

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

October 11, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: President DR. MARK WURZEL; Vice President/Secretary DR. LARRY TODD; Treasurer Ms. CAROLYN DANKO; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MS. TARA KUIPERS, MR. BOB NEWSOME, and MR. DUSTY SPOMER

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, Interim President; DR. GERRY GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MR. DALTON BANKS; MS. HOLLY BERRYMAN; MS. LESLIE BIGHAM; MR. BRAD BOWEN; DR. MARNEÉ CRAWFORD; DR. MICHAEL CUDDY; DR. RENEE DECHERT; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MS. TRACY GASAWAY; MS. NANCY GILMORE; MS. CHRISTI GREAHAM; MS. JO ANN HEIMER; MR. WEST HERNANDEZ; MS. KENDLE JEFFS; MS. MICHAELA JONES; MS. CAREY MILLER; MS. NANCY MILLER; MR. CORY OSTERMILLER; MS. BOBBIE PATTERSON; MR. JACOB PRICE; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. JEN SCHNEIDER; MS. LISA SMITH; MS. LINDA SPOMER; MR. MARTIN STENSING; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MR. KEVIN KILLOUGH, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Interim 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, October 11, 2021, at 4:01 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

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

A CONSENT AGENDA: **A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Kuipers to approve the consent agenda.**

In response to a question from Trustee Housel regarding waitlisted classes, Vice President Giraud stated that he does not believe there were a great number of students on waitlists or students who were unable to attain a full-time load due to classes being at capacity.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the September 13, 2021 regular meeting, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Marketing and Enrollment discussion

Upon invitation from Interim President Watson, West Hernandez and Carey Miller presented a Marketing and Enrollment overview for Trustees.

West Hernandez began the discussion by describing the primary and secondary sources of prospective students. Primary sources include information requests via the website and social media, visiting College Fairs in WY and surrounding states, Admissions events, Career Fairs, high school visits, various faculty recruitment and activity events, in addition to many others. Secondary sources include faculty/academic referrals, ACT/SAT test results, alumni referrals, dual/concurrent enrollment, high school counselor referrals, phone and email referrals, etc. West continued by stating approximately 50% of prospects are generated through outreach by the Admissions staff, while the other 50% are generated through website and social media inquiries as well as through marketing efforts.

In discussing the process of moving a prospective student to an enrolled student, it's important to note that the process can be different for new students, transfer students or returning students. Students receive personalized

admissions communications, such as letters, emails, text messages and phone calls. They also receive a variety of robust recruiting collaterals such as Viewbook, Academic Fact Sheets, Campus Services brochures, event invitations, etc. Face-to-face outreach is also utilized as a very important component of working with prospective students and Admissions Representatives travel extensively for recruiting purposes. The Admissions department also hosts many recruiting events such as Preview Day, Adult Learner Night, Experience Day, New Student Registrations and NWC Career Day.

West stated that in May, Northwest College launched a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software that is incorporated into the website. The CRM offers students an improved personalized digital experience. It also allows improved data collection in collecting more information on students and monitoring their activity and what communications resonated well with them. Conversations with students can be tracked, who is coming to various Admissions events is tracked, and workflows and communications can be automated. Audiences can be segmented and then the information is given to faculty members to get them involved in the recruiting process. Student behavior is also tracked in terms of what pages they are visiting on the website. While staff were able to track this information before implementation of the CRM, it was much more cumbersome and required entering the information manually into spreadsheets. The College has recently hired a new Admissions Representative with a background in Computer Science who will assist with managing the complex technology.

In response to a question from Trustee Danko, West stated that while one of the Admissions Representatives will be working more heavily with the digital component, it's important to note that there will still be five to seven visits per year to each area high school for the purpose of face-to-face recruiting efforts.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, West stated that Financial Aid and scholarship opportunities remain a concern for many students. The scholarship brochure that is sent to students includes Hathaway scholarship information for Wyoming students and is an active part of the conversation. The website also provides a depth of information regarding scholarships as well. The Hathaway scholarship remains a large part of the conversation while visiting and communicating with prospective students.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, West stated the return on investment for traveling to reach students is shrinking. Being able to hire an Admissions Representative that will spend more time managing the virtual component is very beneficial. While more could be done with recruitment efforts if there were not budget constraints, West stated the staffing levels in Admissions at Northwest College are comparative to other community colleges in the state.

Carey shared the personnel and their respective roles in the Communications and Marketing office (CMO) and Printing Services. She also announced the hiring of Tim Carpenter to fill the Communications/Web & Social Media position. Tim will begin his role on November 8th.

