
MINUTES

**Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
Lincoln Public Schools District Office Boardroom
5805 O Street, Lincoln, Nebraska
Friday, March 13, 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 MARCH 13, 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	Molly O'Holleran (via Zoom)
Dr. Deborah Frison	Dr. Paul Von Behren (via Zoom)
Dr. Dennis Headrick	Tami Weber (via Zoom)
Mary Lauritzen (via Zoom)	W. Scott Wilson
Dannika Nelson	

Commission Staff Present

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

*Minutes of the January 30, 2026,
Commission meeting approved*

*Commissioner Von Behren joined the
meeting at 8:40 a.m.*

Chair's Report

Nominating committee appointed

*Resolutions for Commissioner Griffin
and Commissioner Lauritzen*

*Commissioner Headrick to represent
CCPE on MHEC*

Executive Director's Report

Legislative report

Nebraska P20 Alliance

*Workforce Pell in Nebraska
implementation*

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 30, 2026, COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve the January 30, 2026, Commission meeting minutes as written. Commissioner Frison seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Daniels appointed Commissioner Wilson to chair the Nominating Committee along with Commissioners Nelson and Frison. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of officers to be voted upon at the May Commission meeting for 2026-2027.

Chair Daniels read Resolution 26-01 and Resolution 26-02, recognizing Commissioners Griffin and Lauritzen for their years of dedication and commitment to Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

Chair Daniels stated that Commissioner Frison will be resigning from serving as a commissioner on the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC). Commissioner Headrick has agreed to represent the CCPE on MHEC.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Baumgartner provided an explanation of the Appropriations Committee amendments to LB1071 and 1072 regarding the ACE, GAP, Excellence in Teaching, and NOG scholarships. He also discussed aid to the community colleges and noted that there were no reductions for the state colleges or the University of Nebraska. Dr. Baumgartner reviewed several current bills of interest to the Commission along with carryover bills from the 2025 session.

The P20 Working Group is now the Nebraska P20 Alliance. They met in February and March and are working on the structure, working groups, and priorities. The working groups are credential attainment; data, accountability, efficiency; and workforce readiness.

Dr. Baumgartner discussed the implementation of Workforce Pell in Nebraska. Katie Thurber, Commissioner of the Department of Labor (DOL) has convened a group to get the process of identifying and approving programs underway. J. Ritchie Morrow, Financial Aid Officer, and Dr. Baumgartner are working with the DOL, the Governor's office and the postsecondary institutions to move that forward. A state team has been formed to work with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact to share experiences and needs across the MHEC states.

MHEC visit to Lincoln

Dr. Baumgartner noted that Susan Heegaard from MHEC visited Lincoln in February to meet with Commission staff, legislators, and institutional leaders to learn about issues in Nebraska and how MHEC can be of assistance.

Director of the Education Commission of the States visit to Nebraska

The senior director for state and board relations of the Education Commission of the States and the Nebraska liaison came to Lincoln to meet with Nebraska's ECS Commissioners. Dr. Baumgartner is the Vice Chair of the National Forum Planning Committee.

Dr. Baumgartner reported on recent meetings and activities he has been involved in

Recently Dr. Baumgartner participated in an Apprenticeship Degree Day of Learning in Kearney sponsored by the University of Nebraska. The meeting was facilitated by the National Center for Apprenticeship Degrees. He stated it is an opportunity for bachelor's and master's degree programs to be rethought as registered apprenticeships. While in Kearney, Dr. Baumgartner met with Dr. Kyle Meyer, Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Workforce Initiatives at UNMC, and was able to tour the new Health Sciences Education Center at UNK.

Staff meetings and news

In staff news, Dr. Baumgartner and Jill Heese, Research Director, attended the Nebraska ACT Summit on UNL's Innovation Campus in February. Last week Matthew Roque, Capital Project & Financial Analyst, attended the Nebraska Chapter of the American Planning Association annual conference in Kearney. Mr. Morrow will be participating in the Nebraska Association of Student Financial Aid Administrator annual meeting and leading a negotiated rulemaking webinar on Workforce Pell the week of March 23rd.

