

**EAST CENTRAL COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Monday, August 25, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER: The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 5:36 p.m. by Board President Ann Hartley. Other Board members present at the meeting were Eric Park, Cookie Hays, Audrey Freitag, and J.T. Hardy. Also present were President of the College Jon Bauer; Administrators –Vice President of Academic Affairs Robyn Walter, Vice President of External Relations Joel Doepker, Vice President of Student Development Sarah Leassner, and Vice President of Finance & Administration; Faculty – Faculty Association President Tracy Mowery and ECC-NEA President Reg Brigham; Other Staff – Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Research Bethany Lohden, Classified Staff Association Vice President Cynthia Cubas, Professional Staff Association President Todd Tracy, Director of Rolla Christina Ayres, Human Resources Director Carrie Myers, Dean of Health Sciences Nancy Mitchell, Director of Information Technology Doug Houston, Communications & Marketing Director Gregg Jones, Enterprise System Associate Daniel Gruenenfelder, and Executive Assistant to the President Stacy Langan.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS: Vice President Joel Doepker recognized Chris Parker from the *Missourian*, Jim Shearer of *The Lawrence Group*, Ryan Wilson of *NAVIGTE Building Solutions*, Washington Practical School of Nursing Director Chris Redd, and community members Paul and Dean Grosse.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Each item on the consent agenda shall be deemed to have been duly approved with the same validity as if each action were separately moved, seconded, and adopted.

Motion: To **approve** the agenda for August 25, 2025, meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Motion by Eric Park; Seconded by J.T. Hardy; Carried with all present voting in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Board approved the minutes of the June 16, 2025, regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.

TREASURER’S REPORT AND FINANCIAL REPORT: Vice President Hoelzer reviewed the financial statements as of June 30, 2025. He noted that financial statements are preliminary. The Business Office is in the process of closing out the fiscal year 2025. Auditors are scheduled to be on campus in September to perform the annual audit.

Motion: To **approve** the treasurer’s report, the financial report, and the payment of bills subject to the annual audit.

Motion by Eric Park; Seconded by Cookie Hays; Carried with all present voting in favor.

BIDS: President Bauer noted that this equipment is a typical purchase for the IET program from a sole source provider, which was budgeted for.

Motion: To **approve** the purchase of a Universal Robot UR7e with accessories for the Industrial Engineering program from Advanced Technologies Consultant, a sole source provider, at a cost of \$42,544 to be funded 75% with Vocational Enhancement Grant funds and 25% with institutional funds.

Motion by Cookie Hays; Seconded by Eric Park; Carried with all present voting in favor.

Ryan Wilson with NAVIGATE Building Solutions noted that the Board previously approved the abatement and demolition of the Rolla building, and that work is now underway. This renovation involves 62,000 square feet of the 100,000-square-foot building. Three contractors submitted bids for this work, as outlined in the attached document. After reviewing the bids, all three contractors were interviewed, and their proposed durations, references, and past projects were taken into consideration. Based on this review and prior successful work with K&S, NAVIGATE recommends that the Board award the contract to K&S Associates, Inc. Additionally, a 10 percent contingency is recommended for the contract. Legal counsel has reviewed the bids. The project is supported with state and federal funds, with the largest portion being state money, along with a federal earmark and MoExcels funds. The total project budget is \$19.5 million. Any change order will return to the Board for approval, even if the amount does not otherwise require Board action.

Motion: To **award** the Rolla campus renovation construction contract to K&S Associates, Inc., of St. Louis, MO, at a cost of \$9,642,000.

Motion by J.T. Hardy; Seconded by Cookie Hays; Carried with all present voting in favor.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST & PERSONAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT POLICIES: President Bauer noted that there are no changes to the policies.

Motion: To **reaffirm** the Board Member Conflict of Interest Policy (BP1.10) and the Personal Financial Disclosure Statements Policy (BP1.9) as attached to the agenda to fulfill the requirements of the Missouri Ethics Commission.

Motion by J.T. Hardy; Seconded by Eric Park; Carried with all present voting in favor.

EMPLOYEE INSURANCE: President Bauer informed the Board that ECC has been with Anthem for several years. For the second consecutive year, there will be a 0 percent increase with no plan changes. A 5 percent increase had been included in the budget. Insurance is based on the calendar year.

Motion: To **approve** Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield to provide medical insurance benefits for employees in 2026 at a 0% rate increase with no plan changes.

Motion by J.T. Hardy; Seconded by Eric Park; Carried with all present voting in favor.

BOARD RESOLUTION: President Bauer noted that ECC continues to meet with the General Services Administration (GSA) to negotiate a lease for the tenants in the Rolla building at 1400 Independence Drive. One item on the GSA checklist is the Board's signing authority to negotiate the lease. Later this fall, the Board will approve the lease of college-owned space to GSA. The building in Rolla already housed government entities when ECC assumed ownership, and this lease represents an excellent source of revenue to cover direct expenses in the building. The structure of the agreement moving forward, including termination rights, will be negotiated to provide flexibility. ECC will also transition to a full-service lease, under which the college will be responsible for paying utilities.

Motion: To **approve** a resolution authorizing East Central College to negotiate a facilities lease with General Services Administration.

Motion by Cookie Hays; Seconded by J.T. Hardy; Carried with all present voting in favor.

