Minutes of the
Gaston College
Board of Trustees Meeting
Myers Center, Section C
August 17, 2026

Members Present:	Judge Jesse Caldwell, Chair Ms. Janie Peak, Vice Chair Dr. Shawnya Gore, Secretary Mr. Bill Carstarphen Mr. Bryan Farris Mr. Jonathan Fletcher Ms. Iris Hopper Mr. Steve Huffstetler Mr. Tom Keigher Mr. David Lee Ms. Julie Stroupe Dr. Jonathan Waller Mr. Caiden Buckner, SGA President Dr. John Hauser, President
Members Absent:	Mr. Steve Hall, Ms. Resa Hoyle
Others Present:	Mr. Todd Baney, Dr. Ginger Black, Ms. Tonia Broome, Mr. Brett Buchanan, Ms. Ayiesha Dawson, Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Captain Eric Howard, Ms. Guyann Howe, Dr. Zachary Kendra-Dill, Mr. Brett LaFemina, Ms. Meagan Lingerfelt, Ms. Andrea Lovelace, Mr. Kendrick McDowell, Mr. Mack Millen, Dr. Jennifer Nichols, Ms. Julie Ostrowski, Dr. Audrey Sherrill, Dr. Aaron Slutsky, Mr. Luke Upchurch, and Mr. Mike Whiteman.

Chair Caldwell called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. A quorum was present for the meeting.

- **Invocation – Ms. Janie Peak**

- **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. Keigher moved to approve the agenda; Ms. Stroupe seconded the motion. The motion carried.

B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

1. June 22, 2026, Board of Trustees Meeting

Chair Caldwell asked if there were any changes, additions, or corrections to the June 22, 2026, Board of Trustees Minutes. None were identified.

Mr. Huffstetler moved to approve the June 22, 2026, Board of Trustees Minutes; Ms. Peak seconded the motion. The motion carried.

C. WELCOME

1. Welcome Guests
   Dr. Hauser welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Mr. Brett LaFemina, President of the Faculty Senate, and Mr. Kendrick McDowell, President of the Staff Senate.

2. Introduction of New Trustees
   - Mr. Caiden Buckner
     Is serving as SGA President for the academic year 2026-27. He is a resident of Mount Holly. He is currently working on both his High School Diploma from Gaston Early College High School and an Associate Degree in Engineering from Gaston College. Caiden is serving as the President of the Gaston College Student Government Association and is a participant in the NC Community College System's Student Leadership Development Program. Caiden is passionate about student leadership and academic success. He plans to transfer to a four-year university to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering to become a mechanical engineer for defense contractors.

   - Mr. Bryan Farris
     Was appointed by the North Carolina General Assembly/ Senate. A native of Gaston County and a resident of Gastonia, Mr. Farris is owner and CEO of Farris Group, a diversified manufacturing company serving customers throughout North America such as John Deere and Caterpillar. Fab employs approximately 162 people. He is also a partner in 3 Keys, Inc., a regional importer and distributor of fine wines serving North and South Carolina. He is active in the community and serves as deacon at First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia. Mr. Farris and his wife Jamie have four children.

   - Dr. Jonathan Waller
     Was appointed by the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners. A resident of Iron Station, NC, he is General Manager of The Timken Company’s Lincolnton Bearing Plant, where they employ approximately 650 people with approximately $400 million in annual sales. Since joining Timken in 1999, he has held leadership roles in Engineering, Quality, and Manufacturing Operations. He has an AAS in Mechanical Drafting and Design from Clayton State University, a BS in Mechanical Engineering Technology from Southern

Polytechnic State University, and an MBA from the University of West Georgia. He is also the recipient of two United States patents and a Doctor of Theological Studies from Bethany Divinity College and Seminary. He and his wife of 32 years have three adult children and one granddaughter.

- Mr. Tom Keigher was recognized for being reappointed for another term by the Gaston County Board of Commissioners. Mr. Keigher was just recently presented the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award.
- Dr. Shawnya Gore was also recognized for being reappointed by the NC General Assembly/House of Representatives for another term.

