
MINUTES

**Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
Apothecary/Ridnour Building
140 North 8th Street, Suite 300, Lincoln, NE
Friday, January 30, 2026
8:30 a.m. (CT) and Via Zoom**

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 JANUARY 30, 2026. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 8:30 A.M. AND ADJOURN AT APPROXIMATELY 11:30 A.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 8:30 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Daniels called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and asked for introductions.

Commissioners Present

Tim Daniels	Dannika Nelson
Dr. Deborah Frison	Dr. Paul Von Behren
Dr. LeDonna Griffin	Tami Weber
Dr. Dennis Headrick	W. Scott Wilson
Mary Lauritzen	

Commissioners Absent

Molly O'Holleran

Commission Staff Present

Dr. Michael Baumgartner	Helen Pope
Dr. Kathleen Fimple	Matthew Roque
Jill Heese	Gary Timm
Kadi Lukesh	Joe Velasquez (Moderator)
J. Ritchie Morrow	

Dr. Alex Brodersen, NSWERS

SPEAKER

Dr. Alex Brodersen, Assistant Director for Research & Evaluation at the Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System (NSWERS), presented an informative PowerPoint evaluation of the Access College Early (ACE) Scholarship Program. The evaluation of the scholarship program offers the most detailed analysis to date of student participation, demographics, and postsecondary outcomes. The report supports the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) and its partners in understanding the program's impact and planning future investments to strengthen early college opportunities for Nebraska students. Dr. Brodersen answered Commissioner's questions.

Minutes of December 5, 2025, Joint NDE/CCPE Meeting approved

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JOINT NEBRASKA BOARD OF EDUCATION/COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DECEMBER 5, 2025, MEETING

Commissioner Headrick made a motion to approve the December 5, 2025, Joint NDE/CCPE meeting minutes as written. Commissioner Frison seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. Commissioners Griffin and Lauritzen abstained from the vote. The motion carried.

Minutes of December 5, 2025, CCPE Meeting approved

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2025, COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Frison made a motion to approve the December 5, 2025, Commission meeting minutes as written. Commissioner Headrick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. Commissioners Griffin and Lauritzen abstained from the vote. The motion carried.

Chair's Report

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Daniels did not have a report.

Executive Director's Report

Kadi Lukesh presented Second Quarter Budget Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Baumgartner called on Kadi Lukesh, Office Manager and Budget Coordinator, to present the Second Quarter Budget Report as of December 31, 2025. Ms. Lukesh gave updates on the status of Administrative Funds, the Nebraska Opportunity Grant Program (NOG), the Higher Education Financial Aid, Access College Early Scholarship (ACE), Guaranty Recovery Program, and the Community College ARPA Funds – Dual Enrollment.

Dr. Baumgartner gave Governor's Budget and Legislative Report

Dr. Baumgartner noted the Legislature is in its second session. He provided information on the Governor's budget recommendations and on bills of interest to the Commission.

*J. Ritchie Morrow spoke on AHEAD
Committee*

Dr. Baumgartner asked J. Ritchie Morrow, Financial Aid Officer, to discuss his recent participation on the AHEAD (**A**ccountability in **H**igher **E**ducation and **A**ccess through **D**emand-driven Workforce Pell) Negotiated Rulemaking (neg reg) committee in Washington, D.C. Mr. Morrow stated that when Congress passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act in the summer of 2025, they made changes to federal financial aid programs. Before the US Department of Education can write the rules regarding those changes, they bring together representatives from different higher education sectors to negotiate and come to consensus on those changes. This gathering is called a Negotiated Rulemaking Committee. Two committees were created, one that dealt with the changes to student loans (called the RISE Committee), and one that dealt with Workforce Pell and new accountability standards for academic programs (called the AHEAD Committee). SHEEO nominated him for the AHEAD Committee. The committee met one week in December to discuss Workforce Pell, and then another week in January to discuss the accountability standards. If the committee does not come to consensus on the draft rules then the U.S. Department of Education (ED), along with the Office of Management and Budget, are authorized to write the rules as they best see fit. As it was, while not completely unanimous, the committee did come to consensus on the two sessions. ED will now take these draft rules to the public to allow for a comment period on the draft rules prior to the rules being written into law.

*Other items of interest from Executive
Director*

Dr. Baumgartner stated the state is moving forward with the implementation of the Workforce Pell program. Katie Thurber, Commissioner of the Department of Labor (DOL), is convening a group to get the process of identifying and approving programs underway. Mr. Morrow and Dr. Baumgartner will be working with the DOL, the Governor's office, and the postsecondary institutions to move that forward. A team is being organized to work with MHEC to share experiences and needs across the MHEC states.

Dr. Baumgartner reported that the P-20 Working Group met in December and January and with the legislature's Education Committee. The contract has been renewed with Foresight Law & Policy through June 30 for consulting services.

Dr. Baumgartner noted that Nebraska did not receive the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant that would have allowed implementing a credential registry, talent marketplace, and developing new workforce Pell programs. He stated there are other grant opportunities to be pursued, including one from the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC).

