

## **APPROVED MINUTES**

### **COCHISE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING**

**Tuesday, November 18, 2025  
Sierra Vista Campus  
HR Building 300 Room 301  
6:00 p.m.**

Members of the public who wished to attend the meeting via video conference joined at <https://cochise.zoom.us/j/91738543543>.

#### **1. GENERAL FUNCTIONS**

##### **1.01 Call to Order**

Mr. Hudgins called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

##### **Board Members Present:**

Mr. David DiPeso  
Mr. Mark Farr  
Mr. Don Hudgins  
Mr. Steve Leeder  
Ms. Stephanie Money

##### **1.02 Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Hudgins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

##### **1.03 Adoption of Agenda**

Dr. Perey informed the board that the agenda had been published in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes and then modified the agenda, pulling items 5.01 Executive Session and 5.02 Possible Action Item following the Executive Session. The agenda was adopted with no further modifications.

Mr. DiPeso moved, and Ms. Money seconded a motion to adopt the meeting agenda. With no further discussion, the Governing Board approved Mr. Leeder, Ms. Money, Mr. Hudgins, Mr. Farr, and Mr. DiPeso, all voting aye. **MOTION PASSED.**

##### **1.04 Citizen's In-person Interim**

There were no requests to address the Governing Board.

##### **1.05 Standing Reports**

##### **1.05.1 Representative to the Arizona Association of Community College Trustees (AACCT)**

There were no new AACCT updates since the last board meeting.

##### **1.05.2 Senate Report**

A written October 2025 Senate report was submitted and accepted as published.

### **1.05.3 Student Government Association (SGA)**

A Student Government Association report was submitted and accepted as published.

### **1.05.4 College President**

Dr. Perey, College President, began his report expressing his deep appreciation for the college faculty and staff and their continued dedication. He then provided updates to the Governing Board; highlights include:

#### **Legislative Update:**

##### **State Legislative Outlook**

- Arizona's 2026 legislative session will begin under tight fiscal conditions due to slower revenue growth and increased mandated spending.
- Sales tax collections remain soft, with only \$67 million in discretionary funds projected for FY26.
- Federal legislation may reduce state general fund revenues by \$400 million in FY26 and \$330 million in FY27.
- A recent court ruling requiring increased funding for K-12 facilities will further constrain the budget.
- Advocacy efforts with local representatives (Lupe Diaz, David Gowen, and Gail Griffin) are underway; meetings are being scheduled through the college lobbyist.

##### **Federal Outlook**

- Following a six-week shutdown, Congress passed a continuing resolution funding operations through February 2026.
- The Departments of Education and Labor announced a partnership that shifts some education grants toward workforce development priorities.
- Title V, TRiO, workforce grants, FAFSA, and Pell Grant operations have resumed, though processing delays are expected.
- Larger budget reconciliation is still pending.

#### **Facilities Update:**

##### **District**

- Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) - The Gordian Group
  - Data Development phase continues
  - The delivery phase is planned to begin the first week in October or soon thereafter.

##### **Douglas Campus**

- Customs & Border Protection Tower Relocation
  - Work is expected to start on 1 December (Monday) and be completed by mid-week
- City of Douglas Wellsite
  - IGA Revision review in progress – who is doing what regarding tying college water into city water
  - Once the agreement is signed and the parcel transfer is completed, the City will start the bid process and contractor selection.
  - Wellsite development is most likely to start in March
- Welcome Center Turnabout/Parking Lot A Improvements
  - Contracted work completed on Parking Lot A and Turnabout
  - Xeriscaping is mostly completed; ground covering and irrigation continue on the west side
- AdultEd (400) Renovation/Drainage Improvements

- Roof demolition scheduled for the week of 17 November
- Roofing contractor proposal in progress
- Drainage improvement plan received and submitted for contractor proposal
- Interior build back to start after exterior renovations are completed
- Stormwater drainage improvements to take place concurrently with the build back
- General Classrooms (700)
  - Renovation of offices and a small conference room is complete
  - Large conference room renovation continues with estimated project completion in the first week of December

#### Sierra Vista Campus

- Campus Services Building (2600)
  - Building approved for occupancy
  - The Technology Services and Facilities staff have started the relocation

#### Downtown Center

- Flight/Police Cruiser Simulators
  - Police Cruiser simulators installed and operational
  - The estimated delivery date for the Helicopter Flight Simulator is the week of March 9.

