

**NORTHWEST COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

December 9, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: President MS. TARA KUIPERS; Vice President/Secretary MS. DENISE LAURSEN; Treasurer MR. BOB NEWSOME; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MR. R.J. KOST, MR. SHANE OGDEN, and DR. MARK WURZEL.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, President; MR. DAVE ERICKSON, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. TOM HAVRON, Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MS. DIEDRE ASAY; MR. ERIC ATKINSON; DR. ALAN CHILDS; MS. ANNA CRAGOE; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; DR. DAVID FAY; MS. TRACY GASAWAY; MR. MARK GRANT; MS. JEN LITTERER-TREVIÑO; MS. CAREY MILLER; MR. CORY OSTERMILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MR. BURT REYNOLDS; DR. SCOTT SEVILLE; MS. LISA SMITH; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; DR. UKO UDODONG; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MR. ZAC TAYLOR, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.

CALL TO ORDER: President Tara Kuipers called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, December 9, 2024, at 4:04 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building.

OATH OF OFFICE Ms. Diedre Asay, Foundation Technician, and Notary Public administered the Oath of Office to newly elected Trustee Shane Ogden.

MISSION MOMENT Eric Atkinson, Associate Professor of Biology and leader of Northwest College's INBRE program, expressed his appreciation to Dr. Alan Childs, who led the INBRE program before his retirement.

Eric stated that INBRE stands for IDeA Networks for Biomedical Research Excellence. He is passionate about the program, which introduces freshmen, sophomores, and dual-credit high school students to scientific research in Wyoming.

Upon invitation from Eric, Dr. Scott Seville, Professor and Chair of the UW Department of Zoology and Physiology Director of INBRE, stated he works at the University of Wyoming on the Casper College campus. He has been involved with INBRE since its inception in 2002. The National Institutes for Health fund INBRE, which is concluding a five-year funding cycle. There is a strong indication that the program will be funded for another five years. This funding is crucial as it allows the program to continue its activities, which include supporting research and education in the biomedical field.

Dr. Seville stated that the INBRE program has two primary components: one focuses on developing research infrastructure and faculty at the University of Wyoming to compete for external grants, while the other emphasizes educating the next generation of biomedical researchers. This dual approach is essential for building a sustainable research environment in Wyoming.

Dr. Seville stated that INBRE allocates approximately \$500,000 annually to support activities at the community colleges; Northwest College receives roughly \$100,000 each year in supplemental funding to run the program on its campus. This funding is used for curriculum improvements, faculty development, and student research opportunities. Competitive programs for faculty to apply for additional funding highlight the program's commitment to fostering innovation and research.

An important aspect of the program is its focus on experiential learning, where students engage in research projects as part of their coursework. This hands-on experience is crucial for developing research skills and understanding the scientific process, from formulating questions to presenting findings. Dr. Seville emphasized the importance of mentorship in these projects, which enhances student learning and engagement.

Dr. Seville stated that an essential aspect of INBRE is collaboration between faculty across the state and at the University of Wyoming, which facilitates knowledge exchange and access to advanced research equipment. This collaborative spirit maximizes resources and expertise, benefits students, and enhances research outcomes.

Dr. Seville provided an overview of the INBRE program's objectives, challenges, and achievements and highlighted the importance of funding, collaboration, and experiential learning in building a robust biomedical research infrastructure in Wyoming. He is enthusiastic about the program's future, its impact on students, and the significance of such initiatives in fostering scientific inquiry and professional development in the region.

A APPROVE THE AGENDA:

President Watson requested the agenda be amended to move the “Distribution of Disclosure of Interest forms” to the February meeting to align with the approval of the “Designation of Depositories.”

A motion was made by Trustee Kost and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

A CONSENT AGENDA:

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the consent agenda.

Trustee Housel stated that he and others enjoyed seeing Northwest College and the international students in the *Cody Cowboy Christmas Lighted Parade*. He also appreciates Amanda Enriquez’s work in organizing the college’s participation.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that Photographic Communications was previously considered a Career and Technical program. The NASAD Commission on Accreditation recently approved it as part of the College’s existing NASAD Accreditation of Visual Arts.

President Kuipers commended Bob Becker and the Forensics team members who judged and recruited at the Powell High School Novice forensics tournament. She expressed appreciation for them taking the recruiting opportunity and growing the College’s presence in the communities it serves.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the November 8, 2024, special meeting/retreat and the minutes of the November 11, 2024, regular meeting, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Legislative Meet & Greet

President Kuipers stated that the Trustees invited area Legislators to the new Student Center on December 3rd for a “Meet and Greet” breakfast. It was enjoyable visiting with Legislators.

New Website Review

President Watson added that it was an excellent opportunity to discuss the College's programmatic focus, how the Student Center project was brought to fruition and completed without debt, and to tour the building.

President Watson stated that the College prioritized developing a new website as part of its strategic work. She is pleased with the end product and hopes it serves current and potential students well. She encouraged Trustees to investigate the new design if they had not yet had the opportunity.

Carey Miller stated that the project took almost two years, beginning to end, and was not without challenges. This is the fourth website redesign she has undertaken, and it was one of the largest. It included a new system, a new design, and much research. Her team worked diligently on the project and worked with department representatives to ensure the information on the new website was accurate.

