

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

April 22, 2025

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, President; MR. DAVE ERICKSON, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. TOM HAVRON, Vice President for Student Services; MR. BURT REYNOLDS, Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MS. HOLLY BERRYMAN; MS. JACQUE COBOURN; MS. TRACY GASAWAY; MR. MARK GRANT; MR. WEST HERNANDEZ; MS. JEN LITTERER-TREVINO; MS. CAREY MILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. LISA SMITH; MR. MARTIN STENSING; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.

CALL TO ORDER: President Denise Laursen called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 3:30 p.m. in the Meeteetse School cafeteria.

A APPROVE THE AGENDA: **A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**

MISSION MOMENT: Shelby Wetzel reported that the NWC Foundation conducted its 5th annual Giving Day on March 20-21, 2025. It was their most successful year, with over \$230,000 from 245 donors raised in 24 hours.

Scholarships were the most popular opportunity for designated and general scholarship support. The scholarship category raised \$128,000 (127 donors), athletic scholarships raised \$35,000 (34 donors), and CTE scholarships raised almost \$25,000 (12 donors).

The mental health outreach category had twenty-one donors, and twelve donated to the academic program development. Eighty-three different donors gave to various program-specific projects. Some of these numbers may be duplicated as people gave to more than one category.

The seventeen academic program projects raised \$23,000. Five of the projects met their goal. Shelby feels the triple-match campaign in other areas may have pulled energy away from these projects because donors saw that their money could have a more significant impact in the other areas.

Shelby stated there was a 35% decline in the number of donors from the previous year; however, that was somewhat expected since the Student Center's "Legacy Wall" attracted many alumni who wished to have their name on the glass windows in the new building. There was also the employee "All In" campaign to encourage all employees to participate in the new Student Center project. These campaigns drove participation numbers that were not matched this year. Shelby also feels that economic uncertainty was a possible factor as well.

New to this year's Giving Day was a campus rally held in the Student Center. Food and giveaways for students and employees brought people together and built campus spirit. Next year, the Foundation plans to build on that with activities to make it a stronger element for the future.

The Foundation is extremely grateful to the challenge donors who inspire activity and drive participation through their ongoing support of the College. Shelby highlighted that Trustees Laursen, Newsome, and Kost, as well as all three Vice Presidents and President Watson, provided matching gifts.

President Watson stated that Giving Day is a big event that takes a lot of effort but is an amazing labor of love for the Foundation. Shelby and her team do a fantastic job, and she is grateful for their creativity and effort every year.

A CONSENT AGENDA:

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Kuipers to approve the consent agenda.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that Print Services operates on a chargeback model. Departments utilize their services for posters, door hangers, pamphlets, etc. Print Services invoices the department, which then pays through its printing budget line. The model is being redesigned and will run through Fund 10 next year.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson credited Bronson Smith with revitalizing the Livestock Judging Team. He purchased lambs to be used as practice animals and for use in 4-H and FFA events. Casper College and now Northwest College are the only colleges sponsoring the use of animals at such events as the Wyoming State FFA contest. The lambs were used for instructional and recruiting purposes for approximately three months and then sold at a profit.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel related to Senate File 69, which reduces property tax by 25%, President Watson stated that the local levy is very fluid and will not be determined until June. Until then, the College will work with estimates for budget planning. Once local levies are known for each college, those figures are worked into the funding formula to determine state appropriation allocations. Each county's local levy will be affected differently based on the percentage of personal property tax versus oil and gas revenues.

Current estimates show Northwest College's local levy will be reduced by approximately \$650,000 before the state funding model reallocations. Early estimates indicate the College could lose an additional 300,000 in the state process. If the state's citizens vote for a 50% reduction in property taxes during the next election cycle, it will have an even larger effect on the budget.

Vice President Reynolds stated that the Park County Assessor is new to his role, as is the CFO at the Wyoming Community College Commission. The community college CFO's have come together to try to project the tax implications on the budget. Still, the projections are very preliminary and continue to change daily.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the turnout at the community input sessions for the Master Plan was limited. Still, valuable feedback was received from both the in-person event and the completed surveys.

