



**District Board of Trustees
Board Retreat
January 20, 2026
Pensacola Campus—Broxson Hall**

Present: Chair Gordon Sprague; Dr. Troy Tippet; Chief Deputy Andy Hobbs; Mr. Zack Smith; Ms. Audrey McDonald; Mr. Richard Holzknecht; Mr. Todd Leonard; Dr. Ed Meadows; and staff.

Absent: Mr. Ed Fleming

Guests: Dr. Erin Spicer; Dr. Brenda Kelly; Ms. Anita Kovacs; and Ms. Diane Bracken

A continental breakfast was provided beginning at 8:00 a.m. Chair Sprague and Dr. Meadows called the retreat to order at 8:31 a.m.

Retreat Topics:

1. Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Strategic Plan Review

Board members were provided with a copy of the 2026–2031 Strategic Plan.

I. Introduction

There were no proposed revisions to this section.

II. Vision Statement & III. Mission Statement

Dr. Tippet distributed a handout with suggested revisions to the Mission and Vision Statements (Items II and III), noting that his intent was to simplify the language. Dr. Tippet moved to revise the Vision Statement to read as follows:

“Pensacola State College educates students through a dynamic and supportive learning environment that develops and prepares them to succeed.”

Mr. Smith expressed support for simplifying the Vision Statement as suggested by Dr. Tippet and proposed alternative language emphasizing civic engagement and self-sufficiency to read as follows: “Pensacola State College seeks to foster an educational environment that promotes human flourishing by equipping students to become engaged citizens capable of self-support and self-government” Chair Sprague suggested that Dr. Tippet and Mr. Smith confer during the break to attempt to reach consensus on the Vision Statement language.

Dr. Meadows explained that, historically, the Board has directed the preparation of one or more revised versions of the Mission and Vision Statements for subsequent review and formal action at a future Board meeting.

Mr. Smith suggested the possible formation of an ad hoc committee to revise the statements. Dr. Tippettt stated his preference for maintaining concise and straightforward language.

Dr. Tippettt then presented a revised Mission Statement with simplified language, as follows: "Pensacola State College is committed to providing quality, affordable, and accessible educational opportunities."

Mr. Smith expressed agreement with the revised first paragraph and suggested removing the phrase "and cultural enrichment opportunities for students and the community" from the second paragraph, noting that the concept is encompassed within "community outreach." Dr. Tippettt agreed.

Mr. Smith restated the proposed second paragraph as follows:

"The College, a member of the Florida College System, offers baccalaureate and associate degrees, workforce certificates, business and industry training, non-credit continuing education, and community outreach."

Dr. Tippettt concurred. Dr. Meadows confirmed that Mr. Smith's suggested revisions incorporated Dr. Tippettt's proposed language. Dr. Tippettt summarized the revised Mission Statement accordingly: First paragraph: "Pensacola State College is committed to providing quality, affordable, and accessible educational opportunities."

Second paragraph: "The College, a member of the Florida College System, offers baccalaureate and associate degrees, workforce certificates, business and industry training, non-credit continuing education, and community outreach."

IV. President's Institutional Priorities

Dr. Meadows asked if the Board was prepared to proceed to the Strategic Plan. Mr. Smith requested discussion of the President's Institutional Priorities, which Dr. Meadows noted are included within the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Smith proposed revisions to the introductory language of Item IV, recommending the removal of certain terms and the inclusion of language supporting respectful debate and free exchange of ideas. He proposed the following revised language:

"Pensacola State College values continuously creating and improving opportunities for success in an atmosphere of integrity and responsibility for students, employees, and members of the community. Respectful debate of ideas and issues is necessary and encouraged. The institution places high importance on the following priorities:"

Dr. Meadows asked for additional Board input on the priorities listed under this section. Mr. Smith noted a numbering error in the printed Strategic Plan, which was confirmed to be administrative in nature.

