EETING MINUTES
Arizona Western College
District Governing Board Meeting
Work Session with Regular Meeting 12:00 p.m.
Quartzsite Learning Center
November 16, 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: NA

Others Present within Meeting room: (23)
Dr. Reetika Dhawan, President
Dr. Shadi Kilani, EVP of Entrepreneurial College
Katheline Ocampo, Vice President and CHRO
Scott Estes, Chief Information Officer
Lorraine Stofft, Vice President of Advancement and Executive Director of AWC Foundation
Czarina Gallegos, Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services
Renee Macaluso, Dean of Mathematics, Science, and Engineering
Susanna Zambrano, Dean of Regional Centers and Adult Education
Stuart Gibson, Dean of Business, Education, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Ken Grant, Associate Dean of Allied Health
Mark Sims, Dean of Workforce and Public Safety
Yaneli Pasillas-Miller, Director of Outreach and Special Programs
Elaine Groggett, Exec Director of Centralized Scheduling, Assessment, Curriculum and Spec Projects
Randy Hartless, Associate Dean of La Paz County Services
Jennifer Freedman, Executive Assistant
Johanna Megui, Office Coordinator
Victor Mata, Technology Coordinator
Tyler Vodehnal, Director of Project Management
Marybel Garcia, Service Desk Director
Casandra Maciel, AWC La Paz Staff
Cheyenne Collier, AWC La Paz Staff
Marika Holcombe, AWC La Paz Staff
Stirling G. Baack, AWC Student of the Month

Others present via Zoom (3): Dr. Michelle Sims, Professor of Economics; Melanie Ruiz Lopez, SGA Vice President; Cindy Zavala, Director of Campus Life

Community Members Present in Room: **(3)** Lonnie Lewis, La Paz County Superintendent of Schools; Ariana Flores, La Paz ESA; Kim Baack, parent of Student of the Month

Board By-Laws Work Session:
Board Chair Dennis Booth joined the meeting remotely and requested that Board Secretary Olivia Zepeda preside as Acting Chair.

Call to Order: Board Secretary Olivia Zepeda called the Work Session to order at 12:04 p.m. Ms. Zepeda acknowledged that a quorum was present.

Dr. Reetika Dhawan presented the drafted Board By-Laws for review. The draft included corrections and edits by both Dr. Dhawan and legal counsel to align with Arizona Revised Statutes and best practices.

Discussion included:
Page 3 of 11 – Question by Dr. MacFarland regarding a caveat for when the President is absent from the Board Meetings. Dr. Dhawan mentioned that is stipulated on a later page of the document.

Page 5 of 11 – Discussion about the suggested updates to Section III. Goals to more accurately reflect the Board's role in delegating authority to the President.

Page 5 of 11 – Discussion regarding Section IV. Membership and Officers of the Board, which provides that officers are elected at the first meeting of each calendar year and that the Board Secretary will preside over the meeting if the Board Chair is absent. Dr. MacFarland suggested using the word "developing" or "composing" instead of "planning" with regard to Board Agenda preparation.

Page 6 of 11 – Dr. Dhawan clarified that the President "shall review" the Meeting Agenda with the Board Chair; the section formerly read "may be reviewed". Dr. Dhawan invited all Board Members to meet with her ahead of the Board Meetings to discuss the agenda if they wish to.

Page 6 of 11 – Regarding Special Meetings, Dr. MacFarland commented on the feasibility of obtaining a majority vote to call for a Special Meeting. It was clarified that the "vote" would be gathered through communications initiated by the Executive Assistant with Board Members individually so as not to constitute an inadvertent quorum. A request was made to change "signed" to "ratified" in this section.

Dr. MacFarland asked if there is a stipulation on how to remove a Board Member who is not able to serve due to a medical issue or other factor. Mr. Sale referred to ARS 38-291, which defines a vacancy in public office.

Page 8 of 11: Discussion of President's duties as delegated by the Board. Consider replacing "employing" with "recommending" with regard to College personnel.

Page 8 of 11: Addition of "Unity of Control" section. Dr. Dhawan explained that other Arizona Community Colleges have this statement. There was agreement with adding it.

Page 9 of 11: Suggestion of Section X. Evaluation of the President to make this into a bulleted list instead of paragraph form for easier reading.

Page 10 of 11: Discussion regarding the additional duties for Board Members. Dr. Dhawan mentioned that some unnecessary items were also removed.