Chair Caldwell welcomed the new and returning Trustees and thanked them for their service.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Ms. Hopper presented the following action and informational items, which were vetted during the Committee meeting held on August 10.

1. **Policy 4-14 – Academic Standards**

The College has undergone several operational changes in recent years, and this revision aligns the policy with current institutional practices. Students are notified of their academic standing directly by the Office of Records and Registration. Additionally, student honors and recognitions continue to be shared through established institutional communication channels. As a result, the reference requiring the provision of a list of students to the College's marketing office is no longer necessary and has been removed to ensure the policy accurately reflects current processes.

The Administrative Services Committee recommended that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed revised Policy 4-14 Academic Standards, as presented.

Chair Caldwell asked if there were any discussions. There being none, **the motion passed.**

2. **Policy 4-19 – Academic Advisors**

In 2021, the College implemented its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which transitioned academic advising responsibilities from faculty advisors to professional advisors. This organizational change prompted updates to the policy to accurately reflect the College's current advising structure.

Since that time, the College has also implemented required advising at key points in a student's academic journey to help ensure students are enrolling in courses that align with their educational goals and lead to credential completion. Additionally, the procedures have been updated to reflect current advising practices, including multiple appointment modalities and a holistic approach to supporting students' academic success and overall well-being.

The Administrative Services Committee recommended that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed revised Policy 4-19 Academic Advisors, as presented.

Chair Caldwell added that a handout was provided charting the Academic and Student Affairs Organizational structure. Chair Caldwell asked if there were any discussions. There being none, **the motion passed.**

3. **Policy 4-20 – Full-Time Course Loads**

As a result of organizational changes, this policy has been updated to reflect the College's current organizational structure, including the appropriate office names and position titles. These revisions ensure the policy accurately identifies the responsible departments and personnel.

The Administrative Services Committee recommended that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed revised Policy 4-20 Full-Time Course Loads, as presented.

Chair Caldwell asked if there were any discussions. There being none, **the motion passed.**

4. **Policy 4-24 – Counseling Services**

As a result of organizational changes, this policy has been updated to reflect the College's current organizational structure, including the appropriate office names and position titles. These revisions ensure the policy accurately identifies the responsible departments and personnel.

The Administrative Services Committee recommended that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed revised Policy 4-24 Counseling Services, as presented.

It was noted that a handout outlining the Academic and Student Affairs organizational structure was provided to assist the Trustees in reviewing the reorganization of those areas.

Chair Caldwell asked if there were any discussions. There being none, **the motion passed.**

5. Policy 4-1 – Admissions

The proposed revision to this policy includes a title change for the Vice President from Student Affairs to Educational Partnerships and Enrollment Management as well as minor deletions and more detailed information of statements to more accurately reflect current practices.

As per Policy 1-1, Policy Development and Implementation, the Board of Trustees is responsible for approving all College policies, and as needed, the President is responsible for approving procedures to support College policies.

The updated procedures were approved by the College’s Executive Council, Policy Review Committee, and ultimately the President to be effective July 1, 2026, to provide time to update student handbooks and guides in preparation for the fall 2026 semester.
The updated procedures are provided as information. No action was required.

6. Policy 4-16 Standards of Student Conduct

   As a result of organizational changes, this policy has been updated to reflect the College's current organizational structure, including the appropriate office names and position titles. These revisions ensure the policy accurately identifies the responsible departments and personnel.

   As per Policy 1-1, Policy Development and Implementation, the Board of Trustees is responsible for approving all College policies, and as needed, the President is responsible for approving procedures to support College policies.

   The updated procedures were approved by the College's Executive Council, Policy Review Committee, and ultimately the President to be effective July 1, 2026, to provide time to update student handbooks and guides in preparation for the fall 2026 semester.

   The updated procedures are provided as information. No action was required.

7. Policy 5-61 – Safe Student Performance in Educational Programs

   This policy/procedure was originally implemented in 2020 to provide guidance for student conduct and safety in lab, shop, or clinical components for educational courses and programs at the College.

   In many cases, the College's CARE Team is engaged in evaluating a student's conduct and safety-related matters. CARE stands for Conduct, Awareness, Response, and Encouragement.