Mr. Smith recommended adding language to Objectives 1 and 7 to ensure that partnerships and activities comply with applicable state and federal laws. During discussion, Mr. Smith inquired about the College's use of TikTok. Dr. Meadows stated that the College does not currently maintain a TikTok account and explained that a previously existing account was removed upon discovery.

No additional revisions were suggested. Dr. Meadows stated that the discussed revisions would be incorporated into a revised draft of the Strategic Plan to be presented at the February Board meeting.

V. Goals and Objectives

Dr. Meadows moved discussion to Item V and invited feedback. Mr. Smith suggested adding language related to accountability and measurable outcomes in Objective 1.2 and requested clarification regarding the "Lean Office" mentioned in Objective 1.6.

Dr. Meadows explained that the Lean Office refers to an external evaluation of institutional processes to improve efficiency and modernize operations. Dr. Tippett suggested removing the term “Lean Office” from Objective 1.6 to avoid confusion and allow flexibility in selecting future evaluators. Mr. Smith expressed support for this revision.

Ms. McDonald asked whether the College has internal mechanisms for employee feedback on inefficient processes. Dr. Meadows stated that the College has previously used a suggestion box and could consider reinstating a similar process.

Mr. Smith suggested exploring the use of Florida DOGE or similar organizations for an external operational review. Dr. Meadows stated that the College would evaluate what such a review would entail.

Chair Sprague noted the absence of references to the Charter Academy in the Institutional Priorities. Dr. Meadows explained that, due to the Charter Academy’s separate Board of Trustees, its staff could be consulted to develop its own mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Mr. Smith inquired about the status of adult high school education referenced in Objective 6.4.3. Dr. Meadows explained the reasons for the program’s termination, including availability of similar pathway programs in public schools, accreditation limitations, reporting requirements, and financial deficits.

Dr. Tippett requested clarification regarding the reference to “critical life skills training” in Objective 6.4.3. Dr. Meadows outlined several College offerings focused on foundational life skills, including financial literacy instruction, coaching and mentoring programs, and time management support. Dr. Meadows then invited Dr. Spicer to provide additional detail, and she noted that the College also offers career coaching, interview preparation, and résumé development.

Mr. Smith referenced Objectives 6.1.3 and 6.6.2 and recommended that references to the Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) be broadened to include other relevant institutional and programmatic accreditors. Dr. Meadows agreed and suggested that language referencing program-specific accreditors be added where appropriate.

Mr. Smith then referenced Objective 7, Student Success, and suggested future discussion regarding the alignment of the College’s baccalaureate degree offerings with existing technical programs and certificates. He also questioned the inclusion of marketing the library as an institutional goal under Objective 6.6.2. Dr. Meadows explained that the library is accessible to both students and the general public. Mr. Smith suggested that the objective be broadened to reference additional resources. Dr. Meadows noted that other resources, such as computer labs, are not publicly accessible. Dr. Spicer added that multiple accreditation standards pertain specifically to library services and usage. Mr. Smith inquired whether the library is separately accredited, and Dr. Spicer clarified that it is included under the College’s institutional accreditation. Dr. Meadows agreed to further review the language in Objective 6.6.2.

Mr. Smith next raised questions regarding the use of the term “at-risk populations” in Objective 7.8 and 7.8.1. Dr. Spicer explained that the definition of at-risk populations varies by grants and program and typically refers to students who are underrepresented or nontraditional within a given program of study. Mr. Smith suggested removing the language. Dr. Tippett asked whether the terminology is required for grant purposes and cautioned against removing it if so. Mr. Smith stated that removal of said language would not necessarily affect grant eligibility. Mr. Holzkecht suggested revising Objective 7.8.1 to read “Strengthen student outreach,” which was supported by Mr. Smith. Dr. Tippett noted that corresponding revisions would need to be applied to Objective 7.8. Dr. Meadows proposed revising the language to “Strengthen student outreach as determined by grant requirements” and

suggested combining Objectives 7.8 and 8.1 to clearly reflect that the College meets or exceeds expected outcomes.