Page 10 of 11: Related to Section XIII. Attendance at Board Meetings, there was a suggestion to define excessive absences and consequences. Since Board Members are elected, they cannot be removed for lack of attendance. Dr. MacFarland suggested seeking legal advice about Board Member removal for lack of attendance (abandonment).

Page 11 of 11: Discussion about Board Member orientation and an annual Board self-evaluation, which could be collected anonymously.

Dr. Dhawan mentioned the possibility of a Board Retreat planned for March to review College policies.

A second reading will occur during the December 17 Board Meeting, once all updates have been made to the current draft, with the potential for a vote to adopt the revised draft. Board members also discussed the potential for an Honorary Board Member Emeritus designation for a past Board Member who has served for at least 6 years to be available to advise and assist.

No formal action was taken on the proposed By-Laws, and the revisions were not adopted.

Work Session concluded at 1:03 p.m.

Regular Meeting:

Call to Order: Board Secretary Olivia Zepeda called the Regular Meeting to order at 1:13 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda: The Agenda for the November 16, 2026 meeting was presented for approval.
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

Approval of Minutes: The Meeting Minutes for the October 15, 2026 Regular Meeting with Executive Session were presented for approval.
Motion by Brad Sale, 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

Call to the Audience:
N/A

District Governing Board:
Oaths of Office:
Mr. Lonnie Lewis, La Paz County Superintendent of Schools, administered the Oaths of Office to Mr. Sale of District #1 and Dr. MacFarland of District #2.

First Reading and Consideration of Proposed Revisions to the District Governing Board By-Laws:
Dr. Dhawan reiterated that the suggested edits will be made and brought back for the second reading at the December 17 Board Meeting. No action was taken at this meeting.

College Reports:
Student Government Association: Vice President Melanie Ruiz Lopez provided an update on student engagement initiatives. Ms. Ruiz Lopez highlighted two November Mega Matador honorees for leadership, initiative, creativity, service, and contributions to a welcoming college community.

The Student Belonging Survey received 1,544 total responses, exceeding its 1,000-response goal. Results show 94% believe they can succeed academically, 86% know where to seek help, and 85% feel part of the AWC community. Students identified opportunities for more connection, better communication, welcoming support, inclusive access, and community-building spaces. SGA and Vision 2026 Team 1 will use these findings to help develop and pilot a belonging initiative in Spring 2027.

Faculty Senate: Dr. Michelle Sims, Faculty Senate Representative to the District Governing Board, provided an update on faculty and student achievements across the district.

Highlights include:
Workforce and career readiness: Welding, healthcare, public safety, engineering, and artificial intelligence initiatives are connecting students with industry needs and emerging career opportunities. The Healthy Futures Symposium alone engaged 80 students, while healthcare faculty also worked directly with regional employers to discuss workforce skill gaps and AI's impact on healthcare education and practice.

Faculty leadership and recognition: Faculty accomplishments include professional presentations, artistic recognition, community leadership, and selection of Professor Dubia Zaragoza for the HACU Enlace Mid-Level Leadership Program, including a $4,000 Mellon Foundation Scholarship.

Student engagement and community impact: Faculty supported student clubs, cultural activities, performing and visual arts, family engagement, and community-based projects, including completion of a student-created mural at the Yuma Juvenile Justice Center.

Outstanding athletics: Women's soccer, volleyball, and men's soccer earned major ACCAC, Region 1, and district championships, along with Lorayne Chandler earning Coach of the Year and several athletes earning Player of the Year honors.

Student of the Month:
Dr. Shadi Kilani recognized Stirling G. Baack as Student of the Month. Stirling is currently continuing his education to earn an associate's degree after completing the Certificate in Phlebotomy.

Action Item #1 – Consideration to Approve Candidates for Exempt Positions, presented by Katheline Ocampo
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 –
- Trevor Elordi, Director of Compliance & Risk
- Denny Perez, Industry Outreach Coordinator
- Isabella Powell, Data and Evaluation Coordinator

- Michael Smith, Executive Director – La Paz

Board Member Dr. MacFarland inquired about the Executive Director of La Paz position. Ms. Ocampo gave details about the position in conjunction with the La Paz Economic Development Corporation and La Paz County.

