

MINUTES
POLK STATE COLLEGE
District Board of Trustees Workshop
Thursday, February 5, 2026 – 1:00-5:15 p.m.
Polk State Center for Public Safety – Room 267

Chair Barnhart called the February 5, 2026, District Board of Trustees Workshop to order at approximately 1:10 p.m.

Members Present: Ms. Ann Barnhart, Ms. Ashley Bell Barnett, Mr. Kyle Davis, Mr. Steve Lester, Mr. Greg Littleton, Ms. Cindy Hartley Ross, and Mr. Ashley Troutman

Also in attendance: President Angela Garcia Falconetti, Board Attorneys Mr. Don Wilson and Mr. David Carmichael, Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Board Facilitator Dr. Jill Wakefield, and Office of the President Director Christine Lee

Purpose

To set the stage for another successful year at Polk State College. To review attributes of high performing boards and effective board/president teams. To discuss results of 2025 Board Self-Evaluation and review/revise Board Evaluation instrument. To review/revise President's Evaluation instrument. To have an annual discussion on how the Board can increase its effectiveness.

Workshop Outcomes

- Review board/president roles and responsibilities
- Review attributes of high performing boards
- Discuss results of 2025 Board Self-Evaluation and set 2-3 priorities for upcoming year
- Review/revise Board Self-Evaluation Instrument
- Review instruments for President's Evaluation and begin revising the evaluation process/instrument 2026-2027 and beyond

Welcome and Overview – Ann Barnhart, Chair

- Agenda Overview
- Comments from Chair Barnhart and President Falconetti
 - Chair Barnhart directed the Board members to ACCT Board Facilitator Dr. Jill Wakefield's bio contained in their workshop packets. She highlighted her expertise in community college leadership, both as a President and a Chancellor.
 - President Falconetti recommended that the Board consider three things when reviewing the presidential evaluation tool for the next president.
 - President and Board should understand expectations of the President and these goals should be communicated clearly. Goals should be embedded with the College's Strategic Plan.

- Evaluation tool should be aligned with the presidential contract.
- Encourage legal and the Board to communicate the outcomes of the evaluation in a workshop format rather than a regular board meeting. Support the president publicly.
- President Falconetti departed the workshop to attend a 2:30 p.m. virtual Special Meeting of the University of North Florida's Board of Directors.

Opening Exercise - Jill Wakefield, ACCT Facilitator

- Dr. Wakefield asked the Board members to create their own "coat of arms" to learn more about each other.
 - What is important to you
 - Your special skill, strength, or knowledge
 - A personal or professional success
 - A personal or professional project
 - A motto that guides your life
 - Each Board member presented their coat of arms to the group

Creating a High Performing Board - J. Wakefield

- Attributes of high performing boards.
 - Set standards for quality, ethics, and prudence
 - Define clear expectations for high quality programs
 - Require wise and prudent use of funds
 - Define expectations for student achievement
 - Set parameters to attract high quality personnel
 - Board members exhibit deep respect for the skills and experiences of all members
 - Board members advocate for their communities and are accountable to them
 - Board members focus on accountability in making strategic decisions
 - Board members have clearly defined roles and are committed to college
 - Board is responsible for creating and maintaining a spirit of cooperation
 - College mission, not individual interests, informs decisions
 - Board members exemplify ethical behavior and support board decisions
 - Board members cultivate healthy relationship with president and help them achieve goals
 - Board members participate in board training
 - Board members speak with one voice to the community and support board decisions
 - Board members attend board meetings fully prepared to discuss issues
 - Board assesses its own performance and that of the president
- Dr. Wakefield distributed a document containing attributes of high performing boards and asked Board members to separately rate themselves and the board as a whole.
 - The group discussed how the Board affirms the authority of the President and President affirms the authority of the Board.