In response to a request from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that enrollment in aviation and other programs does not ebb and flow as it does in the CDL program. Therefore, a monthly report on enrollment and completion numbers would be stagnant. A yearly report would offer a better understanding of enrollment and completion in the program.

Trustee Housel inquired about the success of the Esports team. President Watson noted that several students were competing in the National Tournament. She stated that Chris Dugger had recently traveled with a recruiter to a Billings high school and was able to visit with many prospective students and generate excitement about Northwest College's Esports team.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that Student Activities and Housing use the multi-Sport Court for various events. The Basketball and Volleyball teams utilize it, and it is open to all students. Usage is higher in the warmer months.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that she recently attended the Higher Learning Commission Conference on Accreditation in Chicago. The College is in year seven of the ten-year accreditation review cycle. A team of faculty, administration, and library representatives, led by Lisa Smith, Accreditation Liaison Officer, has begun meeting monthly to plan and write the comprehensive evaluation.

Trustee Kuipers congratulated Adrian Arismendi on being granted tenure and promotion and Keith McCallister, Kerrie Spinney, Eric Atkinson, and Jason Horton on their promotions. She also congratulated Dave Erickson on his appointment as Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of March 3, 2025, regular meeting, was approved.

DISCUSSION/ INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Legislative wrap-up

President Watson stated that in this session, a lot of legislation was passed that will directly affect Northwest College. The total impact from bills related to taxation is still unknown, as calculations are still being completed. The College will continue to monitor those closely.

In addition, legislation was passed that will require changes to existing policies and others that will require procedural changes. For instance, the Fairness in Sports—Intercollegiate Athletics bill requires that colleges verify an athlete's gender. The procedure for doing so will need to be developed.

The Repeal Gun Free Zones bill will affect all colleges and could be litigious. If treated differently across the State, it could cause challenges, and the community colleges differ from the University of Wyoming because they do not typically have armed police on campus. President Watson suggested to her peers that they work together to create one initial policy. A task force was formed with representatives from all colleges, and a draft policy was developed, which is now under review at each college.

President Watson clarified that the bill states that individuals must be 21 years of age and have a permit, therefore not allowing constitutional carry. Colleges may also restrict concealed carry in a limited number of spaces, such as in hazardous spaces like welding and chemistry labs. The College cannot restrict concealed carry in classrooms, departments, or offices.

The draft policy will be sent to the Policy Review Committee, shared across campus, and approved by the Board, but because it is legislatively mandated, it will not be subject to the same level of campus development. The law goes into effect on July 1, 2025; therefore, President Watson intends to present it for first reading at the May Board meeting.

Legislators have selected dual and concurrent enrollment and Hathaway scholarships to learn more about during the interim session. The colleges also hope to get on the docket of interim committees to educate Legislators about what additional budget cuts could mean to the colleges.

Trustee Kuipers stated she is encouraged that the colleges are working together in a concerted effort on the policy. Although individual Boards will approve the policy, it shows the strength of the institutions that ideas are shared and improved upon.

State Fall Enrollment Report

Lisa Smith provided a summary of the statewide Fall 2024 Enrollment Report. Once the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) approves it, the official report will be available on the WCCC website.

NWC's final fall 2024 enrollment was 1500 unduplicated headcount and 1241.3 FTE. This was an 8% increase over the previous fall and the largest increase of all Wyoming community colleges, which had an average of a 4% increase. Since 2000, NWC has had the highest percentage of full-time enrollment among the Wyoming community colleges, although the part-time percentage has increased in recent years.

The largest percentage of NWC's students (26%) are enrolled in 3-5 credits, which is heavily influenced by dual and concurrent enrollment. The second largest group (23%) enrolls in 12-14 credits, followed by students taking 15-17 credits (18%).

Students under age 18 account for the largest percentage of the NWC's population (32%), who are typically dual and concurrent high school students. Students aged 18-19 account for the next largest group (31%). These are the highest percentages in the state for these age groups.