Action Item #2 – Consideration to Approve New Curriculum, presented by Dr. Shadi Kilani
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 –
Two items presented:
Associate in Applied Science in Surgical Technology (AAS.SGT)
Occupational Certificate in Transportation & Logistics Specialist (CERT.TLS)

Action Item #3 – Consideration to Approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with Lake Havasu Unified School District, presented by Czarina Gallegos
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 -
Arizona Western College is seeking approval of a new two (2) year Intergovernmental Agreement with Lake Havasu Unified School District to give eligible students under age 18 the opportunity to earn college credit through dual enrollment while attending Lake Havasu Unified School District partner schools. This Agreement aims to set forth the understanding of the Parties as to their respective responsibilities and rights in providing Dual Enrollment Courses to eligible School District students. We are seeking approval for this new two (2) year Intergovernmental Agreement, effective as of the final signature date through June 30, 2028.

Action Item #4 – Consideration to Renew the Intergovernmental Agreement with Bicentennial Union High School District / Salome High School, presented by Czarina Gallegos
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

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

Summary -
Arizona Western College is seeking renewal of the two (2) year Intergovernmental Agreement with Bicentennial Union High School District / Salome High School to give eligible students under age 18 the opportunity to earn college credit through dual enrollment while attending Bicentennial Union High School District / Salome High School. This Agreement aims to set forth the understanding of the Parties as to their respective responsibilities and rights in providing Dual Enrollment Courses to eligible School District students. We are seeking approval to renew this two (2) year Intergovernmental Agreement, effective as of the final signature date through June 30, 2028.

Action Item #5 – Consideration to Approve the Master Service Agreement with Laerdal Medical Corporation, presented by Czarina Gallegos
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 –
Arizona Western College is seeking approval of a five (5) year Master Service Agreement with Laerdal Medical Corporation that sets forth the legal terms, implementation schedule, and pricing for Laerdal Medical Corporation to supply, install, and support an 8-node SimCapture Enterprise Cloud simulation management system for Arizona Western College. This Agreement outlines a 60-month subscription along with a phased 10-milestone deployment plan covering site preparation, AV integration, software configuration, system training, and user acceptance testing. We are seeking approval for this five (5) year Master Service Agreement, effective on or about November 17, 2026 through November 16, 2031.

Action Item #6 – Consideration to Approve Voucher (October 2026), presented by Czarina Gallegos
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 –
Executive Summary
The District continues to demonstrate a solid financial position, with operating and investment cash balances reaching $69.8 million as of October 31, 2026, up from $62.5 million at the same time last year. Financial performance remains positive, as year-over-year revenue has grown by 13.0% while expenditures are down

2.0%. Enrollment trends provide further evidence of continued growth, particularly in early college and dual enrollment programs, along with an increase in overall credit hours. These favorable results reflect the District's ongoing commitment to sound financial stewardship, maintaining adequate resources to support current operations while positioning the District to address future needs and priorities.

Fiscal Overview

Metrics	2026-2027	2025-2026	% Change
Actual Revenues	$31,207,416	$27,623,417	+13.0%
Actual Expenditures	$21,481,711	$21,919,848	-2.0%
Operating Cash Balance	$13,972,601	$18,865,111	-25.9%

Enrollment Trends

Enrollment Type	2026-2027	2025-2026	% Change
Total Credit Hours	96,865	90,847	+6.6%
Early College Credit Hours	23,011	18,180	+26.6%
Dual Enrollment Credit Hours	13,444	10,881	+23.6%

Closing Statement

The District continues to take a strategic approach to financial planning, ensuring resources are directed toward initiatives that support its mission and long-term goals. Priorities include sustaining enrollment momentum, enhancing the quality of academic and student support services, and making investments that address critical facility and technology needs. Through ongoing evaluation of financial performance and prudent management of available resources, the District remains committed to maintaining fiscal stability while advancing initiatives that promote institutional effectiveness and student achievement.

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 at the next District Governing Board meeting for information.

Department	Vendor	Description	Cost	Fund Source
Finance & Administrative Svcs	HCC Medical Insurance Services	International Student Insurance Premiums through WorldTrips	$ 88,529.61	General

Ms. Gallegos explained that the international student insurance premium is a pass-through expense; students pay the cost directly to the College, and the College then pays the vendor.

President's Reports

Strategic Plan and Vision 2026 Updates, presented by Lorraine Stofft and the Vision 2026 Team Leads

Lorraine Stofft shared an opening statement about the Strategic Plan and Vision 2026. As the College is in the middle of the current 3-year Strategic Plan, there is continuity and evolution as the Plan aligns with Dr. Dhawan's Vision 2026. Ms. Stofft showed how the Strategic Plan maps to the Vision 2026 in the three Strategic Pillars of Excelencia, Disruption and Access. There will continue to be quarterly updates to the District Governing Board and the College community.

