

Sisseton Wahpeton College  
Regular Meeting  
Classrooms 1 & 2  
Board of Trustees Minutes  
5/20/2025

Meeting called to order at 5:09 PM

Roll Call:

Big Coulee	Marijo Keeble	Present
Buffalo Lake	Heather Larsen	Present
Enemy Swim	Janell Williams	Present
Lake Traverse	Jessica Redthunder	Present
Long Hollow	Vincent Owen	Present
Old Agency	Rhonda Kampeska	Present
Heipa	Marie Renville	Present
Tribal Council Ex. Officio	Francis Crawford	Present
Student Council	Emily Johnson	Present

Others Present: President Dr. Erica C. Holmes, Vice President of Student and Academic Affairs Julie Buckman, Financial Aid Director Sylvan Flute, Vice President of Administrative Services Gretta Lavergne, Director of HR and ER Crystal Renville, Nursing Director Nola Ragan, Internal Auditor Lisa Jackson, Grant Writer LeeAnn Tallbear, Assistant Athletic Director D'Laino Paige, Registrar Selena Olvera, Tribal Elder Etta Jo Marks, Tribal Elder Bill LaRoque, Presbyterian Women's Conference Rep Junior Heminger, TZ Director of Dakota Studies Rachelle Crawford, SWC Recorder TJ Shellman.

-If you attended and your name is not documented, your name was not legible on the sign-in sheet.

Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

**Motion 1:**

Motion made by Lake Traverse to approve the agenda, second by Big Coulee, question by Old Agency. Long Hollow opposed because there is a closed session on the agenda to discuss personnel, and the Board should only be discussing personnel about the president. Motion voted passed.

**READING OF MISSION STATEMENT:**

Sisseton Wahpeton College provides extensive, relevant and varied educational programs and opportunities for the intellectual, cultural, and personal growth of all its community. The college

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values its role as an educational leader, embracing change and responding to the complex needs of those it serves.

## **CHAIRWOMAN WILLIAMS OPENED THE FLOOR FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.**

### **Junior Heminger**

- Junior mentioned that the Presbyterian Women's Conference will be visiting Lake Traverse.
- They also plan to visit SWC, tour the campus, and potentially speak with the 2 recipients of the scholarship that Presbyterian Women's Conference sponsors.
- The planned visit date is June 12, 2025.
- There are 50 women who have signed up to come and visit the college, they are from Minnesota and Wisconsin.

### **LeeAnn Tallbear**

- LeeAnn first states that she is here to speak as a tribal elder.
- LeeAnn provided the board with documents pertaining to the governance of the college affecting HLC accreditation. • She also mentioned how "we" should have control of "our" education and asks the board to make informed decisions.
- She also mentioned how there is "no way in hell" she will standby and watch the nursing program be shut down.
- Mentions how important healthcare is to have on Tribal Land.

### **Bill LaRoque**

- Bill mentioned his unwavering support for the college, regardless of the view's others have.
- He stated that his concern is that the college has the appropriate governance.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT**

- Chairwoman Williams had nothing to report.

### **PHI THETA KAPPA**

- The college now has a chapter of Phi Theta Kappa to recognize our students into The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.
- The requirements are that students have a 3.5 GPA.

### **COST OF ATTENDANCE**

- The Board was given cost of attendance for each year dating back to the 2021-2022 academic year.
- Sylvan Flute gave details of the spreadsheet and talked about changing costs.
- Sylvan Flute suggested maybe raising "miscellaneous" and "travel" expenses to adjust to budget cuts coming from the United States Presidential Office.

- Dr. Erica Holmes noted that tuition is the only expense that would have a direct impact on our students and that increasing all other expenses may help students to receive more from federal funding because all of the expenses make up the students' budget for aid.
- Dr. Holmes also mentions that proposed Pell Grant requirements have been changed from 24 credits each academic year to 30 credits each academic year for full time. This greatly impacts our students because only sixteen of our students currently take 30 credit hours.
- Dr. Holmes stated our advising philosophy needs to change to advise students to take 30 credits each academic year, if they are ready to sustain that academic load. Other factors are the students' readiness to take beyond 12 credit hours, their jobs, child care, and other personal factors.
- Dr. Holmes also suggests that the Board may wish to consider differential tuition, which is different tuition costs based on program.

## **REVIEW OF MISSION STATEMENT**

- The board was provided with a document showing feedback on the college's mission statement.
- This feedback was collected from all faculty & staff who were in attendance for the 2025 All-College Day.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEE 2025 RETREAT**

- The Board chose to finalize the dates of June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> for the SWC Annual Board Retreat.
- Location has been set to Mystic Lake Casino.
- A survey will be sent out to the Board to determine their final travel plans.

## **HLC SPECIAL MEETING**

- An HLC Special Meeting will be held 5/21/25 in the SWC Conference room to discuss HLC matters pertaining to the college.
- SWC's assigned HLC Liaison, Jamie Stanesta will be in attendance via zoom.

