

	BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING March 12, 2026 Minutes	Board of Trustees Jim Reames, Chair Nicole Bradshaw, Vice Chair Molly Lentz, Sec/Treas Cherie Buckner-Webb David Bishop
CWI MISSION The College of Western Idaho is committed to empowering students to succeed by providing affordable and accessible education to advance the local and global workforce		

**CWI Nampa Campus Academic Building
Room 122
3:00PM**

ATTENDANCE:

Jim Reames, Chair
Nicole Bradshaw, Vice Chair
Molly Lentz, Secretary/Treasurer
David Bishop, Trustee
Cherie Buckner-Webb, Trustee

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Reames called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Vice Chair Bradshaw recited the CWI mission statement. No visitor introductions were made, and no public comments were received.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. February 2026 Minutes,
- B. Capital Projects Budget to Actuals Report

MS (Lentz / Bradshaw): To approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried.

III. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Jones reported that legislative action will prevent CWI from facing an additional 2% budget cut, keeping the College aligned with the Governor's recommended reduction, and highlighted CWI's continued visibility at the Statehouse through program demonstrations during CWI Day. He noted recent media appearances that helped share updates on CWI's mission and impact, as well as participation in the Nampa Chamber Ag Forum, which engaged more than 500 regional leaders. He also provided an update on the development of athletics and recreation programs, including strong applicant interest for the new Athletic Director position and student survey data showing both low current involvement and strong desire for more opportunities. While community feedback has been largely supportive, he acknowledged ongoing conversations about timing and priorities as planning continues.

Secretary/Treasurer Lentz - Question: Do you have a timeline for finalists for the Athletic Director Position?

President Jones - Answer: Our goal would be to have an offer sent out by May 2026.

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Chair Reames - Question: How are you currently sharing updates regarding athletics with the community at large?

President Jones - Answer: We emphasize that communication with the campus and our local community is an ongoing priority supported by town halls and additional messaging to ensure transparency and direct access.

IV. MARKETING UPDATE

Vice President Tetz reviewed CWI's shift from reactive, task-based work to a strategic, data-informed approach focused on controlling the institutional narrative and guiding audiences through a structured funnel: Awareness, Engagement, Consideration, and Conversion. Updated campaigns now balance emotional storytelling with program and pathway information, responding to feedback to better represent both classroom and career elements. Key metrics show significant year-over-year increases in impressions, engagement, and website traffic, supporting continued enrollment growth. Community survey results also indicate rising awareness, with CWI now ranking among the most recognized colleges in Idaho.

Chair Reames - Question: When you say Idaho, is that Treasure Valley Only?

Vice President Tetz - Answer: Yes, it's our service area, so the 10-county area.

CWI continues to rank among the top institutions in its cohort, with public perception strongly aligned to key brand pillars such as affordability, accessibility, and convenience. Survey results show that the community views CWI as a "smart option" offering quality and value, with very few seeing it as a fallback. Respondents also believe CWI graduates are as qualified—or more practically prepared—than those from four-year institutions. While strengths center on affordability and employability, student life remains a key area for improvement. Net Promoter Scores increased, reflecting stronger community support. Upcoming efforts focus on improved data tracking, balancing career messaging with campus-life storytelling, and expanding marketing channels. Operation Activation Amplification will further leverage word-of-mouth by encouraging advocates to share CWI stories across social platforms.

Trustee Bishop - Question: Are any of the KPIs you're measuring being benchmarked against other community colleges or universities—locally or within the region—and how are you performing on those benchmarks?

Vice President Tetz - Answer: We collaborate closely with local colleges and universities to obtain data firsthand. Our campaigns also perform strongly, supported by high click-through engagement and precise ZIP-code targeting.

Secretary/Treasurer Lentz - Question: How will your team collect and use information about our diverse students and their different experiences so that your engagement efforts are inclusive of all their varied expectations?