Carey stated Northwest College is continually running digital advertising on Facebook, Instagram, Audience Network and Messenger, which contains sixteen different types on the various platforms. In addition to digital advertising, traditional advertising is also done in local publications, on radio networks and on billboards in the Big Horn Basin and on the interstate near

Billings, MT. A newspaper insert is going into all Big Horn Basin newspapers at the beginning of each semester that lists programs, financial aid and scholarship opportunities as well.

Carey explained that the digital advertising contains custom web landing pages for different audiences and programs, depending on the user profile. Each landing page includes a request for information form that feeds directly into the CRM, where prospective students begin their digital journey through the enrollment funnel and various communication methods. Having the CRM tied into the webpage in ways it wasn't before will be very beneficial and provide more robust data in the future.

Carey stated she is now including a summary page in her monthly analytics report to Trustees to aid in viewing the information at a glance. The data is used to measure past performance and in planning for the future.

Carey stated that she sets aside a portion of her advertising budget every year in order to try new things. Last year, ads were run on cable television and a digital display campaign. This year, she has contracted with Amplified Digital, which is a digital agency partnered with the *Billings Gazette*. This contract contains many components such as branded content (custom branded articles), targeted email marketing, mobile location targeting, etc. She has also partnered with *The Education Magazine* which also contains various components and is a national campaign.

Carey shared the annual Enrollment and Marketing Campaign Update. She explained this is the final year of a three-year campaign and reminded Trustees of the targeted audiences, the key messages, the target programs and the primary generations targeted as a result of work by the Strategic Enrollment Management Team. The media utilized in the campaign included cable and streaming television, social media ads, newspaper inserts, billboards and Amplified Digital advertising. Analytics for the period of July 2020 through June 2021 include the various digital ads were seen 4.7 million times and clicked on 34k times; the website had 187k visitors viewing a total of 1.2 million pages; and the unpaid social media efforts had 160k engagements and 6.1 million impressions.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Carey stated that when branding Northwest College as a whole, the four key messages are location, quality, value/affordability and experience. Trustee Housel pointed out the above average click-through rate of nearly 4% speaks to the quality of the messaging and design of the ads.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, Interim President Watson stated that while some of the area high schools are hesitant to allow Colleges to visit their schools because of the pandemic, they are still more than willing to send their students to the campus for special events such as Preview Day; therefore, the College is still planning to host those events this year as long as health conditions are good.

Trustee Kuipers commented that she is appreciative of the efforts to meet students needs and desires in recruiting by reaching them digitally while also keeping the face-to-face component prevalent as well.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, Vice President Giraud stated that with changes in administrative staffing at the University of Wyoming, the philosophy of articulation with the community colleges has changed. The focus is more on individual courses and work has been done to align courses and

implement common numbering across the state. UW has issued a general articulation agreement that states that any student who graduates from a community college in Wyoming will have met the general education requirements of UW. Whether they enter at the junior level depends greatly on the programmatic courses they completed.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, Carey stated the College has many banners placed in the community such as at baseball fields in Powell and Lovell, at Riley Arena, the Powell Aquatic Center, etc., in order to reach high school students as well as community members and to show community support.

Longitudinal Enrollment Report

Lisa Smith shared the Longitudinal Enrollment report which is prepared every year. The report offers a breakdown of enrollment over a 10-year period and provides a better understanding of various changes over time. Highlights of the report are:

- The preliminary fall 2021 enrollment indicates that headcount is at 1,413 and FTE is at 1,143. Typically, headcount increases 3% to 7% between the drop date and the end of the semester. The actual enrollment numbers won't be finalized until the end of January when validation tests have been completed.
- Historically, in looking at fall enrollments from 1995 forward, Northwest College's enrollment peak and decline follows very closely the national trend of public two-year institutions.
- In looking at Fall to Spring enrollment, headcount typically stays the same from fall to the subsequent spring. However, FTE always decreases due to students taking fewer credits in the spring.
- Enrollment by first-time and degree-seeking students has declined over the last ten years and has most impacted the overall enrollment trend. Fall 2020 marked the first time in Northwest College's history where part-time enrollment surpassed full-time enrollment. The larger part-time population is largely due to an increase in dual and concurrent enrollment by high school students and that students are enrolling in fewer credits.
- The largest population of students attending Northwest College come from the service area, followed by WUE states, other Wyoming counties and lastly out-of-state and international students.
- The breakdown of enrollment by age indicates that the population of students 18-21 years has decreased over time and enrollment by students under 18 has increased, which corresponds to the increase of concurrent and dual students. However, the majority of the College's students are in the traditional age range of 19-23 years.
- While there has been a decrease in enrollment in face-to-face classes, the online enrollment has remained fairly steady.
- Concurrent students (college courses taught by college-approved high school teachers) have decreased over time, while Dual students (enrolled in credit courses taught by NWC faculty) have more than quadrupled since 2011.
- Powell High School and Cody High School students make up the largest population of Concurrent and Dual enrolled students.

