

Sisseton Wahpeton College
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
7/21/2026 - 5:00 PM (4:30 PM meal)

Roll Call:

Big Coulee	Mary Jo Keeble	Present
Buffalo Lake	Heather Larsen	Present
Enemy Swim	Janell Williams	Present
Lake Traverse	Jessica Redthunder	Zoom
Long Hollow	Fran Quinn	Present
Old Agency	Travis Renville	Zoom
Heipa	Marie Renville	Present
Tribal Council Ex. Officio	Francis Crawford	Absent

Others Present: Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman (Zoom), Vice President of Academic Services Gretta Lavergne, Extension Director Erica Fisher, Dean of Business Dr. Samuel Bonsu, Dean of Education Kelsey Stadtler, Dean of CTE Josh Flute, Dean of Indigenous Health Heather Flute, HR Director Crystal Renville, Nursing Director Melissa Marx, SPO Lisa Jackson, Facilities Director David Redthunder, Athletics Director Devero Yellow Earring, Record's Specialist Samantha Crandall, Student's Success Navigator LaJune Morgan, William Laroque, Etta Jo Marks, Vine Marks Sr., SWC Recorder Kenyon Budack Jr.

-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 5:08 PM. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

Public Comments

William Laroque asked for an update on the presidential search. Chairwoman Williams reported that the application process was nearing completion, background checks had been completed, and interviews would be scheduled. Mr. Laroque also asked about the forensic audit, and Chairwoman Williams stated that the Board would provide an update once additional information was received.

Mr. Laroque raised concerns regarding the previous discussion about horses on campus and suggested the College consider a policy regarding farm animals being kept on College property. He also discussed possible federal changes involving Pell Grants and encouraged the College to stay informed about how these changes could affect students. Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman stated she would meet with her team to look further into the issue.

Discussion Items

Board of Trustees Approved on August 18, 2026 Regular Meeting: Motion #10

DLI Contract

The Board reviewed an amendment to the DLI contract that extended the agreement through August 2. Trustee Quinn asked whether the College attorney had reviewed the amendment. Interim President Dr. Buckman stated that the attorney reviewed the original agreement but had not reviewed the amended date.

The Board also discussed liability and insurance requirements. Recorder Kenyon Budack Jr. explained that DLI would sign the liability waiver and assume liability for the event. Trustee Quinn asked whether DLI carried insurance, but this could not be confirmed during the meeting. Trustee Larsen also noted that DLI had signed the original agreement, but the amended agreement had not yet been signed.

Dakota Magic Casino Graduation Contract

The Board reviewed the Dakota Magic Casino contract for the Spring 2027 graduation scheduled for May 15, 2027. The contract was presented for discussion and did not require Board action at this time. There was also brief discussion regarding food for graduation, with administration planning cake at graduation and a separate celebration for graduates the week before.

Policies

Policy 400-22 – Internships

Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman presented a new internship policy covering student eligibility, academic standing, supervision, internship hours, journals, evaluations, and other requirements.

Trustee Larsen expressed concern about making the policy too specific because internship needs can be different depending on the academic program. She noted that many SWC students work, have families, transportation issues, and other responsibilities that could make completing an internship near graduation difficult. She recommended giving students more flexibility in when internships can be completed.

Dean of CTE Josh Flute discussed allowing different types of internships, externships, and work experiences depending on the program. The Board agreed that the policy should provide guidance while still allowing individual programs flexibility. Chairwoman Williams recommended that the policy be sent back for additional internal review before returning to the Board.

Policy 400-23 – Student Organizations and Clubs

Interim President Dr. Buckman presented a proposed policy for student organizations and clubs. The policy covered student eligibility, GPA requirements, club officers, fundraising, charters, student conduct, and up to \$500 in startup funding.

Trustee Larsen questioned whether the proposed 2.0 GPA requirement was high enough and suggested comparing it with requirements used for AIHEC participation. She also recommended that the student code of conduct better reflect SWC's Dakota values. Additional questions were

raised about club advisors, elections, bylaws, startup funding, and who students should contact when they want to create a club.

The Board agreed that the policy needed additional clarification and internal review. Both Policy 400-22 and Policy 400-23 were tabled and will be brought back at a later date.

Consent Agenda

President's Report / VPASA

Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman provided updates on recruitment, staffing, academic programs, grants, and HLC accreditation preparation. SWC received approximately \$250,000 in USDA funding that was being used for flooring, equipment, furniture, testing-room chairs, scanners, and other College improvements.

The College continues using SmartEvals and preparing documentation for HLC. The Sensemaking Grant will also support a permanent part-time tutor and additional tutoring services. Several positions were filled, including a paralegal instructor, nursing instructor, culinary instructor, and Dakota Studies Office Manager.

Trustee Larsen asked about the new Legal Studies/Paralegal program after receiving questions from her district. Interim President Dr. Buckman explained that it is an associate degree program intended to prepare students for legal advocacy and work in attorney offices. Additional clarification was requested regarding what graduates may be able to do within Tribal Court.

