

STATE BOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Martin Valadez, Chair // Kady Titus, Vice Chair // Chelsea Mason-Placek // Mack Hogans // Ben Bagherpour // Jay Reich // Crystal Donner // Emily Yim //

Nate Humphrey, Executive Director // Marianna Watson, Executive Assistant

Statutory Authority: Laws of 1991, Chapter 28B.50 Revised Code of Washington

Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025

SBCTC Agency Office: 1500 Jefferson St SE, Olympia, WA 98501

Hybrid option via Zoom

State Board Members Present: Martin Valadez, Kady Titus, Ben Bagherpour, Crystal Donner, Mack Hogans, Chelsea Mason-Placek, Jay Reich

State Board Members Absent: Emily Yim

Special meeting

The State Board held a special meeting on Dec. 17, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Welcome and board member introductions

Chair Martin Valadez called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m., welcomed those present, and asked the board members to introduce themselves.

Land and labor acknowledgement

Board Member Chelsea Mason-Placek read the Land and Labor Acknowledgement.

Establish a quorum and adopt meeting agenda

Chair Valadez noted that a quorum was present and requested a vote to adopt the meeting agenda without change.

Motion: Moved by Board Member Jay Reich, seconded by Board Member Mack Hogans, and unanimously approved by the board, the adoption of the special meeting agenda.

Consent agenda

Chair Valadez requested a vote to approve the consent agenda without change.

Motion: Moved by Board Member Mason-Placek, seconded by Board Member Hogans, and unanimously approved by the board, the adoption of the December 2025 special meeting consent agenda.

Public comment

There were no public comments.

System unions report

Jacqui Cain, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), gave a report that highlighted issues with professional staff representation and speaking rights at college trustee meetings. She also expressed looking forward to working more closely with State Board staff during the upcoming legislative session.

Suzanne Southerland, coordinating chair for the Washington Education Association (WEA), introduced herself to board members whom she has not met previously and gave more information about her background in the community and technical colleges (CTC) system. Additionally, she discussed upcoming lobby days in January and February, concerns about AI's impact on teaching, and the need for new revenue to support community and technical colleges as economic pillars.

Honoring the life and service of board member Dr. Bernal Baca

Nate Humphrey, executive director, honored the life and legacy of board member Dr. Bernal Baca, who passed away on Nov. 28, 2025. Dr. Baca dedicated 40 years to the CTC system including 30 years with Yakima Valley College and 10 years with the AFT. Other members of the group remembered Dr. Baca's contributions to the colleges, including his unwavering commitment to racial equity and social justice.

Arlen Harris, legislative director, remembered Dr. Baca as a close friend. Dr. Joyce Loveday, president of Clover Park Technical College and WACTC, offered condolences and stated she had a great relationship with Dr. Baca.

Chair Valadez requested a vote to approve Resolution 25-12-54, which formally recognizes and honors the life of Dr. Baca and his contributions to the CTC system.

Motion: Moved by Board Member Reich, seconded by Board Member Hogans, and unanimously approved by the board, the approval of Resolution 25-12-54.

Presentation of AY26-27 tuition rates proposal

Stephanie Winner, operating budget director, presented the board with a proposal for the next academic year's tuition rates. This included a 3.3% operating fee increase in addition to a 2.3% building fee increase, both based on state-mandated formulas.

Chair Valadez requested a vote to approve Resolution 25-12-55, which would approve the tuition rates increase for academic year 26-27.

Motion: Moved by Board Member Reich, seconded by Board Member Hogans, and unanimously approved by the board, the approval of Resolution 25-12-55.

Evaluation of executive director's annual priorities progress

Mr. Humphrey presented this topic with Board Members Reich and Mason-Placek. He recounted the work done during the August state board retreat, where the need for clear priorities, working agreements between the executive director and members of the board, and practical methods for tracking the executive director's progress were established. The evaluation will mainly focus on the

executive director's progress in establishing agency culture, strategic opportunities, fiscal health transparency, and strategic planning. It also includes quarterly progress updates from Mr. Humphrey and will culminate in an annual evaluation at the Aug. 2026 board retreat.

Board Member Reich emphasized the importance of flexibility in the evaluation process for Mr. Humphrey, noting that the board was expecting up to four new board members in the upcoming year and priorities may have to shift depending on the course of those new additions. He also stated that clear and open communication is paramount to the overall process.

Board Member Mason-Placek echoed Board Member Reich's statements. She added that it is important to ensure clarity when the board discusses measurements for progress. Creating tangible metrics is important for the evaluation process and making sure the stated goals and objectives are being met.

Chair Valadez requested a vote to approve Resolution 25-12-56, relating to the evaluation of the executive director's progress toward annual priorities.