- Based on graduating class sizes and calculated by taking the average enrollment yield over the past five years, projected enrollment from service area high schools indicates Northwest College may see an increase in enrollment through 2025 and then a drop-off through 2033.
- Powell, Lovell and Rocky Mountain high schools have sent the largest population of their graduating students (compared to other service area schools) to Northwest College. The lowest number of graduates came from Worland, Meeteetse and Ten Sleep.
- Enrollment at the Cody Center indicates an increase in FTE over the last three years. This is largely attributed to increased program offerings in Cody, particularly in Allied Health areas.
- While Northwest College's enrollment is among the lowest in Wyoming, it has historically been the only Wyoming college with a majority full-time enrollment. Fall 2020 marks the first year when the College's full-time and part-time enrollment became approximately equal.
- Fall-to-fall retention rates have dipped slightly due to COVID; however, Northwest College remains among the highest in Wyoming for full-time retention. The full-time fall-to-spring retention rate remains in the low to mid-80% range.
- Northwest College's graduation rate of 44% is much higher than the national two-year institutions' rate of 21% to 30%, and is also typically higher than or equal to the state average. This can be attributed to the robust retention and completion initiatives implemented by the College over the last ten years.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, Interim President Watson explained that accrediting bodies have raised the minimum qualifications for high school teachers to be able to teach concurrent classes; therefore, the number of qualified high school teachers has declined through attrition and other means. The number of concurrent classes have diminished, which explains the concurrent enrollment decline over the last couple of years. The state has not designated funds to the colleges nor the high schools for professional development opportunities in order for teachers to obtain the credentials necessary to teach concurrent classes.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, West stated that in relation to the Logitudinal report, he focuses on the number of students we are receiving from service area high schools. His concern is that some of those percentages have declined. While there are certain factors that are beyond the College's control, there are also opportunities for improvement.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer related to the loss of instructors in schools who are unable to send their students to campus for dual classes, Interim President Watson stated the model is changing and more online or Zoom courses need to be offered.

CampusWorks

Interim President Watson shared the CampusWorks on-campus discussion worksheet summary with Trustees. There were 67 responses received. Based on the responses to questions concerning focus group themes, Experiential/Real World and Immersive Learning rose to the top as a priority. Renaming and rebranding the College was the theme with the least priority. When looking at the Core Model options, the responses were varied by

constituency group. Lisa feels there needs to be more conversation regarding whether the essence of what the campus wants in the models has been captured.

Interim President Watson stated that the campus community as well as Trustees are clear on the Mission of the College. However, approximately 50% of the people that responded were not clear on our Vision. She feels the timing of the development of the Vision and the transformational work may be to blame. Also, while our strategic vision statements have usually encompassed five years, she's wondering if the timeline should extend beyond five years to accomplish transformational change.

Interim President Watson feels there are two main points that came out of the feedback she received. Primarily, there is a translation gap between the themes and the models. Also, how to turn the roadmap into an action plan if we don't have a longer term vision.

Interim President Watson shared the Trustees' responses to the worksheet and pointed out the responses were similar to the campus community responses. She stated they could choose to discuss the results and their thoughts tonight or to spend more time on the topic during the winter retreat. There has been a tremendous amount of work done with CampusWorks and transformational change and it's time to begin work on the roadmap and in determining if the College is ready to state where it wants to put time, energy and resources in distinguishing itself from others.

Trustee Kuipers feels the Longitudinal Enrollment report and enrollment trends shared by Lisa Smith are relevant to the conversation related to transformational change. She stated she would like more time to digest the reports as they relate to each other.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer regarding if the worksheet results were indicative of the general feeling or if only one side was speaking up, Interim President Watson stated she felt like a good representation was received. The exercise was intended to bring everyone back to the conversation to determine their perceptions of the work done so far. That's when the disconnect between the themes and the models was revealed and it became apparent more conversations needed to take place in order to ensure everyone understands what they're working toward.

Trustee Spomer stated the chart indicating that Renaming/Rebranding as a theme was not a priority is informative to him; however, the Core Model Options ranking seems to be so varied he is disappointed there wasn't a clear preference.

Interim President Watson stated the comments provided for each Core Model Option are well thought out. The College needs to determine what model or combination of models will be most beneficial moving forward.

President Wurzel stated that while he sees the need for a Strategic Vision to go further out than five years, he is in support of the Vision as it is and that it would work well with the transformational work ahead. Interim President Watson stated that while the Vision is flexible, it lacks key performance indicators that would allow the College to measure in five years if it has met the objectives.

