

**Minutes of the  
Gaston College  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Myers Center, Section C  
January 20, 2026**

**Members Present:** Judge Jesse Caldwell, Chair  
Dr. Shawnya Gore, Secretary  
Mr. Bill Carstarphen  
Mr. Alan Cloninger  
Mr. Jonathan Fletcher  
Ms. Iris Hopper  
Mr. Steve Huffstetler  
Mr. David Lee  
Mr. Bannock Scott, SGA President

Dr. John Hauser, President

**Others Present:** Mr. Todd Baney, Ms. Tonia Broome, Mr. Brett Buchanan, Ms. Jasmine Cox-Wade, Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Dr. Sam Grubbs, Ms. Guyann Howe, Dr. Zachary Kendra-Dill, Ms. Meagan Lingerfelt, Ms. Andrea Lovelace, Mr. Kendrick McDowell, Mr. Rico Mcllwain, Mr. Mack Millen, Dr. Jennifer Nichols, Ms. Julie Ostrowski, Mr. Stephen Sharp, Dr. Audrey Sherrill, Mr. Luke Upchurch, Mr. Richard Walker, and Mr. Mike Whiteman

**Chair Caldwell called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. A quorum was present for the meeting.**

- **Invocation – Mr. Fletcher**
- **Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder**

Chair Caldwell reminded Trustees of the ethics requirements of public servants and requested they identify any conflicts of interest or appearance of conflicts of interest present. No conflicts were identified.

**A. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Chair Caldwell asked if there were any changes, additions, or corrections to the agenda. None were identified.**

**Mr. Huffstetler moved to approve the agenda; Dr. Gore seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**1. November 17, 2025, Board of Trustees Meeting**

**Chair Caldwell asked if there were any changes, additions, or corrections to the November 17, 2025, Board of Trustees Minutes. None were identified.**

Mr. Lee moved to approve the November 17, 2025, Board of Trustees Minutes; Mr. Carstarphen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**C. WELCOME**

1. Dr. Hauser opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and extending a special welcome to Mr. Kendrick McDowell, Vice President of the Staff Senate, and Dr. Sam Grubbs, President of the Faculty Senate.

**D. ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Mr. Lee presented the following action item which was vetted during the Committee meeting on January 12, 2026:

**1. Proposed Program – Elementary Education Residency Licensure Certificate**

Per the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, individuals holding at least a bachelor’s degree can apply to be a public K-12 teacher if they are enrolled in a residency licensure pathway at a higher education institution approved to be an educator preparation program (EPP). As of the 2025-2026 academic year, there are 155 teachers in Gaston and Lincoln County Schools who are currently working to earn residency licensure as seen in the table below.

<b>School System</b>	<b>Total in Residency Licensure Program</b>	<b>Total in Elementary Education Residency Program</b>
Gaston County Schools	129	60
Lincoln County Schools	26	10

Thus, Gaston College looks to add the Elementary Education Residency Licensure certificate to its program offerings and serve as an EPP to help meet this local need. Currently, teachers in the service area seeking this residency licensure must attend institutions outside of Gaston and Lincoln counties.

Faculty, including those responsible for program coordination, for approved EPP’s are required to hold Master’s Degree as well as a current North Carolina teaching license in elementary education (or be eligible to re-instate an expired elementary education teaching license). Per NCCCS and NC Department of Public Instruction requirements, faculty also serve as coaches/mentors for students in the program, conduct classroom visits and assessments for students each semester, and complete mandatory reporting. Due to the complexity of the credentials and mandatory tasks, a new full-time faculty member/program coordinator will be required.

**The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommended that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approves the addition of the Elementary Education Residency Licensure Program as presented.**

Dr. Dellinger stated that if approved, the program would be offered on the Dallas Campus and clarified that only one new full-time faculty member would be needed for the program.

