**GREAT BASIN COLLEGE**
**Institutional Advisory Council**
**1500 College Parkway**
**Elko, Nevada 89801**
**Wednesday, November 19, 2025 7:00 am (PST)**

**Call to Order and Roll Call**
Meeting was called to order by Chair Terri Clark.

**Roll Call**
**GBC IAC Members Present:** Terri Clark**,** Barbara Kidwell-Gallagher, Dave Roden, Stacy Smith, Adam Young, Caroline McIntosh, Russ Klein
**GBC IAC Members Absent:** Michelle Hammond, Tim Sutton, Billie Crapo
**GBC and NSHE Staff Present:** Kiah Beverly, Joe Gent, Amber Donnelli,
Sarah Negrete, John Evans, Mary Doucette, Karl Stevens, David Stoddard, Leslie Maple, Abel Del Real-Nava, Christopher Salute, and Sheymane Pitts

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

## Approval of the Minutes- September 25, 2025

**A motion to approve the September 25, 2025 minutes was made by Dave Roden seconded by Barbara Kidwell-Gallagher. Passed unanimously.**

## President's Update

**President Amber Donnelli** noted that several college initiatives are continuing, as outlined in the materials previously distributed, and highlighted only key updates due to time constraints.
She shared that long-serving board member John Tierney has retired after many years of dedicated service, including roles as chair and vice chair. His departure leaves a substantial vacancy, and the college is now looking to fill three open board seats in Elko. Members were encouraged to consider moving from advisory roles to board service or to recommend strong candidates from the community before the next meeting.
The President also addressed upcoming media reports regarding the Nevada System of Higher Education's financial outlook. NSHE is facing a projected $46.5 million deficit, primarily due to the loss of state funding that previously covered 80% of the approved cost-of-living increases for employees. For Great Basin College, this results in a $695,000 shortfall.
In response, NSHE leadership has discussed possible solutions, and there is collective support—including from the presidents and Chancellor—for a tuition increase. The proposal going to the Board of Regents in December recommends:

- 9% increase for lower-division (100–200 level) community college courses
- 12% increase for upper-division (300–400 level) community college courses

- Universities will consider a flat 12% increase across all levels
  These changes would be phased in over three years.

Even with the phased increases, GBC anticipates a deficit of $542,000 in year one and $308,000 in year two, before moving into a slight positive balance in year three. The President emphasized that GBC currently has the lowest tuition in the system—about $200 per credit—and very few additional fees, so the college will remain the most affordable institution even after the increases.

She also explained challenges with the small institution factor in the funding formula. Although the factor was raised from $30 to $40 per FTE, it is treated as a one-time allocation rather than ongoing funding, creating additional gaps. GBC will advocate in the next legislative session for this funding to become permanent and fully supported. While increasing tuition is a difficult step, it is necessary for the financial sustainability of a small institution.

The college has been meeting with student government groups for two months to discuss the proposal. Students expressed thoughtful concerns, especially regarding how phased-in tuition percentages apply when students take both lower- and upper-division courses in the same term. Tuition will be assessed per course, based on course level and the applicable year of the phase-in.

On a positive note, the President reported that the recent Northwest Commission accreditation visit went exceptionally well. Reviewers—both recently retired presidents—praised the college's faculty, staff, administration, and students, noting strong collaboration and alignment across the institution. They reported no findings and shared that, if commendations were permitted during off-cycle visits, GBC would have received several.

The President also highlighted last week's NV Energy–supported "Power of Communications" event, which focused on mental health awareness and included both high school and college students. The event provided an opportunity to showcase the BetterMind counseling platform, which offers students 24/7 access to licensed counselors for up to six sessions. Usage has grown significantly—from 4 students three years ago to 127 students this year, many seeking support for stress, anxiety, and general well-being. The event was very well received, and the college appreciates NV Energy's partnership.

The college's annual town hall meetings will begin soon, with the first scheduled for December 2 in Pahrump. These sessions, held primarily in December and January, allow the college to share metrics, financial data, and program updates with community members.