Team 1: Student Success & Belonging, update by Dr. Michelle Sims

The team has completed the initial listening, mapping, and baseline phase and is now designing targeted interventions. The Retention Team developed the RADAR early-intervention model, piloted Early Grade Checks across 62 course sections with 33 faculty volunteers, and provided personalized outreach to 412 students with early C, D, or F grades. The Belonging Team gathered 1,544 unique student responses, exceeding its 1,000-response goal, and is analyzing results to identify barriers and co-design a Spring 2027 belonging pilot with SGA.

Team 2A: AI Adoption & Governance, update by Mark Sims

The college-wide AI tools inventory and faculty AI readiness/Professional Development assessment are complete, while emerging-technology certificates and peer benchmarking remain underway. 106 participants were enrolled in the Google AI Accelerator as of November 4, with a goal of 200 by December 31; Microsoft Copilot training has been delivered, three free community AI workshops have been held, and more than 100 users received expanded Gemini access. Equipment for the emerging technology initiative has also begun arriving, with upcoming work focused on AI-enhanced courses, an AI integration framework, and an emerging technology center concept paper.

Team 2B: Baccalaureate Degree Development & Transfer Pathways, update by Stuart Gibson

The team completed an audit of transfer programs with Arizona State University, University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University and is now conducting feasibility studies, surveying student interest, reviewing MOUs, and partnering with Transfer Services. Programs under consideration for baccalaureate pathways include AJS, Accounting, and BSN, with year-end goals of proposing 1–2 baccalaureate pathways and finalizing 2–3 articulation agreements with university partners.

Team 3: Rural & Workforce Innovation, update by Elaine Groggett

Team 3 completed a curriculum and workforce-alignment audit, launched a centralized employer partnership webpage, and identified immediate employer training needs including soft skills, EKGs, and blood draws. The team is moving forward with a HyFlex pilot in Yuma and La Paz, Spring 2027 employer-responsive training, apprenticeship expansion, and new work-based experience agreements. Near-term priorities include securing participating employers, promoting the industry partnership portal, finalizing pilot metrics, and completing the HyFlex Faculty Toolkit.

Team 4: Shared Governance & Fiscal Sustainability, update by Lorraine Stofft on behalf of Dr. Kristine Duke

Major work centers on budget education, contract and grants management, committee management, shared governance, and capital planning. The campus-wide budget presentation has moved to Spring 2027; the team is considering a Contract Specialist position and developing a grants-management database. Committee structures and supporting myAWC folders have been refined. The team has also begun revising the shared governance handbook, with a first draft expected by the end of January 2027. For capital planning, South County land allocation requests are pending, while assessment of construction and replacement needs across other locations is approximately 75% complete, with cost estimates still needed to determine financing requirements.

Team 5: Continuous Quality for Teaching & Learning, update by Renee Macaluso

Work is progressing on consistent Canvas quality standards and course outline/syllabus tools. Several Quality Matters-aligned Canvas homepage templates have been developed for Spring 2027 and have passed initial accessibility testing. The syllabus group has evaluated Concourse and Simple Syllabus, with CourseDog also under review. Through January 15, the team will refine templates and minimum standards, complete the vendor comparison, select pilot courses, establish baseline measures, and address technology integration, accessibility, cost, and approval requirements.

Board Member Ms. Chavoya commended everyone on the amount of work done thus far. Board Member Dr. MacFarland asked about Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all Teams. Ms. Stofft relayed that KPIs will be shared with the next quarterly Board Meeting updates.

Board Chair Dennis Booth left the meeting at 2:51 p.m.

Closing Items:
Good of the Order by Dr. Reetika Dhawan
Dr. Dhawan thanked the Vision 2026 Team Leads for their efforts and updates. She noted that Team 2B is focused on creating the College's own baccalaureate programs, in addition to those developed in partnership with the three state universities.

Dr. Dhawan thanked the Board Members who recently traveled to the ACCT Conference. She also reported that financial audits are currently under way in the Finance and Business Office and that audit reports will be shared with the Board when available.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held Thursday, December 17, 2026, at 3:00 p.m., 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: Maria Chavoya, Dr. Kenneth MacFarland, Brad Sale, and Olivia Zepeda
Nay: None
Abstain: None

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Freedman

Jennifer Freedman
Executive Assistant to the President