner Headrick left the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Planning and Consumer Information Committee

Commissioner Wilson

Jill Heese presented the report

Next Commission meeting is Friday, January 30, 2026

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Von Behren and Chair Daniels spoke

Meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

Chair Daniels closed the public hearing on Planning and Consumer Information Items.

PLANNING AND CONSUMER INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Commissioner Wilson, representing the Planning and Consumer Information Committee, introduced Jill Heese, Research Director.

Ms. Heese presented the tenth edition of the *Measuring Accomplishments* report. The report is a companion piece to *Chapter One of the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*. It includes national comparisons, peer comparisons for Nebraska's public institutions, and non-comparative measures. The Data Dictionary describes each of the measures in detail. Nebraska ranked in the top 25 for educational attainment by age group and degree level, in the top 10 for ACT college readiness and college continuation, and in the top 25 for high school graduation rates and six-year completion rates for students who started at public two-year institutions. Ms. Heese answered questions from the Commissioners.

FUTURE MEETING

The next Commission meeting will be a virtual meeting via Zoom on Friday, January 30, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Von Behren wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Chair Daniels acknowledged Commissioners and staff for their organizational skills and hard work that went into the meeting and wished all Happy Holidays.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Daniels adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.