



Board of Trustees Meeting

Virtual, Via Zoom

Zoom Link:

<https://cptc-edu.zoom.us/j/87509792513>

members of the public may attend at the Lakewood Campus, Bldg. 17, room 260

Thursday, July 23, 2026

Special Meeting: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Special Meeting Agenda

- 1:00 Call to Order, Introductions**Adria Buchanan
- Adoption of Agenda**Adria Buchanan
Action
- 1:10 Public Comments**.....Adria Buchanan
- 1:15 New Business**.....Adria Buchanan
Presentation of Process Recommendations by
Presidential Search Committee ([Tab 1](#))
Action
- 2:00 Adjournment**Adria Buchanan



Presidential Listening Sessions Themes & Findings Summary

Prepared from notes across 14 listening sessions with campus stakeholders

Listening Committee Members:

Adria Buchanan, Alice Phillips, Jamie Diedrich, Diane Follett, Chris Ridler,
Luke Ruiz, and Tracey Songao

About This Summary

This document synthesizes notes from 14 listening sessions held as part of the presidential search process, including conversations with executive leadership, deans, managers, faculty, classified staff, and students. Written comments were also considered in the production of this document. It is organized around the major themes that recurred across multiple sessions, followed by a look at the range of distinct or minority perspectives that add texture to those themes.

Major Cross-Cutting Themes

1. Real Momentum, Alongside Real Strain

Nearly every session opened with a version of the same story: Clover Park is growing fast, and the Eastside campus was repeatedly cited as proof the college can execute on its mission in new ways.

- Enrollment has grown roughly 73% over five years, the highest rate in the state, and is above pre-COVID levels. Employees across campus are proud of this work.
- Eastside training center, basic needs supports (food security, transportation, mental health), and expanded ABE/ESL, dual credit, and Running Start pathways were named as visible wins and there was a widespread acknowledgment that folks are committed to student success.
- CPTC's commitment to student success is universally seen as a great strength.
- EDI has shifted from a small, committed group to broader embedding in committee work, shared governance, and curriculum; BIPOC students now make up over half of the student population.
- More open, sustained conversations about race and equitable outcomes, and a described culture shift in what people expect around belonging, were named as real progress.
- Professional Development through the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) has positively impacted the quality of instruction and faculty retention.
- CPTC has received national recognition at multiple venues including Aspen and Achieving the Dream and continues to be sought out as a model for other colleges.

At the same time, almost every group flagged that the pace of change has outstripped the college's capacity to support it.

- Burnout and "initiative fatigue" came up repeatedly: staff described being at or above capacity, with budget limits preventing new hires even as new programs and initiatives keep landing.
- Several groups asked for focus rather than expansion — "pick a few things and hone in on those" — and questioned whether new programs are evaluated against a clear business case before launch.
- Despite the progress made at CPTC, the loss of federal grants have decreased staffing.

2. Shared Governance: A Structure in Progress

Shared governance was probably the single most discussed structural topic. Most sessions credited it as a genuine improvement over past practice, but nearly as many described it as inconsistent, under-resourced, or not yet delivering on its promise.

- **Positive:** an innovation core team with roughly 30 members and seven goal-based sub-teams was cited as a working example; shared governance has been formally credited with EDI work being embedded into committees rather than sitting outside them.
- Concerns about **power dynamics:** Some described shared governance as sometimes feeling like "a repackaging of existing structures" still led by the executive team, and called for a co-chair model to rebalance power.
- Concerns about **consistency:** managers noted governance is "vastly different" depending on the committee — one example involved 30 members assigned to a committee with only

about 10 regularly attending, and being handed work that wasn't on the committee's own plan.

- Concerns about **follow-through**: faculty and staff sessions raised concerns that decisions and their rationale don't reliably flow back down to the people affected, which several described as eroding trust in the process.
- Front-line and classified staff in particular said they have little schedule time to participate and often feel shared governance runs on the assumption that everyone has capacity to engage, which isn't true for hourly or high-volume roles. At the same time, they are often asked to implement without contributing to the creation of new policies or procedures as end users and often hear about changes from students instead of managers.

3. Communication and Silos

Communication — both across departments and from leadership down to front-line staff — was named as a weakness in almost every session, regardless of the group's role or level.