#### Initiatives:

##### Nursing and Allied Health

- The Nursing and Allied Health division recently hosted a HOSA (Future Health Professionals) competition on Friday, November 7, at the Downtown Center. Thirty-eight high school students from Willcox, Benson, Tombstone, and Buena participated in the “Cochise Health Off,” practicing clinical skills, completing online assessments, and engaging with local healthcare professionals. The division is also collaborating with Workforce Development to showcase applied health programs through the workforce trailer. This interactive setup includes the Anatomage table, a high-fidelity mannequin with the i-Simulate cardiac monitor.

##### Business, Career, and Technical Education

- The FAA inspection of the Aviation program has been completed and approved. Congratulated Director, Belinda Burnett, for her hard work and dedication to the aviation program.
- The RCT-built house project continues to advance as planned.
- Cyber Patriot activities are underway this Fall with very strong student participation across Cochise County.

##### Workforce Development

- Workforce leadership attended the Cochise County Sheriff's Office UAV Symposium to explore training support for border operations.
- Professional development partnerships continue countywide, with 25 Copper Queen Community Hospital employees completing customized customer service training in October, and Arizona G&T scheduled to complete communication skills training in December.

Awards and Recognitions:

- Marketing Team Achievements: Cochise College's marketing team earned five Medallion Awards at the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations District Conference:
  - Gold: Cochise Red Hot Podcast; Early College Summer Camps Digital Advertising
  - Silver: New website design; 60th anniversary logo; promotion of 60th anniversary events. The team has demonstrated innovative approaches to college marketing over the past year.
- Athletics: The women's soccer team made history by winning Region 1 and District 1 championships and competing in the NJCAA National Tournament for the first time. They defeated Monroe Community College in double overtime (3-2) but did not advance beyond pool play.
- Coach Recognition: Head Coach Santos was named the 2025 NJCAA West District Coach of the Year. Plans are underway to celebrate the team's achievements on campus.

Community Engagements:

- Oct 16 – Cochise College Tabletop Exercise (Housing Displacement & Emergency Shelter); partnered with Red Cross, and they noted that the Douglas Campus and rodeo grounds are great locations for shelter-in-place locations. College will review options for a partnership with the Red Cross.
- Oct 20 – NAU Collaboration Meeting
- Oct 21-25 – ACCT Leadership Congress (New Orleans)
- Oct 27-28 – Tom Hughes Visit (HLC Prep)
- Oct 29 – Cochise Combined Trust Meeting
- Nov 1 – Foundation Board Social
- Nov 3 – UofA Provost Team Meeting
- Nov 5 – Bring a Vet to Lunch
- Nov 5 – Women's Soccer Won the Region 1 Championship
- Nov 6 – Attended the CVMC Veterans Wall Celebration (Ruth Quinn was recognized)
- Nov 7 – Hosted Arizona Town Hall – discussion regarding workforce development
- Nov 8 – Women's Soccer Won the West District Championship
- Nov 11-13 – Attended AACC Small and Rural Community College Conference
- Nov 14 – Aviation Open House & Pit Fire (Douglas Campus)
- Nov 17 – Attended the Cochise County Drone Summit

Upcoming Activities:

- Nov 21 – President's Student Leadership Academy (SV Campus)
- Nov 21 – Hispanic Chamber Mixer
- Nov 24 – Meeting regarding the Ann Stephens Grant (Viticulture)
- Nov 27-28 – Thanksgiving Holiday
- Dec 4 – Police Academy Graduation (2 p.m. on the SV Campus)
- Dec 9 – Board Meeting at the Willcox Center beginning at 4 p.m.
- Dec 16 – Holiday Luncheon on the Douglas Campus @ 11:30
- Dec 17 – Holiday Luncheon on the Sierra Vista Campus @ 11:30
- Dec 20-Jan 4 – College Closed for Winter Break)