Finally, the President noted that invitations for the college's holiday celebrations at each location would be distributed later in the morning and encouraged members to join faculty and staff for seasonal festivities.

**VP of Academic Affairs Report**

**VP Sarah Negrete** shared the following updates:

Several new academic initiatives are currently being developed, all of which will still need formal approval by the Board of Regents. Three programs in particular are moving forward:

**Revised Paramedic Skills Certificate**

The former 10-credit paramedic certificate has been restructured into two 4-credit courses and one 3-credit course. Although this increases the total credits by one, the revision adds a critical-care component that will qualify students for additional certifications. The smaller course segments also make the program more manageable and accessible for students compared to enrolling in a single 10-credit class.

**Project Management Degree**
In response to strong interest from industry partners, the college is developing a project management degree. This program will serve students completing skilled-trade programs as well as those with an A.A. or A.S. who want to continue toward a bachelor's degree. Because project management is widely applicable across fields, it is expected to benefit a broad range of graduates.

**B.A.S. in Behavioral Health (SB165)**
Through SB165 funding—shared with UNLV and UNR—GBC is creating a Bachelor of Applied Science in Behavioral Health that leads to licensure as a Behavioral Health Wellness Practitioner. Since this is a licensed profession, the curriculum is being developed in coordination with regulatory and licensing boards. The bill also calls for a "micro-credential," but in education this functions as an endorsement. GBC's Education Department is working with the Nevada Department of Education to establish a behavioral-health endorsement for both current teachers and future educators. This will equip educators with additional skills to support students facing behavioral or mental-health challenges. The endorsement will be available statewide once approved. GBC received **$1 million** in funding for this initiative, with most of the funds dedicated to student scholarships and tuition support for those entering the program.

**Vice President of Finance & Operations Report**
The VP reported that $300,000 has been allocated to the Strategic Resources Committee, funding made available through recent savings from vacant positions. The committee has been restructured so that centers and deans may now bring forward funding requests throughout the year, rather than only during a single annual cycle.
Approved projects so far include:

- New flooring for the Ely center
- Painting and new flooring for the Pahrump center
- A Health Sciences classroom retrofit in Winnemucca, with staff still determining which classroom will be updated

On the Elko campus, multiple renovation projects continue. The room currently being used for the meeting is one example of the recent upgrades. Berg Hall is expected to reopen in approximately two months, following a seven-month closure for renovation. Progress has accelerated now that key contractors have been approved through NSHE.

**Hiring Updates:**
The college continues to fill academic and administrative positions. The new Winnemucca Director is already on site. A Political Science instructor is expected to begin in January, pending final interviews. A new Biology instructor position has also just been posted.

Capital Improvement Projects (CIP):
The college is working with the state to finalize contractor selection for upcoming work on sidewalks, parking lots, and HVAC upgrades in Lundberg and McMullen Hall.

**IT Upgrades:**
The first round of Zoom classroom upgrades is complete, though some technical adjustments are still underway. A second round of upgrades is being prepared for submission. Additionally, campus walk-throughs revealed inadequate wireless coverage across multiple sites. All necessary wireless access points have been ordered, and installation will occur over the next few months.

Regarding the $300,000 Strategic Resources Committee funds, the VP confirmed the funds have already been transferred to the committee. Some projects have been approved, and additional proposals will be reviewed at the committee's meeting next Wednesday.
This committee is an internal GBC committee established by the President last year to create a structured process for staff to recommend project needs prior to review at President's Council.