- Multiple sessions described the college as siloed, with student financials, student success, instruction, and finance not feeling connected to one another.
- A recurring pattern: the "what" of a change is communicated before the "why," leaving end users without the context to understand or support new initiatives.
- One staff member's example: routinely having to escalate emails just to get a response — described as a symptom of a broader lack of service-level expectations between departments.
- Some staff described fear of retaliation as a barrier to speaking up, and email specifically was called out as an inadequate tool for the kind of communication the college needs.
 - Recommendation on this front was made to have a systematic internal communication infrastructure led by marketing, with a regular, predictable channel.
 - Also to encourage more in-person communication.

4. Accountability and a Culture of Respect

Accountability — of leadership, of employees, and for how people treat one another — was raised as both a strength to build on and a significant gap.

- There were raised serious concerns about how harassment, discrimination, and hostile work environment complaints are handled, including that tenure and contract protections can shield behavior that goes unaddressed, and that people are leaving the college as a result.
- There was push for shared expectations for professional conduct, a mindset shift from blame toward repair, and training rolled out college-wide, including how to manage conflict.
- Some cited defining service commitments in some areas (e.g., a 48-hour response standard for anything involving a student) as a model worth extending.
- Some cited the need for consequences when expectations or deliverables are consistently unmet.
- There were folks who described real hurt when individual contributions are absorbed or claimed by others without due credit, and said there is currently no restorative process when people are harmed this way.

- Several groups tied accountability directly to the next president: someone willing to "put the hammer down" when needed, while still being humane — described by one group as being "flexible but firm."

5. EDI Progress, With Continued Investment Needed

Equity work was consistently described as having moved from the margins to the mainstream of the college — but still under-resourced relative to its scope.

- Funding remains a sticking point as staff described having to be strategic simply to sustain existing programming, let alone grow it.
- Faculty raised concerns about bias in hiring and search committees specifically, noting EDI anti-bias training is in place but that vigilance is still needed and requested a member of the EDI team be represented on the future search committee.

6. Budget, Systems, and Operational Strain

Financial and systems concerns were widespread, ranging from the statewide funding model to the day-to-day frustrations of CTC Link.

- Multiple groups cited multi-year budget shortfall projections (figures of 3%, 5%, and 7% were mentioned) and said the college needs a longer-range plan than it currently has to work through them.
- CTC Link was repeatedly named as a source of inefficiency — workarounds, downtime, and managers lacking real-time access to their own budgets.
- HR and payroll were described as having improved substantially from a previously "broken" state, though some questioned whether splitting those functions was the right call.
- Onboarding and training came up as a gap across several sessions: new employees and even long-tenured staff often rely on informal, person-to-person "legacy knowledge" rather than a structured system, which was described as inequitable if social capital is needed to gain information, and risky if key people leave.

7. Identity as a Technical College

A number of sessions raised a strategic question about what CPTC's core identity should be, especially compared to peer institutions.

- Folks noted the resurgence of trades and workforce training nationally as a moment of opportunity, and cautioned against trying to "do everything" the way other regional colleges have, at the expense of a clear identity.
- Several groups called for leaning into recognized strengths — trades, healthcare, flight school — and questioned whether newer initiatives (dual credit, Running Start, some Eastside programming) are diluting focus or being added without a clear population or business case.
- Multiple sessions emphasized that technical colleges operate under different laws and dynamics than traditional community colleges, and want a president who inherently understands that distinction.

What Stakeholders Want in the Next President

Themes about desired presidential qualities were remarkably consistent across very different groups, even though the emphasis and language varied. The qualities named most often were:

A good communicator

- An understanding that not all students at CPTC have English as a first language.
- Can address the breakdown of silos.

Relational and visible

- Present at campus-wide events, known personally by staff and students, and able to build trust across very different constituencies — several sessions pointed to Dr. Loveday's visibility and relational style as a bar to meet or maintain.
- Others mentioned someone charismatic, social, and visible at events and on campus – not stuck in meetings all day.

A unifier who can close silos

- Named specifically and echoed by nearly every other group in different words: someone who can bring divisions together around a shared identity and shared expectations.

Financially and operationally savvy

- Comfortable with budgets, data-driven decisions, and — in several sessions — described as needing a background that isn't limited to instruction (business, corporate, or broad higher-education operations experience was frequently mentioned).

Willing to hold people accountable, including at senior levels

- Described alternately as needing a "stronger hand," the ability to be "flexible but firm," and someone who won't let a desire to be well-liked get in the way of hard decisions, particularly when entering a tough budget cycle.