Coming from committee, no second was required. With no further discussion **the Motion Carried.**

**E. FINANCE AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

**Mr. Huffstetler presented the following informational items:**

**1. Change in IRS Mileage Rate**

Effective January 1, 2026, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) established new travel mileage reimbursement rates. The business standard rate for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) increased to 72.5 cents per mile. Gaston College will increase the mileage rate from 70 cents per mile to the new rate of 72.5 cents per mile established by the IRS effective February 1, 2026.

If state employees use a personal vehicle for business travel, actual mileage is reimbursable. Mileage is measured from the duty station or point of departure—whichever is closer to the destination—to the destination (and return). In accordance with agency’s policies, a state employee shall be reimbursed at a rate that does not exceed the business standard mileage rate set by the IRS when using their personal vehicle for state business.

At the August 16, 2021, Board of Trustees meeting, the Board approved allowing the College to change travel mileage, meals, and lodging rates to agree with the established IRS rates as appropriate but requested that the Board be notified when changes are made. Reimbursement rates shall never exceed IRS standard rates.

This is for information; no action was required.

**2. Supplemental Budget Allocations**

The College’s net increase in Supplemental State Budget Allocations through December 2025 was \$3,959,944. Customized Training received an additional \$84,651 allocation for fiscal 2026.

<b>Customized Training – Reconciliation As of December 2025</b>	<b>Year to Date Total</b>
LNS	\$ 25,168
Parkdale Mills	63,876
OWENS #4	5,510
Husky	4,950
Huber Technology Inc	18,500
Bosch Hand Tools	8,220
Blum #3	84,095
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 210,319</b>

Description	State Current
High-Cost Health Care Workforce Start-Up - Carryforward	\$ 818,170
Adult Basic Education - Carryforward	72,157
Apprenticeship Building America - Carryforward	12,390
Apprenticeship Expansion - Carryforward	200,404
Equipment - Carryforward	896,952
Books - Carryforward	12,817
Base Skills PBF - Carryforward	1
Other PBF - Carryforward	3,163
Perkins - Carryforward	24,109
BioNetwork	864,811
Short-Term Workforce Development	7,435
Finish Line Grants	26,211
Disaster Recovery Act of 2024	124
Adult Basic Education	253,759
Title II Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals	24,461
Faculty Recruitment and Retention	427,502
Nursing Faculty Salary Adjustment	197,622
Modernization of Degree Program Competencies	20,000
Career Coach	148,163
Apprenticeship Recall	(6,000)
Apprenticeship Recall	(44,307)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,959,944</b>

This item is presented for informational purposes.

### 3. Financial Reports

Summary of expenditures for month-end December 2025, for State, Gaston, and Lincoln operating budgets and proprietary accounts.

**State:** State budget **non-categorical** spending was 48.8% spent at the end of December 2025. Results will fluctuate based on receipt of supplemental funding and the timing of one-time operational spending.

**Categorical:** Overall spending is at 46.5% with some categories higher. Due to the nature of certain categorical allotments, straight line percentage comparisons can be misleading, as not all are based on the fiscal year and funds are allocated to the College throughout the year for specific projects. For example, purpose code 361—New and Expanding Industry Customized Training—represents funds awarded to the College to deliver training based on timelines requested by individual companies. These funds are typically intended to be spent quickly upon award.

**County Budgets:** 46.7% of the Gaston County budget and 49.5% of the Lincoln County budget has been spent as of the end of December 2025. Finance continues to manage county spending using other funding sources as needed.

**Proprietary:**

The overall report is three pages which represents three categories of funds.

1. Student Fees
2. Auxiliary Activities
3. Other Activities

Mr. Huffstetler reviewed an overview of all student fees for fiscal 2026.

