MEETING MINUTES
Arizona Western College
District Governing Board Meeting
Regular Meeting 11:00 a.m.
Parker Campus
September 14, 2026

Board Members Present: Board Secretary Olivia Zepeda, Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, and Brad Sale
Board Member present by phone, Zoom: Board Chair Dennis Booth
Board Member Absent: N/A

Others Present within Meeting room: (20)

Dr. Reetika Dhawan, President
Bryan Doak, EVP of Learning and Student Services
Katheline Ocampo, Vice President and CHRO
Scott Estes, Chief Information Officer
Dr. Shadi Kilani, EVP of Entrepreneurial College
Lorraine Stofft, Vice President of Advancement and Executive Director of AWC Foundation
Wendy Wrenn, Director of Financial Services and Controller
Cinthia Reyes, Executive Director and Dean of CTE and Nursing
Mandy Heil, Dean of Marketing and Communications
Betty Lopez, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research
Jennifer Freedman, Executive Assistant
Johanna Megui, Office Coordinator
Dr. Michelle Sims, Professor of Economics
Susanna Zambrano, Dean of Regional Centers and Adult Education
Yaneli Pasillas-Miller, Director of Outreach and Special Programs
David Kern, Professor of English, La Paz County
Adam Freedman, Exec Director of Integrated Public Safety Education
Randy Hartless, Associate Dean of La Paz County Services
Khyati Arora, AWC Student
Diza Bajaj, AWC Student

Community Members Present in Room: **(3)** D. Bajaj, family of AWC student; Miguel Alvarez, La Paz County Sheriff’s Office; Aubrey Cox, La Paz Regional Hospital

Board member Ms. Maria Chavoya announced that Chair Booth will be joining remotely and he has designated Ms. Olivia Zepeda to serve as Chair Pro Tem for today’s meeting, presiding over the conduct of the meeting. Chair Booth will continue to participate and vote on all matters, assuming no connectivity issues arise. There were no objections to moving forward.

Motion to designate Olivia Zepeda as Chair Pro Tem for the September 14th meeting, presented for approval.
Motion by Maria Chavoya, seconded by Dr. Kenneth MacFarland
Final Resolution: Motion Carries.
All Board members present voted "aye." No roll call vote was taken.

Call to Order: Board Secretary and Chair Pro Tem Olivia Zepeda called the Regular Meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda for the September 14, 2026 meeting presented for approval.
Motion by Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, seconded by Maria Chavoya
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Dennis Booth, Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, Brad Sale, and Olivia Zepeda
Nay: None
Abstain: None

Approval of Minutes: The Meeting Minutes for August 24, 2026 Regular Meeting, presented for approval.
Motion by Maria Chavoya, seconded by Brad Sale
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Dennis Booth, Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, Brad Sale, and Olivia Zepeda
Nay: None
Abstain: None

Call to the Audience:
N/A

College Reports

LEAD Student Club: Khyati Arora, LEAD President, introduced the club's officers and provided an overview of the organization's mission to listen, empower, advocate, and develop student leaders. She shared that the club seeks to connect students across campuses through engagement opportunities, foster a sense of belonging, and ensure students feel heard and valued. The organization actively gathers student feedback to help shape events, initiatives, and services that meet student needs.

Ms. Arora presented photos highlighting club activities and member involvement and reviewed the club's goals, which include holding monthly meetings, supporting professional growth, expanding fundraising efforts, and developing student leadership skills.

During the discussion, Board Member Dr. MacFarland thanked the club for its efforts to include students from Quartzsite and Salome and other communities throughout the district.

Faculty Senate Association: Dr. Michelle Sims, Faculty Senate Representative to the District Governing Board, provided an update on Faculty Senate activities. She shared a presentation highlighting faculty accomplishments across the College, including professional achievements, community engagement, volunteer service, student training opportunities, educational milestones, and participation in upcoming events. Dr. Sims noted that these contributions reflect the ongoing commitment of faculty to student success, professional excellence, and service throughout the College district.

Dr. Sims also reminded attendees that the Faculty Senate's monthly meeting would be held later that day at 3:15 p.m.

Action Items

Action Item #1 – Consideration to Accept Candidates for Exempt Positions, presented by Katheline Ocampo
Motion by Maria Chavoya, seconded by Dr. Kenneth MacFarland
Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Dennis Booth, Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, Brad Sale, and Olivia Zepeda
Nay: None
Abstain: None
The **Board Approved** the Action Item as Presented.

Summary –
- Julie Sackfiel, Accounts Receivable Manager
- Shanen Aranmor, Professor of Welding (1-semester temporary appointment)

Action Item #2 – Consideration to Reaffirm the Education Foundation Board Representative for Arizona Western College, presented by Wendy Wrenn
Motion by Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, seconded by Maria Chavoya
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Dennis Booth, Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, Brad Sale, and Olivia Zepeda
Nay: None
Abstain: None

The **Board Approved** the Action Item as Presented.

