

STATE OF WISCONSIN

WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM BOARD

2023-25 BIENNIAL REPORT

October 2025



Wisconsin Technical College System Board

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Layla Merrifield, President

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Mission and Purpose

Chapter 38, *Wis. Stats.*, provides that the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Board is responsible for the initiation, development, maintenance and supervision of programs with specific occupational orientation below the baccalaureate level. These include associate degrees, training of apprentices and adult education below the postsecondary level. In order to foster economic development and expansion of employment opportunities, the principal purposes of the System are to provide occupational education and training and retraining programs necessary for full participation in the workforce and to provide customized training and technical assistance to business and industry. Additional purposes of the System are to cooperate and contract with secondary schools, provide collegiate transfer programs, offer basic skills education, offer community service programs and self-enrichment activities, and address barriers.

WTCS Board

As the WTCS governing body, the WTCS Board is structured to reflect its mission and various responsibilities. The Board consists of 13 members, including three ex officio and ten members appointed by the Governor. The three ex-officio members are the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary (or designee), the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) Board of Regents President (or designee) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) State Superintendent (or designee).

Of the ten appointed board members, one represents employers, one represents employees, one represents farmers, one represents students and six represent the public as at-large members. Appointed board members serve staggered, six-year terms, with the exception of the student representative, who serves a two-year term. The WTCS Board is empowered to determine the organization, plans, scope and development of postsecondary technical and adult education; appoint a System President; approve the qualifications of district educational personnel and courses of study; establish System-wide policies and approve district proposals for facilities development and land acquisition. The Board establishes procedures and criteria for determining course credit, state aid, uniform accounting for financial programs and other data required of the colleges.

During the 2023-25 biennium, the following individuals served on the WTCS Board:

Member	Representing	Residence
S. Mark Tyler, President, 2023-25	Public	Woodville
Douglas A. Holton, Sr., Vice President, 2023-25	Public	Milwaukee
Dr. Quincey Daniels, Jr., Secretary 2023-25	Public	Mindoro
Lindsay Blumer	Employer	Colgate
Janixa Franco Gonzalez	Student	Milwaukee
Dan Klecker	Public	Deerfield
Alex Lasry	Public	Milwaukee
Sara J. Rogers	Public	Milwaukee
Daniel Sperberg	Employee	Coloma
Leslie Svacina	Agriculture	Deer Park
Stephen Willett	Employer	Phillips

The following ex-officio members served on the Board during the 2023-25 biennium:

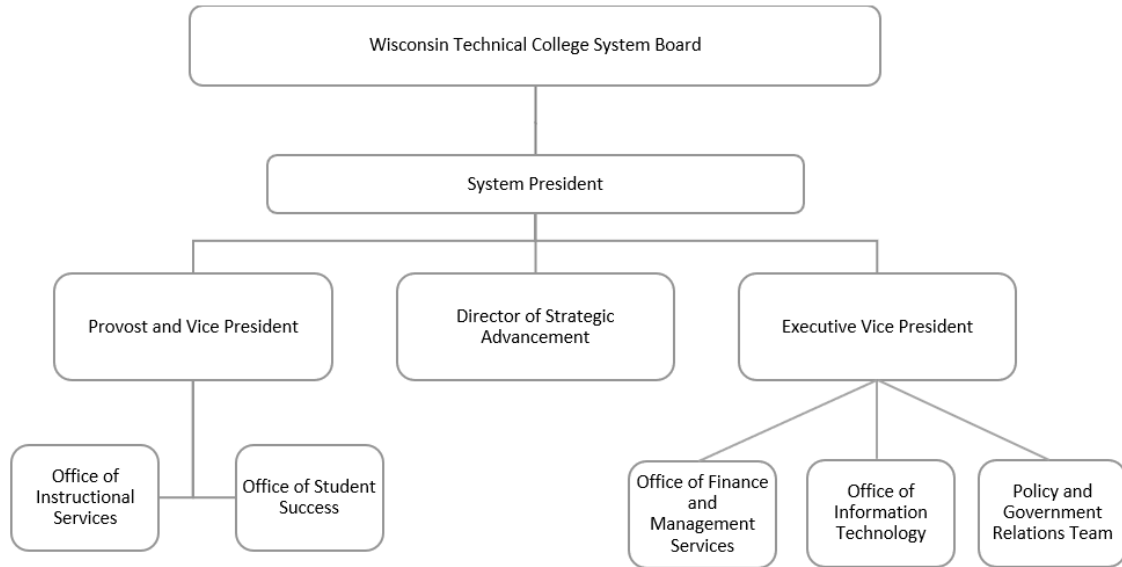
Member	Representing
John W. Miller	University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents Designee
Karen Walsh	University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents Designee
Timothy Nixon	University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents Designee
Amy Pechacek	Secretary, Department of Workforce Development
Dr. Jill Underly	State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction

