Exhibit M -1

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Harry E. Brown Community Board Room
MINUTES – April 12, 2025

Board Vice-Chair Mrs. Nancy Brown called to order the meeting of the Warren County Community College Board of Trustees at 6:30 pm. The meeting was held in the Harry E. Brown Community Board Room at the College and was advertised on the College's website.

Mrs. Brown noted that the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Law, PL. 1975, Chapter 231, were satisfied as the date of the meeting had been published stating the place and manner as required by law.

The **Flag Salute** was conducted.

Roll Call:

Trustees present were Mrs. Brown, Mr. Joyce, Dr. Lamonte, Ms. Maciag, Mrs. Maier, Mrs. Singh, Mr. Schmidt, Mrs. Steinhardt.

Others present included Dr. William Austin, President, Dr. Debbie DiThomas and Sarah Van Horn, Recording Secretary,

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Steinhardt, seconded by Mr. Schmidt, made a **motion to Approve the minutes of the April 12, 2025, Board Session Meeting. Roll call**: Mrs. Brown, yes; Mr. Joyce, Yes, Dr. Lamonte, abstain; Ms. Maciag, yes, Mrs. Maier, abstain; Mr. Schmidt, yes; Mrs. Singh, yes: Mrs. Steinhardt, yes. The motion carried.

Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mrs. Singh, made a motion to Approve April 12, 2025, **Executive Session Minutes Roll call:** Mrs. Brown yes; Mr. Joyce, yes; Dr. Lamonte, abstain; Ms. Maciag, yes; Mrs. Maier, abstain; Mrs. Singh, yes; Mr. Schmidt, yes; Mrs. Steinhardt, yes. The motion carried.

Communications- *Dr. Will Austin*

Dr. Austin introduced Dr. Debbie DiThomas from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) as the facilitator for our retreat. Dr. DiThomas, who comes from California, brings a wealth of experience to the table, particularly in her roles as a college President and her extensive work with the Board of Trustees. Recently, she has been involved with Northern Idaho Community College, further expanding her impressive portfolio. Dr. Austin also distributed a magazine titled Depart of Flight, published by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Dr. Austin emphasized the significance of this publication, noting that Embry-Riddle is one of the few Universities that collaborate with community colleges to enhance their offerings. Within the magazine, Dr. Austin highlighted noteworthy articles such as "Teaching Aviation, Not Drones," found on pages 23 and 24, and "High-Tech Hands-On". This collaboration underscores the innovative approaches being adopted in higher education to integrate Community Colleges into broader academic initiatives.

Policy and Planning Committee (First Reading Policy)

Board Vice-Chair Mrs. Brown reviewed the Revision (First Read) exhibits. (Exhibit CP-1) 201.12.1 NJ Domestic or Sexual Leave, (Exhibit CP-2) 201.12 Family and Medical Leave Policy, (Exhibit CP-3) 308.1 Service and Support Animal. Mrs. Brown announced a new policy (Exhibit CP-4) 313 Lactation Policy to the board members and noted no questions or concerns regarding these policies.

Revision (First Read)

- 201.12.1 NJ Domestic Or Sexual Violence Leave — Exhibit CP-1
- 201.12 Family and Medical Leave Policy — Exhibit CP-2
- 308.1 Service and Support Animals — Exhibit CP-3

New

- 313 Lactation Policy — Exhibit CP-4

Consent Agenda

Vice-Chair Mrs. Brown reviewed the Consent Agenda, asking Board members if they would like to have any item reviewed separately.

Motion to approve items A – S as presented:

A.	January 2025 Financial Statement	Exhibit CFA-1
B.	February 2025 Financial Statement	Exhibit CFA-2
C.	March 2025 Financial Statement	Exhibit CFA-3
D.	Reapproval on the Resolution to Apply for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) 2025	Exhibit CFA-4
E.	Board Resolution to Amend Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) Grant FY25	Exhibit CFA-5
F.	President's Personnel Recommendations	Exhibit CO-1
G.	Fiscal Year 2026-Holiday Schedule	Exhibit CO-2
H.	Fair and Open Contract for Landscaping	Exhibit CO-3
I.	Non-Fair and Open Contract to Joseph Cerreta for Consulting Services	Exhibit CO-4
J.	Non-Fair and Open Contract to Condensed Curriculum International, Inc. For Allied Health Career Training Program FY25	Exhibit CO-5
K.	Resolution Approving a Facility Renewal and Replacement Plan	Exhibit CO-6
L.	Bev Graph Packaging International LLC, month-to-month lease Effective March 1, 2025/ $500.00 per month	Exhibit CO-7