Dr. Baumgartner commented that the Nebraska Department of Education, the state colleges, and the Commission are continuing work on a direct admissions process with completion by fall.

*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, introduced Dr. Kathleen Fimple, Academic Programs Officer, to discuss the items on the agenda.

Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Northeast Community College – Agriculture Communication, AAS

Proposal for a New Instructional Program - Northeast Community College – Agriculture Communication, AAS

Dr. Fimple presented the proposal, stating the proposed program is designed to give students a variety of skills needed to work in agricultural organizations. There are no associate degree programs in ag communication in Nebraska. Dr. Fimple noted that Northeast Community College surveyed 11 agricultural communications professionals to assess the need for the program. All responded that the AAS degree would qualify applicants for openings in their workplace.

Dr. Kathleen Fimple presented the proposal

Jill Heemstra and Connie Sixta, Northeast Community College

Jill Heemstra, Director of Ag Programs, and Connie Sixta, Dean of Science, Technology, Agriculture & Math, from Northeast Community College, discussed the program proposal and answered Commissioners' questions.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the Associate of Applied Science in Agriculture Communication at Northeast Community College.

Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Northeast Community College – Agriculture Communication, AAS approved

Commissioner Nelson, on behalf of the Academic Programs Committee, moved to approve Northeast Community College's New Instructional Program – Agriculture Communication, AAS. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Griffin, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Application for a Recurrent Authorization to Operate – Osiri University, Lincoln, Nebraska

Application for a Recurrent Authorization to Operate – Osiri University, Lincoln, Nebraska

Dr. Fimple presented information on the application noting that Osiri University was approved to establish an administrative office in Nebraska in 2023. In 2025 the University requested to add a Montessori component to the MA in inclusive education. She stated this application is for a recurrent authorization to operate in Nebraska offering HUMA 499/599 Montessori Early Childhood Classroom Application in person.

Dr. Fimple presented information on the application

Dr. John Kalu Osiri, Osiri University

Dr. John Kalu Osiri answered questions from Commissioners regarding the status of Osiri University’s application to the HLC and the timeline imposed. He also addressed faculty qualifications, variation in actual enrollments vs. projections, and structure of the Montessori course.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation. That the proposal be forwarded to the full Commission without a recommendation.

Application for a Recurrent Authorization to Operate – Osiri University, Lincoln, Nebraska, approved

Commissioner Nelson made a motion to approve Osiri University’s Application for a Recurrent Authorization to Operate offering one course: HUMA 406/506 Montessori Childhood Classroom Application. The authorization is for three years, valid through March 15, 2029, with the following four Conditions of Authorization:

- 1) Osiri University submits the requested additional documentation to the Higher Learning Commission by May 23, 2026, and receives approval to pursue candidacy status,**
- 2) Osiri University continues to follow HLC procedures and becomes fully accredited,**
- 3) audited financial statements are included with the required annual reports, and**
- 4) Osiri University complies with the assessment and surety bond requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. §85-2423 through §85-2427.**

Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Griffin, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, Von Behren, and Weber. Commissioner Wilson voted no. The motion carried.

Existing Program Review

Existing Program Review

Dr. Fimple discussed justification for several of the existing programs.

Information Items:

Metropolitan Community College

- Design, Interactivity, and Media Arts, AAS
- Interior Design, AAS
- Photography, AAS
- Video/Audio Communication Arts, AAS

Mid-Plains Community College

- Graphic Design, AAS & AA

Northeast Community College

- Graphic Design, AAS & AA

Southeast Community College

- Graphic Design/Media Arts, AAS

Chadron State College

- Art, BA & BSE
- Music, BA & BSE
- Music Studies, BA (Discontinued)
- Theatre, BA

Peru State College

- Art – Fine Arts, BA & BS
- Art – Teaching, BS
- Community Music & Private Studio, BA & BS (Discontinued)
- Graphic Design, BA & BS
- General Music, BA & BS
- Music – Business Marketing, BA & BS (Discontinued)
- Music K-8 Vocal/Elementary Music Education, BS (Discontinued)
- Music K-12 Vocal/Instrumental, BS
- Music Performance, BA & BS

Wayne State College

- Art, BA
- Music, BA & BS (BS Discontinued)

University of Nebraska at Kearney

- Art Education, MAE
- Art K-12, BAE
- Interior & Product Design, BS
- Music, BA
- Music Comprehensive, BM
- Music Education, MAE
- Music Ed. PK-12 Field, BM
- Music Performance Comprehensive, BM
- Studio Art, BA
- Studio Art Comprehensive, BFA
- Visual Communication and Design, BFA

University of Nebraska – Lincoln

- Acting, BFA
- Art, BA, BFA, MFA
- Art History and Criticism, BA & MA
- Emerging Media Arts, BFA
- Graphic Design, BA & BFA
- Music, BA, BM, BME, MM, DMA, PhD
- Theatre, BA, BFA, MFA

University of Nebraska at Omaha

- Art/Fine Art, BMS
- Art History, BAH (Discontinued)
- Creative Writing, BFA
- Music, BA, BMS, Graduate Certificate, MM

- Music Education K-12, BM
- Music Performance, BM
- Studio Art, BFA & BSA
- Theatre, BTH & BMS

Existing Programs Requiring Further Review

Existing Programs Requiring Further Review

Dr. Fimple reported that two programs were under Commission minimum performance standards requiring further review. Dr. David Jackson, Executive Vice President and Provost at the University of Nebraska, stated that changing the review date from May 1, 2026, to July 1, 2026, would be acceptable. Commissioner Nelson added that the date will be changed for both MCC and UNL programs.