Commissioner O'Holleran joined the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

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

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Commissioner Nelson, Committee Chair, introduced Dr. Kathleen Fimple to present the academic items on the agenda.

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

Application for Renewal of a Recurrent Authorization to Operate - Osiri University, Lincoln, Nebraska

Dr. Fimple presented the information on the renewal application, stating that Osiri University was approved to add a Montessori component at the

Dr. Kathleen Fimple

January Commission meeting. This application is to approve authorization to continue operating an administrative office in Nebraska for its online programs.

Dr. John Kalu Osiri was available virtually on Zoom.

Committee Recommendation

Committee Recommendation: That the Commission approve the renewal of the recurrent authorization to operate for:

Institution: Osiri University

Owner: John Kalu Osiri

Level of authorization:

- a) Administrative Office and
- b) less than a complete program, specifically HUMA 499/599 Montessori Early Childhood Classroom Application (per Neb. Rev. Stat. §85-2412 and NAC Chapter 7 §003.08)

Length of authorization: Three years (valid through August 15, 2029)

Conditions of authorization:

- 1) Osiri University submits the requested additional documentation to HLC by May 23, 2026*, and receives approval to pursue candidacy status,
- 2) Osiri University continues to follow HLC procedures and becomes fully HLC accredited,
- 3) audited financial statements are included with the required annual reports,
- 4) the 2025 audited financial statements are submitted as soon as they are available in 2026,
- 5) the Osiri University catalog and website are updated to reflect current administrative fees wherever they are mentioned and the specific names of accreditors (HLC and MACTE) by March 31, 2026, and
- 6) Osiri University complies with the assessment and surety bond requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. §85-2423 through §85-2427.

* as detailed in Section E of the Committee Draft

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

Commissioner Nelson, on behalf of the Academic Programs Committee, moved to approve the Application for Renewal of a Recurrent Authorization to Operate – Osiri University, Lincoln, Nebraska. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, O’Holleran, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Existing Program Review

Existing Program Review

Information Items:

University of Nebraska at Kearney

- Agribusiness, BS

University of Nebraska- Lincoln

- Agribusiness, BSBA, BSAB
- Agricultural Economics, BSAE, Grad. Cert., MS, PhD
- Agronomy and Horticulture, BSAG, BS, Grad. Cert., MS, PhD
- Athletic Training, MS
- Environmental Science, BSES
- Natural Resource & Environmental Economics, BSNE
- Nutrition and Health Sciences, BSEH, Grad. Cert., MS, PhD
- PGA Golf Management, BS
- Plant Biology, BSPB
- Plant Health, DPH
- Plant Pathology, MS, PhD
- Regional and Community Forestry, BS

University of Nebraska at Omaha

- Geography, BA, BS, BMS, Grad. Certificate, MS
- Geology, BA, BS

*Report on Institutional Activities
Related to Existing Programs*

Dr. Fimple

*Dr. Wendy Waugh, Nebraska State
College System*

*Shubha Krishnamurthy, Northeast
Community College*

Report on Institutional Activities Related to Existing Programs

Dr. Fimple presented the Existing Program activities report, explaining the new reduced credit degrees at Chadron State College. Dr. Wendy Waugh, Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning and Partnerships at the Nebraska State College System, was present and answered Commissioners' questions. Shubha Krishnamurthy, Director of Science, Information Technology & Pre-Engineering Programs at Northeast Community College, also provided comments via Zoom.

Reasonable and Moderate Extensions

Reasonable and Moderate Extensions

- CSC – Applied Justice Studies Reduced-Credit Degree Program, BA
- CSC – Applied Education Reduced-Credit Degree Program, BS
- CSC – Mathematics, Certificate of Advanced Studies
- CSC – Business, Certificate of Advanced Studies
- CSC – Social Science Comprehensive Major, BA
- CSC – Public History, Minor
- CSC – Business Administration Comprehensive Major, Business Analytics Option
- NECC – Information Technology, Diploma
- NECC – Small Business Entrepreneurship, Certificate
- SCC – Electronic System Technology - AVD/Low Voltage Technician, Diploma
- SCC – English, Certificate
- SCC – Culinary Arts, AAS
- SCC – Hospitality Management, AAS
- SCC – Culinary Communications, AAS
- UNO – Accounting, BSBA
- UNO – Human Resources Management, BSBA
- UNO – Entrepreneurship, BSBA
- UNO – Finance, BSBA
- UNO – Logistics, BSBA