- The value of evaluations was presented, particularly the value of a deep discussion of the results, including what is working well, points of discord, and areas for improvement.
- Many boards use the outcomes of the discussion as the focus of goals for the upcoming year.
- Review board/president roles/responsibilities
 - Adopt clear policies to guide evaluations
 - Follow your policies
 - Assess performance based on previously defined goals
 - Discuss results of the evaluation, strengths, and areas of improvement
 - Discuss resolutions for moving in unity
 - Use results to set annual goals for improvement
- Discussion is where “magic” happens
 - All board members participate
 - Ample time for thoughtful discussion
 - Review what is working well, points of discord, areas of improvement, and happy surprises
 - Use outcomes for defining the focus of Board for the coming year

Board Self-Evaluation

- Discussion of 2024 – 2025 Board Self-Evaluation.
Identify themes.
 - Dr. Wakefield summarized some of the responses from the Board’s 2025 Self-Evaluation. As they reviewed strengths and concerns, she asked them to identify some possible areas they might want to focus on as they look to the year ahead.
 - Strengths – 100% agree
 - DBOT reviews and approves mission, vision and goals
 - DBOT is knowledgeable about community and regional needs/expectations
 - Board members maintain good relationships with community leaders
 - DBOT effectively conducts annual evaluation of president
 - DBOT is knowledgeable about educational programs and services of the College
 - DBOT has Board rules that require employee due process and grievance procedures
 - DBOT understands the financial audits and recommendations
 - DBOT has a clear description of its roles and responsibilities
 - DBOT actively supports the College’s Foundation
 - DBOT holds an annual fall retreat, spring workshops and participates in professional development
 - DBOT evaluates itself
 - Concerns

- DBOT operates as a unit (86% disagree)
- Climate of trust exists between DBOT and president (80% disagree)
- DBOT meetings focus on policy rather than operation of College (66% disagree)
- DBOT assures a comprehensive review of board roles and College procedures (50% disagree)
- DBOT effectively represents the interests of the community (33% disagree)
- DBOT clearly delegates administration of College to president (33% disagree)
- To address some of the concerns the Board will strive for the following.
 - The Board has already established a process for a more rigorous review of board policies.
 - The Board reviewed strategies for building trust, such as establishing board norms, assuming positive intent, limiting side conversations, disagreeing respectfully, and reminding of one voice after decisions are made.
 - Another strategy is to create shared success by setting 2 - 3 clear short-term goals.
 - It was recommended that the board adopt 2 - 3 priorities for the upcoming year in response to the DBOT feedback.
- Chair Barnhart inquired from the Board if the current self-evaluation tool met the needs of the Board. The Board referred to the ACCT Board Self-Assessment Sample provided by Dr. Wakefield and compared it to its current survey tool.
 - The Board determined that it was time to adopt a new template to strengthen the process and better support the success of the president/institution.
 - It was noted that some questions could not simply be answered with “agree” or “disagree.” Recommended use of a Likert scale but using standard deviation to show differences and how spread-out responses are.
 - Number the items within the categories to make it easier for analysis and to compare year-to-year responses.
 - It was agreed that the results of the self-evaluation should be reviewed in a workshop format. Use the workshop to discuss scores and determine where they are as a Board.
 - Discussion was had regarding taking the results of the DBOT self-evaluation to a regular meeting to “accept” the results. To clarify, Board self-evaluations do not need to be “approved” by the Board, the results simply need to be presented during a meeting.
 - To ensure better preparedness for Board meetings, it was recommended to have 1:1 board briefings with president and each trustee (after the DBOT packet is distributed 7 days prior to the meeting). These could be in the form of phone calls.
 - Chair Barnhart requested Christine to schedule time on the interim president’s calendar to accommodate such briefings

- Several items from the current Board Self-Evaluation assessment were revised to strengthen the assessment as follows:
 1. **Statutory Responsibilities**
 - a. NO CHANGE: The DBOT understands its powers, duties, and responsibilities ascribed in Florida Statutes and SACSCOC requirements.
 2. **Board Organization**
 - a. REVISED: The DBOT operates as a unit. Suggested change: Board members work as a team to accomplish the work of the board.
 - b. NO CHANGE: Board members are free of any contractual, employment, personal, or familial financial interest in the institution.
 - c. NO CHANGE: Meeting agenda items contain sufficient background information and recommendations for the DBOT.
 - d. REVISED: Board members understand the DBOT's roles and responsibilities regarding the College's mission. Suggested change: The Board adheres to its roles and responsibilities.
 3. **Policy Role**
 - a. REVISED: DBOT meetings focus on policy and finance rather than the operation of the College. Suggested change: DBOT meetings focus on policy and finance and delegate operations to the President.
 - b. NO CHANGE: The DBOT reviews and approves the College's mission, vision, and goals.
 - c. NO CHANGE: The DBOT bases its decisions in terms of what is best for students and the community.
 - d. NO CHANGE: The DBOT assures a systematic, comprehensive review of board rules and College procedures.
 - e. REVISED: The DBOT relies on Board rules in making decisions. Suggested change: The DBOT has clarified the difference between its policy role and the roles of the President and staff.
 4. **Community Relations**
 - a. NO CHANGE: The DBOT effectively represents the interests of the community.
 - b. NO CHANGE: The DBOT is knowledgeable about community and regional needs and expectations.
 - c. NO CHANGE: Trustees maintain good relationships with community leaders.
 5. **Board-President Relations**
 - a. NO CHANGE: A climate of mutual trust and respect exists between the DBOT and College President.
 - b. NO CHANGE: The DBOT clearly understands its policy role and differentiates its role from those of the College President and staff.