Metropolitan Community College

- Fashion Design, AAS

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

- Dance, BA

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: That Metropolitan Community College and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln conduct in-depth reviews for Fashion Design and Dance, respectively.

Existing Programs Requiring Further Review approved

Commissioner Nelson moved that Metropolitan Community College conduct an in-depth review of its Fashion Design, AAS program, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln conduct an in-depth review of its BA in Dance program, with a new due date of July 1, 2026. A roll call vote was taken. Commissioner Lauritzen seconded the motion. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Griffin, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Annual Reports from Out-of-state and Private Institutions

Annual Reports from Out-of-state and Private Institutions

Dr. Fimple provided information on the following institution that was required to report annually to the Commission.

- Pillar Seminary, Omaha, Nebraska

Dr. Fimple provided information

Report on Institutional Activities Related to Existing Programs

Reasonable and Moderate Extensions

Reasonable and Moderate Extensions

- MCC – Content Creation, Certificate of Achievement
- SCC – AI for Professionals, Certificate

New Organizational Units

New Organizational Units

- UNL – Combine Department of Entomology and Department of Plant Pathology (the name of the new combined department will be finalized in Spring 2026)
- UNL – Combine Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication and Department of Agricultural Economics (the name of the new combined department will be finalized in Spring 2026)

Program Name Changes

Program Name Changes

- CSC – Music, BA to *Applied Music, BA*
- NECC – Paramedic Diploma to *Paramedicine Diploma*
- NECC – Paramedic, AAS to *Paramedicine, AAS*

Discontinued Departments and Programs

Discontinued Departments and Programs

- UNL – Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design
 - Bachelor of Science in Education and Human Sciences (BSEH) in Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design
 - Master of Arts in Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design
 - Master of Science in Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design
 - Graduate Certificate in Quilt Studies

UNL – Department of Statistics

- Bachelor of Science in Statistics and Data Analytics
- Master of Science in Statistics
- Doctor of Philosophy in Statistics

UNL – Department of Educational Administration

- Master of Education in Educational Administration (MA retained)
- Doctor of Education in Educational Administration
- Graduate Certificate in Community College Leadership

UNL – Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

- Bachelor of Science in Meteorology-Climatology
- Bachelor of Science in Geology
- Master of Science in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences
- Doctor of Philosophy in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

CSC – Music Studies, BA

PSC – Music- Business Marketing, BS and BA

PSC – Music K-8 Vocal/Elementary Music Education, BS

PSC – Community Music & Private Studio, BS and BA

WSC – Music, BS (BA retained)

UNO – Art History, BAH

CCC – Business Administration, Accounting & Logistics, Entrepreneurship Certificate and Logistics Certificate

CCC – Energy Technology, Diploma, AAS

CCC – Advanced Energy, Certificate

CCC – Solar Power, Certificate

CCC – Wind Power, Certificate

Chair Daniels called for a break at 11:04 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:15 a.m.

*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 Von Behren

BUDGET, CONSTRUCTION, AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE

Commissioner Von Behren chaired the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee in Commissioner O'Holleran's absence. He introduced Nancy Hall, Administrative Management Director at Western Nebraska Community College, to present the new Master Site & Facilities Plan.

*Western Nebraska Community College
Master Site and Facilities Plan*

*Nancy Hall, Western Nebraska
Community College*

**Western Nebraska Community College Master Site and Facilities
Plan**

Ms. Hall provided a visual presentation of Western Nebraska Community College's values and goals for 2025 – 2035. The master site and facilities project was approved by the WNCC Board of Governors. The plan includes reenvisioning student success, academic excellence, community partnerships, and institutional vitality. For the Scottsbluff campus Ms. Hall discussed eight concepts included in the master plan, and an additional list of projects for the Alliance and Sidney locations. Mr. Greg Dart, President of Western Nebraska Community College, answered questions regarding enrollment expectations and how the plan's priorities will be rolled out.

*Mr. Greg Dart, Western Nebraska
Community College*

*Next Commission Meeting is March 13,
2026*

FUTURE MEETING

The next Commission meeting will be Friday, March 13, 2026, 8:30 a.m. at Lincoln Public Schools District Office Board Room, 5905 O Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Commissioner Comments

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Lauritzen gave a health update and noted she intends to continue as a Commissioner for the CCPE.

Meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Daniels adjourned the meeting at 11:34 a.m.