Most NWC students (69%) come from the service area. Of all the Wyoming community colleges, NWC has the highest percentage of enrollment from states bordering Wyoming (11%) and international countries (7%).

The largest population of students (41%) is non-degree-seeking students, which is heavily influenced by dual and concurrent students. They are followed by students seeking transfer preparation or Associate of Arts or Science degrees (37%). Thirteen percent of students seek career/technical education (CTE, Associate Degree in Applied Science or Nursing, or any certificate), 6% seek multiple degrees crossing both transfer and CTE areas, and 3% seek a bachelor's degree.

NWC has the largest percentage of students enrolled in distance education (60% of total students), the largest percentage of dual enrollment (19% of total students), and among the smallest percentages of concurrent enrollment (21% of total students). Students may be included in multiple categories in these numbers.

Every course is assigned a level of instruction based on specific characteristics that determine its state funding level. Fifty-nine percent of NWC credit enrollment is from Level 1 (lecture) courses, 28% from Level 2 (lab courses), and 13% from Level 3 (high technology, such as welding or nursing) courses.

Marketing Report

Carey Miller shared a Marketing Report for the fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) which reflects figures from before the website redesign.

Advance 360 Education is a pay-per-click search campaign where the College

pays each time someone clicks on its advertisement through various search engines such as Google. The goal is to reach people actively searching relevant terms, such as “American college.” Of the 52,020 impressions, the College received 5,284 clicks, a 10.18% click-through rate. The pay-per-click benchmark is 6.21%, which the College’s campaign outperformed by 3.95%. The cost is relatively small, but the numbers indicate a creative quality to the advertising because people are reacting to the messaging. Fifty-eight leads were delivered to Admissions during this time.

The second part of Advance 360 Education is social lead generation. This type of advertising is more passive, as the ads appear on individual social feeds based on predetermined audience parameters. Out of 1.4 million impressions, there were 16,083 clicks, with a click-through rate of 1.16%. The click-through rate is slightly lower than the education benchmark. The video ads were the highest performing of all ads.

Niche is a college search platform prospective students use to find the best school. Most colleges and universities have a profile on Niche, but Northwest College pays for a premier profile that provides sponsored listings. The College’s ads will appear on other colleges’ profiles and be remarketed across different platforms. During fiscal year 2024, there were 2,820 profile views, 14k inquiries and cross-interest prospects, 115k total sponsored listing impressions, and 74k total remarketing impressions.

In fiscal year 2024, the website had 717k total users, 172k new users, one million views, 418k sessions, and 201k engaged sessions. The website traffic was down slightly from the previous year. The key takeaway is that a website redesign was necessary.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, Carey stated that the College is in its third year of the contract with CampusReel. She noted that the partnership has been disappointing, and they have been building an in-house solution for the same service. The College just launched its own virtual tour, which is much better than the product offered by CampusReel. They are also working to keep the student-generated video but are transferring it to a platform that makes more sense and is moving away from the partnership with CampusReel.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Carey stated that the Niche profile is a page within their system, similarly designed for every college and university, and is not customizable. The value to the College comes from the paid premier profile that generates the remarketing impressions.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Carey stated that the Communications and Marketing team stay educated on the latest trends by attending webinars, conferences, and other related professional development opportunities.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Carey stated that he would not likely see the paid advertising on his social media because the ads are audience specific. Visiting the Northwest College Facebook page would pre-engage the algorithm so more organic posts would appear on his feed.

President Watson stated that the College would again participate in the Perkins grant. The Perkins V grant requires the College to notify the Board of its intent to participate during the program year 2025-2026.

Spring Board Retreat

President Watson stated that schedules did not allow a common date for the Spring Board Retreat. However, the retreat is valuable time spent discussing the focus and priorities the Board would like to bring forward for the College during the upcoming year. This becomes the foundation for the strategic work and guides the President's Operational Plan.