   If a student is removed from a program or course of study for reasons such as conduct or safety, the procedures for re-applying for re-entry and evaluating their request were unclear.

   The revised re-application procedures provide greater clarity to what a student needs to do to apply for re-entry, and the revision further engages the CARE Team to assist in evaluating the student's request.

   As per Policy 1-1, Policy Development and Implementation, the Board of Trustees is responsible for approving all College policies, and as needed, the President is responsible for approving procedures to support College policies.

   The updated procedures were approved by the College's Executive Council, Policy Review Committee, and ultimately the President to be effective July 1, 2026, to provide time to update student handbooks and guides in preparation for the fall 2026 semester.

   The updated procedures are provided as information. No action was required.

E. ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Mr. Lee presented the following action and informational items, which were vetted during the Committee meeting held on August 10, 2026.

1. **Proposed Program – Associate in Applied Sciences Health Sciences**

   The College proposes to add the Associate in Applied Science in Health Sciences. This curriculum is designed to prepare students for success in healthcare by providing a strong foundation in courses essential for health practice while offering opportunities to earn stackable credentials in relevant healthcare roles. Coursework includes the use of current healthcare technologies, specialized health science competencies, and training within interdisciplinary teams while offering opportunities to earn stackable credentials that support career advancement in a healthcare setting. Nearly all courses offered as a part of this degree program are courses already offered at the College such as phlebotomy, nurse aide, anatomy/physiology, and general education courses.

   This program is being proposed for a few reasons:
   1. To create a more effective pathway for pre-healthcare program students (such as students trying to enter nursing, medical sonography, respiratory therapy, etc.). In this capacity, this program will be used instead of the Associate in General Education.

   2. To create a more effective pathway for College Now students to complete pre-requisites for healthcare programs and certificate-level certifications (such as nurse aide and phlebotomy).

   3. To allow students who do not enter other healthcare programs to complete this credential to become a Patient Care Technician, a highly needed healthcare position, at local hospitals.

   <u>IMPLICATION FOR BUDGET</u>
   The majority of the courses are already offered at the College as a part of other programs. This program will require three courses not currently offered at the College, however, the College has ample faculty credentialed to teach these three courses. Therefore, no additional full-time faculty are needed to support the addition of this program.

   The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommended that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approves the Proposed Program-Associate in Applied Sciences, Health Sciences as presented.

   Chair Caldwell asked if there were any discussions. There being none, **the motion passed.**

2. FY 2025-26 Compliance Review

   A compliance review was conducted at Gaston College by the North Carolina Community College System to ensure data used to allocate state funds among the community colleges were reported accurately for Summer Semester 2024 through Spring Semester 2025. This review is conducted pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 115D-5(m).

   A finding was noted in the review of continuing education records in the occupational extension sample of classes. Documentation showed a finding with non-compliant hours reported for budget FTE exceeding 1% of the total number of hours.

The finding, however, was minimal at 1.04% of the total number of Workforce Continuing Education hours and 1.34% of the total number of College and Career Readiness course hours, which falls under the 5% threshold for a material finding. The finding did not warrant a reversion of funds.

Recommendations include implementing internal controls and consistent documentation. Recommendations also included a review of class hours beginning with Summer 2024 and making necessary adjustments allowed based on the three-semester grace period.

A full report was provided in the Board material.

This is an informational item; no action required.

E. FINANCE AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Chair Caldwell presented the following action and information items, which were vetted during the Committee meeting held on August 10, 2026.

1. **FY 2026-27 Salary Increases and Bonuses**

For FY 2026-2027 biennium, the NC legislature appropriated recurring funds to support a 3% salary increase for state-funded community college employees as well as a one-time bonus of $1,750 for eligible employees with annual base salaries of $65,000 or less, and a one-time bonus of $1,000 for eligible employees with annual base salaries greater than $65,000

Legislative Salary Increase

- Applies to state-funded full-time and part-time regular employees on a prorated basis, including college presidents and full-time faculty by education level.
- Employees employed on 6/30 are eligible for the 3% increase, even if they retire or resign after 6/30.
- Colleges can process the increases without waiting for State Board approval.