System Office

A System President, who serves at the pleasure of the WTCS Board, leads the WTCS Office. The WTCS Office ended the biennium with 55 full-time equivalent (FTE) authorized positions. Major staff responsibilities are as follows:

- The *offices of Finance and Management Services and Information Technology* have oversight responsibility for operations including accounting, budgeting, procurement, payroll, human resources, facilities and information technology. The offices distribute state aid and provide guidance to the technical colleges in developing financial policies and standards. In addition, the offices assist the Board in determining student fees and tuition rates and in approving district facility development projects. The offices are also responsible for the management of information and oversight of district budgets and enrollments.
- The *Office of Instructional Services* has responsibility for program definition, approval, evaluation and review for more than 500 programs. It oversees instructional offerings in agriculture, food and natural resources; architecture and construction; arts, audiovisual technology and communications; business, management and administration; education and training; Emergency Medical Services; finance; health science; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology (IT); law, public safety, corrections and security; manufacturing; science technology, engineering and math (STEM); transportation, distribution and logistics; general education and liberal arts; and apprenticeship. It also serves as a liaison to secondary schools.
- The *Office of Student Success* is responsible for the coordination of state and federal grant programs, student financial aid, federal projects for people with disabilities or that are disadvantaged, adult and continuing education outreach, adult basic education, English language learning and workforce projects. It also serves as a liaison to business and industry.
- The *Policy and Government Relations Team* provides leadership for System-wide policy analysis and development, public outreach and federal and state government relations. It is responsible for the coordination of System-wide budgeting, planning and research.
- The *Director of Strategic Advancement* serves as a member of the agency's leadership team. The Director is the WTCS Public Information Officer and functions as the liaison between WTCS and a wide variety of internal and external partners.

Wisconsin Technical College System Board and Office



WTCS Board Policies

The WTCS Board has the authority to establish System-wide policies. The WTCS Board uses a two-step process to consider policy changes and ensure the opportunity for member input. Draft policy recommendations are first developed by the WTCS Office in consultation with various stakeholders. The System President presents the draft recommendations to the Board for discussion. System Office staff incorporate the comments of the Board into the draft recommendations. At a subsequent Board meeting, the System President presents the final recommendations to the Board for its action. Policies approved by the WTCS Board are published in its [policy manual](#).

WTCS Strategic Directions

The WTCS Board has adopted the following strategic directions and action steps for the upcoming five-year period. [Strategic Directions 2026-2030](#) outlines the WTCS vision and its values of innovation, collaboration, inspiration, transformation and illustration.

Expand access and success for all students

- Advance teaching and learning strategies tailored to individual student needs.
- Deliver student support services that ensure accessibility and success across all colleges.
- Align college facility proposals with evolving student and employer needs.

Advance student and employer goals through effective partnerships

- Maintain affordability while upholding academic rigor and quality.
- Ensure curriculum is industry-aligned, flexible and responsive to workforce needs.
- Engage stakeholders to build a lifelong learning continuum that supports economic growth.
- Strategically align grant funding with instructional and student support priorities.
- Collaborate across WTCS colleges on professional development, finance and advocacy with a focus on student outcomes and workplace quality.