Mr. Smith referenced Objective 8.4 related to continuous improvement of the College website and asked when the last comprehensive website review occurred. Dr. Meadows responded that the College is currently in the process of conducting a comprehensive review and that a redesigned website is expected to launch within the next several months.

Ms. McDonald asked how the Strategic Plan is used by the College. Dr. Meadows explained that the Strategic Plan is integrated into the budgeting process, particularly when evaluating requests for budget increases, and that funding decisions are tied to alignment with strategic objectives. Ms. McDonald further asked whether the Strategic Plan also functions as an accountability tool to evaluate the progress at the end of the year. Dr. Meadows confirmed that the Strategic Plan serves as an accountability document and noted that the College reports on progress toward strategic goals, institutional priorities, and functional area objectives through the annual Institutional Effectiveness Survey. Mr. Smith asked who reviews these reports, and Dr. Meadows responded that they are reviewed internally by the institution and externally by the accreditor.

Dr. Meadows asked if there were any additional suggestions related to the Strategic Plan. Dr. Meadows confirmed that Board feedback would be incorporated into a revised draft for further review prior to the February meeting.

2. Facilities Master Plan and Campus Acreage

Ms. Bracken presented an overview of College facilities, including all campuses and centers, and responded to Board questions.

Prior to open discussion, Dr. Meadows noted an upcoming action item regarding the continuation of WSRE Public Broadcasting.

Mr. Smith asked whether a formal Board vote was necessary to express support for continued WSRE operations. Dr. Meadows stated that he preferred an official vote in order to document the College's intent, noting that such intent would be reflected in legal filings associated with the ongoing lawsuit. Mr. Smith expressed concern that an official vote could commit the Board to a specific course of action without accounting for potential future changes. He stated a preference for the Board to express general support for the continuation of WSRE while avoiding narrowly defined language that could be construed as binding in legal proceedings. He suggested including qualifying language to indicate that the Board's support is based on current circumstances. Dr. Tippet stated that a vote expressing continued support would not bind the Board indefinitely and could be reconsidered should circumstances change. Mr. Smith reiterated concern that such a vote could create the appearance of misleading the court if conditions were to change in the future. Dr. Meadows suggested adding clarifying language such as "at this time" to reflect that the Board's intent is based on present conditions. Mr. Smith agreed with this suggestion.

Mr. Smith stated that he remained concerned about what he perceived as mixed messaging regarding the continuation of WSRE. Dr. Tippet disagreed with the assertion of mixed messaging, stating that the College's position has remained consistent since the issue was first discussed at a Foundation Board meeting. He noted that Dr. Meadows has consistently stated publicly and on record the College's intent to support the continuation of WSRE and maintain its broadcast license. Mr. Smith clarified that his concern related to statements regarding scheduling and programming. Dr. Meadows responded that he has consistently expressed hope for the continuation of WSRE since his initial interview and does not believe his messaging has varied. Mr. Smith disagreed. Dr. Meadows

acknowledged the disagreement and explained that the College explored alternative financial models to allow for the continuation of WSRE. He stated that no model would allow WSRE to continue with the same PSC affiliation; however, a model exists that would allow the College to continue utilizing WSRE as a broadcasting station. He reiterated that, aside from expressing hope early in the process, his messaging has remained consistent. Mr. Smith stated that additional statements had been made, but he would be happy to table that discussion for now.

Dr. Meadows then provided an overview of the current plan and progress related to WSRE. He reported that WSRE has developed a proposed programming schedule designed to meet federal compliance requirements for maintaining the College's broadcast license, including a minimum of 300 hours of children's programming and the broadcast of community events and activities. He further reported that WSRE has transitioned from analog to digital broadcasting and will soon transition from digital to data transmission, which will allow for broader institutional communication with students, faculty, and staff and expanded use of the license.