## **CONSENT AGENDA:**

### **College Reports:**

### **STUDENT SENATE**

- Student Senate President and Vice President, Emily Johnson and Brennan Robertson, voiced their concerns of issues they endured when planning their "Wacipi" with TZ Dakota Studies Director Rachelle Crawford.
- They mentioned how they received no guidance from Samantha Crandall who was assigned to guide student senate through these processes.
- They mentioned how they were sent to many different offices.
- They mentioned turning in a W-9 form that was misplaced and led to their host drum from the Wacipi not being paid on time.

- They mentioned that two staff members told them a day before that it would be better if they cancelled their Wacipi.
- They mentioned how they were under the assumption that there was \$10,000 in their account but the day before they were told there is only \$3,000 in their account.
- They reported being told their account is overdrawn.
- They mentioned how throughout these issues Dr. Holmes moved funds over to ensure that they don't have to cancel their Wacipi.
- Rachelle Crawford mentioned how their host drum hadn't received payment yet.
- Rachelle also mentioned a meeting with the president resulting in every person being paid with the only exception being the host drum.
- Dr. Holmes mentioned that she had no prior knowledge of the host drum not being paid and said that the host drum would be paid in the morning. Dr. Holmes mentioned that Rachelle Crawford received all monies to pay the groups, and she was not aware that the host drum's payment was not made by Rachelle Crawford.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- Dr. Erica Holmes congratulates all graduates from the 2025 class.
- There was a College & Career Fair day held in the SWC Auditorium. It was successful and there are requests to do this again.
- There was a 2025 SWC All-College Day Feedback.
- The 2025 Graduation was held in the SWC Auditorium.
- Faculty and Staff of the year awards were presented at graduation: Faculty of the Year- Kelsey Stadtler, Administrator of the Year: Dr. Erica Holmes, Staff of the Year: Tia Topoluck, Kendall Miller, and Robbie Keoke, Unsung Hero: Tia Topoluck, and Mustang Spirit: Phillip Jackson.

The remainder of the consent agenda is located in the Board Book. Dr. Holmes asked if there are any questions regarding the other reports and there were none.

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

### **Motion 2:**

#### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

Motion made by Big Coulee to approve the consent agenda, second by Old Agency, question by Lake Traverse. Motion voted passed. 7/0 **Motion 3:**

#### **Approve Minutes: May 12, 2025**

Motion made by Old Agency to approve May 12, 2025, board minutes with revisions, second by Long Hollow, question by Buffalo Lake. Motion voted passed. 7/0 **Motion 4:**

#### **Approve Minutes: April 15, 2025**

Motion made by Lake Travers to approve April 15, 2025, minutes, second by Heipa, question by Big Coulee. Motion voted passed. 6/1 Long Hollow opposed.

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## **DISTRICT CONCERNS:**

Big Coulee District:

→ None

Buffalo Lake District:

→ None

Enemy Swim District:

→ None

Heipa District:

→ At district meeting held on April 27<sup>th</sup> there was a motion made for the immediate removal of the SWC President, 39 members voted. Trustee Renville says “her district member” who works here was removed as retaliation. She questions Dr. Erica Holmes as to who gave her their meeting minutes. Dr. Holmes responds “if you have a performance issue with her it should be addressed in closed session”. Trustee Renville points her finger at Dr. Holmes and demands Dr. Holmes to respond. Dr. Holmes replies with the same statement as before. Trustee Renville went forward with a motion to terminate the President as she was directed to do so by her district member (who is also her son).

## **Motion 5:**

### **Motion to terminate SWC President**

Motion made by Heipa to terminate the SWC President, second by Long Hollow, Question by Heipa. 2 in favor, 4 opposed. Motion not passed.

Lake Traverse District:

→ Trustee Redthunder stated her district was to look into the hiring processes at SWC and went forward with a motion.

## **Motion 6:**

### **Motion to investigate hiring practices at SWC**

Motion made by Lake Traverse to investigate the hiring practices at SWC, second by Heipa, question by Long Hollow. 3 in favor. 3 not voting.

Long Hollow District:

→ Long Hollow requests to see the President of SWC’s original contract. Long Hollow went forward with 4 motions that he was directed to give by his district.

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**Motion 7:**

Motion to leave all personnel policies as is until further notice

Motion made by Long Hollow to leave all personnel policies as is until further notice, second by Heipa, no question. 2 in favor. 4 opposed. Motion not passed.

**Motion 8:**

Motion to freeze all travel for training or retreats until further notice

Motion made by Long Hollow to freeze all travel for training or retreats until further notice, no second. Chairwoman Williams stated that the Board must receive training and travel is an operational. Motion died.

**Motion 9:**

Motion to not shelve any current programs

Motion made by Long Hollow to not shelve any current programs, no second. Motion died.

**Motion 10:**

Motion to not renew SWC President's Contract

Motion made by Long Hollow to not renew SWC President's contract, second by Heipa, no question. 2 in favor. 3 opposed. 1 not voting. Motion not passed.

Old Agency District:

→ None

**Motion 11:**

Motion to go into closed session

Motion made by Old Agency to go into closed session, second by Big Coulee, question by Enemy Swim. Motion voted passed. 7/0

Trustee Vince Owen, Long Hollow and Trustee Marie Renville, Heipa District left the meeting and were not present in the closed session.

**Closed Session: 7:42 PM**

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

TERRELL J. SHELLMAN