**Vice President of Student Services Report**

**VP Matt Aschenbrener** introduced himself and noted that this is only his third week in the role, so his update is brief. He highlighted three primary areas of focus since beginning his appointment.
First, he has been reviewing campus housing and working on the development of a five-year housing plan. Because student housing must be financially self-sustaining, there is a need to address significant deferred maintenance and improve overall facility quality. This plan will also include more accurate projections of occupancy to ensure long-term stability.
Second, he has begun developing a comprehensive enrollment plan. This work includes assessing where and how the college recruits, identifying key student populations, and determining which programs have capacity for growth. While some academic areas are already at or near full capacity, others present strong opportunities for expansion, making this an important initiative for the college's future.
Third, the VP shared that he will be supervising the center directors. He noted that it was good to see Abel, who is in his first days on the job, and shared that he visited the Ely center on Monday. He looks forward to visiting more centers—particularly in the spring—to better understand their operations and strengthen community connections.

**Foundation and Communications/Marketing Update**

**Leslie Maple** (Executive Director) provided updates from both the Foundation and the Communications and Marketing teams.

**Foundation Update**

She began by highlighting the recent Power of Connection event, supported by NV Energy. While NV Energy has consistently supported scholarships, it had been several years since the Foundation received grant funding from them. The $15,000 grant supported the event and will also fund additional BetterMind access for students. Importantly, the event was hosted at all center locations, advancing the Foundation's goal of deeper community engagement across the region.
The Foundation has finalized its annual events calendar and is confirming dates for the upcoming Golf Classic. Once finalized, dates will be distributed early to encourage board and community participation. She also noted that the team is preparing its annual reports for both the Board of Regents and the Foundation Board, along with new year-end and planned-giving materials. The Foundation plans to partner more closely with local CPAs and legal professionals to promote planned giving opportunities.
Recent philanthropy has shown strong momentum:

- Jarbidge Community Association donated $50,000, establishing two endowed scholarships: one for CTE/skilled trades students and one for Health Sciences students (outside of nursing).
- Orla Mining contributed $100,000 to help support instructor salary needs in Industrial Maintenance, enabling an additional hybrid course section designed for working adults.
- Elko Federal Credit Union provided $8,500, extending the college's BetterMind subscription. This organization previously helped launch the platform through seed funding.

The Foundation is also cultivating several new opportunities, including:

- A potential $100,000 grant to support electric vehicle curriculum within the diesel program; an application was submitted this week.
- Renewed funding from Nevada Gold Mines to continue the Great Basin Indian Archives project.
- Support for a potential expansion of the Child and Family Center.
- Early planning for a capital campaign tied to future Winnemucca campus expansion efforts.

The pending post-event gift from NV Energy will also help sustain BetterMind services for students.

**Communications and Marketing Update**

The Communications team has filled two long-standing vacancies with the hiring of a new Communications Manager, Ray Demesa, who officially joined full-time on November 1. Ray brings agency experience, graphic design and videography skills, and prior higher education experience at an arts college in Pasadena. He is already engaged in several projects and will travel to Pahrump for the upcoming town hall, where he will also begin producing program- and student-focused video content.

The team recently coordinated media outreach for the Nevada Tech Hub expansion project in Winnemucca. Coverage appeared in the Winnemucca and Elko newspapers and received a brief mention in Reno. Tech Hub representatives visited last week, toured facilities, and expressed strong satisfaction with progress.

Current marketing initiatives include:

- The spring enrollment campaign, featuring paid social media and radio advertising, developed in coordination with Deans and advisors.
- Preparation for town halls, with events posted on social media and a request that board members share them within their networks.
- Promotion of the MTC (Maintenance Training Cooperative) Scholarship Program, with recruiters presenting weekly in local schools.
- Ongoing work on the branding refresh, with new policies and guidelines expected in January.
- A major project: a complete redesign of the college website. The new site is scheduled for a late January launch. Content preparation begins this week and will continue through the holiday period. The new platform will significantly improve marketing and recruitment capability, aligning more closely with the college's current identity and evolving needs.

The Executive Director noted that the current site's outdated architecture has presented challenges, but progress with the developer remains steady.

Additional Context Provided

A brief clarification was shared regarding MTC (Maintenance Training Cooperative):

- Students receive $6,200 in scholarship support for programs such as diesel, welding, electrical, industrial maintenance, and instrumentation.
- Last year, 176 students applied, and 92 were funded.
- Eleven industry partners support the program, with Nevada Gold Mines as the largest contributor.
- Participating students can also enter an apprenticeship program earning $21/hour on weekends.