Encourage learners of all ages to pursue technical education

- Ensure all students have access to lifelong learning and career preparation.
- Raise awareness of college offerings and outcomes, positioning technical colleges as a top choice for continuing education.

Redefine the delivery of postsecondary education and training

- Align college efforts with community needs, emphasizing student and employer success.
- Leverage IT infrastructure and data to close achievement gaps.
- Promote understanding of the System's broad statutory mission and its unique ability to meet evolving demands in a time of rapid change.

Showcase student success and employer partnerships

- Elevate the visibility of technical education by highlighting student achievements and employer engagement.
- Share compelling stories of personal growth, career advancement and community impact.
- Highlight employers' roles in curriculum development, internships and hiring to demonstrate their impact on workforce readiness.
- Promote innovative, grant-funded projects that expand access, enhance learning and introduce new technologies.

WTCS College Districts

Currently with 52 campuses, the 16 WTCS colleges deliver career and technical education to meet the needs, interests and abilities of their students and the demands of the labor market. To assist the colleges in their missions, WTCS Office staff provide the colleges with technical assistance and help to coordinate activities and support services.

Each WTCS college has unique demographic, geographic and economic characteristics. Programs are tailored to meet local needs within the uniform program standards established by the WTCS Board. Each technical college is governed by a district board appointed by local elected officials. Similar to the WTCS Board, district board membership is intended to reflect the diversity of district stakeholders. Excluding Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), membership for each of the remaining 15 district boards comprises nine members who must be residents of their respective districts: two members representing employers, two representing employees, a local K-12 school administrator, a state or local elected official and three at-large members.

MATC's District Board also comprises nine members, seven of which must reside in Milwaukee County. Membership of the MATC District Board is as follows: five representing employers, three representing employers with 15 or more employees and two members representing employers with 100 or more employees. In addition, at least two members must represent employers that are manufacturing businesses. A person representing an employer must have at least two years of experience managing a business entity, non-profit, etc., with at least 15 employees or at least two years of experience managing the finances or hiring personnel of a business entity or non-profit, etc., with at least 100 employees. Finally, MATC's Board includes a school district administrator, a state or local elected official and two at-large members.

District boards are empowered to levy taxes on property, provide facilities and equipment, contract for instructional services and appoint a college president who serves as chief executive officer for the district. Additional information and a map for Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges can be viewed on the [WTCS colleges webpage](#).

Engagement and Partnerships

The WTCS Board and System Office are committed to working with internal and external partners to improve the quality, availability and cost-effectiveness of WTCS education and workforce training programs.

The WTCS Office and individual colleges participate in a variety of collaborative projects involving outside educational and workforce development agencies to:

- improve college transfer opportunities;
- enhance college access and affordability; and
- develop career clusters and pathways.

Partner institutions involved with these projects include the Wisconsin Departments of Workforce Development and Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the University of Wisconsin System, Wisconsin tribal colleges and universities and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Additional information about WTCS is available on the [WTCS website](#).

REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONS

Wisconsin's technical colleges strive to provide graduates with education and training that develop skills to compete in today's competitive job market. WTCS regularly publishes data on student and financial data, programming, and outcomes. The data is available on the [WTCS publications and resources page](#).

Operational Costs

In order to provide the instruction, services and activities necessary to carry out their mission and achieve their goals, WTCS colleges rely on a combination of federal, state and local revenues. In 2023-24, the latest year for which complete financial information is available, WTCS colleges enrolled 287,365 individuals at an operational cost of \$1.2 billion.

Actual 2023-24 cost allocation data show that 62.8% of operational costs were for instruction while the next highest amounts were for general institutional (15.6%), student services (12.0%) and physical plant (7.5%). Instructional resources accounted for the remaining 2.0% of operational costs. Data on college costs is published annually, with the most recent year of complete data available in the [cost allocation summary report](#).