VPAS Report

Business Office and Grants

Vice President of Administrative Services Gretta Lavergne reported that the Business Office continues working on accounts receivable, payroll, ACH transactions, journal entries, grant closeouts, financial forms, and corrections within Jenzabar. USDA grant years 28, 29, and 30 were being closed out, and the College was beginning work under its new USDA grant.

The College also received approximately \$147,000 in BIE renovation funding. Administration identified areas that could potentially be renovated to provide additional faculty office space. USDA funding was also used to purchase new tables and chairs for the café, and staff are working toward providing healthier food options.

Trustee Quinn asked what funding source was being used for food provided to students in the dorms. VPAS Lavergne stated that unrestricted funds were being used. Trustee Quinn expressed concern that the café could continue showing a financial loss if food being sent to the dorms was not properly recorded as an expense. VPAS Lavergne stated that the expenses would be journaled, so the costs were properly reflected.

IT, Bookstore and Athletics

VPAS Lavergne reported that the College experienced a disruption with its phone system that required software and hardware upgrades. Chairwoman Williams asked whether the College was

charged for the work. VPAS Lavergne stated that she had not yet seen a bill and would follow up.

The bookstore is preparing textbooks for the fall semester and looking at ways to offer more SWC merchandise online. Staff are also reviewing whether the current C-Point system should be upgraded or replaced with a system that works better with Jenzabar.

The Athletic Department continues working on recruitment, student records, statistics, and student success. Recruitment efforts included travel to Arizona and Rapid City to identify potential student-athletes.

Financial Statements

Trustee Quinn had several questions regarding the financial statements and changes from previous reports. She questioned an approximately \$2 million change from the prior financial report. VPAS Lavergne explained that several grants and revenue sources had not previously been entered into Jenzabar and that corrections were being made for USDA, NACTEP, Pell, FSEOG, and other funding.

Trustee Quinn also questioned why other revenue had decreased to approximately \$198,000 and why some year-to-date expenses had decreased from previous reports. VPAS Lavergne explained that Jessica West and College staff were continuing to enter and correct information that had not previously been properly recorded. Some bank and credit card information also remained to be entered before the financial statements would provide a more complete picture.

Trustee Quinn questioned approximately \$142,000 listed under honorariums and asked about insurance and professional fees that did not appear to be changing as expected. VPAS Lavergne explained that some expenses had historically been placed in incorrect categories and would need to be renamed or reclassified. Some professional expenses were also being moved to the grants where they belonged.

Trustee Quinn continued asking questions regarding the College's net position, inventory, SBITAs, depreciation, amortization, and subsidiary ledgers. VPAS Lavergne explained that assets and inventory had not been fully entered into Jenzabar and staff were working to build those areas into the system. The College is also considering an inventory system that would allow College property to be tagged and scanned.

Trustee Quinn noted that the Board had requested subsidiary ledgers several months earlier and had still not received them. VPAS Lavergne stated that she would provide the requested subsidiary ledgers at the next Board meeting.

Budgets and Financial Reporting

Chairwoman Williams asked whether the College budgets were ready for Board review. VPAS Lavergne stated that she was still meeting with department managers and developing individual department budgets that would include salaries, revenues, and expenses.

Chairwoman Williams reminded administration that the Board had approved the current budget for only 30 days and requested that complete budget information be available for the upcoming Board retreat.

The Board continued discussing the need for more complete financial information, including department-level budgets and reports that allow Trustees to better understand where revenues are coming from and where College funds are being spent.

Audits

Chairwoman Williams asked for an update on the College's audits and expressed concern that the Board had not received completed audits or enough information regarding their status. She noted that the Board had previously requested audit reports and referenced the earlier Eide Bailly audit.

Trustee Larsen asked whether an audit had been completed since VPAS Lavergne began working at the College. VPAS Lavergne stated that she continued communicating with the auditors and apologized that the requested information had not been provided to the Board. She stated that she would gather and provide the requested audit information.

Cell Phone Reimbursements

Trustee Larsen questioned the College's cell phone reimbursements for approximately ten employees. VPAS Lavergne explained that department heads and certain supervisors receive \$120 per quarter.

Trustee Larsen questioned whether some of those costs could be charged to grants instead of unrestricted funds. She expressed concern about continuing expenses that may not be necessary while the College is working through financial difficulties and encouraged administration to review areas where costs could be reduced.

HLC, Strategic Planning and Board Retreat

Trustee Larsen asked about HLC accreditation preparation and who would participate in the upcoming Board retreat. Interim President Dr. Buckman reported that approximately ten HLC committees are working on the accreditation criteria. The committees currently meet every other month and are expected to begin meeting monthly as the accreditation visit gets closer.

Trustee Larsen requested regular HLC updates for the Board and also asked about the Student Handbook, College catalog, strategic plan, recruitment plan, retention plan, and community assessments. She encouraged administration to involve more employees in reviewing these documents instead of relying on only a few individuals.