**Advisory Council Member Reports**
**Barbara Kidwell-Gallacher** shared that she did not have a formal report but expressed how impressed she continues to be with the growth and success of Great Basin College. She commended the dedication of faculty and staff and noted how remarkable the institution's progress has been over the years.
**Dave Roden** reported that new apartment construction is underway in Winnemucca to support the incoming workforce for the lithium project.
**Stacy Smith** had no formal report but thanked President Donelli for her recent visit to the Pahrump campus. She noted that the campus improvements look excellent and that the updated paint and renovations will further enhance the space.
**Caroline McIntosh** thanked John and Matt for attending the White Pine Small Business Fair earlier in the week. She also expressed appreciation for Jermaine's continued presence and engagement at events throughout White Pine County. She recognized the superintendents who attend regularly, noting that their participation demonstrates strong support.

**Superintendent Updates**
**Superintendent Adam Young** brought forward two questions:

1. An update on the *diesel technology instructor vacancy*, following the previous instructor's departure.
2. A request for a status update on the *planned construction program*, noting he was unable to meet during the earlier site visit.

He added that he did not expect the questions to be fully addressed during the meeting but wanted to raise them for follow-up.
He also shared that he will be retiring at the end of the school year, and that the White Pine School Board has selected Angie Angelopoulos—currently principal at David E. Norman and coordinator of the STEAM Academy—as his successor. He and Angie will work jointly through the transition, and he will remain in his role until June 30.
The Board congratulated him and thanked him for his years of service.

**Academic Affairs Response**
**Dean David Stoddard** provided updates in response to Superintendent Young's questions:

- **Diesel Technology Program:**
  The program has maintained continuity. A new instructor, Mike Larson, joined immediately after the departure of the previous hire. Larson brings extensive industry experience and has trained apprentices in diesel technology. He is teaching hydraulics, welding, and diesel courses through the end of the semester and will continue in spring. The college is also exploring adjustments to the program structure to better accommodate high school students who cannot commit to a half-day schedule due to sports or extracurricular activities.
- **Construction Program:**
  The construction program is on track to launch in January as a 10-credit skills certificate. It will run during the spring semester each year for 15 weeks. Instructor Caleb Summerall will teach the program during the winter/spring months and return to his construction work during the summer. Other centers— including Elko—have already expressed interest in adopting the same model due to strong regional demand.

Superintendent Young expressed his appreciation for the updates and emphasized the strength of the partnership behind these efforts.

**Chair Terri Clark** shared an invitation to the annual Sensory-Sensitive Santa event hosted by the hospital on December 6 at 1:00 p.m. The event is tailored for children who have sensory needs, providing a quiet, calm, low-stimulus environment for visiting Santa. Families from across the region attend, and she encouraged members to share the information with anyone who may benefit.
A superintendent requested that the event details be forwarded for distribution, and staff confirmed they would send it out.

**Superintendent Reports**
**Tate Else, Superintendent, Eureka County School District**
Superintendent Else began by recognizing Superintendent Young's upcoming retirement, noting that his departure will be a significant loss for the state. He described Young as both an exceptional educator and a valued colleague, and he expressed that he will be greatly missed. He looks forward to working with the newly appointed superintendent once he has the opportunity to meet her.
There are several statewide updates important for the committee:

- **Declining Enrollment Across Districts:**
  Fourteen school districts are currently experiencing declining enrollment. Under the pupil-centered funding plan, reduced student counts are beginning to create budget challenges, which may expand to additional districts. He noted that the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS) has raised questions about how unspent pupil-centered allocations should be handled—particularly whether these funds could be redistributed to increase per-pupil amounts statewide.

Contributing factors to declining enrollment include growth in homeschooling, the opening of new charter schools, and an overall decrease in the number of school-aged children. As an example, Eureka is graduating 32 seniors this year but has only nine incoming kindergarteners, with lower grade levels averaging fewer than 18 students and upper grades around 30.

