

**COCONINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD**

**BUDGET RETREAT**

**JANUARY 26, 2026**



**COCONINO COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION  
OF THE  
DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD  
JANUARY 26, 2026**

A Work Session of the Coconino Community College District Governing Board was held via interactive videoconferencing (Zoom). Board Chair Mr. Joey Smith called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm.

PRESENT: Mr. Joey Smith, Board Chair  
Mr. Patrick Hurley, Board Vice Chair/Secretary  
Mr. Eric Eikenberry  
Dr. Nat White  
Ms. Patricia Garcia

**Also Present:** President Eric Heiser, Ms. Kirsten Mead, Dr. Jami Van Ess, Dr. Adriana Flores-Church, Ms. Dianna Sanchez, Ms. Janel States, Mr. Shane Pablo, Dr. Sandra Hinski, Mr. Tony Williams, Ms. Cathleen Banier-Goff, Ms. Randi Axler, and Ms. Sonni Marbury.

Reports, summaries, background material, and other documents referred to in these minutes can be found in the January 26, 2026, documents file.

**1. Information Item - Purpose and Structure of the Budget Retreat – President Heiser**

President Heiser introduced the purpose and structure of the Budget Retreat to the Board.

**2. Information Item – Budget Planning – Dr. Jami Van Ess**

- A. Budget Status Report through December 2025
- B. FY27 Budget Retreat
  - i. October and November slides (Information only)
- C. Budget Forecast
- D. Informed Budget Process (IBP) Request Summary
- E. Capital Budget Requests
- F. Reserves
- G. Tuition and Fees
- H. Compensation and Benefits
- I. Board Questions, Direction, or Follow-up

Dr. Van Ess reviewed the budget status report with the Board. The report details expenses through December 31, 2025, which is 50% of the current fiscal year (FY). Please see the January 26, 2026, documents file for additional details.

Dr. Van Ess, President Heiser, and the Board discussed the FY27 budget forecast, the Informed Budget Process (IBP), tuition and fees (including the technology fee), compensation, and Board direction. Please see the January 26, 2026, documents file for additional information.

**Board Direction**

Based on discussion during the work session, the District Governing Board provided the following direction to administration:

- **FY 2027 Budget Framework:**  
Administration is directed to continue developing the FY27 budget using the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) as the foundational planning assumption for ongoing cost increases, consistent with previously adopted board policy.
- **Compensation Planning:**  
The Board supports using a HEPI-based salary increase (3.6%) as the baseline placeholder for FY27 compensation planning, recognizing the need to balance competitive compensation with available financial resources and other institutional priorities.
- **Informed Budget Process (IBP):**  
Administration is directed to continue refining IBP requests within available ongoing resources, prioritizing requests aligned with Board-established strategic priorities and recognizing that not all requests can be funded in a given fiscal year.
- **Tuition Planning:**  
The Board supports a \$5 per credit hour tuition increases for FY27, consistent with the HEPI-based assumption, and directs administration to bring forward a formal recommendation at the February board meeting.
- **Technology Fee:**  
The Board supports a \$3 per credit hour increase to the technology fee for FY27 and directs administration to include this increase in future budget planning materials, recognizing rising student-facing technology costs and the need for additional adjustments over time.
- **Future Technology Fee Strategy:**  
Administration is encouraged to incorporate ongoing discussion of technology fee trends and potential future adjustments for the annual Board Retreat to support long-range financial planning to avoid significant periodic increases.
- **Medical Benefits Cost Sharing:**  
The Board supports maintaining the current proportional cost-sharing model between the College and employees for medical benefit premium increases and directs administration to use this model as the basis for FY27 planning.
- **Use of Reserves:**  
The Board is not interested in using reserves to supplement operating expenses currently.
- **Capital and Facilities Planning:**  
Administration is directed to continue preliminary capital and deferred maintenance planning, including refinement of cost estimates and placeholders related to new construction, furniture, fixtures, equipment, site infrastructure, and to bring forward recommendations as appropriate.
- **Student Affordability and Access:**  
The Board affirms its continued support for student affordability initiatives, including the Comet Promise Program, and encourages administration to continue efforts to mitigate the impact of tuition and fee increases on students with the greatest financial need.

The Board thanked Dr. Van Ess and her team for their work on tonight's budget presentation.

ADJOURNMENT: The Work Session adjourned at 6:22 pm.

**MINUTES PREPARED BY:**

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Ms. Kirsten Mead  
Board Recorder

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Mr. Patrick Hurley  
Vice Chair/Secretary of the Board

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Mr. Joey Smith  
Board Chair

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