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- UNO – Management, BSBA
 - UNO – Marketing, BSBA
 - UNO – Integrated Leadership, Undergrad. Certificate
 - UNO – Operational Leadership, Undergrad. Certificate
 - WSC – Higher Education and Student Affairs, MSE

Program Name Changes

Program Name Changes

- NECC – Computer Information Systems, AA to *Information Technology, AA*
- NECC – Information Security & System Administration, AAS to *Cyber Security & Network Administration*
- NECC – Drafting-Architectural, AAS to *CADD Technology, AAS*
- NECC – Drafting, Diploma to *CADD Technology, Diploma*
- NECC – Drafting, Certificate to *CADD Technology, Certificate*
- NECC – Web/Visual Application Development & Technical Services Support, AAS to *Computer Programming & Data Analytics, AAS*

Discontinued Programs

Discontinued Programs

- CSC - Business Administration Comprehensive Major, Business Information Systems Option
- CSC – History Subject Major, BSE
- CSC – Family & Consumer Science Comprehensive Major, Design and Merchandising Option
- CSC – Family & Consumer Science Comprehensive Major, Health and Human Services Option
- CSC – Family & Consumer Science Comprehensive Major, Nutrition and Wellness Option and Minor
- CSC – Family & Consumer Science, Gerontology Minor
- CSC – Family & Consumer Science, Hospitality Minor
- CSC – Family & Consumer Science, Public Health Promotion and Education Minor
- CSC – Family & Consumer Science, Textiles and Design Minor
- NECC – Information Technology AAS, Cisco Networking Academy and Information Security Concentration
- NECC – Information Technology AAS, Cisco Networking Academy and System Administration Concentration
- NECC – Information Technology AAS, Cisco Networking Academy and Technical Service Support Concentration
- NECC – Information Technology AAS, Information Security and Technical Service Support Concentration
- NECC – Information Technology AAS, System Administration and Technical Service Support Concentration
- NECC – Information Technology AAS, Web and Visual Application Development and Cisco Networking Academy Concentration
- NECC – Information Technology AAS, Web and Visual Application Development and Information Security Concentration
- NECC – Drafting-Structural Concentration, AAS
- NECC – Cisco Networking Academy, Certificate

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- NECC – Information Security, Certificate
 - NECC – Information Technology-General, Certificate
 - NECC – System Administration, Certificate
 - NECC – Technical Services Support, Certificate
 - NECC – Web & Visual Application Development, Certificate
 - UNO – Religious Studies, BA

*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 O'Holleran

BUDGET, CONSTRUCTION, AND FINANCIAL AID COMMITTEE

Commissioner O'Holleran, Committee Chair, opened the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee segment and asked Gary Timm, Finance Officer, to present the first agenda item.

*Statewide Funding Issues/Initiatives
for use by the Commission in
developing the 2027-2029 Biennial
Public Postsecondary Operating
Budget Recommendations*

Gary Timm

**Statewide Funding Issues/Initiatives for use by the Commission in
developing the 2027-2029 Biennial Public Postsecondary Operating
Budget Recommendations**

Mr. Timm presented the four statewide budget priorities identified for the upcoming biennium: initiatives that respond to identified educational and workforce development needs in Nebraska, initiatives that increase college enrollment, initiatives that make postsecondary education more affordable, and initiatives that increase the postsecondary retention and graduation rates. Mr. Timm answered questions from the Commissioners.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: The Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee recommends approval of the Statewide Funding Issues/Initiatives for the 2027-29 Biennial Budget Process.