- **Legislative and Licensing Changes:**
  Assembly Bill 335 and Senate Bill 460 introduce new statewide requirements that will impact both K–12 and higher education systems.
  - By 2030, all teachers will be required to earn an ELAD (English Language Acquisition and Development) endorsement. Regulations are still under development by the state.
  - By the 2028 school year, all primary teachers must complete approximately 15 hours of professional development in the *science of reading*. Details related to how this requirement will affect initial licensure and endorsement pathways are still being finalized.

**Institutional Perspective on Enrollment Trends**
President Donelli added that the college has been preparing for the projected "enrollment cliff," anticipated to affect higher education statewide around 2029–2033. To respond proactively, GBC is focusing on strategic initiatives including:

- Strengthening dual enrollment pathways to increase the number of high school students who continue directly into full-time college enrollment.

- Expanding outreach beyond traditional-aged students across Nevada.
- Promoting the college's 14 fully online bachelor's degrees as accessible options for adult learners.
- Implementing credit for prior learning opportunities to help returning students complete degrees more efficiently by receiving credit for relevant professional experience.

She noted that hearing Superintendent Else's enrollment numbers reinforces the importance of these strategies, as similar trends are impacting institutions across the system.

**Strategic Plan – Theme One: Access**

**Dean Mary Doucette** provided a brief overview of the college's newly approved strategic plan, focusing on Theme One: Access. She emphasized that the plan outlines how GBC advances its mission of *transforming lives through education*, particularly important given the college's role in serving rural Nevada.

She explained that accreditation standards require the college not only to set goals but also to demonstrate institutional effectiveness through measurable outcomes. This is accomplished through clearly defined objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs), which are reviewed and tracked annually.

Key objectives under Theme One include:

- Increasing overall enrollment:
  The goal is to reduce GBC's baseline enrollment gap by 3% each year, reaching 4,000 students by Year 5. Current enrollment stands at 3,631, placing the institution close to its first-year target.
- Expanding academic and workforce pathways:
  The college continues to broaden opportunities through dual credit, workforce programs, and new skill certificates such as diesel and construction. Dual enrollment numbers have increased significantly, supported by the addition of a dedicated dual enrollment coordinator.
- Enhancing student services to support retention and success:
  GBC has added a new retention coordinator and expanded outreach efforts. Investments in tutoring platforms, support tools, and other student success initiatives are tied directly to fulfilling strategic plan outcomes.

Dean Doucette noted that GBC compiles these results in its annual Mission Fulfillment Report, which provides evidence of progress and has been well received by accreditors.

President Donelli added that enrollment has grown by over 20% since fall 2023, rising from approximately 2,900 to more than 3,600 students. Dual enrollment alone increased by 300 students this year, reflecting strong partnerships across rural and urban school districts.

When asked how the Institutional Advisory Council could support further access initiatives, President Donelli emphasized continued collaboration with local school districts. The addition of staff such as the dual enrollment coordinator has strengthened partnerships, and access to high schools remains essential. She shared that dual credit opportunities are often a student's first exposure to college, and many first-generation students are now transitioning directly from high school into GBC programs because of these efforts. She thanked the Council for its continued support.

President Donelli emphasized the strong partnerships GBC has built with area school districts to expand dual enrollment opportunities. She noted that the addition of a dedicated Dual Enrollment Coordinator, Carrie Meisner, has made a significant impact. GBC has also hired a new staff member in Pahrump to further support outreach and coordination efforts.
She reiterated the college's goal of becoming fully integrated with local school districts and providing the programs and supports they need. In most districts, GBC already has a strong presence, and she expressed appreciation for the continued access schools provide to their campuses, teachers, and students.
President Donelli shared that dual enrollment is making a meaningful difference in students' educational pathways. Many students report that GBC courses—whether CTE-focused or general education classes such as English, history, or math—served as their first real introduction to college-level work. During a recent visit to a CTE class in Winnemucca, she observed that approximately 85% of the students were Hispanic, and nearly all identified as first-generation college students. The vast majority began their journey through dual enrollment, and many are now transitioning directly into GBC programs after high school.
She thanked the school districts and the Council for their continued support, emphasizing that these partnerships are directly contributing to increased access and student success.