**Leadership Congress Highlights:**

Several trustees attended the Leadership Congress in New Orleans and actively engaged in sessions focused on governance and leadership. Key takeaways included:

- **Board Development:** Importance of onboarding new members and strengthening collaboration as a leadership team.
- **Governance Excellence:** Reinforcement of Cochise College's strong governance culture, noted as operating well above national benchmarks.
- **National Trends:** Expansion of Workforce Pell, growth in dual enrollment and career training pathways, and increased support for rural students through housing and earn-to-learn models.
- **Strategic Focus:** Participation in discussions on emerging issues such as AI, maintaining a student-centric, community-anchored, and future-focused approach.

The trustees expressed their appreciation for the opportunity and affirmed the value of continuing to participate in future conferences.

**Additional Updates:**

- The semester is nearing completion with a focus on finishing strong.
- Materials provided include the 2024–2025 Year in Review (highlighting the college's 60th anniversary) and the Cochise Snapshot for public engagement.

**1.05.5 Monthly Financial Report – October 2025**

The Financial Report for October 2025 was provided in the board packet and approved as submitted.

Mr. Leeder asked Dr. Perey if there were any concerns; Dr. Perey noted that there were none and stated he feels good about where the college is currently.

**1.05.6 Monthly Academic Progress Report – November 2025**

The November 2025 Academic Progress Report included an Early College report.

**2. NEW BUSINESS \***

**2.01 Consent Agenda \***

The following items were approved:

- 2.01.1 \* Non-Exempt Staff; Appointment (*Erin Ross, Career Services Coordinator, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.2 \* Non-Exempt Staff; Appointment (*Armond Walker, Facilities Services Technician, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.3 \* Faculty; Appointment (*Raj Patil, Instructor of Business, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.4 \* Faculty; Appointment (*Ganesh Rana, Instructor of Chemistry, Douglas Campus*)
- 2.01.5 \* Non-Exempt Staff; Resignation (*Brian Smith, Grounds Technician I, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.6 \* Exempt Staff; Resignation (*Dr. Dale Porter, Assistant Dean of Business, Career, and Technical Education, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.7 \* Exempt Staff; Resignation (*Dr. Brian Stover, Chief Information Officer, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.8 \* Non-Exempt Staff; Separation from Probation (*Wendi Massaglia, Testing Services Specialist, Sierra Vista Campus*)

- 2.01.9 \* Non-Exempt Staff; Retirement (*Dawn Nuetzel, Administrative Assistant, First Responders Academy, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.10 \* Non-Exempt; Retirement (*Leanne Perkins, Payroll Data Specialist, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.11 \* Faculty; Retirement (*Ben Berry, Instructor of History and Political Science, Sierra Vista Campus*)
- 2.01.12 \* Curriculum
- 2.01.13 \* Acceptance of Revised Minutes for September 9, 2025 – Regular Meeting
- 2.01.14 \* Acceptance of Minutes for October 14, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Mr. Leeder moved, and Ms. Money seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. With no further discussion, the Governing Board approved, with Mr. DiPeso, Mr. Farr, Mr. Hudgins, Mr. Leeder, and Ms. Money all voting aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**\*\*\* Introduction of New Employees \*\*\***

Mr. Wick Lewis, Executive Director of Human Resources, introduced Myra Escarcega, Administrative Assistant for Liberal Arts; Emily Russell, Financial Aid Technician I; and Acacia Barnett, Director of Small Business Development Center.

**2.02 FY2026-2027 Course Fees**

The administration requested that the Governing Board adopt a motion to approve the FY2026-2027 Course Fees. Dr. Perey stated that the proposed FY2026 budget included in the board packet listed an incorrect course fee for Nursing 232; it listed \$2,000, but should be \$1,100, a \$10 increase.

