

**MINUTES**  
**POLK STATE COLLEGE**  
**District Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Monday, January 26, 2026 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**JD Alexander Center – Room 202**

Dr. Angela M. Garcia Falconetti called the January 26, 2026, District Board of Trustees meeting to order at approximately 4:00 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

**Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**

**Special Recognitions**

Chair Barnhart introduced and welcomed the newest member of the Polk State District Board of Trustees, Mr. Kyle Davis.

Dr. Falconetti introduced Director of Enrollment and Curriculum Management Mike Long, who addressed the Board and introduced Keyshawn Tention, a former student of his. Tention started at Polk at Polk State College in 2023. He plans to enroll in the University of Florida's Engineering program and needs Calculus III and Physics II, so he is considered a non-degree seeking student at Polk State. His career path is to be a pharmaceutical engineer. He has maintained a grade-point average greater than 3.9 since starting at Polk State, is in the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honors Society, and has enjoyed his time at Polk State College.

Dr. Falconetti introduced and welcomed Executive Vice President for Human Resources and Legal Affairs, Mr. David Fugget.

Chair Barnhart presented a Polk State College Proclamation honoring Ms. Teresa V. Martinez for 16 years of distinguished service to the Polk State College District Board of Trustees. During her years of service on the District Board of Trustees, Ms. Martinez has seen historic growth including the opening of the Center for Public Safety, the Clear Springs Advanced Technology Center, and the continued expansion of access with the soon-to-open Haines City-Davenport Campus. Ms. Martinez expressed her appreciation for serving her alma mater alongside the Board, leadership, and this community, especially the students. She ended by stating that Polk State will always be a part of her life. Dr. Falconetti also thanked Ms. Martinez for her service to the College.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Chair Barnhart stated that there were items missing from the agenda, and she is adding DBOT Rule 1.03, Powers and Duties of the Board under Item 4 Unfinished Business.

The second item was from Mr. Troutman to have a timelier review of rules, and this item will be brought forward at the February DBOT meeting with comments from Mr. Fugett on the full process.

The third item was from Ms. Bell Barnett for a look back data request, but Dr. Mary Clark is not present today, so this item will be brought forward at the February DBOT meeting.

Mr. Littleton moved, seconded by Ms. Ross, to approve the agenda, with the additional revision, for January 26, 2026. All members voted affirmatively.

### **Approval of Board Minutes**

#### **a. December 8, 2025, Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Troutman moved, seconded by Mr. Lester, to approve December 8, 2025, Regular Board Meeting minutes. All members voted affirmatively.

### **Unfinished Business:**

#### **a. Virtual Link for Public Attendance**

Chair Barnhart shared that providing a virtual link for public attendance can technically be done. A poll of the 28 colleges was conducted; 15 responded and only 2 of the 15 are currently streaming their board meetings. Those two were Seminole State College and Valencia State College. None of them permit public comment from remote attendees, and the Florida Department of Education and the Florida College System do not maintain the data. Chair Barnhart asked for a motion to begin providing a virtual link for public attendance, keeping in mind that there would also be policies that need to be updated to do this. Mr. Fugett was asked to share his thoughts on providing a virtual link for public attendance. He mentioned some of the issues to be considered. A lot of the burden falls on the IT staff and being on point to switch mics off and on, timely, and to be sure that those who are speaking are on camera. Dr. Falconetti recommended that Mr. Fugett look at some other colleges across the state to see how they handle this so that if the Board decides to go through with streaming the DBOT meetings, they have all the details. Ms. Bell Barnett mentioned the Owl System as an option. The College already has this system in place if the Board decides to go forward. Ms. Bell Barnhart also added that the public would not have access for public comment, the Board would need to know when the meeting link will be archived, and that Board members need to be aware that when they walk into the room for a DBOT meeting, all conversations are public. Currently all DBOT meetings are recorded for purposes of transcription, and the audio is available through a public records request.

Ms. Barnhart made a revised motion to wait for more details and information on providing a virtual link for public attendance, seconded by Mr. Troutman. All but one member voted affirmatively.