**Roundtable Discussion – CTE Curriculum Review**
President Donelli opened a roundtable discussion by describing the ongoing curriculum review taking place within Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. She explained that several programs have not undergone a comprehensive review in many years, despite rapidly changing industry technology and practices. Because many CTE programs require expensive equipment—such as diesel trainers that cost up to $300,000 each—it is essential to ensure curriculum alignment before making major investments.
As part of the review, the college is also examining program credit totals. Comparable programs at CSN, TMCC, and WNC carry fewer credits and align more closely with the standard 60-credit associate degree. Many GBC programs currently exceed 70 credits, and some courses are grouped in large 8–11 credit blocks, making it difficult to evaluate credit for prior learning. The proposed revisions include both reducing total credits and restructuring large courses into smaller, more meaningful components.
President Dinelli acknowledged recent public criticism related to these efforts. She noted that pushback is coming from a small number of faculty who are concerned about losing overload pay—not base salary—as credits are reduced. She emphasized that GBC faculty recently received a 22% increase to their regular salaries, and the goal of this work is student success, not cost cutting. Industry partners and advisory boards have been supportive of the review and understand the need for modernization.
She also shared that media coverage has sometimes portrayed the effort inaccurately, with headlines such as "GBC Cuts CTE Credits," which do not reflect the full context. The college is being cautious about responding publicly, but may prepare an opinion piece if needed to clarify the purpose and benefits of the review. She encouraged board members to help share accurate information in their communities.
Dean Stoddard provided a specific example from the Industrial Maintenance program: introductory coursework in electrical and boiler systems does not translate into usable skills on mine sites, where those tasks must legally be performed by licensed specialists. Removing or

reducing these components will not diminish student preparedness; instead, it will better align training with workforce realities.

Sarah added that an audit of similar programs both in Nevada and in other states shows that most institutions operate within a lower credit range. Reducing credits will make GBC students more competitive and better positioned for employment while ensuring programs remain current and rigorous.

Board members expressed appreciation for the transparency and student-centered approach of the current administration, noting that this level of openness strengthens community partnerships.

In response to questions about negative feedback, President Donelli clarified that concerns have appeared mainly through the local newspaper, not social media, and that misunderstandings about credit reductions have contributed to the confusion.

Dean Stoddard concluded by explaining that after faculty complete the first round of curriculum review, the updated proposals will be brought back to industry partners early in the spring for validation. Industry will provide input—but not dictate final decisions—to ensure graduates are prepared for entry-level roles at the appropriate skill levels.

Caroline McIntosh expressed her appreciation for Dave's approach to incorporating industry feedback into curriculum planning. She noted that viewing industry as the "customer" and students as the "product" reframes the conversation in a helpful way, underscoring the importance of aligning educational programs with workforce needs. She also voiced support for adopting hybrid instructional models when appropriate to better serve industry partners.

Chair Clark agreed and emphasized that GBC has a strong, positive story to share—namely, that the college is working closely with industry to support student success. She encouraged the administration to develop talking points or brief messaging that board members can use when questions arise in their communities. Even short updates or positive media posts could help counter misunderstandings and ensure accurate information is shared. She invited suggestions from others on how best to distribute messaging across different regions, noting that timely communication can prevent the public from filling in gaps with assumptions.

She closed by thanking the administration for keeping the board informed, adding that she feels better prepared to answer community questions now that she understands the context of the curriculum review.

**New Business**

No new business was brought forward. There were no additional items from remote participants.

**Public Comment**

A final call for public comment was made, with no comments received.

The council confirmed that the next meeting will take place in three months (February 26th).

The meeting was adjourned with thanks to all attendees and appreciation for the informative reports presented.