- c. NO CHANGE: The DBOT effectively conducts an annual evaluation of the College President.
- d. NO CHANGE: The DBOT clearly delegates the administration of the College to the President.

6. College Operations

- a. NO CHANGE: The DBOT is knowledgeable about the educational programs and services of the College.
- b. NO CHANGE: The DBOT understands the fiscal condition of the institution and the annual budget.
- c. REMOVE: The DBOT is aware of the auxiliary services of the College (Book Store and Café).
- d. REVISED: The DBOT has Board rules that require fair employee due process and grievance procedures. Suggested change: The DBOT has adopted policies that require fair and equitable employment practices.

7. Institutional Performance

- a. NO CHANGE: The DBOT monitors the impact the College has on the community.
- b. NO CHANGE: The DBOT understands the financial audits and its recommendations.
- c. ADDITION: The Board reviews accountability reports including state and federal audits, enrollment student achievement reports, etc.

8. Board Leadership

- a. NO CHANGE: The DBOT has a clear description of its roles and responsibilities.
- b. NO CHANGE: Board members are prepared for DBOT meetings.
- c. NO CHANGE: Once a decision is made, Trustees cease debate and uphold the decision of the Board.

9. Advocating for the College

- a. NO CHANGE: The DBOT protects the College from undue influence by external persons or bodies.
- b. NO CHANGE: The DBOT actively supports the College's Foundation and fundraising efforts.
- c. ADDITION: Board members advocate for College interests to local, state and national agencies and legislatures.

10. Board Education

- a. NO CHANGE: New members receive an orientation to the DBOT and the institution.
- b. REVISED: The DBOT holds an annual fall retreat, workshops in the spring and has access to participate in state and national professional development. Suggested addition: Board members participate in professional development and have access to state and national training.
- c. NO CHANGE: The DBOT annually evaluates itself.

11. Overall Effectiveness

a. NO CHANGE: The DBOT is committed to the mission of the College, maintains public trust, advocates for the College, works well together, and supports the Board Chair and College President.

12. Please use the space below for any additional information you would like to provide to enhance the effectiveness of the DBOT roles and responsibilities.

Consider adding open-ended questions:

What are the DBOT's major strengths?

What are the DBOT's major accomplishments this past year?

What goals should the DBOT adopt for the upcoming year?

Do you have anything else you would like to share?

13. In compliance with Florida's public records law, please place your name in the box below.

- Presidential Search
 - Onboarding an interim president
 - Onboarding a permanent president
 - A screening committee selects finalists for the Board to review
 - Not all candidates who apply will be public record, only the finalists interviewed by the Board will be public

- Strategies to Build Trust
 - Be true to your word. Do what you say you will do.
 - Communicate effectively with others. Be clear about what you commit.
 - Make decisions carefully and thoughtfully.
 - Show people you care.
 - Be consistent. Take small steps.
 - Value relationships.
 - Be vulnerable.
 - Admit when you are wrong.

Break - At approximately 3:30 p.m., the Board paused its workshop to participate in a Special Board meeting. The Board resumed its workshop at approximately 4:15 p.m.

President's Evaluation Instrument

- Review current instrument & those used by other colleges
 - Sample presidential evaluation instruments from several Florida College System institutions were shared with the group for their review.
 - A sample presidential evaluation instrument template from the ACCT was also shared for review and input.

- Discuss revisions to the instrument/process
 - Takeaways from the discussion on revisions to the presidential evaluation instrument.

- The Board selected the ACCT Presidential Evaluation Template and revised several items to better reflect the College.
- The new presidential evaluation form will utilize a Likert scale and the “Don’t Know” column from the ACCT template will be deleted.
- Analysis will utilize standard deviation to assess how spread out the values are from the mean.
- Following is the ACCT template plus the Board’s recommended revisions.