Enrollment

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students enrolled annually increased 3.2% from 60,011 in FY 2022-23 to 61,924 in FY 2023-24. The number of individual students enrolled remained relatively consistent from 287,951 in FY 2022-23 to 287,365 in FY 2023-24. In the previous three-year period, from 2021-22 to 2023-24, enrollment grew 15.6%.

In 2023-24, enrollments across WTCS colleges included 140,612 males (48.9%), 135,907 females (47.3%) and 10,846 individuals for whom gender was not reported (3.8%). The average student age across all credit types was 31. Data on enrollment is published annually in the [Fact Book](#) with the most recent year of complete data available.

Services for Students with Special Needs

WTCS provides specialized services for:

- students with physical or mental disabilities;
- students who are disadvantaged, including academically or economically disadvantaged individuals; and
- students with limited English proficiency.

In 2023-24, 14,546 students with disabilities received specialized services. These services were supported with funds from General Purpose Revenue (GPR), WTCS districts, the federal Perkins Act and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within DWD. These services enable students with disabilities to enroll and succeed in technical education programs and courses. Services include specialized guidance and counseling, needs assessment and evaluation, support services, remedial instruction, career development, adaptive equipment and career placement.

In 2023-24, WTCS colleges provided services to 76,834 disadvantaged students (unduplicated), of whom 39,867 were academically disadvantaged and 47,161 were economically disadvantaged. Services provided to disadvantaged students are supported with funds from WTCS general state aid, local funds, targeted state GPR funds and federal funds provided through Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Services provided include remediation services such as specialized reading and mathematics laboratories, note-taking instruction and staff and peer tutors.

Grant Programs

WTCS provides several grants to individual technical colleges using funds received from GPR, the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

These programs are intended to assist WTCS districts in providing educational and economic development services to individuals and high priority industry sectors. Grants also help promote innovative or successful practices related to priorities identified by the WTCS Board, such as:

- strengthening career and technical education programs through efforts to provide direct support services to students and target attainment gaps;
- supporting high school-to-college transitions;
- building skills for adults to earn a secondary credential, transition to postsecondary education and obtain employment; and
- expanding career pathways to offer an efficient and student-centered approach to training and education.

Major Program Goals and Objectives

Expand the Pool of Skilled Workers in the State's Labor Force

The WTCS Board continues to approve demand-driven, cutting-edge career and technical education and training programs developed by Wisconsin's technical colleges in collaboration with Wisconsin's businesses and industry, labor and other partners. Employer partnerships throughout the System support the creation of industry-aligned curriculum that is continuously reviewed, modified and discontinued as needed, ensuring that programming stays in tune with the state's economic needs.

Targeted employer outreach efforts, including the [Employer Satisfaction Survey](#), provides meaningful feedback on the effectiveness of the WTCS Board. Conducted every four years since 1980 and most

recently completed in 2021, the Employer Satisfaction Survey measures employer satisfaction with the skills and abilities of WTCS graduates. Nine in ten employers surveyed report that technical college program graduates met or exceeded expectations for the ability to perform technical skills; ability to communicate effectively; mastery of science, technology and engineering; and the overall preparedness for employment.

Employer-specific worker training is a critical component to meet the needs of new and expanding businesses in Wisconsin. Technical colleges' customized instruction and technical assistance continue to provide upskilling and talent development opportunities for local employers and their workforce. In 2022-23, the most recent year with data available, technical colleges served more than 85,700 individuals with instruction in technical and productivity skills, providing learning opportunities on-site or on campus.

Not only do WTCS colleges produce graduates with skills that align with the needs of local employers, they also produce strong career outcomes for graduates. Recent WTCS graduates have a 92% employment rate and earn family-sustaining wages. The [WTCS Graduate Outcomes report](#) is a comprehensive annual survey of graduates, collecting information on employment and wages by credential and program. The latest survey results for 2024 graduates were available in May 2025. Of the 25,253 graduates, 14,136 (56%) responded to the survey.

