

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

April 6, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: President MR. DUSTY SPOMER; Vice President/Secretary DR. MARK WURZEL; Treasurer MR. LUKE ANDERSON; and Trustees MS. CAROLYN DANKO, MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MS. NADA LARSEN, and MR. BOB NEWSOME.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: DR. STEFANI HICSWA, President; DR. GERRY GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. LISA WATSON, Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance; MR. BRAD BOWEN, MR. DEAN BRUCE, MS. JENNIFER CANNIZZARO, MR. DUSTIN DICKS, MS. KIM FLETCHER, MR. JASON HORTON, MS. NANCY MILLER, MR. SHAMAN QUINN, MR. GREG THOMAS, MR. OSCAR TREVINO, MS. SHELBY WETZEL, MR. KEVIN KILLOUGH, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. DIANA GWYNN, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.

CALL TO ORDER: The regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees was called to order on Monday, April 6, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

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

A CONSENT AGENDA: **A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

President Hicswa responded to questions on the check register and other reports.

A roll call vote was taken, the motion carried unanimously, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the March 9, 2020 regular meeting, the March 19, 2020 emergency meeting, and the March 23, 2020 special meeting were approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

COVID-19 Response Update President Hicswa asked three members of the Incident Command team to give an update on the COVID-19 situation, the planning and the operationalization of the response plans.

Shaman Quinn, Incident Command Team Planning Section Chief, presented an overview of the response planning. He reported that following the activation of the Incident Command Team (ICS), the Planning Section created a COVID-19 Master Plan, then used that to branch off into Sub-Plans with three areas of institutional focus: Academics, Administration, and Student Services. These three areas of focus were simultaneously operationalized in cooperation with Dennis Quillen, the ICS Operation Section Chief.

Through the creation and subsequent operationalization of the Sub-Plans, the majority of employees were able to rapidly transition to working from home. To a great degree, this was possible because of the Virtual Machine (VM) infrastructure which had been installed by Computing Services over the course of the last few years, as well as their hard work to ensure each employee had appropriate technology and communication methods in place to continue working.

Despite the planning process being intense, and at times stressful, these rapid adjustments largely permitted NWC to go about its normal business and to generate its expected operational results. In coming weeks, the Planning Section

will turn its attention to preparing to re-open campus and resume normal face-to-face business, when it is determined to be prudent to do so.

Mr. Quinn then explained that the presentation today would emphasize the campus progress by focusing on three areas: 1) Customer Service, 2) Academic Product, and 3) Institutional Communication, which will demonstrate that NWC is operating efficiently despite being closed to the public.

Customer Service

Robust customer service is being offered despite significant social distancing. Employees' transition to working from home suspended normal face-to-face customer contact, but employees are successfully utilizing a variety of other contact methods (i.e., Zoom, Skype, Facebook, Facebook Live, etc.) which were already in place as part of our normal operating procedures. Various software platforms (i.e., Disability Service's "AIM" system, Residence Life's "E-Rez," room and roommate scheduling software; Academic Affairs' "Student Planner" module, the students' semester course builder, and a homegrown Computing Services tool for submitting sensitive documents to the Financial Aid office) were installed long before the current crisis, but are now invaluable in maintaining continuity of service. Mr. Quinn then shared a few examples of the innovative ways campus has adapted to this crisis:

- The Admissions Office implemented a chatbot option on their home webpage that features many of their frequently asked enrollment questions and provides prospective students the opportunity to connect with Admissions staff in a live format. Additionally, they are using phone banks for increased support for students during high-interaction events such as the recent Advising Day.
- The Student Success & Counseling Office created a fillable release form for their tele-mental health services. This form is sent to students for review and their electronic signature prior to conducting an online session. With this, there is zero disruption to the depth and breadth of counseling services – a service more important than ever.
- The TRIO office converted the TRIO Center into an online Moodle classroom. From that Moodle classroom, students can: have discussions with each other; access resources for academic, financial, career and transfer success; and access contacts for resources for food, internet access, mental health, motivation, and more. All of the TRIO peer mentors have been trained to use Zoom and are now helping to familiarize students with Zoom and other online platforms.
- The staff at the Children's Learning & Care Center Preschool, while closed to the public, remain in contact with parents. With help from the Communications & Marketing Team, they created a Facebook page with information and activities to help parents prepare their preschool children for kindergarten. The connection between the childcare center and their clients remains strong despite the closure.
- The Graduation Committee has found a way to augment each graduate's special recognition by issuing a "Celebration Box" to all 200+ graduates which will include a cap, gown, tassel, graduation program with names, their diploma cover (official diplomas are sent after the graduation ceremony) as well as other celebratory items.

Academic Product

Dean Greg Thomas reported that classes resumed April 6 and that 99.5% of current classes have been transitioned to online or distance education. Two classes require one day of face-to-face testing at the conclusion of the course. A ton of hard work went into moving classes to an online format, some of which were never intended to be offered online. Dean Thomas commended faculty for all of their work to transition courses so that students can complete this semester. NWC is currently on schedule to complete the 2020 spring semester online and on-time. The 2020 summer and fall course schedules has been published online. 82% of summer classes are already being offered online and conversion plans are in place for the face-to-face classes.