Summary –
Mandy Heil will continue to serve as the Education Foundation Board Representative for Arizona Western College for the term of one year.

Action Item #3 – Consideration to Renew the Education Partnership Agreement with Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), presented by Wendy Wrenn
Motion by Brad Sale, seconded by Dr. Kenneth MacFarland
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Dennis Booth, Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, Brad Sale, and Olivia Zepeda
Nay: None
Abstain: None

The **Board Approved** the Action Item as Presented.

Summary -
The U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is seeking renewal of the five (5) year Education Partnership Agreement to develop and enhance STEM curriculum, involve faculty with test and evaluation (T&E) projects, student tours, and information sessions. This Agreement aims to partner with YPG to provide students with exclusive access to defense-grade technology, real-world engineering exposure, and direct pathways into local STEM careers.

Action Item #4 – Consideration to Approve Voucher (August 2026), presented by Wendy Wrenn
Motion by Maria Chavoya seconded by Dr. Kenneth MacFarland
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Dennis Booth, Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, Brad Sale, and Olivia Zepeda
Nay: None
Abstain: None

The **Board Approved** the Action Item as Presented.

Summary –
Executive Summary
The District's financial position remains exceptionally strong, with operating and investment cash balances totaling $53.9 million as of August 31, 2026, compared to $53.0 million at the same time last year. Fiscal performance continues to show positive momentum, with revenues increasing 20.1% over the prior year, while expenditures decreased 5%. Enrollment trends are also encouraging, with continued growth in early college credit hours, dual enrollment credit hours, and total credit hours. Together, these factors demonstrate the District's continued commitment to sound fiscal stewardship and provide a strong foundation for future growth, student success, and continued service to the community.

Fiscal Overview

Metrics	2026-2027	2025-2026	% Change
Actual Revenues	$12,824,821	$10,680,395	+20.1 %
Actual Expenditures	$11,106,985	$11,686,135	- 5.0 %
Operating Cash Balance	$11,857,162	$12,665,180	-6.4 %

Enrollment Trends

Enrollment Type	2026-2027	2025-2026	% Change
Total Credit Hours	91,266	82,491	+10.6%
Early College Credit Hours	17,649	12,976	+ 36 %
Dual Enrollment Credit Hours	8,017	6,065	+32.2%

Closing Statement
The District continues to maintain a strong and stable financial position through disciplined fiscal oversight, strategic resource allocation, and a continued commitment to student achievement. Investments in campus infrastructure, technology, and student services enhance the District's ability to meet both current and future needs. Continued investment in enrollment initiatives, including dual enrollment opportunities, along with careful financial planning and responsible stewardship of resources, will position the District for long-term financial sustainability and continued success in serving students and the community.

Board member question regarding comparison between the actuals across the two years. Wendy Wrenn explained that the comparison is July-August from last year and this year.

Information Item #1– Informational Review – Purchases over $50,000– Presented by Czarina Gallegos
Summary –
Since the Purchasing threshold increased from $50,000 to $250,000 per Procedure 337.1, the College presents purchases over $50,000 to the next District Governing Board meeting for information.

Department	Vendor	Cost	Fund Source
ITSS	Dell Marketing LP	94,638	Unexpended
Facilities	The Hiller Companies	71,146	General
Learning Services	ESI	101,731	General
Facilities	Sunland Asphalt & Construction	186,405	Unexpended
Facilities	Iris Group Holdings LLC	52,277	General
ITSS	TouchNet	75,000	General

Wendy Wrenn explained the individual expenses briefly. There was no questions or discussion.

<u>President's Reports</u>
<u>Spotlight on La Paz County Services</u>, presented by Randy Hartless, Associate Dean of La Paz County Services.

Randy Hartless provided an update on activities and program growth in Parker and Quartzsite. Highlights included student engagement initiatives, the awarding of more than 40 degrees and certificates in Spring, the expansion of CDL training with an additional truck coming to La Paz County, and new course offerings in Quartzsite, including Artificial Intelligence and piano.

Mr. Hartless also shared updates on workforce and community partnerships, including collaboration with La Paz Economic Development, plans to expand programming in career and technical education fields including welding, the return of the Fire Academy, and exploration of an RV repair enrichment course. He noted that a legal aid kiosk will soon open in Quartzsite to assist community members with accessing court documents online.

Additional updates included a growing partnership with Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) and La Paz County to provide detention officer training locally, as well as significant growth in Adult Education enrollment. Mr. Hartless expressed enthusiasm about having a fully staffed team in place for the first time in several years.

Board members commended Mr. Hartless and his team for their work, noting the community's excitement about the growth and expanded opportunities being provided throughout the region.