#### **b. DBOT Rule 1.03, Powers and Duties of the Board**

Mr. Fugett was asked to address the Board on the review of DBOT Rule 1.03. Mr. Fugett stated that he had read the minutes from the December 8, 2025, DBOT meeting and the concerns of Ms. Bell Barnett regarding the Florida Statute tied with Rule 1.03 being very dense and whether more of the statute be reflected in this rule. Mr. Fugett shared his pros and cons to adding more

detail or leaving more detail out of it. He wants to make it very clear as to what the Board's powers and duties are without having to search for them and provide the Florida Statute links to know exactly what's behind them. He will also review other state colleges' rules to compare and to update Rule 1.03. Chair Barnhart confirmed that DBOT Rule 1.03 will be brought forward at the February DBOT meeting as first reading and then again for approval at the March DBOT meeting.

**Consent Agenda Items:**

- a. **Tangible Personal Property Deletions for January 2026** – Approved on consent agenda. Board action is required.
- b. **Polk State College Personnel Actions Report for November and December 2025** – Approved on consent agenda. Board action is required.
- c. **Polk State College Collegiate High Schools Personnel Actions Report for November and December 2025** – Approved on consent agenda. Board action is required.

Mr. Davis moved, seconded by Mr. Littleton, to approve all three consent agenda items. All members voted affirmatively.

**Items Removed from the Consent Agenda**

None

**Action Items:**

- a. **Finance: Financial Statements for December 2025 – Ms. Cindy Baker**

Ms. Baker presented and recommended for approval the Financial Statements for December 2025. She noted that there is a timing difference related to the exemption adjustments for dual enrollment in 2025 for comparative purposes. The exemption adjustment of approximately \$10,000,000 wasn't reflected until January 2025, showing approximately a \$700,000 increase over the same period last year.

Mr. Davis moved, seconded by Ms. Bell Barnett, to approve the Financial Statements for December 2025. All members voted affirmatively.

Chair Barnhart informed the Board that she received a letter from the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee (JLAC) advising that the College has failed to correct a repeat audit finding in three consecutive reports. A status update, resolution, or reason is required by this Board by April 30, 2026. A copy of the letter was given to each member of the board. Ms. Baker was asked to give a high-level explanation of what this is related to. Ms. Baker said that this was first brought to her attention last year in the operational audit. This finding is related to limitations with Genesis, the College's previous enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. Genesis does not allow the College to purge prospective student information, and the problem is that if there are students with social security numbers, they could be accessed. Banner does have a way to purge personal information, but five years' worth of data as transferred from Genesis to Banner and there are no prospective students in Banner at this time. The College will have a very specific action plan in

the response to the JLAC that will be supported with specific College processes. Genesis will be locked down completely by June 30, 2026, and this will solve this finding as well. There are approximately 148,000 prospective students in Genesis with personal identifying information (PII). These students were not brought into Banner. Currently, there is very limited access to Genesis. When the College moves this data over, the social security numbers will be redacted and any prospective students that don't need to be in there, will also be removed/purged. Prospective students are students that have applied but have not enrolled. After these 148,000 prospective students have been addressed, the process to purge the PII data in Banner will occur at the end of each term. The Board will receive an update on this process as it continues.

**Board Rule Approval:**

**a. DBOT Rule 1.01, Board Membership and Organization**

Ms. Bell Barnett moved, seconded by Mr. Troutman, to approve DBOT Rule 1.01, Board Membership and Organization. All members voted affirmatively.

**b. DBOT Rule 2.10, Facsimile Signatures**

Mr. Littleton moved, seconded by Mr. Troutman, to approve DBOT Rule 2.10, Facsimile Signatures. All members voted affirmatively.

**c. DBOT Rule 2.27, Service Animals on College Property**

Mr. Troutman moved, seconded by Ms. Bell Barnett, to approve DBOT Rule 2.27, Service Animals on College Property. All members voted affirmatively.

