

Agenda
Southwest Technical College
Board of Trustees Meeting
January 15, 2026; 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Southwest Tech Boardroom

Board of Trustees

Chairperson: Darin Gifford (Iron County Business Representative); Kristie McMullin (Iron County Business Representative); Sharon Corry (Iron County Business Representative), Paul Terry (Iron County Business Representative); Melinda Pfundstein (Iron County Business Representative); Beverly Burgess (SUU Trustee); Jarad Brinkerhoff (Kane School District); Kenneth Ure (Beaver School District)

Invited Guests:

Commissioner Landward, Eric Petersen, Gail Goodman, Paige Smith

I. Agenda Items by Chairperson

A. Call to order

A quorum was confirmed. Chairperson, Darin Gifford called the meeting to order at 12:06pm

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Darin Gifford led the Pledge of Allegiance

C. Approval of the Agenda

Melinda Pfundstein motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Paul Terry seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Approval of the November 6, 2025 Minutes

Paul Terry made a motion to approve the November 6, 2025 meeting minutes, Kristie McMullin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Darin Gifford Visit with Governor Spencer Cox

Darin Gifford shares his visit with the governor in November, discussing the governor's vision for higher education. The governor emphasizes the importance of a core education foundation and criticizes the "choose your own adventure" approach to education. The governor highlights the crucial role of tech schools in Utah's economy and the importance of the work being done at Southwest Tech.

II. Special Item:

A. Department Highlight - Gail Goodman, Director of Health Professions & Public Safety

Gail Goodman discusses the surgical technology program, funded through the Talent Ready program and additional industry funding. The program has run two cohorts, with a 100% placement rate and a 100% pass rate on the national exam.

B. Student Presentation - Paige Smith

Paige graduated in November. Her time in the course was one of the most challenging and transformative experiences of her life. During the program, she completed 360 externship hours, gaining valuable hands-on experience. In her final months, she earned a position on the President's Council and secured a job. Although it wasn't always easy - especially since not everyone was supportive - she persevered and is proud of what she accomplished. She is especially grateful for the instructors and the school, who were supportive and helpful throughout her journey. Gail Goodman explains how the testing center manager, Heather, was involved in pinning a student during the ceremony. The story highlights the impact of the testing center staff on students' educational experiences.

II. Action Items:

A. Approval of Discontinuance of Commercial Driver's License Class A (Richfield) - Scott Leavitt

Scott Leavitt discusses the transition of the commercial driver's license program from Richfield to Kanab. The program will be discontinued in Richfield, and equipment will be moved to Kanab to start a new program. The new program in Kanab will use the same equipment and processes, with plans to start in the next few months. Darin Gifford asks for a motion to approve the discontinuance of the commercial driver's license program in Richfield. Paul Terry motioned to approve the motion, and Jarad Brinkerhoff seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Closure of the Richfield Instructional Service Center - Scott Leavitt

Richfield did not charge for facility use; the program was housed on Snow College's campus, and we provided our own computers and equipment. In Kanab, we will use space in our existing building for the seven days of classroom instruction. All other instruction will take place in the semi-truck cab. For student testing, one of our Cedar City instructors—who are state-certified third-party examiners—will travel to Kanab, as was done in Richfield. Instructors rotate testing duties, and the teaching instructor cannot administer the student's driving test. Kristie McMullin motioned to approve the motion, and Melinda Pfundstein seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Consent Agenda Approval

The consent agenda is approved. Paul Terry motioned to approve the motion, and Kenneth Ure seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Discussion Items:

A. Procurement Exception - Brennan Wood

Clarissa Crosby provided additional details on the financial components of the RFP. It was noted that Kearny Wood is the manufacturer, and shared that our welders have worked with Wood products previously, including at the airport site. Brennan Wood emphasized the importance of transparency. Paul inquired about any potential conflict of interest, and Brennan Wood recommended including a formal statement confirming that no conflict exists. Kristie McMullin asked about potential injury risks. The project was reviewed by an engineer to address safety concerns, and the foundation has been over-engineered as an added precaution. Gail Goodman

added that all training will include a designated safety officer and a medically trained individual onsite to respond to any emergencies.

B. Tuition Increase Process - Brennan Wood & Clarissa Crosby

Brennan Wood initiates a discussion on the possibility of a tuition increase, considering the political landscape and legislative expectations. Commissioner Landward provides insights on the system office's perspective and the legislature's view on tuition increases. The discussion explores the pros and cons of a one-time 5% increase versus a series of smaller increases over several years. Paige Smith shares her experience with financial aid and the impact of additional funding from AmeriCorps. The conversation highlights the importance of financial aid and the challenges of increasing tuition without affecting student enrollment. The discussion also touches on the broader implications of tuition increases on student services and program capacity.

C. Student of the Year Awards Week 4/28 - 4/30 (Navigator Night of Excellence) - Brennan Wood

Brennan Wood introduces the Student of the Year program, which started 10 years ago. The program initially had seven department students of the year, with one overall system Student of the Year. Brennan Wood proposes changing the program to three nights, each focusing on different areas: health professions and public safety. Each night will feature outstanding students and industry partners, with directors responsible for their respective nights. The new format aims to highlight more students and will be less formal compared to previous years. Brennan Wood invites board members to attend the events, emphasizing that attendance is not mandatory for all three nights. Darin Gifford supports the idea of highlighting more students through the new format.

D. USHE Technical College Dedicated Capital Project_STECH Project- Brennan Wood

Brennan Wood provides an update on the USHE Technical College dedicated capital projects. The original cost estimate for the project was \$5.8 million. The system office identified \$7 million from SB 102 funds that were not allocated last year. Southwest Tech was ranked as the number one priority, with a proposal to reduce the building size from 8000 to 4000 square feet. The reduced size will allow the project to move forward, focusing on essential facilities like classrooms and shops.

E. Investment Report - Clarissa Crosby

Clarissa Crosby provides an update on the investment report, noting that the balances of cash accounts are included in the board packet. Brennan Wood and Darin Gifford thank the board members for their comments and opinions, emphasizing the importance of their input. Darin Gifford appreciates the state's support and funding, which has been crucial for the institution's progress.

IV. Adjourn

The Meeting was motioned to adjourn at 1:39pm.

Next Board Meeting: March 5, 2026 at 12pm in the Southwest Technical College Boardroom.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION DURING PUBLIC MEETINGS

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals needing special accommodations (including auxiliary communicative aids and services) during this meeting should notify Valerie Stringfellow (970) 376 - 4793, three days prior to the meeting. In accordance with the Open and Public Meeting Act, this meeting is being recorded. Trustees may participate in a Board of Trustees meeting by means of electronic media.

Upcoming Events and Informational Items:

- A. January 19 - Martin Luther King Day, Campus Closed
- B. January 20 - First Day of General Session of the Legislature
- C. February 16 - President's Day, Campus Closed