Randy Hartless presented the Student of the Month Award to Diza Bajaj, recognizing her exceptional academic achievement and leadership. Currently a high school freshman, Diza has been taking college courses since seventh grade. Mr. Hartless shared remarks from Professor David Kern's nomination, which highlighted Diza's passion for learning, positive engagement with peers, and commitment to academic excellence. Diza thanked AWC faculty, staff, and her family for their support.

<u>Institutional Data and Strategic Content Update</u>, presented by Lorraine Stofft
Lorraine Stofft, Vice President of Advancement and Executive Director of AWC Foundation, introduced her two teams to provide updates: Betty Lopez, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research and Mandy Heil, Dean of Marketing and Communications.

Betty Lopez presented the college's enrollment and performance data for the 2025-26 academic year. The college achieved one of its highest enrollment years on record, with a total of 14,535 students, representing a 7% increase from the prior year and a 25% increase over the last ten years. Early college enrollment reached 4,358 students, up 11% from the prior year and 443% over the last ten years. Academic dual credit continues to be a significant component of the college's growth strategy.

In terms of student academic success, the college achieved an 84% success rate, up 2 percentage points from the prior year. The college awarded 2,053 graduates and 3,449 total credentials, including degrees and certificates, marking the highest numbers on record. Ms. Lopez reported that the 10-Year Performance Indicators report will be available this week on the college website, and the more detailed 2025-26 fact book, which includes breakdowns by location, modality, and student demographics, will be posted later this month.

Additionally, the college is launching a new data visualization project featuring interactive dashboards that will replace standard reports and allow users to filter and explore data by different student groups and locations. This project, which utilizes a new "report architects" tool connected to the student information system, has a priority launch date of October 1 and involves cross-departmental collaboration across finance, human resources, financial aid, and student services.

Mandy Heil presented the college's social media performance and strategy for the 2025-26 academic year. The college achieved exceptional reach across its primary platforms—Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn—with over 7 million total views, more than 120,000 likes, comments, shares and quotes, and 1,539 posts and stories throughout the year. Year-over-year growth was significant, with Instagram views and reach each increasing 54% and interactions increasing 33% from 2024-25 to 2025-26, while Facebook reach nearly tripled with a 194% increase.

The college's social media strategy focuses on meeting prospective students where they are and maintaining top-of-mind awareness through strategic content. Content about enrollment deadlines, tuition payments, and seat availability emerged as the single best-performing content across all platforms throughout the year. The college tracked nearly 29,000 visits to the AWC website that came directly from social media, with Facebook accounting for over 17,000 visits and Instagram for 10,647 visits. The marketing team positions faculty as subject matter experts rather than promoting programs directly, with successful examples including faculty discussing topics relevant to current events and student interests. Ms. Heil emphasized that all content is developed with intentional strategy, noting that even entertainment-focused posts serve a purpose in lifting visibility of important institutional messages through the social media algorithm. The college continuously monitors analytics and adjusts its strategy based on data-driven insights, recognizing that social media strategy is a living approach that must adapt to platform changes and audience preferences.

Board Member Dr. MacFarland inquired about the reported decline in dual enrollment. EVP Bryan Doak explained that enrollment figures are still being finalized and that a clearer picture will be available at the end of the academic year. He noted that approximately 400 students have transitioned from dual enrollment to concurrent enrollment as part of the College's effort to move students to AWC campuses and courses taught by AWC faculty. Mr. Doak also shared that high school enrollments have declined overall and emphasized the distinction between enrollment counts and the number of individual students served. Additionally, he noted that state funding had covered enrollment costs for many students during the previous year, but that funding is no longer available.

Closing Items:
Good of the Order by Dr. Reetika Dhawan
Dr. Dhawan expressed appreciation to Randy Hartless, Yaneli Pasillas-Miller, and the La Paz County team for their hospitality and for hosting the day's events. She commended the strong momentum, positive energy, and growth occurring throughout the region and thanked community members for their continued support and engagement.

Dr. Dhawan also recognized the efforts of faculty and staff who have contributed to program expansion and student success, including work related to Adult Education under Susanna Zambrano's leadership, the Parker Welding Lab, dual credit programming, and other strategic initiatives. She highlighted ongoing exploration of future cosmetology offerings in La Paz and concluded by thanking faculty and staff across the district for their dedication and service to students and communities.

Next Meeting: The next meeting scheduled will be Thursday, October 15, 2026 at 2:00pm including a Regular Meeting in-person at the Yuma Campus.

Adjournment:
Motion to adjourn by Maria Chavoya, seconded by Brad Sale
Final Resolution: Motion Carries
Yea: Dennis Booth, Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, Brad Sale, and Olivia Zepeda
Nay: None
Abstain: None

The Board **Approved** the next meeting date and final matters of the meeting.
The meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Freedman
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Executive Assistant to the President