**Total Revenue from Student Fees: \$1,950,578**

- **Total Expenses:** \$2,648,122
- **Net Loss:** (\$697,544) – The overall loss is due to the use of the Technology Fees Fund Balance for a required refresh and update of computers to Windows 11 compatibility.
- **Total Cash on Hand:** \$4.37 million
- **Key Fee Categories:** Access, Excess, Lab, Student Activity, and Technology Fees

An overview of all auxiliary activities for fiscal 2026 was also reviewed. This activity includes the Fire Training Facility and Textile Center Testing which was shown on the previous report format.

- **Total Revenue:** \$1,926,339
- **Total Expenses:** \$2,115,793
- **Net Loss:** (\$189,454) – Several factors are contributing to the year-to date loss
  - Athletic expenses are typically not reimbursed until the Spring when fundraising occurs. Additional conversations are being held related to athletics fundraising.
  - Fire training – a meeting with the CFO and the VP for Economic and Workforce Development has occurred and two areas of focus have been identified. These areas are the proper classification of expenses and an understanding of budget availability.
  - The Textile Center
    - Has accumulated cash over the past few years and used those cash reserves for a one-time grant match to assist with the purchase of machinery.
    - We also plan to use cash reserves to fund approximately \$285K in Spinning Room electrical connections.
    - These amounts will be reimbursed should the \$4M in state funding or some portion thereof be received prior to the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2026).
- **Cash on Hand:** \$2.5 million
- **Investments:** \$600,000 in principal with an interest balance of \$113,389.

Other activities for fiscal 2026.

- **Total Indirect Cost and Lost Revenue income:** \$106,102
- **Total Indirect Cost and Lost Revenue expenses:** \$123,569
- **Net Indirect Cost and Lost Revenue Loss:** (\$17,557)

- **Cash on hand:** \$410,635
- **Investment cash:** \$1,684,491 with an interest balance of \$109,330
- **Health Science Education and Simulation Center:** Going forward, the H&S Education and Simulation Center will show a loss as all of the revenue was received in the prior year and we will be spending it down as architectural and construction invoices come due.
- **Interest Revenue:** \$705,063
- **Cash used for construction activities:** \$663,560
- **Net cash gained:** \$41,503
- **Cash on Hand:** a deficit balance of \$3,501, which will be reimbursed from invested cash.
- **Investment cash :** \$60 million in principal with an interest balance of \$236,009.

This was for information; no action was required.

#### 4. Capital Reports:

The monthly summary of capital reports were reviewed by Mr. Huffstetler, highlighting changes since the last report.

**De-escalation Center:** A pre-bid meeting was held on 11/24/25 concerning an RFP for a General Contractor. The bid opening was on 12/18/25. The submittal by Heartland Contracting was approved by C - Design and has been sent to SCO via Interscope for approval.

**Fiber Innovation Center Extrusion Equipment Connections:** Dallas Electric has been procuring electrical equipment and materials and will start installation asap.

**Fiber Innovation Center Process Chiller:** Team Mechanical has installed the concrete pads for the equipment and the chiller has been set on site.

**Fiber Innovation Center Reactor Room Connections:** A pre-bid meeting was held on 1/7/26.

**Fiber Innovation Center Yarn Spinning Room Connections:** A pre-bid meeting was held on 1/7/26.

**Minor Project – Rauch Science and Fine Arts Building Lab Hood Exhaust System:** Lab hoods will need to be inspected and re-certified upon completion.

This was for information; no action was required.

#### 5. Grants and Foundation Updates

**Fundraising Update:**

From July 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025 the Foundation received \$525,893 through 2,438 gifts, with an average contribution of \$216.