Bonuses

- Employees employed on 6/30 are eligible, including those leaving before payment.
- Bonus is prorated for split-funded employees; categorical funds should not be charged.
- Bonus eligibility is based on 6/30 salary; prorated for part-time employees.
- Employees transferred without a break in service are eligible.
- Threshold salary for bonus tiers is based on 6/30 salary, not post-increase salary.
- Payment can be made in September or October.

While non-state funded employees are not mentioned in Session Law 2026-41, management proposes funding salary increases and bonuses from the employee's funding source or administrative overhead funds, if needed.

Gaston County-funded positions also receive the 3% salary increase and bonus. Although Gaston County did not increase its operating budget allocation to the College for FY 2026-27, the College has identified sufficient funding to support the salary increases and related bonuses through strategic allowable budget reallocations totaling approximately $607,000. Specifically, costs associated with the Textile Center have been shifted to the new $5.8 million recurring State appropriation, and eligible Campus Security expenditures have been reassigned to the Campus Access Fee budget. As a result, the College can fund these compensation enhancements without requiring additional county support.

Lincoln County-funded positions will also receive the 3% salary increase and bonus. Lincoln County approved a 4% ($12,970) increase in its operating budget allocation to the College for FY 2026-27. The cost of the proposed salary increase and bonus for Lincoln County-funded positions can be funded within the approved budget increase.

IMPLICATION FOR BUDGET

	Fund Sources			
Estimated	**State**	**County**	**Institutional**	**Estimated Total**
Legislative 3% increase with benefits	$980,258	$75,386	$74,234	$1,129,878
Legislative Bonus with benefits	$645,636	$79,122	$55,164	$779,922

The Finance and Facilities Committee recommended that the Board of Trustees approve a 3% salary increase for all eligible full-time faculty and staff in State-funded, county-funded, and institutionally funded positions who meet the established eligibility requirements. The salary increase shall be effective July 1, 2026.

The Finance and Facilities Committee further recommended that the Board of Trustees approve a one-time bonus of $1,750 for eligible employees with annual base salaries of $65,000 or less, and a one-time bonus of $1,000 for eligible employees with annual base salaries greater than $65,000, subject to applicable payroll taxes and deductions.

Chair Caldwell asked if there were any discussions. There being none, **the motion passed.**

2. Mileage Increase Effective 8-1-26

Effective July 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 76 cents per mile. Gaston College will increase the mileage rate from 72.5 cents per mile to the new rate of 76 cents per mile established by the IRS effective August 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.
No significant impact on budget is anticipated. This was an informational item; no action required.

3. Kimbrell Fiber Innovation Center-Machine Installation Summary

The Board received a spreadsheet update on machinery installations at the Kimbrell Fiber Innovation Center. Six machinery hookup projects are underway or nearing completion, including work involving the chiller, reactor room, yarn room, extrusion room, and other equipment areas. Funding for the installations has already been secured, and no additional budget allocation is required.

This was an informational item; no action required.

4. Supplemental Budget Allocations

The College's net increase in Supplemental State Budget Allocations for the month of June 2026 was $288,924. Customized Training did not receive any additional allocations in June 2026.

This item was presented for informational purposes only. No action required.

GASTON COLLEGE
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026
Supplemental Budget Allocation

PURPOSE / VOC	DESCRIPTION	STATE CURRENT
P 361	Customized Training	$ -
Various	Faculty Recruitment and Retention	$ 288,518
530/80	Child Care Reallocation	$ 406
	TOTAL	$ 288,924

5. Financial Reports

The Board reviewed financial reports covering state, county, and student fee expenditures through June 30, 2026.
The College reported that approximately 95.4% of the overall state budget had been expended.
Mr. Whiteman emphasized the importance of careful monitoring and stewardship of state funds and reported that the College is not experiencing a budget deficit.
The College expects to carry forward approximately:

- $567,701 in performance-based funding;
- $307,767 in reserves;
- $1,064,004 in equipment; and
- $54,202 in Instructional Resources

TOTAL: $1,993,674

Mr. Whiteman noted that carryforward funds are important because some major institutional purchases cannot be funded adequately from a single year's allocation.
County expenditure reports for Gaston and Lincoln Counties, as well as student fee reports, were also reviewed.
The Board was informed that the Fire Training Facility generated a profit during the fiscal year following operational and financial improvements. Although the facility continues to have a cash deficit resulting from prior years, Mr. Whiteman expects to continue working toward eliminating that deficit.