M. 104 Procedural Rules for Hearing Before County College Board of Trustees — Exhibit CP-5

N. 202.3 Anti-Nepotism Policy — Exhibit CP-6

O. 201.7 Classification of Employment — Exhibit CP-7

P. 201.15 Employees Background Investigation Policy — Exhibit CP-8

Q. Resolution to Offer An Associate in Science in Robotics and AI — Exhibit CP-9

R. Resolution to Offer An Associate in Science Business Administration Organizational Communication Option — Exhibit CP-10

S. Resolution to Approve a Revised College Vision and Mission Statement — Exhibit CP-11

Ms. Maciag, seconded by Mrs. Maier, made a **motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items A-S as presented. Roll call**: Mrs. Brown, yes; Mr. Joyce, yes; Dr. Lamonte, yes; Ms. Maciag, yes; Mrs. Maier, yes; Mrs. Singh, yes; Mr. Schmidt, yes; Mrs. Steinhardt, yes. The motion carried.

Foundation Report- *Dr. Will Austin*

Dr. Austin informed the board that Samir will not be present this morning, as he is preparing for the dedication ceremony scheduled for noon today. The dedication will take place indoors immediately following the meeting. Dr. Austin emphasized that the focus for fundraising this year will be on two primary initiatives supporting Samir with the Harry E. Brown Scholarship and the Chuck Haytaian Scholarship. Dr. Austin noted that Samir has publicly committed to raising one million dollars for the Haytaian Scholarship, which is a significant target for this County. Dr. Austin assured the board that he would hold Samir accountable for achieving this ambitious goal.

Furthermore, Dr. Austin expressed his intention not to introduce additional scholarships at the time. He explained that students with financial needs attending Warren County Community College have access to scholarships that cover tuition costs, or they can opt for a Pell Grant, which not only covers tuition but also often provides a cash benefit. As such, students who qualify for these grants may not be inclined to apply for additional scholarships, as it would not be financially advantageous. Dr. Austin also addressed the implications of the Community College Opportunity Grant, commonly referred to as the free college initiative. This grant is available to individuals from households earning less than $100,000.00 annually, making them ineligible for certain scholarships. Consequently, scholarships appear to be primarily needed by a specific demographic with those whose parents earn above the threshold but do not financially support their education, and women whose spouses or partners do not support their educational pursuits despite having financial means.

Dr. Austin said those scholarships are crucial for such individuals. Dr. Austin acknowledged that while scholarship fundraising remains popular, distributing scholarship funds has become increasingly challenging due to these financial dynamics. It is anticipated that it may become increasingly uncommon to fully allocate scholarship funds, as accepting them may not align with the financial best interests of eligible students.

<u>**Other Business, Announcements, Ad-Hoc Actions, and Actions required since Committee Meeting**</u>

Motion to approve the increase of professional service contract for Colliers Engineering and Design by $4,500.00 for the Contemplation Garden Project, an increase in the amount of Purchase Order 36849 from $44,500.00 to $49,000.00

Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mrs. Maier, made a **motion to approve the increase of professional services contract for Colliers Engineering and Design. Roll call**: Mrs. Brown, yes; Mr. Joyce, yes; Dr. Lamonte, yes; Ms. Maciag, yes; Mrs. Maier, yes; Mrs. Singh, yes; Mr. Schmidt, yes; Mrs. Steinhardt, yes. The motion carried.

Motion to approve the proposal from Colliers Engineering and Design in the amount of $20,500.00 for plan preparation as noted in the proposal to design and bid an outdoor learning space to complete the Contemplation Garden.

Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mrs. Maier, made a **motion to approve the proposal from Colliers Engineering and Design of $20,500.00. Roll call**: Mrs. Brown, yes; Mr. Joyce, yes; Dr. Lamonte, yes; Ms. Maciag, yes; Mrs. Maier, yes; Mrs. Singh, yes; Mr. Schmidt, yes; Mrs. Steinhardt, yes. The motion carried.

Dr. Austin reminded the board of a previous attempt to construct an amphitheater, which was deemed too large. He proposed an alternative plan that involves utilizing the slope adjacent to the garden to create a cost-effective, outdoor lecture space. This would serve as an ideal venue for outdoor classes in warm weather and would be a positive addition for Middle States accreditation. It would also enhance the garden's appeal and draw more attention to the area. On a positive note, Dr. Austin highlighted the success of Warren County Community College's dual enrollment program with local high schools, which started a decade ago.