Dr. Meadows stated that he would develop language, prior to the Board Retreat and full Board meeting, that would reflect the College's intent to continue WSRE at this time while preserving flexibility should circumstances change. He reported that the Amos Studio will continue to operate and that the Baldwin County antenna will remain in place. He further stated that WSRE staff will manage rentals of the Amos Studio, recording studios, and podcast studios to generate revenue in support of continued operations following the conclusion of the College's PBS affiliation on June 30, 2026. Mr. Smith asked whether the continuation plan applied only to the primary WSRE channel. Dr. Meadows confirmed that the plan applies solely to Channel 23.

Mr. Hobbs expressed concern regarding the potential loss of community engagement historically associated with WSRE/PBS events, such as "Be My Neighbor Day," and asked whether alternative events were being considered. Dr. Meadows responded that the College plans to propose other community outreach events.

Mr. Smith requested that the Board be provided with anticipated programming schedules and asked about the source of children's programming. Dr. Meadows stated that the College will be able to more thoroughly vet children's programming to ensure appropriateness and the absence of political or ideological content.

Ms. McDonald requested clarification regarding content produced by *Pensacola State Today* and *Conversations with Jeff Weeks*. Dr. Meadows explained that both programs are recorded monthly and aired at various times. He stated that *PSC Today* focuses on College programs, initiatives, partnerships, and personnel, while *Conversations with Jeff Weeks* addresses local community topics and projects. Chief Deputy Hobbs shared his experience appearing on *Conversations with Jeff Weeks*, including episodes addressing fentanyl awareness and hurricane preparedness. Ms. McDonald asked about viewership in light of declining traditional television usage. Chief Deputy Hobbs responded that the programs are shared on social media platforms and noted that the aforementioned episode addressing fentanyl resources received approximately 25,000–30,000 views on Facebook.

Dr. Tippet expressed interest in developing programming that would support student education in journalism and broadcasting and suggested exploring partnerships, including with the University of West Florida, to create student-run programming. He noted that this approach would both enhance student learning and reinforce the College's educational mission in continuing WSRE.

Mr. Smith asked about the cost to the College to maintain WSRE operations. Dr. Meadows stated that estimated costs range between \$80,000 and \$90,000 annually, noting that the College will gain greater clarity through experience. Mr. Smith clarified that the College currently provides approximately \$1.5 million in direct support and \$1.5 million in indirect support. Dr. Meadows confirmed the indirect support amount and stated that direct costs will be reduced by nearly half. Mr. Smith clarified that

anticipated direct support would be approximately \$750,000 annually. Dr. Meadows confirmed and stated that indirect support costs would remain unchanged. He noted that discontinuing use of the Baldwin County tower could result in approximately \$60,000 in annual savings but recommended retaining the tower for the upcoming year due to student enrollment and scholarship activity in Baldwin County. Mr. Smith confirmed that indirect support would remain in excess of \$2 million annually without the PBS affiliation. Dr. Meadows confirmed and stated that facility rentals and leases will be a primary focus for revenue generation, noting that revenue projections remain uncertain at this time.

Mr. Smith raised concerns regarding the College's discretion related to leasing facilities and requested clarification regarding public forum considerations. Dr. Meadows responded that existing rental and leasing contracts already include language addressing these issues.

Mr. Smith asked about the annual cost of the College's WEAR sponsorship. Dr. Meadows stated that the cost is approximately \$50,000 annually. Chair Sprague noted that WEAR has generated successful programming and pledge events.

Chief Deputy Hobbs suggested utilizing the Amos Studio as an event space and incorporating culinary program catering to provide student experience and generate revenue. Dr. Meadows stated that there are numerous opportunities for student involvement as the College moves forward.

Dr. Meadows asked whether there were any additional questions or comments regarding WSRE and noted that the ongoing lawsuit would be addressed during Executive Session following the full Board meeting.