Mr. Farr moved, and Mr. DiPeso seconded a motion to approve the FY2026-2027 Course Fees with the revised course fee amount for nursing 232 of \$1,100. With no further discussion, the Governing Board approved, with Mr. DiPeso, Mr. Farr, Mr. Hudgins, Mr. Leeder, and Ms. Money all voting aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**3. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**3.01 Communications**

- *Dr. Perey, the college president, received a phone call from Congressman Juan Ciscomani, congratulating Cochise College as the #1 community college in Arizona and ranking it among the Top 50 Best Community Colleges in the nation by SmartAsset.*

**3.02 Liberal Arts Division Report**

Dr. Angela Garcia, Dean of Liberal Arts, provided a presentation to the Governing Board on the Liberal Arts Division; highlights included:

Overview of departments and activities:

- Arts & Humanities: 7 full-time faculty, 26 part-time, 105 classes.
  - Department Chair: Roman Briggs
- Writing & Communications: 11 full-time, 23 part-time, 124 classes.
  - Department Chair: Denisse Canez
- Education, Language & Student Success: 12 full-time, 19 part-time, 89 classes.
  - Department Chair: Ella Melito

- Key community outreach and cultural initiatives include international films, art gallery visits, zine creation, and major annual events such as the Pit Fire, Creative Writing Celebration, and Mirage literary magazine.
  - Pit Fire Event Highlights:
    - The 18th annual event was held on November 14; the start time was moved to 2 PM.
    - The number of featured artists increased from 8 to 12, with three live bands performing.
    - Bowl price raised to \$15 (or 2 for \$25); sold out by 6:30 PM.
    - Generated \$11,831 for art scholarships.
- The Art Department incorporated AI into creative projects, including a 3D design challenge that explored futuristic tools.
- The division continues to emphasize cultural engagement and scholarship support through these programs.

#### Liberal Arts Division – Additional Outreach and Initiatives

- Creative Writing Celebration scheduled for April 10; entries currently being accepted for contests with prizes and publication opportunities.
- Mirage Literary & Arts Magazine continues as a long-standing tradition, believed to have originated around 1974.
- The Pit Fire Event featured bowls created by student artist Haniel Robas, incorporating cultural symbolism into the design.

#### AI Integration in English Curriculum

- The English Department is implementing structured AI activities in English 101 and 102 to enhance research and critical thinking skills.
- No single AI platform is mandated; focus on tools students already have access to, including Microsoft Copilot and integrated AI features in research databases.
- Faculty guidelines emphasize AI as a support tool, not a replacement for student work. Examples include brainstorming ideas and improving research strategies.
- The department developed clear policies on permitted and prohibited AI use, set maximum usage limits, and incorporated training on identifying AI bias and hallucinations.
- Collaboration with librarians and faculty support staff continues; spring implementation planned.
- Goal: Responsible AI adoption that strengthens metacognition and prepares students for future academic and professional needs.

#### Questions/Comments

Board members expressed strong support for the AI initiatives, noting their alignment with national trends and the importance of balancing technology and critical thinking.

Dr. Garcia introduced Virginia Thompson, an art faculty member, who answered questions regarding the Pit Fire Festival and shared how she has integrated the use of AI into her art projects. Dr. Garcia also introduced Erica Reed, an English faculty member, who answered questions regarding the implementation of AI activities within the English department. Ms. Reed also shared that no single AI platform is being used, and students are informed of when and where AI cannot be used, so as not to minimize critical thinking skills.

Dr. Perey thanked Ms. Thompson and Mr. Rich for all the work they put into making the festival a success.

### 3.03 Student Services Division Report

Dr. Jacqie Allen, Associate Vice President for Student Services, provided a presentation to the Governing Board on the Student Services Division, and the Campus Safety and Title IX Reports; highlights include:

Highlights from Last Year

Student Success Initiatives:

- Expanded in-person counseling to twice weekly at Douglas and Sierra Vista campuses.
- The C.A.R.E.S. team supported students facing various barriers; most reports were related to mental health.
- Tutoring impact: 85% of students who used tutoring in the Fall persisted to Spring, which is higher than the overall persistence rate.
- Testing services now offer external certification exams, including those for real estate and emergency vehicle technician certifications.
- Accessibility enhancements included instructor microphones paired with Otter note-taking software and video remote interpreting (VRI) to address ASL interpreter shortages.
- Financial Aid Outreach
  - Conducted over 30 FAFSA completion events, 8 scholarship awareness sessions, and 13 classroom visits.
  - Increased collaboration with the recruitment team to expand outreach efforts.