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Vice President Tetz - Answer: We'll rely on close collaboration and genuinely listen to what students share, then act on that feedback to build what they truly need. By highlighting student stories and clearly communicating available resources, we'll ensure students know what's offered and feel supported in accessing it.

Chair Reames - Question: As our CRM and marketing efforts continue to expand, how do you see our teams working together and aligning across those two channels?

Vice President Tetz - Answer: The CRM and marketing will work closely together by coordinating data, aligning student attributes, and maintaining regular communication with recruiting so students move smoothly through the funnel.

Chair Reames - Question: What is the life cycle of a brand?

Vice President Tetz - Answer: We do not plan on refreshing our brand any time soon, we are currently looking at establishing our brand recognition within the Valley.

V. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Vice President Kline reported that the institution faced a 3% state appropriation reduction and an additional 1% legislative cut; CTE plans to absorb its share internally. The 3% cut was managed through salary savings, while the additional 1% required a 1% operating reduction across Vice Presidential units. As of January 31, tuition and fee revenues are tracking at 99.6% of budget and may close the small shortfall by year-end. Overall revenue is projected to finish about \$1.45M below budget due to state cuts. Payroll expenses remain under budget but operating and capital costs are higher because of Ford Idaho Center transition expenses, with a finalized budget expected in April.

Chair Reames - Question: Does this budget information account for state-funded programs or courses—such as a geology course previously supported with a \$10,000 state allocation—that are no longer receiving state revenue?

Vice President Kline - Answer: No, they are lump sums for a department's budget.

Vice President Kline goes on to review the Ford Idaho Center transition costs, noting a reconciled obligation of \$111,000 to the city due to prepaid expenses and outstanding items. OVG's budgeted operating loss remains in place, and approximately \$280,000 in one-time transition expenses are anticipated for project management, audit work, and signage. Ongoing costs through June 30 include grounds maintenance provided by the City and property insurance, while OVG will continue covering all other insurance.

The Treasurer's monthly report stated that liquidity remains stable across the checking account, PFM investments, and the state LGIP, though much of the cash is restricted for specific purposes such as bond funds, COPs, debt service, grants, and donor-directed gifts. The institution must also advance one month of operating expenses for OVG, using OVG's bank accounts.

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All capital projects are now fully funded, with some coming in under budget. The remaining \$1 million gap could be covered by unspent board-allocated reserves. Backfill renovations will proceed, and total capital fundraising has reached \$9.8 million, though reserves must bridge timing gaps in pledge payments.

The year is projected to close with about five months of operating reserves. Unlike prior years, reserves will decrease due to absorbing state budget cuts and reduced savings. Vice President Kline recommends revisiting the reserve threshold, with further discussion planned for the next board meeting.

Vice Chair Bradshaw - Question: How many months of liquid funds is considered best practice?

Vice President Kline - Answer: To be financially healthy would be six months.

The budget review highlighted steady annual growth in funding per student since 2020, with revenue coming from public support, tuition and fees, and other smaller sources. A significant increase occurred in the current fiscal year due to higher tuition and fees. When comparing actual spending to an inflation-only projection based on CPI, 2020 showed underspending, and CPI-adjusted trends aligned closely with tuition and fee revenue until this year. The additional revenue now available allows the institution to move beyond covering inflation and make strategic investments. Although higher education often uses the HEPI index—which emphasizes labor costs—the analysis used CPI for simplicity and broader clarity.

President Jones - Question: When we say CWI budget per student, is your calculation based on full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment or simply a raw headcount without considering credit hours?

Vice President Kline - Answer: This would be a headcount for our academic transfer and CTE students, which would exclude our dual credit numbers.

The institution faces notable financial pressures next year, including a potential 3% reduction in state appropriations (about \$666,000) and an expected \$725,000 drop in interest income. On the expense side, costs will rise due to a \$1.2 million increase in employer health insurance rates, 8% higher employee premiums, and roughly \$611,000 in additional fixed costs. New obligations include nearly \$5 million in debt service for the Whitewater project and added occupancy expenses for the Student Learning Hub. Budget planning for the Idaho Center is in progress, with a target completion date in April.

