Minutes

Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
South Sioux City College Center, Large Conference Room
1001 College Way, South Sioux City, Nebraska
Friday, July 24, 2026
9:45 a.m. (CDT)

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 FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2026. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 9:45 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

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Daniels called the meeting to order at 9:47 a.m. and asked for introductions.

Commissioners Present

Tim Daniels	Molly O'Holleran
Dr. Deborah Frison	Tami Weber
Dr. Dennis Headrick	W. Scott Wilson
Dannika Nelson	

Commissioners Absent

Beth Forney	Dr. Paul Von Behren

Commission Staff Present

Dr. Michael Baumgartner	Helen Pope
Dr. Kathleen Fimple	Matthew Roque
J. Ritchie Morrow	Gary Timm

WELCOME

Dr. Leah Barrett, President at Northeast Community College, and Dr. Marysz Rames, President at Wayne State College, welcomed the Commissioners and gave updates on their respective campuses and spoke on the successes of the joint WSC and NECC South Sioux City College Center.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 22, 2026, COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve the May 22, 2026, Commission meeting minutes as written. Commissioner Frison seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Nelson, O'Holleran, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Daniels announced new committees for 2026-2027. He stated that chairs for each committee will be selected at each upcoming committee meeting.

Academic Programs Committee
Tami Weber
Dr. Paul Von Behren
Dr. Deborah Frison
Molly O'Holleran

Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee
W. Scott Wilson
Dr. Deborah Frison
Dannika Nelson
Beth Forney

Planning and Consumer Information Committee
W. Scott Wilson
Beth Forney
Dr. Paul Von Behren
Tami Weber

Chair Daniels announced that a new Commissioner will be joining us at the September Commission meeting. Beth Forney is from Alliance, Nebraska, and will be an at-large member.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Baumgartner, Executive Director, introduced Gary Timm, Chief Finance and Administrative Officer, to present the Fourth Quarter Budget Report. Mr. Timm gave updates on the status of Administrative Funds and the Nebraska Opportunity Grant Program (NOG). He focused on the government aid portion of the Higher Education Financial Aid regarding the Excellence In Teaching Act programs. Lastly, Mr. Timm reviewed the Access College Early Scholarship (ACE) and Guaranty Recovery Program, and noted that the Community College ARPA Grants have been spent with no remaining balance.

Dr. Baumgartner gave a brief update on several legislative bills that have upcoming hearings and reports due.

Dr. Baumgartner shared topics and themes from the Education Commission of the States National Forum that he recently attended. He commented that there were 20 Nebraskans in attendance, with panel including Workforce Pell Implementation, Accountability 2.0, integrating financial aid into admissions redesign, education outcomes data linkages and dashboards, and adult reengagement projects at the state level.

At the SHEEO Annual Meeting, the issue with the most attention was three-year bachelor's degrees, what to call them, how employers and graduate schools value them, how they affect Pell and state financial aid, and what the demand is for them. Other topics of discussion included the federal do no harm requirements, Workforce Pell, the future of accreditation given federal regulatory changes, financial monitoring in public and private institutions, excess institutional capacity and state responses, and AI in higher education.

PUBLIC HEARING ON MATTERS OF GENERAL CONCERN

Dr. David Jackson, UNL Provost, came forward to update the Commission on the consolidation of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The joint accreditation process was completed in June both with the U.S. Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission. He discussed benefits of the UNL and UNMC merger in relation to programs that will provide a smoother pathway for students.

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

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, Committee Chair, mentioned former Commissioner Lauritzen and her living in the South Sioux City College Center area and thanked Drs. Barrett and Rames for providing opportunities to students in the surrounding area. She introduced Dr. Kathleen Fimple, Academic Programs Officer, to present the agenda items.

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Doctor of Social Work

Dr. Fimple presented the proposal, stating the focus of the program is social work leadership in administration, clinical practice, and higher education settings. She noted that many students are interested in the field of behavior health, indicating a high need for the program. Dr. Susan Reay, John E. Christensen Community Chair of Social Work at UNO, was present in support of the program proposal.

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the Doctor of Social Work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Commissioner Nelson, on behalf of the Academic Programs Committee, moved to approve the University of Nebraska's Proposal for a New Instructional Program – Doctor of Social Work. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Nelson, O'Holleran, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

University of Nebraska at Omaha – Proposal for a New Instructional Program - BS in Professional Training and Development

Dr. Fimple presented the proposal, commenting that workforce development is a top economic priority in Nebraska. This program would prepare students to lead organizational learning, talent development, and professional training initiatives. She noted a high need and demand for this program. Dr. Christine Billings, Director, Division of Continuing Studies at UNO, was present in support of the program proposal.

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the Bachelor of Science in Professional Training and Development at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Commissioner Nelson, on behalf of the Academic Programs Committee, moved to approve the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Proposal for a New Instructional Program – BS in Professional Training and Development. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Nelson, O'Holleran, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

University of Nebraska Medical Center – Proposal for a New Organizational Unit – Research Center for Developmental Toxicology and Pharmacology

Dr. Fimple presented the proposal, noting the mission of the proposed center is to advance interdisciplinary research, education, and translational science focused on developmental health, maternal-fetal medicine, toxicology, and pharmacology. The proposal demonstrated high need and demand for the center, with many letters of support received. Dr. Aditya Bade, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Neuroscience at UNMC and creator of the center, provided additional information and answered Commissioners' questions.