LEADERSHIP

1. **NO CHANGE:** Possesses a vision, assists the board in establishing goals, and provides leadership for others to progress toward vision and goals.
2. **NO CHANGE:** Produces a collaborative, well-thought-out strategic plan for the institution and executes College planning and assessment activities for continuous quality improvement
3. **NO CHANGE:** Promotes inclusiveness in the College community and provides for involvement of students and staff in decision-making which affects them and exhibits respect for all groups in the process.
4. **NO CHANGE:** Promotes the College and advocates for its needs to appropriate federal and state level legislators and maintains College excellence with national and regional accrediting agencies.

ADDITION: Maintains and supports effective interactions with stakeholders at the College: Students, employees, College leaders, the Faculty Senate, and the Foundation Board. Actively takes part in campus and community activities.

ADDITION: Ensures well-maintained College facilities and seeks needed funding for future construction and renovation.

FINANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5. **NO CHANGE:** Provides sound fiscal management, including addressing budgetary matters in a way that achieves more efficient and effective use of resources without compromising student success.
6. **NO CHANGE:** Ensures accountability measures are in place to maintain quality and appropriate resource allocation to promote student success.
7. **REVISED:** Effectively interacts with the Board to develop/maintain funding sources and strategic goals.

Suggested revision: Effectively interacts with the Board to maintain funding sources and develop strategic goals.

ADD: Manages audit process and resolves audit issues, ensuring that the College is in compliance with state and federal laws.

ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

8. NO CHANGE: Ensures the overall quality and continuous improvement of instruction to meet student needs.
9. NO CHANGE: Provides effective leadership, establishes and maintains accessible and comprehensive student services that promote student success.
10. NO CHANGE: Presents and analyzes student success data appropriately and ensures multiple strategies are in place to strengthen efforts.

ADD: Work with College leaders to develop systems that provide students with smooth and easy enrollment processes.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT/FACILITIES

11. NO CHANGE: Ensures maintenance of all capital assets of the College.
12. NO CHANGE: Ensures technology is continuously upgraded and used as tool to promote greater student access, learning options, service efficiencies and productivity.
13. NO CHANGE: Provides effective leadership for implementing technological support of teaching, learning, and the operations of the College to accomplish the strategic goals and priorities.

ADD: Ensures well-maintained College facilities and seeks needed funding for future construction and renovation.

HUMAN RESOURCES

14. NO CHANGE: Ensures College compliance with employment and non-discrimination laws and regulations.
15. NO CHANGE: Provides leadership and resources for the professional development of staff and maintains own currency about developments in education and particularly community colleges.
16. NO CHANGE: Promotes a positive work environment for employees and seeks ways to continuously improve and creates an atmosphere with contributes to positive morale.

17. NO CHANGE: Accomplishes College's strategic short-term and long-term human relations goals and priorities.

RELATIONS WITH THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- 18. NO CHANGE: Offers professional advice to the Board based on thorough study, data analysis and sound educational principles on items requiring board action.
- 19. NO CHANGE: Carries out Board governance policies and College values in a conscientious manner.
- 20. NO CHANGE: Communicates with Board members to inform and resolve issues of interest.
- 21. NO CHANGE: For data-informed decision-making and accountability, prepares effectively for Board meetings.

Questions to be considered:

What were the highlights of the past year? Please note what was especially positive and areas that could be strengthened.

What areas should the College place special emphasis on next year and succeeding years? How might this be reflected in focused goals?

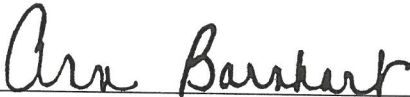
Any additional suggestions/comments:

Review of the Day/Next Steps

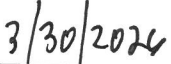
- The following were identified as priorities for the upcoming year:
 - 1. Increase review of Board policies and procedures.
 - 2. Onboard and support the interim president.
 - 3. Onboard and support permanent president, implementing new evaluation template and aligning it with the strategic plan and president's contract.
 - 4. Work with permanent president to begin planning for new strategic plan.

Adjournment:


Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:40 p.m.



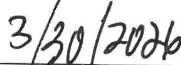
Ms. Ann Barnhart
DBOT Chair



Date



Anne B. Kerr, Ph.D.
Interim President



Date