This initiative allows high school students in Warren County to enroll in college courses free of charge, with transcripts provided at no cost. The program has gained significant traction, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Austin announced this year that thirteen high school students from Warren Hills and Phillipsburg High Schools will graduate from this dual enrollment program, receiving their Associate Degree a month prior to their high school diplomas. The board expressed excitement about this achievement. Dr. Austin noted that while there is a dual enrollment partnership with Hackettstown High School, they prefer collaboration with Centenary University.

Belvidere High School faces limitations due to its small size and fewer classes. North Warren High School presents challenges due to its distance from the college. Mrs. Singh inquired about the acceptance of credit earned through the dual enrollment program, Dr. Austin clarified that Warren County Community College does not distinguish on transcripts whether courses were taken as dual enrollment, online, or in-person. Dr. Austin emphasized that there is a strong demand for students, with most institutions accepting these credits, noting that private schools are more accommodating than state schools in New Jersey. Dr. Austin cited his relationships with Fairleigh Dickinson University and Centenary University, highlighting their willingness to accept up to 90 credits. Dr. Austin pointed out that this approach makes financial sense, as it balances tuition costs between state and private institutions, with private schools often offering more generous credit acceptance policies.

Motion to Enter Executive Session

At 8:54 AM, Mr. Steinhardt, seconded by Mrs. Singh, made a **motion to enter Executive Session.** The motion carried.

Dr. Austin excused himself from the Executive Session at 8:54 AM Rejoined at 9:38 AM

At 10:03 AM Dr. Lamonte, seconded by Mrs. Steinhardt, made a **motion to exit Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously.**

Retreat Session

The Board began its retreat at 10:04 AM.

Good Board Governance

Dr. DiThomas delivered an insightful presentation on Effective Board Governance, focusing on fiduciary duties and the importance of understanding the adhering to board roles and responsibilities. Dr. DiThomas emphasized the implementation of best practices for effective boards and the establishment of and respect of communication protocols. During the session, Dr. DiThomas conducted an activity addressing ethical concerns for governing boards, highlighting the roles and responsibilities of board members. Dr. DiThomas outlined three key principles, noting that board decisions are primarily policy decisions, policy are board statements that set direction and standards for college operations, and boards define and delegate responsibilities. Dr. DiThomas presented a slide deck on High Performing Boards, emphasizing the need to understand governance, think strategically, lead by example, and develop a strong Board/President relationship. Dr. DiThomas engaged the Trustees in a case study activity followed by a group discussion. The session also covered communication protocols for effective boards, discussing guidelines for communication with the President, among board members, and with college staff, as well as handling employee complaints, community concerns, and interactions with the press. It was agree that the college would examine its communication protocols and policies in more detail

Dr. DiThomas reviewed the Warren County Community College Board Policy 103.7 regarding Public Information and concluded with a short video titled "Knowing Why." Dr. DiThomas handed out a packet of the board of governance and fiduciary responsibilities, referring to the "Top 20 Truths of an Effective Board." Dr. DiThomas provided a comprehensive overview of key responsibilities, including the duties of care, loyalty, and obedience. Dr. DiThomas' presentation also covered strategic planning, priority setting, and monitoring institutional progress. Mr. Schmidt suggested curriculum updates and the introduction of new programs.

Dr. Austin responded with an update on these initiatives, discussing challenges in maintaining academic programs amidst the evolving impact of artificial intelligence on education. He also stressed forming partnerships with hospitals and other institutions to support clinical training opportunities and encouraged faculty to proactively gather and share information on their programs' community impact. Dr. Austin expressed his gratitude to the board, highlighting the often-overlook dedication and volunteer efforts that the board members contributed. Dr. Austin acknowledged that the community may not always recognize the board's efforts, except during graduation ceremonies. Dr. Austin emphasized that the fulfillment derived from working directly with students, particularly witnessing those pivotal moments when a student grasps a concept and gains independence in their learning journey.