*Statewide Funding Issues/Initiatives
for use by the Commission in
developing the 2027-2029 Biennial
Public Postsecondary Operating
Budget Recommendations approved*

Commissioner O'Holleran, on behalf of the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee, moved to approve the Statewide Funding Issues/Initiatives for use by the Commission in developing the 2027- 2029 Biennial Public Postsecondary Operating Budget Recommendations. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, O'Holleran, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*Prioritization Process for Capital
Construction Budget Requests – 2027-
2029 Biennium*

Matthew Roque

**Prioritization Process for Capital Construction Budget Requests –
2027-2029 Biennium**

Mr. Roque presented the prioritization process for the next biennium. By statute, the Commission is responsible for developing a unified prioritization of individual capital construction budget requests for which it has recommended approval. Those priorities will be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature for their consideration. Mr. Roque noted

there are ten criteria used within the prioritization process and a facilities category rankings table that is used in the scoring of projects for prioritization.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: The Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education recommends approval of the Prioritization Process for Capital Construction Budget Requests – 2027-2029.

Prioritization Process for Capital Construction Budget Requests – 2027-2029 Biennium approved

Commissioner O’Holleran, on behalf of the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee, moved to approve the Prioritization Process for Capital Construction Budget Requests – 2027-2029 Biennium. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, O’Holleran, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Key Deadlines Concerning Commission Recommendations on Public Postsecondary Education Operating and Capital Construction Budget Requests for the 2027-29 Biennium

Key Deadlines Concerning Commission Recommendations on Public Postsecondary Education Operating and Capital Construction Budget Requests for the 2027-29 Biennium

Mr. Roque

Mr. Roque presented the timeline regarding the Operating and Capital Construction Budget recommendations for the 2027-2029 Biennium.

Nebraska Career Scholarship 2026-27 Annual Allocation Report

Nebraska Career Scholarship 2026-27 Annual Allocation Report

J. Ritchie Morrow

Mr. Morrow presented the report, stating the Commission allocates state funding from the Nebraska Career Scholarship program to the community colleges and private non-profit colleges and universities based on one of two formulas. For 2026-27, \$4 million was allocated to the community colleges, based on the most recent 3-year Reimbursable Education Units (REU) calculations, and \$4 million to the private nonprofit institutions, based on the average number of Nebraska residents enrolled in specific high-need academic programs over the last three years.

Public Hearing on Planning and Consumer Information Committee Item

PUBLIC HEARING ON PLANNING AND CONSUMER INFORMATION COMMITTEE ITEMS

There was no testimony on Planning and Consumer Information Committee Items.

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

Chair Daniels called for a break at 9:52 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:02 a.m.

Planning and Consumer Information Committee

PLANNING AND CONSUMER INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Commissioner Wilson

Commissioner Wilson, Committee Chair, introduced Jill Heese, Research Director, to present the *2026 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*.

Commissioner O’Holleran left the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

*2026 Nebraska Higher Education
Progress Report*

Jill Heese

2026 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report

Ms. Heese presented PowerPoint slides of the Progress Report. She stated there are three key priorities the Commission is required to evaluate in the report: increase the number of students who enter postsecondary education in Nebraska; increase the percentage of students who persist and successfully complete a degree; and reduce, eliminate, and reverse the net out-migration of Nebraskans with high levels of educational attainment.

Dr. Baumgartner

Ms. Heese noted what is new in the 2026 report and provided details on the three priorities. Given the findings of the report, more work needs to be done to increase the number of Nebraskans who enroll in college and complete degrees. Dr. Baumgartner discussed the recommendations for improvement at the high school, postsecondary, and state government levels listed in the report and responded to several comments and questions from the Commissioners.

Committee recommendation

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the *2026 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*.

*2026 Nebraska Higher Education
Progress Report approved*

Commissioner Wilson, on behalf of the Planning and Consumer Information Committee, moved to approve the *2026 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report*. A roll call was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Lauritzen, Nelson, Von Behren, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

*Next Commission Meeting is May 22,
2026*

FUTURE MEETING

The next Commission meeting will be Friday, May 22, 2026, 8:30 a.m. at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska.

Commissioner Lauritzen

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Lauritzen commented that her many years with the Commission had been a wonderful and incredible experience.

Meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Daniels adjourned the meeting at 11:38 a.m.