Interim President Watson stated that when she looks at declining revenues, she feels the College needs to put a real concerted effort into sustainability. After analysis, the College needs to decide if there are areas it wants to invest in,

whether renaming or rebranding could provide added value, then move forward. Interim President Watson stated she will be working with the CampusWorks Advisory Committee to consolidate the work thus far to begin Phase III roadmap work.

Interim President Watson reminded Trustees of the Renaming/Rebranding Panel Discussion on the following Wednesday evening, October 13, at 6:00 p.m. Community members and employees may submit questions online ahead of time. The questions are being grouped and will be addressed by the panelists. Once the questions have been answered, there will be an opportunity for comments to be made.

Facilities Planning discussion

Interim President Watson stated the Board Facilities Committee met earlier in the month to discuss the status of facility projects and the Student Center project.

Interim President Watson stated that after much review and discussion she made the decision to go with a Construction Manager at Risk model for the Student Center Level III planning work. A project of this scope and size is very complex with a lot of risk involved. The concept involves bringing in a construction manager during the planning and design process along with the architects, engineers, etc., to reduce the risk of design or construction flaws that could result in significant costs down the road.

Interim President Watson reminded Trustees of their request to review the Residence Life Master Plan every two years. While it is yet to be two years since the last review, she feels there are items that need consideration such as Ashley Hall, Trapper Village West, etc. and she is inquiring how the Board would like that work to move forward.

Trustee Spomer, speaking on behalf of the Board Facilities Committee, inquired if the Board as a whole is agreeable to assign this work to Committee for thorough consideration followed by a recommendation to the Board.

A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Kuipers to refer the use of funds for asset improvements to the Board Facilities Committee for consideration and to bring a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Trustee Housel suggested the topic be a work session or discussion item prior to the Facility Committee's work in order for the Board as a whole to fully understand the expectations involved with the limited funding available and what the goals and priorities might be. At that time, Trustees would be able to express their preferences in order to inform the Committee in their further review and discussion.

Interim President Watson stated she would like to share the Residence Life Master Plan with Trustee Todd and Trustee Kuipers. She would then bring the plan to the Board as a discussion item to review the different items of interest to the Board and the community as well.

Trustee Spomer withdrew the motion.

Interim President Watson stated she will bring the facilities planning as a discussion item at the next regular Board meeting and follow up with a Facilities Committee meeting, likely the same week.

Distribute Board self-assessment

President Wurzel stated it's the time of year for Trustees to complete a self-assessment. The questions have been included in the Board Book for review and transparency; however, a link will be sent in order for the self-assessment

to be completed online. He asked Trustees to complete the assessment by the next Board meeting on November 8, 2021.

Winter Board Retreat discussion

Interim President Watson stated it will be best to have the winter Board retreat sooner rather than later since the Board has many items to discuss. She suggested early December or after the first of the year. A Doodle poll will be sent in order to find dates that work within Trustees' schedules.

Further discussion

In response to a question from Trustee Housel regarding the potential for further declining revenue sources, Interim President Watson stated the JEC is considering reducing funding percentages. For instance, before the pandemic, community colleges were funded with 60% state funds, 20% local levies and 20% by students. Currently, the ratio is 50% state funds, 23% local levies and 27% by students. The state lost approximately \$800 million in local levies from the seven service counties within the last year. There are Legislators who feel the colleges should be funded one third each by state, local and student funding. The rates and tuition would increase to a point that Wyoming would lose students to out-of-state schools.

Interim President Watson stated she expects funding to stay level for another year. The outcome of the ARP funds are still unknown and there is conversation related to using a portion of the money to create an endowment for community colleges; however, all state agencies are in need of funding since coal used to be the largest funding source.

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:

There were no unfinished business items on the agenda.

A NEW BUSINESS:

There were no new business items on the agenda.

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

November Upcoming:

- Wyoming Postsecondary Education Options report
- Review of Board self-assessment (study session?)
- Academic calendars
- Preliminary audit report
- Statewide legislative update
- Nomination committee for Board officers
- Winter Board professional development/retreat reminder
- Holiday Party reminder
- Other TBD

Future and follow-up topics:

Trustee Housel requested a future agenda item be on the transferability of Northwest College classes to the University of Wyoming. Hearing that there is a movement from the two-plus-two program implemented just a few years ago, he would like an opportunity to learn more about the changes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next meeting, November 8, 2021, Meeteetse School
Panel on Rebranding /Renaming, October 13, 6:00 p.m. Yellowstone Bldg.
ACCT Leadership Congress, Oct. 13-16, 2021, San Diego, CA

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

LARRY TODD, Vice President/Secretary

Date