Annual	\$285,754
Funds/Grants	
Athletic Funds	\$95,788
Capital Funds	\$10,000

Endowment Funds	\$17,040
WSGE Radio	\$117,186

**New Scholarship Funds FY 2026**

- Rafalow Vet Tech Scholarship
- Clifton and Flora Walton Scholarship
- Greg Smith Scholarship
- Metropolitan Woodworks Scholarship
- James A. Crawford Jr. Award for Excellence

**Grants and Sponsored Programs- FY 2026**

*Grants Awarded:*

- U.S. Department of Education- TRiO- Student Support Services- \$1,361,820\*
- CaroMont Health- Medical Sonography Support- \$75,000
- Bosch Community Fund- Skills USA/Academic Enrichment- \$30,000
- NC State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program- \$185,000- I.T. Infrastructure\*
- Gaston Community Foundation- \$20,000- Skills USA/Academic Enrichment
- NC AHEC- Clinical Faculty Support- \$15,000
- Duke Endowment/Atrium Health- \$900,000- Lincoln Health Academy

*Grants Pending:*

- U.S. Department of Education- FIPSE Short Term Training- \$4,000,000
- National Science Foundation- \$750,000- SPARC 6\*
- National Science Foundation- \$2,510,542- Textile Engines\*
- Economic Development Administration - \$20,000,000- Lincoln Campus Workforce Development\*

\*Federal Funded Grants

This was for information; no action was required.

**G. SGA**

Mr. Scott gave the following SGA update:

The Campus Activities Committee of the Student Government Association before the end of the Fall 2025 semester, the SGA was able to host four events and serve a total of 195 students. Their events saw an overall consistency in the people they have seen throughout the semester. At the Winter Wonderland event, they had students from the Broadcasting Program conduct interviews and allow more students learn more about what the SGA is doing on campus.

**Red Cross Blood Drive**

On November 12, 2025, the SGA sponsored a fall blood drive with the Red Cross mobile bus on the Dallas Campus and collected close to 20 units to support patients in need.

**Gastonia Christmas Parade**

On December 7, 2025, the SGA represented Gaston College at the Gastonia Christmas Parade. The SGA collaborated with Gaston College student athletes from our Baseball, Basketball, Softball and Volleyball teams.

**Strategic Plan Updates**

The SGA is continuing to work towards completing their 2025-2026 team goals that they began at the beginning of the academic year. The SGA’s Campus Activities Committee has been working on offering students more experimental events such as our November Winter Wonderland event, which offered students winter themed snacks, crafts, music and more. The Family Feud event is another example of a pilot event and was an overall success for the students in attendance. The SGA Campus Activities Committee has also been working on preparing events for the spring semester.

The SGA’s Public Information Committee has been working on flyers for social media to help keep our student body informed of the events going on and is currently preparing for the SGA’s spring semester events.

**H. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Caldwell shared the following:

- The Board Self-Evaluation Survey results were provided for the Trustees to take home and review. These will be assessed at the February 6, Board Retreat.
- Trustees who are required to complete an Ethics Class by the first quarter of 2026 have already been sent notifications via email by Ms. Howe. Other notification regarding the submission of SEI statements will also be sent out at a later date.
- Upcoming Athletic dates were provided in the Board material.

Board of Trustees Retreat	February 6, 2026	8:30 AM	Gaston Country Club
Committee Meetings	March 16, 2026	TBD	MCMA, Section B
Board of Trustees Meeting	March 23, 2026	TBD	MCMA, Section C
NCACCT Spring 2026 Law-Legislative Seminar	April 22-24, 2026	TBD	Raleigh - Embassy Suites
Foundation Golf Tourney	March 30, 2026	TBD	Gaston Country Club
Momentum Makers Event	June 5, 2026	TBD	Gaston Country Club

**I. PRESIDENT’S REPORT/REMARKS**

Dr. Hauser encouraged the Trustees to review the eleven pages of his report and the divisional reports to stay informed about the many great initiatives taking place at Gaston College.

Dr. Hauser shared:

- Fall 2025 enrollment was ~6% more in comparison to 2024.
- Spring 2026 enrollment is ~6% more in comparison to 2025.

