



To:	Western Texas College Board of Trustees
From:	Dr. Laurie Sharp
Date:	August 6, 2026
Subject:	Approval of Professional Skills Continuing Education Course

Recommendation

I recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the development and offering of a new continuing education course entitled Professional Skills. This non-credit workforce training course is designed to strengthen the professional competencies employers consistently identify as essential for workplace success and career advancement.

Background

Regional employers continue to emphasize the importance of professional or “soft” skills alongside technical expertise. In response, Western Texas College has developed a six-module curriculum that prepares participants to communicate effectively, demonstrate professionalism, manage workplace relationships, resolve conflict, and create a personal professional development plan.

Benefits

Approval of this continuing education course will:

- Expand WTC’s workforce development and continuing education offerings.
- Support local employers by providing high-quality professional skills training.
- Enhance career readiness for students, employees, and community members.

Fiscal Impact

The continuing education course uses existing instructional resources where feasible. Participant fees will support program delivery and sustainability.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The Professional Skills continuing education course advances the goals of *Serving Students Together: A 10-Year Strategy for Western Texas College (2026–2036)* by supporting the College’s priority of “Workforce, Academic Pathways, and Regional Impact” through continuing education, workforce upskilling, and employer-responsive programming. It also supports the College’s priority of “Enrollment Growth and Visibility” by expanding professional development opportunities for adult learners, working professionals, and regional employers. Consistent with WTC’s mission, this continuing education course empowers learners to achieve educational, workforce, and life goals through high-quality instruction and strong community partnerships.

Recommendation for Board Action

I respectfully recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the Professional Skills course as a continuing education offering at Western Texas College, with implementation beginning upon completion of curriculum development and scheduling. This continuing education course advances the College’s commitment to workforce excellence and regional economic development.

People first. Purpose always. Forward together.

Professional Skills

CONTINUING EDUCATION

 MODULE 1 PROFESSIONALISM	PURPOSE  Builds the foundation for workplace success by developing professional behaviors, accountability, ethics, integrity, reliability, adaptability, and workplace image.	KEY TOPICS  - Professional Identity - Professional Expectations - Accountability - Integrity - Ethics - Reliability - Adaptability - Workplace Image	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES  - Professional self-assessment - Case studies - Scenario discussions - Reflection activities	PARTICIPANT OUTCOME  Participants establish a professional mindset and understand employer expectations.
 MODULE 2 PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION	 Develops effective workplace communication skills for everyday interactions and difficult conversations.	 - Communication Process - Active Listening - Communication Styles - Constructive Feedback - Digital Professionalism - Communication Under Pressure	 - Telephone exercise - Listening pairs - Scenario analysis - Knowledge checks	 Participants improve communication, listening, and professional digital interactions.
 MODULE 3 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	 Strengthens self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and relationship management.	 - Self-Awareness - Emotional Regulation - Empathy - Stress Management - Relationship Management	 - EQ self-reflection - Pause practice - Walk in Their Shoes activity - Scenarios	 Participants improve resilience and interpersonal effectiveness.
 MODULE 4 WORKPLACE CONFLICT RESOLUTION	 Teaches collaborative approaches to resolving workplace conflict using negotiation and problem-solving strategies.	 - Conflict Styles - Collaborative Problem Solving - Negotiation - Repairing Relationships	 - Conflict style assessment - Negotiation practice - Group scenarios	 Participants learn to resolve disagreements professionally.
 MODULE 5 DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS & DE-ESCALATION	 Develops skills for handling emotionally charged conversations while maintaining professionalism.	 - Recognizing Escalation - De-escalation - Difficult Conversations - Managing Difficult Personalities - Professional Boundaries	 - Role-playing - Supervisor/employee scenarios - Reflection	 Participants practice calm, respectful, solution-focused communication.
 MODULE 6 PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN	 Develops a plan for continuous professional growth and future success.	 - Professional Self-Assessment - SMART Goals 90-Day Action Plan - Continuous Learning	 - Goal setting - Professional Development Plan - Final assessment	 Participants leave with a personalized roadmap for ongoing development.



INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The curriculum follows adult learning principles and emphasizes scenario-based learning, case studies, facilitated discussion, role-playing, reflection, practical workplace application, and continuous assessment.



Scenario-Based Learning



Case Studies



Role-Playing



Reflection



Assessment



ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Assessment includes module knowledge checks, scenario performance, reflection activities, instructor observation, a comprehensive final assessment, and a Personal Professional Development Plan.



Knowledge Checks



Scenario Performance



Reflection Activities



Instructor Observation



Final Assessment



Professional Development Plan