The Trustees decided to hold a Work Session at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, May 12, 2025, before the regular Board meeting to discuss the Board and President's priorities for FY2026.

New June Board meeting date

Due to scheduling conflicts, the June Board meeting has been rescheduled for Tuesday, June 17, 2025.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM

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

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no unfinished business items on the agenda.

A NEW BUSINESS:

Major Maintenance Projects

A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Ogden to approve the Major Maintenance projects as presented.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the items listed include estimated costs. If the costs associated with the project significantly change, items may be canceled or re-prioritized. By approving these projects, the Board approves the expenditure and the College's list of project priorities. These projects will move forward to State Construction to be carried out.

Motion carried.

TVW Building Renovation

President Watson stated that the College continues to do repairs and renovations to Trapper Village West to the best of its ability but has been unable to repair several units that have been uninhabitable for years. The College received bids for the complete major renovation of one building (two units). Because of the existing workload strain on Physical Plant staff, it is necessary to use an outside contractor. It is essential to get the units repaired and ready for use in order to rent and generate revenue that would allow the College to continue renovating other buildings and units.

A motion was made by Trustee Kost and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the Trapper Village West building renovation as presented. Motion carried.

Lewis and Clark Hall Roof Replacement

President Watson stated that a roof condition assessment was performed a few years ago for all campus buildings. Repairs and improvements have taken place, but at this time, the Lewis and Clark Hall roof is in poor condition and needs to be replaced.

A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the Lewis and Clark Hall roof replacement as presented. Motion carried.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FEEDBACK TO CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM TOPICS:

May 12, 2025, upcoming:

- Review President and Board Budget
- Preliminary Budget Presentation

- Renewal of the President's Contract
- PVCE Contract for Services Renewal
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Watson expressed her gratitude to Dave Erickson, who was willing to serve as the Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs. After a national search and with his appointment to the permanent position, she is grateful to have a full suite of Vice Presidents and is excited and looking forward to working with all three.

Trustee Wurzel congratulated the College on the Commission's approval of the CDL and Ski Area Operations certificates. He stated that the Commissioners noted that the Ski Area Operations certificate is the first of its kind in the State and appreciated the flexibility of the for-credit CDL certificate for students.

President Watson announced that Governor Mark Gordon would visit the campus on May 5, 2025. He will meet with K-12 and then come to the Student Center to have lunch with students, tour the building, and travel to the Armory to tour the Center for Training and Development.

Trustee Housel referenced a recent *Cowboy State Daily* article about Berry Bryant. He appreciates that the College has immersed itself in the message about domestic violence and is grateful to the Foundation for Remembrance Day and the bench and flowers planted in memory of Berry.

Trustee Housel recited a poem in Berry Bryant's honor.

Small Ensembles Concert, April 22, 2025, 7:00 p.m., NPA
Wednesdays Around the World – Netherlands, April 23, 2025, 11:30 a.m., SC
Stothart Reading, April 24, 2025, 12:00 p.m., Hinckley Library
Student Academic Award Reception, April 24, 2025, 3:30 p.m., YB
Brass Recital, April 28, 2025, 7:00 p.m., NPA
What's the Tea – Italy, April 29, 2025, 2-3 p.m., Student Center
Percussion Ensemble Concert, April 29, 2025, 7:00 p.m., NPA
Wednesdays Around the World – Japan, April 30, 2025, 11:30 a.m., SC
Student Academic Showcase, May 2, 2025, Yellowstone Building
Northwest Civic Orchestra Concert, May 3, 2025, 7:00 p.m., NPA
Final Exams, May 7-9, 2025, NWC
Wednesdays Around the World – Argentina, May 7, 2025, 11:30 a.m., SC
Nursing Pinning Ceremony, May 9, 2025, 3:00 p.m., NPA
Graduation/Commencement, Saturday, May 10, 2025, 10:30 a.m., Cabre
May Board meeting, May 12, 2025, 4 p.m., Yellowstone Building

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

R.J. KOST, Vice President/Secretary

Date