Academic Advising

- Began assigning advisors by student program/major to improve program-specific guidance, process, and technology updates, ongoing.
- Career Services:
  - Hosted *Dress for Success Career Ready Fashion Show* to teach professional attire, interviewing, and resume tips while connecting students with local employers.
- Admissions & Records:
  - Same-day processing of admissions applications implemented.
  - Transcript evaluation time reduced from 8+ weeks to under 2 weeks.
  - The eTranscripts capability was added to streamline requests and free staff for other services.
- Student Recruitment:
  - Increased visibility in local high schools and the community; strengthened internal collaboration, including financial aid literacy events.
- Student Leadership & Activities:
  - Supported Student Government Association operations; launched new clubs and weekly campus events; promoted civic engagement through volunteer opportunities and charitable drives.
- Residence Life:
  - Bugen Hall opened with a new hall director, ensuring programming and support resources tailored to Sierra Vista campus residents.

Current Year Initiatives and Compliance Updates

- Operational Improvements
  - Focus on leveraging shared technology across departments to reduce duplication and improve student experience.
  - Increased collaboration with other divisions (Student Accounts, TRIO, Early College, Athletics) to ensure decisions support college-wide operations.
- Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP)



- Steering committee and subgroups are being formed to guide SEMP goals and initiatives.
  - Emphasis on data-driven decision-making through dashboards developed with Institutional Research to track persistence, retention, and completion.
- Student-Centered Practices
  - All initiatives prioritize student experience, ensuring services and resources are designed with student needs in mind.
- Annual Security & Fire Safety Report
  - Cochise College remains a safe environment; crime statistics show significant improvement, including liquor law violations reduced from 17 (2023) to 2 (2024).
  - Report complies with the Clery Act and includes security structure, emergency procedures, and prevention education (Title IX, drug/alcohol awareness).
- Title IX Compliance
  - The college reverted to 2020 regulations after the 2024 rules were vacated; operations remain unchanged.
  - The Title IX Coordinator continues to train investigators and advisors to ensure timely, fair, and compliant case resolution.

Questions/Comments:

Board members expressed their appreciation for Student Services' commitment to safety, compliance, and student-focused improvements, acknowledging efforts to enhance wellness, persistence, and access to resources. They also recognized significant progress in student engagement, operational efficiency, and community outreach.

#### **4. COMMENTS FROM GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr. Hudgins turned the time over to Governing Board members to provide comments/share information.

- Mr. DiPeso
  - Noted that he is pleased with the #1 AZ rating and #35 nationwide rating Cochise College received.
- Mr. Farr
  - Expressed his continued amazement with the hard work and student-focused educational opportunities the college offers.
- Mr. Hudgins
  - Stated that the ACCT Leadership trip reminds him of the wonderful things the college is doing.
- Mr. Leeder
  - The transformative power of the college is remarkable; everything the college staff does continues to be student-centric, future-oriented, and engaged with the community.
  - Thanks were given to the Foundation for hosting the social event and for the support they provide to the college.
  - Commended the aviation team for the Fly Cochise event.
  - ACCT – Workforce Pell is an excellent opportunity for the college and the community.

#### **5. EXECUTIVE SESSION – PULLED FROM THE AGENDA**

#### **ACTION**

5.01 Executive Session – Consultation for Legal Advice – **PULLED FROM THE AGENDA**

- 5.02 Potential Board Action Pending Legal Review of Contract for Service - **ITEM PULLED FROM THE AGENDA**

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Hudgins adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Crystal Wheeler, Executive Assistant, Office of the President

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Mr. David DiPeso, Secretary of the Governing Board