Politically and externally connected

- Comfortable in Olympia, with legislators, and with national organizations. An effective fundraiser and an ambassador to industry and business partners.

Genuinely student-centered

- Consistent across sessions - ensuring student success is a top priority over protecting instruction.
- Students themselves emphasized wanting a president who prioritizes connecting them to high-paying industry jobs and retaining strong instructors.

Fluent in technical-college and union dynamics

- Familiarity with collective bargaining (the college has four unions) and with how technical colleges differ from traditional community colleges was raised as close to a baseline requirement, not a nice-to-have.
- Ability to learn Washington and CPTC uniqueness.

- Someone who understand the many different parts of the college and how decisions have cascading effects.

Views on the Search Process

Preference for a national search was the dominant view, though it was not unanimous, and the reasoning behind it varied by group.

- Most common rationale: a national search broadens the pool, signals legitimacy, and gives the college "new eyes" unbiased by current campus culture — several sessions used almost identical language about needing someone from outside who doesn't carry an existing bias about the college's internal politics.
- A counterpoint: a purely national search makes it harder to vet candidates deeply, since regional candidates come with more available context; that group argued for a rigorous vetting process regardless of geographic scope, including basic due diligence such as searching a candidate's public record.
- Many felt anyone from Clover Park who wanted to apply should – and they should compete against a national pool to better gauge the best candidate.

Notable Individual and Minority Perspectives

Beyond the recurring themes above, several points were raised in only one or two sessions but are worth preserving because they reflect the genuine range of experience across campus.

- Specific concern that the tenure process can create protections for teaching that inadvertently shield oppressive behavior, and that student-facing communication about outcomes of complaints is currently insufficient.
- A more pointed critique that instruction has "too big of a voice" relative to administration, and that a conflict-averse style has, at times, left leadership feeling undermined or unsupported.
- A call to narrow focus onto adult students headed straight into the workforce, and to reconsider the college's investment in Running Start and dual-credit pathways specifically.
- A mention that individuals who carry major initiatives forward sometimes see other people present that work as their own, and there is no current mechanism to address the harm this causes.
- Faculty: a very specific facilities example — a satellite Avionics location serving about 100 people with only three bathrooms — offered as evidence that data-driven facilities planning hasn't caught up to program growth.
- Interest in a more meaningful, ongoing college-wide AI adoption task force.
- A direct statement that people on campus are afraid to speak up due to fear of retaliation
- Students: More food options on campus — alongside stronger asks about connecting students to high-paying industry jobs and retaining top instructors.

Recommendations to the Board of Trustees

- 1) Run a national search — but make the vetting as rigorous as the reach.
- 2) Engage a search firm.
- 3) Establish a search committee to serve as a liaison between the College and the search firm, with the understanding that the Board of Trustees make the final hiring decision. Include at least a representative of EDI, unions, faculty, staff, and students on the search committee.
- 4) Pair the broad search with real due diligence because national candidates are hard to vet deeply than someone with local context — basic public-record/reputation checks, direct reference conversations beyond the candidate's chosen references, and a vetting process the committee doesn't shortcut just because the pool is bigger.
- 5) Encourage internal candidates to apply.
- 6) Look for Operational and Financial Range, not just instructional pedigree.
- 7) Look for candidates with business/finance experience, multi-year budget management (especially through downturns), and a track record of running large, complex operations.
- 8) A doctorate is preferred but secondary to demonstrated experience managing budgets, unions, and institutional change.
- 9) Weigh demonstrated financial/operational leadership at least as heavily as academic credentials in the screening criteria, and make sure the search doesn't default to an instruction-only candidate slate.
- 10) Create opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to review final candidates and provide input.
- 11) Create opportunities for interested members of the larger community such as advisory boards and the Foundation board to review final candidates and provide input.
- 12) Test for evidence, not self-description. Listen for whether a candidate can speak concretely about *how* they've brought divided organizations together (a change-management framework, specific coalition examples) rather than general statements of values.
 - Consider structured questions and panel composition specifically designed to surface concrete past behavior — conflict navigated, coalitions built, hard budget calls made to demonstrate competence rather than relying on self-description.

We recognize that hiring a new president is a disruptive event for the college, and regardless of the person hired, there is very likely to be some momentum lost in the short run.

Thank you to the listening committee for holding the meetings and to the Board for being open to the feedback.

Thank you to the College community for their willingness to share their views.

This concludes the work of this committee.