Committee recommendation: That the Commission approve the Research Center for Developmental Toxicology and Pharmacology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Commissioner Nelson, on behalf of the Academic Programs Committee, moved to approve the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Proposal for a New Organizational Unit – Center for Developmental Toxicology and Pharmacology. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Nelson, O'Holleran, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Report on Institutional Activities Related to Existing Programs

Reasonable and Moderate Extensions

- UNO – Instructional Technology Leadership, Graduate Certificate
- UNO – Victimology and Victim Services, Graduate Certificate
- UNO - Health Science Education, Graduate Certificate
- UNO – Addiction Counseling, Graduate Certificate
- UNO – Applied Business Economics and Analysis, Graduate Certificate
- WNCC – Basic Construction Technology, Certificate
- WNCC – Advanced Construction Technology, Certificate

Program Name Changes

- UNO – Master of Science in Economics to *Master of Science in Applied Economics*
- UNO – Bachelor of Science in Special Education – Elementary Education and Bachelor of Science in Special Education – Secondary Education to *Bachelor of Science in Special Education*

Discontinued Programs

- UNK – Higher Education Student Affairs, MSEd
- UNK – 7-12 Modern Languages-German Emphasis, BAEd
- UNK – Modern Languages Comprehensive-German Emphasis, BA
- UNK – Music Comprehensive-Music Business Emphasis, BM
- WNCC – Construction, Professional Skills Award
- WNCC – Electrical, Professional Skills Award
- WNCC – Plumbing, Professional Skills Award
- WNCC – HVAC, Professional Skills Award

Chair Daniels called for a break at 11:26 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:38 a.m.

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, Committee Chair, introduced Matthew Roque, Capital Project & Financial Analyst, to present the action item on the agenda.

Northeast Community College – Norfolk Campus – Weller Renovation Project

Mr. Roque presented the project proposal, stating Northeast Community College proposes a 58,623 Gross Square Foot extensive remodel of the existing main floor of the Weller Building on the Norfolk Campus. The project would provide remodeled lab and classroom spaces to support the welding, automotive, auto body, and plumbing technology programs. The project would bring the support spaces up to current safety codes and campus standards. The $17.9 million cost will come from the Capital Improvement Fund. Several representatives from Northeast Community College were present in support of the project proposal.

Committee recommendation: Pursuant to the Nebr. Rev. Stat. § 85-1414, the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education recommends approval of Northeast Community College's proposal to utilize Capital Improvement funds to renovate and equip the existing Weller Building project as outlined in the governing board's program statement approved on May 14, 2026, along with supplemental information provided.

Commissioner O'Holleran, on behalf of the Budget, Construction, and Financial Aid Committee, moved to approve Northeast Community College's – Norfolk Campus – Weller Renovation Project. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Nelson, O'Holleran, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

Nebraska Opportunity Grant 2026-27 Annual Allocation Report

J. Ritchie Morrow, Financial Aid Officer, presented the report on the allocation of the Nebraska Opportunity Grant. He noted that every year the Coordinating Commission is appropriated funds by the legislature, and those funds are combined with the Nebraska Lottery money that we receive to award each year. After an allocation formula is applied, institutions are notified how much is available to award to their students. Mr. Morrow discussed the portion of the report that includes a breakdown of allocated dollars for each participating institution and reviewed the 10-year comparison graph of appropriations funding by source and the Lottery Fund Transfers received to the Nebraska Opportunity Grant.

Excellence in Teaching Act (ETA) Forgivable Loan Programs Allocations Report

Mr. Morrow presented the report, noting the allocations for AETP (Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program) and AETP-ST (Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program-Student Teaching) programs are based on the number of teacher education completers as reported annually to the NDE. EETP (Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program) allocations are based on the number of completers with a master's degree in education awarded by each eligible institution.

<u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u>

<u>Authorize the executive director to contract with Education Strategy Group (ESG) to provide support for the Proactive Admissions Initiative</u>

Dr. Baumgartner stated that the Commission, in partnership with the Nebraska State College System and the Nebraska Department of Education, received a four-year grant from an anonymous foundation to support the development, piloting, and evaluation of a statewide proactive admissions framework designed to expand postsecondary access and strengthen college-going pathways for Nebraska students. This proposal is to authorize the executive director to contract with the Education Strategy Group (ESG) to assist with development of materials, training, data sharing agreements, and evaluation of the project.

Committee recommendation: That the Commission authorize the Executive Director to contract with Education Strategy Group (ESG) to provide support for the Proactive Admissions Initiative.

Chair Daniels, on behalf of the Executive Committee, moved to approve Authorizing the executive director to contract with Education Strategy Group (ESG) to provide support for the Proactive Admissions Initiative. A roll call vote was taken. Voting aye: Daniels, Frison, Headrick, Nelson, O'Holleran, Weber, and Wilson. The motion carried.

<u>FUTURE MEETING</u>

The next Commission meeting will be Friday, September 11, 8:30 a.m. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.

<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

Chair Daniels adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.