



May 29, 2014

**Study Committee Members Named:**  
**Joint Legislative Council Special Committee on the Review of  
Wisconsin Technical College System Funding and Governance**

The Joint Legislative Council, a committee of 22 legislators, has approved a 16-member study committee to review Wisconsin Technical College System funding and governance. Study committees are comprised of both legislators (6 for this committee) and public members (10 for this committee).

See the full committee roster [HERE](#). This roster, along with other resources, will be available at [www.districtboards.org](http://www.districtboards.org) (click on the “Legislative Council Committee” tab).

This committee membership includes several business leaders who are close partners with technical colleges in efforts to close Wisconsin’s skills gap and to increase Wisconsin’s business productivity, job growth and economic development. The committee also includes public official leaders representing K-12 and Wisconsin counties. Two veteran technical college presidents (representing Chippewa Valley and Fox Valley) also have been named to serve.

Among the ten public members, one is a member of the state WTCS Board and four serve on technical college district boards (at Fox Valley, Lakeshore, Milwaukee and Western).

The six legislative members are:

Representative John Nygren (R-Marquette), Chair, who co-requested the study committee, and who serves as Assembly Chair of the powerful Joint Finance Committee (JFC). Nygren is joined by Senator Sheila Harsdorf (R-River Falls) as Vice Chair. She is also a JFC member and is Chair of the Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges.

The Senate delegation is rounded out by Senator Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse), a JFC member and member of the Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges.

The Assembly delegation is rounded out by: Representatives Debra Kolste (D-Janesville), a member of the Assembly Workforce Development Committee among others; Cory Mason (D-Racine), a JFC member; and Tom Weatherston (R-Racine), a member of the Assembly Workforce Development and Assembly Colleges and Universities Committees.

Now that the committee membership is formally approved, an initial meeting will be set at which the committee's work and a calendar will be discussed. This meeting has not yet been scheduled, but will not likely take place until late June or early July.

The Joint Legislative Council approved this study committee in March as requested by Representative Nygren and Representative Tom Larson (R-Colfax) with the following scope:

“The Special Committee is directed to review the current governance model of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) in the interest of transferring governance responsibilities of local district boards to the state ... and examine the current funding model for the WTCS with a preference toward reassigning current local property tax revenue to a broader state tax source.”

Across several meetings, Legislative Council committees typically request background research and presentations to be made on topics addressing the scope and issues. Committee meetings are open to the public (we will announce each meeting through future reports), but public testimony is typically not allowed except by invitation. The committee's goal will be to reach consensus on any recommendations for legislation to be introduced in the January, 2015, legislative session. Some committees also make recommendations for future additional study on the issues or related topics.

Please see the Legislative Council Committee tab at [www.districtboards.org](http://www.districtboards.org) for advocacy updates and templates for letters of support from business and industry.

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*This report was prepared by Paul Gabriel for the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association. Any analysis or opinion is exclusively the author's.*  
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