Advising Day will be held virtually on April 14. Faculty and staff will meet with students using many different modalities to ensure their success in registering for summer and fall classes. Much preparation has been done by the Office of Academic and Career Advising and the Admissions/Enrollment Services Team to make advising possible in the modified format. Additionally, these groups have been working together to plan advising sessions beyond advising day, including summer registration sessions. What those might look like, will greatly depend on status of NWC, Wyoming, and the nation.

Academic Affairs and support services such as tutoring, advising, international student support, library services, and instructional technology have really stepped up to serve students. Dean Thomas expressed how he has been genuinely touched by the level of devotion and hard work done to support students during these challenging times.

Institutional Communication

Finance Director Brad Bowen concurred that much communication and a lot of hard work has been done to ensure a seamless transition. NWC has received an avalanche of information from vendors, from regulatory groups, and from news sources regarding how the College can best work through this crisis. Great effort has been taken to digest the information and to maintain unity and clarity of messaging. He explained that team efforts are consistently being made across campus. Decisions are being made with the best information available and with information from those that would be most affected by the decisions. Regulatory guidance is being reviewed, whether Federal, State, Local, or departmental specific. Employee communications regarding best practices for working from home or on campus are being sent out. Best health and safety practices are being continuously implemented to ensure the safety and protection of all employees. Communication lines are in place to monitor employees' wellbeing. He noted that none of this would be possible without the dedication and diligence of all employees.

Vice President Watson gave a brief update on federal regulations and stimulus legislation related to the COVID-19 crisis. She reported that the information is both varied and vague and the regulations continue to change. Her office is diligently following all updates. They are also working to assess the Family First Act and to determine how it aligns with the College's family medical and sick leave policies. She noted that federal regulations apply to both individual, personal health situations and family needs scenarios. Her office will continue to assess and evaluate needs of employees and applicability of the regulations.

Vice President Watson also gave a brief overview of the CARES Act and the initial implications for higher education. There have been projections of the amount the College may receive, but the numbers are not yet finalized. As soon

as the College has definitive information, the Board will be informed. It is clear that 50% of any funding received needs to be applied directly to students and their needs. The remaining 50% is designed to cover only ongoing and specifically-related expenses incurred from the COVID-19 situation. Vice President Watson's office will continue to monitor subsequent information.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM:

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:02 p.m. There were no citizens that wished to address the Board, so the Citizen's Open Forum adjourned.

COVID-19 Response Update
(continued)

President Hicswa expanded on the information from Vice President Watson by explaining that just as the College will not be able to supplant funds with COVID-19 funding, the State cannot supplant community college budgets with the federal COVID-19 monies. She reported that Wyoming is currently experiencing a perfect storm of revenue loss. The state will see revenue loss due to declining investments, lost sales tax revenue, and the declining oil and gas industries. This will cause hardship for the state. Over the course of the next three months, the Board will be reviewing the budget for next year. Barring a drastic occurrence, NWC should be able to finish out this year without making severe cuts to budgets.

President Hicswa commended faculty and staff for the amazing work being done to ensure student success.

In a response to questions from Trustees, President Hicswa responded that:

- NWC has been granted permission from the federal government and HLC to shorten the semester. Students will not need to make up the extended Spring Break days. Faculty have adjusted their syllabi to ensure content is included for transfer as well as to pass licensure exams or final certifications. The 2020 spring semester will finish online, on-time.
- There are currently 25-30 students who remain on campus. Most were moved into Trapper Village Main. Two were moved to Trapper Village West. Sodexo will provide two meals per day for students using meal plans.
- The College is exploring student employment options for students who are still here and want to work.
- Advisors, coaches, and recruiters continue to work hard to engage current students and recruit prospective students.
- Finance Director Bowen explained the process for student refunds. He noted that there are various rules in place outlining specific ways to process a refund. The housing and business offices have been working conjointly to appropriately process refunds.

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation for how everyone has stepped up and worked through the issues related to this unprecedented situation. He indicated that this speaks very well of NWC and should indicate to prospective students about how well the College can respond and provide the quality education for which NWC is known. Other Trustees concurred with the sentiments.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Public Forum Timeline –
Residence Life Master Plan

Board President Spomer reminded the Board that at the April regular meeting the Board voted to table action on the Residence Life Master Plan until the May meeting with a caveat that the College hold a well-advertised public forum to solicit input on the Residence Life Plan from community members. With the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, holding a face-to-face public forum,

prior to the May Board of Trustees meeting, cannot be accomplished. He recommended that the Board amend their timeline for taking action on the Residence Life Master Plan.

A motion was made by Trustee Housel and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to postpone indefinitely the previous action of the Board of Trustees on the Residence Life Master Plan until such time as a public forum can be held and participants may attend the forum in person. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Recommended Policy Revisions
1. 2310 Board Committees

Trustee Wurzel reviewed additional revisions made by the Board Policy and Student Success Committee to policy 2310 Board Committees.

Trustee Housel recommended adding, at a future date, a clause prohibiting any Board Committee from expending College funds or entering into contracts on behalf of the College without Board approval. Trustee Wurzel recommended adding, also at a future date, a clause prohibiting any Board Committee from speaking on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Larsen to approve the revisions to policy 2310 Board Committees as presented, with the understanding that future revisions may be made. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS &
FOLLOW-UP TO CITIZENS'
OPEN FORUM TOPICS:**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

WACCT Board meeting, April 15, 2020, via Zoom
WCCC Meeting, April 16, 2020, via Zoom
Next meeting, May 11, 2020, 3:00 p.m., via Zoom

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

MARK WURZEL, Vice President/Secretary

Date