VI. SPECIAL COURSE FEES AND PROGRAM FEES

Provost Aberle-Cannata presents on the current special course fees, noting that several increases were highlighted in red in the provided documents, and that these changes are largely driven by inflation and rising vendor costs for licensure materials, toolkits, and other course-related supplies. She noted that the procurement team had worked with vendors to secure the

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best pricing available, but the adjustments reflect current market conditions and represent standard updates across all special course fees.

Secretary/Treasurer Lentz - Question: Are the new fees associated with new courses or programs, or because of an increase in cost?

Provost Aberle-Cannata - Answer: The new fees are associated with brand-new programs or courses.

Secretary/Treasurer Lentz - Question: Are the consumable supplies included in the tuition cost, or is it an additional fee after the student enroll?

Provost Aberle-Cannata - Answer: It is part of the tuition cost.

Trustee Bishop - Question: For the automotive programs do we have any partnerships with local companies to lower cost of tools for our students?

Provost Aberle-Cannata - Answer: Yes, we do have partnerships with different companies to get a better discount for our students, so when they go out into their perspective industries, they do not need to purchase new equipment.

Provost Aberle-Cannata then goes on to review the efforts to implement program fees for high-cost instructional areas. Two programs—Nursing and Heavy-Duty Equipment—were identified to pilot these fees beginning in the fall. The fees would support the replacement of expensive, heavily used training materials, such as nursing mannequins on a seven-year cycle and engine parts that wear out due to repeated student use. Funds collected would be placed in supplemental accounts dedicated to maintaining current, high-quality equipment for each program. A committee has spent the past year developing the necessary policies and procedures to ensure program fees are assigned and managed appropriately before implementation.

Vice Chair Bradshaw - Question: Is this the only fee, or is there an additional fee that they have in the nursing program?

Provost Aberle-Cannata - Answer: They have special course fees as well, but we determined the \$600 program fee by comparing with partner schools and by making sure it aligns with what students in this field will earn. If the field had lower wages—like small engine repair—the fee would be much lower.

Secretary/Treasurer Lentz - Question: Do employers offset some of the costs of fees that students see?

Provost Aberle-Cannata - Answer: Yes, through our Workforce Development Program employers do assist students by offsetting those course fees and tuition.

MS (Lentz / Buckner-Webb): To approve the Special Course Fees and Program Fees as presented. The motion carried.

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VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Reames spoke about the strong impact of word-of-mouth outreach and thanked staff for actively engaging in the community. A recent example was shared from the Nampa Chamber of Commerce event, where Kaden Christensen from the Work-Based Learning Center delivered an impressive presentation showcasing CWI's real-world learning opportunities and partnerships with local employers. His professionalism and ability to energize a diverse audience—including major industry and healthcare leaders—reflected positively on the institution.

The discussion emphasized that while leadership can advocate for CWI, the most compelling message comes from students, instructors, and frontline staff who demonstrate the college's strengths firsthand. Appreciation was expressed to supervisors who encourage their teams to represent CWI at community events, with additional recognition of similar recent successes.

VIII. BOARD SELF EVALUATION – EXECUTIVE SESSION – ACTION ITEM

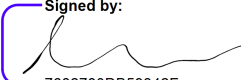
MS (Bradshaw / Bishop): To enter into executive session, pursuant to PURSUANT TO IDAHO CODE § 74-206 (1)(b) To consider the evaluation, dismissal or discipline of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member, individual agent or public-school student.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

- Trustee Bishop - Aye**
- Trustee Bradshaw - Aye**
- Trustee Buckner-Webb - Aye**
- Trustee Lenty - Aye**
- Chair Reames - Aye**

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

Signed by:

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5/12/2026

Molly Lenty

Board Secretary