3. Open Discussion

Chair Sprague explained the purpose and format of open discussion, noting that Trustees may raise any topic of interest. He also provided an overview of the Council of Trustees, explaining that the Council has been reconstituted and that Trustees serve as members. He noted that the Council's purpose is to support the agenda of the Council of Presidents and that a training syllabus is currently being developed, with particular emphasis on orienting and training new Trustees.

Dr. Tippett emphasized that new Trustees should understand the role of the Legislature in determining funding and operational authority. He stated that Trustees play a key role in building relationships with legislators and advocating for the College. Ms. McDonald asked whether the College hosts events to engage legislators and highlight institutional needs. Dr. Tippett confirmed that such events occur, while also noting that personal connections are most successful, and further noted disparities in state funding growth between universities and colleges.

Ms. McDonald raised questions regarding the impact of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies on education and workforce preparation and asked how the College identifies future workforce needs. Dr. Meadows responded that the College has introduced short-term AI certificates and degree pathways and continually monitors workforce trends through industry partnerships. He cited the robotic welding program as an example and noted upcoming collaboration with the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce on an industry education day. Dr. Tippett added that colleges can benefit from sharing best practices with peer institutions.

Chair Sprague outlined Board committee structure, including Academic and Student Affairs, Finance, Facilities, and Human Resources, and explained that Trustees are assigned to committees and that committees meet as needed when action items are scheduled.

Mr. Holzkecht expressed appreciation for the College's technical and workforce-focused programs, then asked for clarification regarding compliance with Sunshine Law requirements in social or informal settings. Chair Sprague explained that Trustees may communicate freely outside noticed meetings

except on matters that may come before the Board for a vote. Mr. Smith added that while limited one-way communication may be permissible, best practice is to route materials through Dr. Meadows. Chair Sprague clarified that Trustees may speak with Dr. Meadows at any time about any matters, including those that may be voted on, and Dr. Meadows noted that he cannot relay opinions of other Trustees regarding potential votes. Mr. Smith recommended the Attorney General's Sunshine Manual as a resource. Dr. Meadows and Mr. Smith further noted that Board retreats and meetings are properly noticed and recorded, allowing discussion of voting matters. Chair Sprague stated that Dr. Meadows has consistently complied with Sunshine Law requirements.

Mr. Holzkecht asked how items are handled when a Trustee feels insufficiently informed to vote. Chair Sprague responded that discussion remains open until Trustees are satisfied, and Mr. Smith added that items may be tabled when additional information is needed.

Mr. Leonard asked about planning for the College's participation in America's 250th anniversary. Dr. Meadows stated that a planning committee has been active for several months and invited Dr. Kelly to provide additional detail. Dr. Kelly confirmed that a schedule of events is in development and that marketing materials would be shared at the full Board meeting. Dr. Tippet commented favorably on campus banners. Dr. Meadows outlined planned activities, including a flag-raising ceremony, lecture series, community partnerships, and student involvement. Dr. Kelly provided details on anticipated speakers. Mr. Smith suggested collaboration with the University of West Florida and additional patriotic visual displays, which Dr. Meadows and Dr. Spicer stated would be explored. Additional ideas included art competitions, gallery displays, musical performances, and outreach to local schools and ROTC programs.

Chair Sprague informed new Trustees that a Foundation report would be presented at the full Board meeting.

Mr. Smith suggested consideration of an institutional neutrality statement and raised potential policy considerations related to visa sponsorships, presidential service on external boards, and standardization of Board meeting recordings.

Chief Deputy Hobbs encouraged new Trustees to attend multiple meetings to gain a comprehensive understanding of College operations and emphasized the College's role in regional economic development. He commended the College's forward-looking workforce initiatives and thanked Trustees for their service.

Chair Sprague encouraged Trustees to tour College campuses, and Dr. Tippet noted that Board meetings rotate among campuses throughout the year.

Chair Sprague concluded open discussion and adjourned the Board retreat at 12:06 p.m.

Recorded By: 

Date Approved: 2/17/2026


Chair, Board of Trustees


President