The Board received an overview of the College's invested cash balances. Several years ago, the Board authorized the College to invest cash that was not needed for immediate operations in order to build reserves for emergencies, future property purchases, and other needs outside normal operations.

Mr. Whiteman reported that the College strategically invests available cash in accounts and markets that provide competitive interest earnings while maintaining appropriate access to the funds. The Gaston College Foundation similarly invests funds in money-market and other investment accounts.

The Board reviewed the Health and Wellness Center account. The State of North Carolina appropriated approximately $60 million for the project. Management reported that significant architectural design and site-readiness work has been completed while carefully managing expenditures. Approximately $59.7 million remains available for construction.

The Board discussed the College's lost revenue reserve, which originated from federal COVID-19 relief provisions that allowed institutions to recover certain revenue losses resulting from decreased student activity during the pandemic.

Mr. Whiteman explained that the College had received reimbursement for certain revenues affected by reduced enrollment and student activity during COVID-19. A portion of the reserve was used during the current fiscal year to address items requiring cleanup from prior years. Mr. Whiteman stated that the goal is to preserve as much of the remaining reserve as possible.

This was for information only; no action required.

6. Capital Reports

Capital project reports in the Board packet were reviewed. The reports provided detailed information regarding project budgets, expenditures, scope, estimated completion dates, design phases, construction progress, and project status.

This was for information only; no action required.

7. Grant and Foundation Update

The Board reviewed the grants and foundation update in the Board packet. The report included fundraising activity for annual funds, grants, athletics, capital projects, endowments, WSGE Radio, and new Foundation funds.
The Board noted that nearly $29 million in grants were pending in addition to grants that had already been awarded.

This was for information only; no action required.

G. SGA REPORT

Mr. Buckner gave the following SGA update:

<u>SGA Sponsored Events</u>
On July 15, 2025, the SGA sponsored pizza and sweet treats for students of the Lincoln Campus Rhino Rush registration event. On July 22, 2025, the SGA sponsored pizza and sweet treats from Anna's Sweet Treats mobile truck for student participants during the Dallas Campus Rhino Rush registration event.

<u>SGA Training</u>
On the week of August 3, 2026, the 2026-2027 SGA student leaders and the SGA advisor met on the Dallas and Lincoln campuses for a week-long summer training session. Topics discussed included best practices in planning student events on campus, understanding the individual and team roles of the SGA members, Robert's Rules of Order, leadership skills, goal setting, and team building activities.

<u>2026-2027 SGA Initiatives</u>
During the summer training session, the SGA discussed our team dynamics and goals for the new year. From these conversations, maintaining high attendance at student events, providing students information on resources and effective organization of event supplies were identified as team goals. The SGA will use these goals within its subcommittees of Campus Activities, Public Information and Research Committee to investigate student ideas and implement effective campus events.

Chair Caldwell thanked Mr. Buckner for his report and welcomed his continued participation.

H. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Updates:

- Convocation is being held for faculty and staff on Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in the Myers Center Multipurpose Room. Trustees are invited to attend this “kick-off” to the Fall semester meeting.
- The NCACCT Leadership Seminar is Scheduled for August 26-28 in Greensboro. Those attending were provided a travel summary with confirmation numbers listed, along with the agenda. Please also note that Dr. Hauser and Robin will be hosting attendees and any spouses who will be attending for dinner on Thursday evening of the Seminar.
- September Committee Meetings will be on September 14 on the Dallas Campus in Myers Center Section B, and the Board of Trustees Meeting on September 21 will be held on the Lincoln Campus.
- The annual Rhino Run will be held on September 26. Trustees were asked to help spread the word.
- An updated Gaston College Quick Facts Sheet was provided. This is a great tool to have when advocating for the College.
- An updated Trustee Contact sheet was provided to the Trustees
- Events coming up:

Convocation	August 20, 2026	8:30 a.m.	Myers Center
2026 NCACCT Leadership Seminar	August 26, 2026	TBD	The Grandover-Greensboro
Committee Meetings	September 14, 2026	1:00-4:00 p.m.	Myers Center, Section B
Board of Trustees Meeting	September 21, 2026	3:00 p.m.	Lincoln Campus
Rhino Run-5K/2K Walk	September 26, 2026	7:30 a.m.	Dallas Campus

I. PRESIDENT’S REPORT/REMARKS

President Hauser encouraged trustees to attend Convocation and described the upcoming academic year as another significant year for Gaston College. He praised faculty and staff for their accomplishments during the previous year and for their work implementing the College’s new strategic plan.

