

**WMCC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 25, 2024**

Present: David Backler, Heidi Barker, Tammy Fauteux, Mike Laracy, Corey Riendeau, Sarmad Saman

Absent: Sarah Boone, Beth Carpenter, Kevin Carpenter, Kevin Powers, Alan Smith

Guests: Tim Allison, Colbie Ayotte, Will Cunningham, Mark Desmarais, Julie King, Pamela Laflamme, Leah Maciejewski, Melanie Robbins, Gretchen Taillon

The White Mountains Community College (WMCC) Advisory Committee convened on September 25, 2024, at 12:00 PM in the WMCC Bistro.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Backler and seconded by Ms. Barker to approve the minutes from the meeting on September 20, 2023. All were in favor.

Regional/Individual Updates & Community Needs

Mr. Riendeau discussed the staffing shortage at the Northern New Hampshire Correctional Facility. WMCC provided inmates with computers for use in classes, and there are currently over thirty students taking courses at the facility.

Ms. Barker highlighted the NH Hunger Run and other collaborations with NH Hunger Solutions throughout the state.

Ms. Laflamme provided an update on the city's ongoing downtown improvement project. She also noted that the city continues to address housing issues.

Ms. King announced her upcoming retirement and shared that she is assisting with the transition of Ms. Fauteux into the superintendent role. Berlin Public Schools are completing the final round of COVID-19 funding, which supported building upgrades such as new HVAC systems and boilers.

Ms. Fauteux reported a successful start to the 2024–2025 school year. Berlin Public Schools are nearly fully staffed, with Professor Robin Scott from WMCC assisting in filling a few special education positions.

Mr. Backler mentioned the upcoming Androscoggin Valley Education Collaborative (AVEC) meeting, which aims to support students in pursuing post-secondary education.

Mr. Laracy inquired about the college's marketing efforts, specifically whether outreach targets parents of high school juniors and seniors. He was assured that mailings are indeed sent to families of local high school students.

Mr. Cunningham shared updates on the EMT courses currently offered at the WMCC Littleton Academic Center.

College Updates

President Saman officially began his role on June 14. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) will be conducting a site visit for WMCC next month, they will be

reaching out to the advisory committee for information and feedback. WMCC has received funding for lab renovations, with completion anticipated in 2026.

Ms. Maciejewski recently transitioned into the role of Vice President of Academic Affairs. Notable program growth this semester includes Massage Therapy, Veterinary Assistant, and Cybersecurity. Additionally, the Second Chance Pell program celebrated its first graduate this summer.

Dr. Desmarais reported that college enrollment is up. In November, there will be a focused effort on student advising. The college continues to offer free meals and limited transportation services to students.

Ms. Robbins shared that the Advanced Technology Building is now complete. The college is planning to launch a Power Generation Technology program. Additionally, the Boys and Girls Club will occupy part of the Berlin campus to provide childcare services, with construction expected to be completed by the end of November.

Ms. Taillon noted that the leadership team is reviewing the college's organizational structure and staffing. Most open positions have been filled, and staff retention has stabilized. Mr. Ayotte is now the Executive Assistant to the President and will serve as the liaison for this committee.

Mr. Allison spoke about the Foundation for New Hampshire Community Colleges and highlighted a significant gift from Eric and Donna Johnson, along with funding received from the Metallica Foundation. He emphasized the importance of identifying businesses interested in partnering with the college.

Ms. King reflected on her experience as a student, as she is currently enrolled in the college's Automotive Technology program. She noted that free meals are available daily and feels this is a valuable benefit for students. On the first day of classes, the college's security supervisor visited classrooms to introduce himself and review student safety procedures. She felt this was a nice introduction, and a great way to make students aware of the procedures. She also praised Canvas as an organized and valuable resource for students.

Ms. Laflamme and Ms. King were recognized for their years of service on the advisory committee, both concluding their time on the committee. With the departure of Ms. Laflamme, who had been serving as the chair of the committee, President Saman encouraged advisory members that were interested in serving as chair to contact him. The advisory bylaws were reissued to committee members.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Colbie Ayotte
Executive Assistant to the President