Carey stated that while the old website was very news and event-centric, the new strategy is that prospective students are the primary target audience. From the home page, individuals can begin their application and explore costs and financial aid options. The home page also features happenings on campus and ways to navigate to other areas, such as academic and student support services, transfer planning, etc.

One of the most exciting features is the ability for prospective students to explore all Northwest College programs and their associated costs. Various tools are available to filter their search. In addition, a new module linked to Lightcast provides students with employment outcomes, such as occupations related to programs of study and salary information.

Carey stated that NWC's Interim Multimedia Production Specialist, Ronnie Wolfe, created a virtual tour from scratch. He took 360-degree photos, allowing the user to walk around campus virtually from any direction and explore the buildings. The tour is spectacular and is unique in that no competitor has anything like it.

Carey urged the Trustees to explore the website, utilize the campus tour, and provide feedback. At a future meeting, she would like to introduce her team, which worked especially hard on the project.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Carey stated that content will be managed and updated by site monitors and the Communications and Marketing department. Website Coordinator Keith Smith will provide training and support to those responsible for their content.

Carey explained that her team is also working with Admissions to integrate their customer relationship management software Element 451 with the website and marketing efforts to get leads that are generated immediately into the communications workflow. The College also utilizes a Chatbot that allows immediate responses and will notify Admissions if a prospect has more questions.

President Kuipers noted the team's incredible talent and appreciated their efforts on the new website.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:00 p.m. No citizens requested to address the Board; therefore, the Citizen's Open Forum adjourned.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

November Consent Agenda

President Kuipers stated that at last month's meeting, it was moved and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda; however, after discussion, the Board neglected to vote to approve. The original motion died when the meeting was adjourned; therefore, a new motion must be made.

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the November 11, 2024, consent agenda. Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the October 14, 2024, regular meeting, was approved.

A NEW BUSINESS:

Course/Lab Fee Proposal

A motion was made by Trustee Kost and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the Course/Lab Fee Proposal as presented. Motion carried.

FY2024 Audit Approval

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the FY2024 Audit as presented. Motion carried.

Project Pay – VPASF duties

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Laursen to approve the project pay for President Watson for performing VPASF duties, per policy as outlined in the memo presented to Trustees. Motion carried.

Policy 3110, 3510, 3520, 3630
and Appendix E – first reading

President Watson expressed her appreciation for Interim Vice President Erickson and the Faculty Senate for working together to create a policy that provides a pathway for fixed-term faculty members to become tenure track. Policy 3110 establishes the pathway to tenure, and the subsequent policies need slight modifications due to the changes to 3110.

President Watson explained that these changes come before the Board as a first reading. The proposal has gone through the College's shared governance process and has been reviewed by the Board Policy and Student Success Committee. If approved, the changes would go into effect the following fiscal year.

Dave Erickson stated that some faculty positions were hired as fixed-term instead of tenure track as a conservative approach after the budget cuts. The intent is to create a pathway for those faculty employed due to a national search and the same process as tenured faculty.

As part of the tenure track process, review takes place after three years of service, during which faculty receive feedback from the Rank and Tenure committee. When creating the pathway for fixed-term faculty, it was essential to create the same opportunity for the three-year review, regardless of years served. Therefore, all fixed-term faculty entering the tenure-track process will enter at the three years served mark. Corrections could then be made if there were concerns before the final five-year review to determine if tenure is granted.

Dave stated there was consensus among the faculty regarding the changes. Of the 67% who voted on the proposal, 100% favored the language change.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS
AND COMMITTEE
APPOINTMENTS**

Trustee Laursen presented the nominations for officers proposed by the Nomination Committee of herself, Trustee Housel, and Trustee Wurzel as follows:

- Trustee Laursen as President
- Trustee Kost as Vice President/Secretary
- Trustee Newsome as Treasurer.

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Housel to elect the nominees to serve a one-year term as follows: Trustee Denise Laursen as President, Trustee R.J. Kost as Vice President/Secretary, and Trustee Bob Newsome as Treasurer. Motion carried.

President Laursen stated that the new slate of officers will determine the committee appointments now that the election is done. She requested that the Trustees notify her if they have specific committees or assignments of interest to them.

**ANNUAL SIGNING OF THE
BOARD CODE OF ETHICS**

Trustees signed the Board Code of Ethics.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
FEEDBACK TO CITIZENS'
OPEN FORUM TOPICS:**

January 13, 2025, upcoming:

- Legislative session talking points/advocacy
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Final Exams, December 11-13, 2024
Nursing Pinning, December 13, 2024, 3:00 p.m. NPA
Holiday Party, December 13, 2024, 5:30 p.m., Student Center
W & M Basketball Booster Club Tourn. Dec 13-14, 2024, Cabre Gym
Residence Halls Close, December 14, 2024, Powell
Campus Closed Holiday Break, December 24, 2024 – January 1, 2025
In-Service Campus Meeting, January 9, 2025, 8:30 a.m., Yellowstone Bldg.
Next meeting, January 13, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Yellowstone Bldg.

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

R.J. KOST, Vice President/Secretary

Date