Manufacturing Innovation Institute
The President highlighted the public announcement of the Manufacturing Innovation Institute and described it as a historic development for Gaston College. Gaston College will be the only community college in the nation associated with a manufacturing innovation institute.

The President reported that planning is underway for a potential ribbon-cutting ceremony in December, with the nonprofit organization expected to be established by that time.

Health and Wellness Center
The President reported that planning for the Health and Wellness Center is progressing, with the College continuing to work with architects toward construction. A groundbreaking is anticipated in December or January.

Enrollment Update

Dr. Nichols provided an update on fall enrollment. Traditional Career and College Promise (CCP) enrollment was approximately 75–80 students higher, while another CCP category was down approximately 115 students because of a cost-saving scheduling decision made by Gaston County Schools. Dr. Nichols noted that students are continuing to enroll and that admissions and advising activity remains strong.
The President noted that the College has experienced enrollment growth for approximately five consecutive years and may be approaching a plateau in traditional curriculum enrollment. However, growth in workforce development and continuing education is expected to help offset any plateau.

Workforce and Continuing Education
Mr. Buchanan reported significant growth in workforce and continuing education. Summer FTE was more than 20% above the College's previous summer record.

He also reported that customized training now generates FTE under the Propel NC changes. Based on the previous year's activity, approximately 40 FTE may now be recognized from customized training that previously did not generate reimbursement. Small Business Center activity also now generates FTE.

The College has also received approval related to workforce Pell opportunities in six identified areas, which is expected to create additional opportunities for students.

Student Headcount and FTE Strategy
Management reported that the College entered the 2025–2026 academic year with an unduplicated headcount of approximately 18,725 students, including curriculum, workforce development, and basic skills students.

The College's long-term goal is to reach 20,000 students. Dr. Hauser expressed confidence that the College is moving toward that goal and explained that increasing workforce development activity is part of the strategy to maintain overall FTE and funding as traditional curriculum enrollment potentially reaches a plateau.

The President provided updates on several initiatives, including:

- The $20 million EDA grant application for a Workforce Development Center at the Lincoln Campus, for which the College remains under consideration;
- The de-escalation center, where concrete work is underway; and
- Continued development of the College's facilities and workforce infrastructure.

The President thanked the Board for its leadership and support and emphasized the importance of trustees seeing the results of their work when students graduate.

Truck Driver Training Program
A trustee asked for an update on the College's truck driver training partnership.
Mr. Buchanan reported that orientations are held approximately every two weeks and that the program has had its first participant successfully complete training. The program has a relatively significant upfront cost but offers a strong return on investment within approximately four to five weeks.
The College is working with NCWorks to connect students with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding that could subsidize or eliminate the cost of training for eligible students.

Management noted that NCWorks staffing has recently improved, which should help increase participation.

The College was also recently notified that its application for CDL truck-driving training through Workforce Pell had been approved, which is expected to provide an additional funding pathway for students.

Trustees discussed the public announcement of the Manufacturing Innovation Institute and expressed enthusiasm about its significance to Gaston College, Gaston County, North Carolina, and the nation. The Chair noted that Gaston College participated in a consortium with nationally recognized universities, including NC State, Georgia Tech, Drexel University, and the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He emphasized that the consortium supported Gaston College taking a leadership role in the initiative.

The Board expressed appreciation for the work that led to the announcement and anticipation about the institute's future impact.

J. ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr. Fletcher moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Shawnya Gore **Judge Jesse Caldwell, Chair**

Guyann Howe, Recording Secretary

(College Seal)