Among the respondents:

- 92% were satisfied or very satisfied with their WTCS education;
- 92% of those in the labor force were employed;
- 93% of graduates were working in Wisconsin; and
- 82% of employed graduates were working in a job related to their WTCS education.

The median salary six months after graduation, regardless of degree type, for 2024 WTCS graduates was \$55,636. Median salaries six months after graduation range from \$50,727 for 2024 graduates with a one-year technical diploma to \$60,003 for 2024 associate degree graduates. The number of WTCS programs with a median salary of \$60,000 or higher within six months after graduation grew by 25% between 2022 and 2024. These high-wage programs range from short-term technical diplomas in Truck Driving to Associate Degrees in Nursing, Dental Hygienist, Industrial Maintenance Technician and Criminal Justice.

The WTCS Board continues efforts to close achievement gaps across its student population. WTCS colleges serve students with varied background and levels of preparedness, including, but limited to, veterans, single parents, individuals with disabilities, students with limited English proficiencies, and students in need of stronger reading, writing and numeracy skills. Technical colleges continue to lead effective student services and support strategies to remove barriers to program completion and produce strong graduate outcomes.

Increase Access with Leading-Edge Instructional Technology and Techniques

WTCS is committed to data-driven decision-making, using a variety of tools to measure effectiveness in support of student access and success. For example, WTCS data dashboards provide a one-stop shop for college staff and faculty to analyze key performance indicators across a series of variables to inform course design and program pathways in real-time. Combined with a focus on student voice and opportunities for student input and engagement, WTCS has built systems to identify, take action and continuously improve teaching and learning strategies that meet the needs of each student.

WTCS meets students where they are by creating student-driven instructional delivery models that support a variety of learning options. For students on campus, state-of-the-art equipment and facilities

reflect the workplaces they are preparing to enter. For the high percentage of students that attend classes part-time, flexible schedules and online learning allow students to balance work and obligations outside of the classroom. The growing use of free Open Educational Resources (OER) – teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain – expands access to relevant materials and reduces cost burdens for students.

Increase Postsecondary Educational Opportunities

WTCS Career Pathways continue to provide opportunities for effective and efficient pathways “to and through” postsecondary education that seamlessly link education and work throughout an individual’s career, creating several points of access that support lifelong learning.

For middle and high school students, career pathways increase awareness of the academic preparation needed for postsecondary education. WTCS continues to lead a successful and growing dual credit program, providing more than 63,000 high school students opportunities to earn more than 297,400 college credits annually at no cost to their families.

For adult students, career pathways created by WTCS colleges commonly include remedial education “bridges” that allow students who need basic instruction, including English language learning, to address those needs without postponing their entry into postsecondary occupational programs. One strategy for bridge programs pairs basic education and occupational instructors in the same classroom so that students can improve their basic academic abilities and at the same time earn a certificate-level credential that will help improve their employment outcomes.

For students who choose to continue their education beyond WTCS and earn a bachelor’s degree, partnerships with four-year colleges and universities provide a framework to develop seamless transfer opportunities. In partnership with University of Wisconsin System and Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities institutions, all 16 technical colleges offer Associate of Arts and Associate of Science programs, allowing for a more direct, clear academic path for those interested in furthering their education. Importantly, credit transfer also creates opportunities for students who transfer to WTCS colleges, including those pursuing education in health sciences, business management, information technology and public safety.

Alternative Work Patterns

WTCS Office policies have permitted alternative work patterns since 1976. In 2005, the WTCS Office adopted a revised policy that permits any employee of the agency to request an alternative work pattern. Alternative work patterns include, but are not limited to, part-time, shared-time and flex-time schedules. Employee and agency work needs are accommodated through the use of non-standard work weeks and straight shift work. In January 2024, the WTCS implemented a two-year Alternative Work Pattern Plan. Under the current Alternative Work Pattern Plan, all employees with satisfactory work performance are eligible to request an alternative work pattern.