Dr. Austin noted that while educators experience these rewarding moments in the classroom, those in leadership roles often face challenges such as complaints and organizational issues. Nevertheless, Dr. Austin takes immense pride in the board, considering it one of the college's greatest assets. Dr. Austin can confidently state that he could present this board in any setting, be it Middle States or ACCT interviews, and they would stand out among their peers. Dr. DiThomas echoed Dr. Austin's sentiments by highlighting the exceptional relationship between the board and the President. Dr. DiThomas observed that many board members, when speaking of their pride in WCCC, acknowledge Dr. Austin's significant contributions to the institution's success. In return, Dr. Austin attributes much of the success to the board's efforts, emphasizing the mutual respect and collaboration that defines their relationship. Dr. DiThomas mentioned this is indeed a cornerstone of the institution's strength and reputation.

Board Members as Advocates

Dr. DiThomas initiated the discussion on advocacy by underscoring the significance of understanding the rationale behind the board's advocacy efforts on behalf of the college. To facilitate this, Dr. DiThomas directed everyone to review their ACCT packet. Dr. Austin then shared an experience illustrating effective advocacy during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the ongoing necessity for fundraising, political advocacy, and community engagement. Dr. Austin emphasized the importance of establishing political connections and delineated the role of board members in advocacy, particularly in relation to understanding the legislative process at both State and Federal levels. Dr. Austin stressed the importance of identifying key issues impacting institutions and students, crafting a clear and consistent message, and supporting the President's role as a prominent advocate and influencer.

Dr. Austin distributed a handout detailing specific advocacy areas for Warren County Community College, with a focus on fundraising strategies involving individuals, corporations, or foundation members Through examples Dr. Austin illustrated successful fundraising approaches. Looking ahead Dr. Austin addressed future challenges, particularly the impact of artificial intelligence on certain degree programs, which could result in significant changes and increased costs. Dr. Austin noted that sectors such as food processing, which integrate human labor with AI technology, promise well-paying job opportunities. Additionally, Dr. Austin raised concerns about faculty engagement. Dr. Austin pointed out that graduates might associate more with larger transfer institutions than with WCCC if there is a lack of ongoing communication.

Succession Planning

Dr. DiThomas delivered an insightful presentation on Succession Planning, focusing on the strategic management of leadership transitions within the board and the college. Dr. DiThomas emphasized the importance of preparing for future leadership needs by fostering learning and growth opportunities, which are crucial for sustaining effective governance. Succession planning at the college is defined as a systematic approach to identifying, developing, and mobilizing talent. Trustees play an essential role in the college's mission success. Dr. DiThomas highlighted key considerations for Board Succession Planning, including the current composition of the Board, members' educational and professional development backgrounds, their commitment to the community college mission, collaboration, and communication skills, understanding of legal and financial matters, and availability of innovative thinking. The importance of succession planning was underscored for several reasons, sustaining the mission and implementation of plans, ensuring fiscal stability, introducing fresh ideas, enhancing board diversity, and fostering resilience within the board and organization. Strategic recruitment of trustees can establish new connections or strengthen existing ones with other organizations and businesses, potentially leading to additional fundraising opportunities and increasing recognition of the community college's value.

Dr. Austin confirmed that the board has approved a succession plan that is aligned with the institution's current needs. This plan emphasizes middle management and leadership development, with satisfaction expressed regarding the new younger leaders recruited through Title III and other initiatives. Dr. Austin stressed the importance of maintaining ongoing discussions on this topic and suggested incorporating related items into future meeting's agenda. Dr. Austin also outlined the schedule for upcoming meetings and highlighted professional development opportunities available to board members.

Graduation & Personal Update

Dr. Austin provided an update on the graduation schedule, emphasizing a personal commitment regarding two of his children graduating from college on the same day, which necessitated delegation during the graduation breakfast to the Chair and VP Van Deursen. Dr. Austin informed the board that Dr. Van Deursen would be representing him at the official ceremony, ensuring continuity and representation at this significant event. Dr. Austin conveyed his enthusiasm for the forthcoming graduation, while also acknowledging the logistical challenges posed by coordinating multiple graduations for his children. Dr. Austin stated that he would be at the Board Meeting and be a guest to watch his youngest son graduate like a normal parent at the ceremony. He notes that he would be so busy with personal issues the week of graduation, that the students who worked so hard, deserved a master of ceremonies completely dedicated to their special day, and Dr. Van Deursen who has presided over graduation in the past during his sabbatical, made the most sense as a replacement. The meeting concluded with a succinct discussion concerning the dedication garden located in the café, underscoring the importance of this space for reflection and community engagement.

Comments from the Public

N/A

Mrs. Singh, seconded by Mrs. Maier, made a motion to adjourn at 11:54 AM

Respectfully Submitted,

Bette Singh

Betti Singh, Board Secretary
Warren County Community College Trustees