Chairwoman Williams requested additional financial information regarding BIA funding that passes through the Tribe, including what funds were used while the College waited for the BIA money and when the College last requested those funds. She also requested quarterly financial information for the BIA funding.

The Board identified financial reports, assessments, strategic planning, HLC preparation, audits, and other supporting documentation as important items to address during the Board retreat.

Board of Trustees Approved on August 18, 2026 Regular Meeting: Motion #10

Dacotah Bank and Federal Credit Union Accounts

The Board discussed two College accounts at Dacotah Bank and another account at the Sisseton Wahpeton Federal Credit Union. VPAS Lavergne reported that one Dacotah Bank account had approximately \$47,000 and was connected to C-Point transactions. She estimated that approximately \$80,000 was held at the Federal Credit Union but was unsure of the account's original purpose.

Trustee Larsen questioned whether inactive accounts should remain open and suggested moving funds to the College's current bank if the accounts were no longer necessary. Trustee Quinn specifically asked whether the College had obtained the bank statements for these accounts. VPAS Lavergne stated that the statements had been received but had not yet been fully reviewed and agreed to provide them for the Board retreat.

The Board also discussed outdated signature authority on the accounts. Trustee Travis Renville explained that Board action would likely be required to remove old signers, add new signers, or close the accounts. The Board then approved motions removing former authorized signers and adding Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman and Chairwoman Janell Williams as authorized signers.

District Concerns

Big Coulee: Trustee Keeble reported that no district meeting was held.

Buffalo Lake: Trustee Larsen stated that her district's concern had already been addressed earlier in the meeting.

Lake Traverse: No district meeting was held.

Heipa: Trustee Marie Renville was unable to attend the district meeting but had asked whether there were any concerns to bring forward and received none.

Long Hollow: Trustee Quinn asked who had access to Interim President Dr. Buckman's signature stamp. Recorder Kenyon Budack Jr. stated that only he and the Interim President had access to his knowledge.

Trustee Quinn then reported that her district had discussed concerns regarding the Interim President and had directed her to bring forward a motion for termination. Trustee Quinn explained that the concerns included a lack of follow-through on items previously requested by the Board, delays in receiving reports and other requested documentation, and continued concerns regarding financial information being provided to the Board. She expressed concern that several items had been requested more than once without the Board receiving the information or seeing the issues fully addressed.

Trustee Quinn stated that she was bringing the matter forward on behalf of her district and made a motion to terminate Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman. No trustee seconded the motion. Therefore, the motion died for lack of a second and no further action was taken on the motion. See Motion #9 below.

Action Items:

Motion #1: To approve the July 21, 2026, Agenda. By Trustee Quinn, Second by Trustee Marie Renville, Question by Trustee Larsen. **MVP 5/0/0. Motion Passed.**

Motion #2: To approve the Consent Agenda. By Trustee Larsen, Second by Trustee Marie Renville, Question by Trustee Keeble. **MVP 4/0/1. Motion Passed.**

Motion #3: To remove the signature authority of Dr. Randy Smith, Jeanette Gravdahl, and Rhonda LaBatte from the Dacotah Bank Signature Card. By Trustee Quinn, Second by Trustee Larsen, Question by Trustee Marie Renville. **MVP 4/0/1. Motion Passed.**

Motion #4: To add Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman and Chairwoman Janell Williams as signature authority for Dacotah Bank. By Trustee Larsen, Second by Trustee Marie Renville, Question by Trustee Redthunder. **MVP 5/0/1. Motion Passed.**

Motion #5: To remove Dr. Erica Holmes as signature authority from the Sisseton Wahpeton Federal Credit Union. By Trustee Quinn, Second by Trustee Redthunder, Question by Trustee Marie Renville. **MVP 5/0/1. Motion Passed.**

Motion #6: To add Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman and Chairwoman Janell Williams as signature authority for the Sisseton Wahpeton Federal Credit Union. By Trustee Larsen, Second by Trustee Redthunder, Question by Trustee Marie Renville. **MVP 5/0/1. Motion Passed.**

Motion #7: To approve the Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes from June 23, 2026. By Trustee Quinn, Second by Trustee Marie Renville, Question by Trustee Larsen. **MVP 5/0/1. Motion Passed.**

Motion #8: To approve the Special Meeting Minutes from June 29, 2026. By Trustee Quinn, Second by Trustee Marie Renville, Question by Trustee Larsen. **MVP 5/0/1. Motion Passed.**

Motion #9: To terminate Interim President Dr. Julie Buckman. By Trustee Quinn. **Motion died for lack of a second.**

Motion #10: To go into Closed Executive Session. By Trustee Marie Renville, Second by Trustee Keeble, Question by Trustee Quinn. **MVP 5/0/1. Motion Passed.**

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

SWC Recorder *Kenyon Budack Jr.*