Motion: Moved by Board Member Reich, seconded by Board Member Hogans, and unanimously approved by the board, the approval of Resolution 25-12-56.

2025-2026 state board self-evaluation framework

Mr. Humphrey discussed the importance of alignment between the evaluation of the executive director's annual priorities and the annual self-evaluation of the board. He highlighted the need for efficient onboarding for the executive director and new board members as they join the group. There will also be a thorough review of the board's bylaws and operating policies and that should be ready for an initial review in the new year. Mr. Humphrey also reaffirmed the need for clear and consistent communication between the executive director and board members.

Chair Valadez stated that Board Member Emily Yim is a former college trustee and former ACCT chair, and that organization already has a productive onboarding process in place for new members. He has tasked her with adapting a similar method for the board and its unique needs and responsibilities.

Chair Valadez requested a vote to approve Resolution 25-12-57, relating to the State Board's self-evaluation.

Motion: Moved by Board Member Hogans, seconded by Board Member Reich, and unanimously approved by the board, the approval of Resolution 25-12-57.

Legislative session update

Arlen Harris provided the board a preview of the upcoming legislative session. The system is currently anticipating a projected 4-year budget shortfall (approximately \$900 million), further heightened by the recent flooding disasters throughout the state. Given this, the primary focus in entering the 2026 legislative session is to return to full funding of staff and faculty compensation. Mr. Harris stated that while the agency is thankful to the Legislature for providing much-needed general wage increases in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for classified and non-represented staff, only partial funding of the general wage increase is contained in the enacted budget. Consequently, the

colleges must backfill the unfunded portion of these increases with tuition and local funds. With about 80% of college operating budgets tied to personnel costs, colleges are severely constrained where they can find funds for the mandated increases. Advocacy efforts are focused on urging the Legislature to return to providing full funding for compensation in the 2026 operating budget.

Mr. Harris also proposed two new policies to the board: one relating to the credentials for nursing programs in the CTC system, and the other about adding workforce certificate programs and continuing education to eligibility for the Washington College Grant.

WACTC report

Joyce Loveday announced that Dr. Jamilyn Penn is now the interim president of Highline College and expressed excitement in being able to work with her. Dr. Loveday thanked Dr. John Mosby for his years of tremendous service and dedication to Highline and the community and technical colleges system overall.

ACT report

Wendy Bohkle, ACT president, was absent but provided a written copy of her report, which was read by Marianna Watson, executive assistant. The report recounted the success of recent events, such as the ACCT Leadership Congress held in New Orleans and the ACT Fall Conference at the SeaTac Airport Hilton. It also discussed the upcoming National Legislative Summit, which will take place in Washington, D.C. in February of next year.

The ACT Spring Conference will be held in May at Semiahmoo Resort and is co-hosted by Bellingham Technical College and Whatcom Community College.

Financials update

Choi Halladay, deputy executive director for business operations, provided updates on system financial initiatives, including the creation of a temporary employee pool to support colleges with staffing gaps in their business offices. It received unanimous support from chief financial officers.

Work is ongoing on fiscal sustainability standards and protocols, with a draft model expected by the end of this fiscal year. More formal presentations on these efforts will be given to WACTC and then the board sometime in late spring. Mr. Halladay also noted completion of fiscal health measures data analysis and upcoming communications to colleges about their results.

Executive director's report

Mr. Humphrey reported on the ongoing weather emergency throughout the state, sharing steps that different colleges throughout the CTC system have been taking to respond to the disaster. Skagit Valley College was specifically mentioned, with their Mt. Vernon campus being utilized as a hub for emergency response operations.

Mr. Humphrey also provided the board with agency staffing updates. Maya Esquivido-Strom will now serve as the permanent director of tribal government affairs. Julie Huss, human resources director, has been moved to the executive division and will now report directly to Mr. Humphrey. Lastly, Mr. Halladay will retire from his position as deputy executive director for business operations in December 2026. This comes after approximately 30 years of service in the CTC system.

There was also discussion of ongoing engagement with Microsoft through the Elevate Washington initiative, which will provide 10 grants and training opportunities for colleges early next year. The training will be paid for by Microsoft. Three colleges within the CTC system had their buildings awarded architectural design awards, so time was taken to celebrate those accomplishments.

Board discussion and chair’s report

Chair Valadez discussed ongoing communications with the governor’s office to continue filling vacancies on the board, as several members have exceeded their term expiry dates already. He expressed the importance of the board being able to make quorum for future meetings. Ben Bagherpour announced his resignation from the board, effective Dec. 31, 2026. The board expressed gratitude for his years of service to the group.

Chair Valadez announced that the next board meeting will take place Feb 18-19 at the SBCTC agency office in Olympia.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Valadez adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.



Nate Humphrey, secretary



Martin Valadez, chair