**Board Chair's Remarks**

Chair Barnhart opened her remarks by addressing the investigation regarding awarding of scholarship money from the Polk State College Foundation last year and issues surrounding enrollment. "As a result of certain concerns raised by one or more members of the Board of Trustees, I as Chair, along with Board counsel commissioned an independent investigator to ensure transparency, accountability, and public trust. The investigation was performed by investigator Terin Cramer out of Tampa, who performed an independent and unrestricted investigation. She interviewed 37 witnesses and spent significant time reviewing emails and other data which she gathered during her investigation. Our objective was very clear and that was to verify compliance and strengthen governance. After examining applicable laws, policies, and procedures, interviewing every conceivable witness, and the numerous documents provided to her, she prepared a final written report setting forth her findings, which each of the trustees has received. The report found no violation of any law, or college, or policy or procedure. The investigation concluded that there were no findings of illegality or wrongdoing and no misuse of scholarship or college funds. Scholarship funds were used for their intended purpose. There were also no findings of any attempt by the administration to hide or cover up any enrollment data. This outcome is certainly what I believe we had all hoped for, but we needed this investigation to verify the findings and hopefully quell the misinformation that was driving much of the discontent. Also, not unexpected as with any review, the report identified areas to refine and to strengthen, but they do not stem from any wrongdoing. While not everyone may agree with the findings of the investigator, this was an exhaustive review of the issues presented, and it needs to be accepted by

this Board as the final resolution of the concerns that were raised. As was stated previously, it doesn't mean that there is no room for improvement in College policies and procedures, as well as strengthening the working relationships with those in administration. This is not anything that can be accomplished overnight, and as a Board, I do not believe that it is our job to micromanage the process but let the administration do its job to ensure the success of the College in serving the mission of student success. Now that this report found no illegality, I hope this can be a turning point for all of us on this Board so we can continue to move forward as a Board in a positive and constructive manner. And I hope and expect that the administration and staff will continue to work with the President to make Polk State one of the best colleges in the system." Chair Barnhart thanked Attorney Cramer for the job well done and asked her and Attorney Levitt to come forward to answer any specific questions the Board has specifically about the report. Ms. Ross thanked them for their time and thoroughness with the process. Mr. Littleton said that this is not a lack of concern as they spent an hour and a half with each person and asked a lot of questions. Attorney Cramer responded that everyone had an opportunity to speak with her, go through their findings, and ask questions.

Dr. Falconetti shared her thoughts on the report. She thanked Attorney Cramer for her work on the very extensive investigation where 37 participants were interviewed. She thanked those who were involved for their time and effort to be interviewed throughout this process. She reiterated that this thorough investigation conclusively determined that the claims asserted about the administration and her were unsubstantiated. At all times they acted in accordance with Florida law and in the best interests of Polk State College, its students, faculty, staff, and the broader community. The process affirmed what she has always known to be true: She has acted with integrity and in the best interest of students and the institution. As always, she is dedicated to advancing the College's mission and a student-centered culture. She will work with the administrative staff to strengthen processes, improve clarity of communication, and enhance cross-functional coordination. She is grateful for the opportunity to serve this institution. She has been passionate since day one. She is grateful for the opportunity to serve students faculty, staff, and the community and looks to the future with dedication and belief in the continued impact that it has on the community. She then provided a letter to each member of the Board echoing her sentiments.

## **President's Report**

### **a. The Governor's Budget for the Florida College System**

Dr. Falconetti provided an update of the Governor's budget for the Florida College System. Every year the Council of Presidents works with the Florida Department of Education, specifically the Florida College System, to identify legislative priorities. They asked for \$70 million to go to the program fund attributed to all 28 colleges in the Florida College System, in the form of a funding formula. Polk State College would get its allotment based on that funding formula that includes fundable FTE. This year, the Governor's recommendation exceeded their request, and they were given \$90 million. The Florida College System is in a good position with \$44 million in campus security and \$100 million for the Workforce Capitalization Grant that each institution will have an opportunity to apply for. There is currently legislation in place that is to include the health sciences from the funding for the Linking Industry in Nursing Education (LINE) Grant, and not just nursing. She asked each of the Board members as they meet with members of our local delegation to make Polk State's request first for \$7.5 million to ensure the Haines City-Davenport Campus comes to fruition, but that they also support the System's request. Dr. Falconetti informed the members that

she has included in their packet a copy of all documents related to the System's request. She will be working with the College's marketing department to ensure that the one-pager in the packet includes on the back the College's legislative priorities that can be provided to members of the legislature. While attending Polk County Day in Tallahassee, Dr. Falconetti provided the College's legislative priorities to members of the legislature that she could.