WASHINGTON PRACTICAL SCHOOL OF NURSING: President Bauer reported that the School District of Washington (SDOW) is interested in transferring full sponsorship of the Washington School of Practical Nursing program to East Central College. SDOW presented the proposal to their board at its last meeting. For decades, SDOW has trained adult learners for the healthcare workforce, but this transition would allow SDOW to focus on its K–12 mission while enabling ECC to expand its role in adult education. A change in sponsorship would also ensure the program meets higher education requirements and provides stronger student support. ECC already operates an LPN program in Rolla, so accreditation and curriculum are in place, making the transition seamless. Facilities options include the potential lease of space at Four Rivers Career Center. Discussions with SDOW are ongoing, and both boards are expected to consider a transition proposal in October 2025. If approved, ECC would welcome students beginning in August 2026. The Washington Board is supportive, but no final decisions have been made at this time.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE: Bethany Lohden, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Research, provided a comprehensive overview of the Strategic Plan, highlighting its alignment with ECC’s mission, vision, and values that focus on five strategies: student-centered experience, strategic enrollment management, community vibrancy, operational innovation and effectiveness, and employee development and institutional culture. Implementation is tracked through regular reports, Cabinet reviews, and adjustments to objectives, ensuring the plan remains active, measurable, and responsive to the needs of students, employees, and the communities it serves.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION UPDATE: Vice President Robyn Walter noted that East Central College is preparing for its reaffirmation visit with the Higher Learning Commission, scheduled for 2027–2028. This visit is a critical step in maintaining accreditation and ensuring that we continue to meet the high standards required for academic quality, institutional integrity, and student success. The reaffirmation process is extensive and will require planning, documentation, and engagement across the college community. This presentation marks the beginning of our preparation and serves as a reminder of the importance of accreditation in supporting the mission and future of East Central College. HLC is one of 6 accrediting bodies in the country. Between now and the comprehensive visit, we will begin writing the self-study/assurance argument and conduct a mock site visit.

***PERSONNEL:** The Board **accepted** the retirement of Melissa Shall-Wilmore, Skill-Up Grant Project Coordinator, effective September 30, 2025. The Board **approved** the appointment of Joseph Lawton as the full-time Network and Systems Manager effective July 28, 2025, with an annual salary of \$79,138.34; Tim Willars as the full-time Accounting/Business instructor effective August 11, 2025, with an annual salary of \$64,525.34; and Anna Schowalter as the full-time Associate Director of Advising and Career Services effective August 8, 2025, with an annual salary of \$57,201.47. The Board also **approved** the addendum roster of adjunct faculty for the Fall 2025 semester as listed in the attached memorandum.

BOARD PRESIDENT’S REPORT: Board President Hartley expressed appreciation for the work involved with the strategic plan and HLC.

REPORTS:

- A. FACULTY ASSOCIATION REPORT:** Tracy Mowery, Faculty Association President, congratulated Dr. Coreen Derifield, Associate Professor of History, whose book, *We Were Still Ladies*, was recently published by the University of Iowa Press.
- B. ECC-NEA:** Dr. Reg Brigham, ECC-NEA President, mentioned that they will host a picnic for all faculty on Labor Day at Veteran's Memorial Park in Union.
- C. PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION REPORT:** Morgan Spangler Ballance received a grant to attend WolfCon 2025 in Kansas City, an international conference on innovative library resources. The ECC Library will host its annual Book Sale from September 8 to 11, with proceeds benefiting Friends of the Library programs. The AEL program served 446 students in FY25, including 92 English language learners, 71 CNA/CMT students, and 255 high school equivalency students, with 46 earning their credentials. ECC's AEL program is among the first in Missouri to be approved by DESE to offer a 20-hour substitute teacher and paraprofessional training course, expanding to Union and Rolla this fall. The Summer Learning Academy concluded with 89 classes and 1,446 seats filled, serving 684 children in Union and Rolla.
- D. CLASSIFIED STAFF ASSOCIATION REPORT:** Cynthia Cubas, CSA Vice President, reported that the recent Celebrate CSA luncheon was a success. Denim Days continue to benefit the CSA Scholarship. She also announced that CSA will now award two \$500 scholarships each year instead of one \$1,000 scholarship.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: President Bauer reported that current enrollment is up 4.1 percent in headcount. This figure will continue to fluctuate until the census date, particularly for dual credit students. Census data will be presented at the October meeting. He noted that East Central College will host the Rural Community College Alliance national conference on campus September 17–19, with approximately 150 attendees from rural and tribal colleges nationwide. Dr. Bauer serves on the RCCA Board, and the conference will focus on federal policy matters. The Thursday evening program will include an awards presentation and a social event featuring food and activities from across the county. The Fall semester is underway. The Foundation and Music Department, in conjunction with External Relations, hosted a Music Festival fundraiser with proceeds benefiting the All Within My Hands Foundation Metallica scholarship. The October Board meeting will be rescheduled to Monday, October 13.

Ryan Miller with Navigate presented the final update on the Respiratory Lab Renovations at East Central College, which are now complete. Navigate partnered with the College to manage the project, ensuring it was finished on time and aligned with program needs. The renovation provides updated facilities to support the Respiratory Care program, enhances instructional space, and accommodates long-term growth with labs in Union and Columbia, MO. The project was fully grant-funded and progressed at a remarkable speed, from program inception and accreditation through to construction. Central Methodist University, a strong community college partner, agreed to share costs at the Columbia site when unforeseen issues arose during construction.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To **adjourn** the August 25, 2025, regular meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:06 p.m.

Motion by J.T. Hardy; Seconded by Cookie Hays; Carried with all present voting in favor.