- Dr. Hauser along with a small delegation from the College, attended the 2026 CES Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. CES is the world's premier technology event, showcasing major announcements and demonstrations in artificial intelligence, robotics, automotive and mobility technologies, digital health, advanced displays, and immersive systems. The team attended CES to explore emerging technologies, examine innovative approaches to instructional design and learning environments, and build institutional capacity as we prepare for the launch of Gaston College's proposed Immersive Technology Department, which we are targeting for 2026.
- He and Dr. Dellinger also attended the Future of Education Technology Conference (FETC) in Orlando, Florida, a nationally recognized event focused on educational innovation, artificial intelligence, data privacy, cybersecurity, immersive technologies, and leadership. FETC offers a first-mover advantage for institutions planning instructional technology investments and academic innovation for the year ahead. Attendance was essential to ensuring Gaston College remains forward-looking, competitive, and well-prepared to lead in emerging instructional technologies that support both workforce and student needs.
- Dr. Dellinger left the FETC conference and traveled to Central Florida to meet with Dr. Bari Hoffman on Wednesday, January 14, at their Innovation Center. She is the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs and Healthcare Innovation in the College of Health Professions and Sciences. UCF's Health Professions adopted 4K hologram technology from PORTL Inc. (branded as Dr. Hologram) to improve training for healthcare students. This lifelike, life-size hologram system allows interactive simulations of patients—either via livestreaming or pre-recorded—enabling students to practice realistic assessments, observe nonverbal cues, and provide humanistic care in ways that traditional methods (like videos or mannequins) cannot fully replicate.
- Dr. Hauser along with Stephen Sharp and other collaborative representatives from NC State, Drexel University, Georgia Tech, and UMass Lowell traveled to Natick Soldier Systems Center (NSSC) in Massachusetts January 13-15 regarding the Department of Defense (DoD) Revolutionary Fibers and Textiles Manufacturing Innovation Institute Consortium (RFTC) Grant. This group is one of four finalists under consideration for the award. If awarded, the grant would span ten years with a total value of \$450 million. The completed proposal must be submitted by January 28. The group will return to NSSC on February 3–4 to present and pitch their proposal. A final decision is expected by March 15, with funding anticipated to be received by May 20, 2026.
- Dr. Hauser, Jasmine Cox-Wade and Davis Warlick have been invited by Senator Overcash to present in Raleigh on February 3. The Chairs of the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee have requested a presentation highlighting the work of the Gaston College Textile Technology Center, including initiatives of the Online Textile Training Academy.

- Representatives from the National Science Foundation (NSF) will visit the Kimbrell Campus on February 9, 2026. Grant cycles 3, 4, and 5 are currently receiving funding.

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Caldwell commended Dr. Hauser and the collaborative efforts of the team for being selected as one of the final four contenders for the Department of Defense (DoD) grant. He also thanked faculty and staff for their efforts in supporting student retention, noting that their encouragement, compassion, and consistent communication with students have proven to be beneficial.

Dr. Nichols confirmed that the College remains in regular contact with counselors at county high schools to support new enrollment efforts. She noted that while not all high schools operate with the same level of autonomy, recruitment efforts are focused on all high schools in Lincoln and Gaston Counties.

Chair Caldwell acknowledged the tremendous loss to both the College and the broader community following the passing of Attorney Carl Stewart. Sheriff Cloninger requested that the College consider planting a tree on campus in Mr. Stewart’s memory, and Dr. Hauser acknowledged that this request could be accommodated.

Chair Caldwell then asked the Trustees to observe a moment of silence in Mr. Stewart’s memory prior to the adjournment of the meeting.

Chair Caldwell asked if there was any further business to come before the Board. There being none,

**Mr. Fletcher moved to adjourn the meeting; Sherriff Cloninger seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

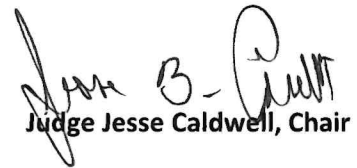
The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Dr. Shawnya Gore, Secretary



Guyann Howe, Recording Secretary

  
Judge Jesse Caldwell, Chair

(College Seal)