Dr. Falconetti addressed a previous question asked of Ms. Bell Barnett about seeing the questions of the PACE survey prior to it being administered. Those questions are also in the Board's packets for their review.

In closing her report, Dr. Falconetti also stated that the report on My Brother's Keeper, submitted by Mr. Webb, is also included in their packets, which was also a request from a Board member.

**Attorney's Report:**

Attorney Wilson announced that this is his 50<sup>th</sup> year working as general counsel for Polk State College, first as Polk Junior College and then as Polk Community College. He represented all five presidents of the College. Attorney Wilson is stepping down and is recommending his law partner, Attorney David Carmichael, step in as general counsel for the College. Further details will be shared at the February DBOT meeting with a plan to take affect March 1. Attorney Wilson shared how it has been a privilege to work with the Board, administrators, and staff all these years.

**Informational Items:**

**a. Employment Vacancy Update for January 2026 – Mr. David Fugett**

Mr. Fugett presented and reviewed the Employment Vacancy Update for January 2026 for the Board's information. He noted two changes: There are only three administrator vacancies and there are 13, not 12, full-time staff vacancies. No Board action required.

**b. Investment Interest Comparison for December 2025 – Ms. Cindy Baker**

Ms. Baker presented and reviewed the Investment Interest Comparison for December 2025 for the Board's information. No Board action required. (*This item was listed incorrectly as January 2026*).

**c. Capital Project Status Report for January 2026 – Mr. Reggie Webb**

Mr. Webb presented and reviewed the Capital Project Status Report for January 2026 for the Board's information. He noted two updates: The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the WSC Building was completed. The WSC 1<sup>st</sup> floor demo has started and should be completed this summer. Phase 2 of the LAC Building will start next week, which includes the bookstore, classrooms, student center, and the high school chemistry lab. This project will be completed in 2026. No Board action required.

**Collegiate High School Report:**

**a. Polk State Lakeland Collegiate High School Accountability Plan Performance Targets and 2024-2025 Academic Year Performance – Mr. Rick Jeffries**

Mr. Jeffries presented and reviewed the Polk State Lakeland Collegiate High School Accountability Plan Performance Targets and 2024-2025 Academic Year Performance. There are six performance categories that are tracked for the Accountability Plan Performance Targets. The Polk State Lakeland Collegiate High School has exceeded all categories. The high school is in the midst of the new enrollment period with an application deadline of February 27, 2026. Mr. Littleton asked if any of the 10<sup>th</sup> graders take college courses and Mr. Jeffries responded that they do take a college math course, but they do not mix with the regular college environment.

**Board Member Final Remarks:**

Mr. Littleton stated that he's glad the investigation is complete and the College can move forward. He also thanked Attorney Wilson for his years of service.

Ms. Bell Barnett echoed Mr. Littleton's sentiments to Attorney Wilson and congratulated Ms. Martinez on her years of service on the Board as well. She also expressed how glad she was to be at the JD Alexander Center.

Ms. Ross thanked Attorney Wilson for his service, guidance, and support. She expressed pleasure in working with Ms. Martinez on the Board all these years.

Mr. Lester shared his thoughts on the investigation report even though he was not on the Board at that time. In the end, the report was good. The damage will need to be repaired, and this Board will have to do that together. He said he was sorry that this all happened, but he's grateful for the outcome. He echoed what Chair Barnhart said in that the College has to rebuild some trust and he's committed to doing that.

Mr. Troutman said that he agrees with Mr. Lester in that there is an opportunity to lead the effort of building trust amongst each other, with the President, and with faculty. He also said that he will miss Ms. Martinez at future meetings, and he welcomed Mr. Davis to the Board.

Mr. Davis echoed the comments made by Mr. Troutman and Mr. Lester. In reference to the investigation report, he said it's the Board's job to look forward, not back.

Chair Barnhart thanked the Board, the attorneys, Attorney Wilson, and former Board member Ms. Martinez for their service. She said if the College keeps its mission-centric focused on the students, it will be the best state college in the state of Florida.

**Adjournment:**

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:05 p.m.

 2/23/26  
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Ms. Ann Barnhart Date  
DBOT Chair

  
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Dr. Angela M. Garcia Falconetti Date  
President