

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

March 14, 2022

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, Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MS. HOLLY BERRYMAN; MR. BRAD BOWEN; MR. TIM CARPENTER; DR. MARNEÉ CRAWFORD; DR. MICHAEL CUDDY; MS. ELAINE DEBUHR; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MS. CHRISTI GREAHAM; MS. JO ANN HEIMER; MR. JEREMIAH HOWE; MS. DEB JACOBS; MS. MICHAELA JONES; MS. CAREY MILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; DR. ROBERT RUMBOLZ; MR. CRAIG SATTERLEE; MS. LISA SATTERLEE; MS. LISA SMITH; MR. MARTIN STENSING; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; MR. MORGAN TYREE; 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, March 14, 2022, at 3:04 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

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

President Wurzel asked that the agenda be amended to add item IX, in which the Board will move into Executive Session.

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

WORK SESSION

President Wurzel extended his congratulations to President Watson on her selection as President of Northwest College.

President Watson stated her excited at the opportunity and is looking forward to working with the Board, the campus, and the community to move the College forward.

President Watson stated that the memo in the March Board packet is a revised version from the February Board of Trustees meeting. The revisions are a result of feedback received during the previous meeting and input she received from President Wurzel and Trustee Kuipers.

President Wurzel stated that the subcommittee of himself, President Watson, and Trustee Kuipers considered the suggested changes and chose to keep the transformational vision flexible while allowing President Watson and the campus community to develop measurable goals to be brought forth by August 31, 2022. The subcommittee desires that the Board be comfortable with the memo's general statements with specific goals and the budget implications within the specified timeframe.

Trustee Kuipers expressed the desire of the subcommittee to provide the structure from which a strategic plan with specific and operationalized goals can be developed. She hopes the process will reflect the clarity or direction that the Board sought and should be tied to the budget, allowing Trustees to know what is prioritized.

Trustee Spomer stated that while the document outlines the background, process, and findings, he feels it lacks purpose without stating the overall goals

and how to measure success. While he understands that the campus would need to operationalize the plan, he feels the document still lacks specific direction. He feels the discussion from the Board retreat held in January provided a direction for reaching Vision 2025 as approved in 2020.

President Watson questioned whether the Board wants to define distinction and destination of place or do they want to charge the campus with defining.

Trustee Danko stated she would like the document to contain examples of a destination and distinction model and how it could be built upon the desired vision.

Trustee Housel stated that while discussion could continue regarding all manner of goal-setting, the ultimate goal is increased enrollment. The Board has participated in goal-setting in the past, and at times goals were exceeded, and other times they were not met. The Board chose to step away from very goal-setting while still focusing efforts to increase enrollment and retention. He is comfortable with this document not containing measurable goals because he understands the rationale for the Board not being involved in specific goal-setting as many external forces could affect the outcome. He favors the document as it currently reads, especially the last statement, which establishes that the vision is set forth, the transformational initiative is concluded, and charges the College with developing its strategic plan. He feels that the Board would be micro-managing the College if it were to establish measurable goals.

Trustee Todd stated he feels goals are necessary, and the Vision 2025 compass should be utilized in setting the goals. However, he feels faculty and staff should be engaged and excited about the process. Potentially, that could be accomplished by allowing them to determine how their contribution could ensure its success. He feels that if the Board were to develop top-down focuses, it could dampen the creative enthusiasm of those charged with moving the College forward. If he were to establish the desired outcome, it would generate excitement in the transformation process for those responsible for engaging students.

President Watson noted that enrollment is a critical part of College sustainability and that grant writing and collaboration with other colleges would also contribute to sustainability.

President Wurzel stated that he doesn't feel that specific numerical goals need to be established by the Board but feels the document lacks a summary statement that gives direction and focus.

Trustee Spomer questioned what "sustainability" would mean from the Board's perspective. Does it mean keeping the lights on, or does it mean a significant shift in direction to ensure success? The "what" is the vision and could be determined by the Board. The "how" is the way in which the College will achieve the vision. He also feels there should be consequences if the goals are not met. He feels the Board needs to ensure the College is set up for success for another seventy-five years. He thinks that defining clear goals would make President Watson's job easier vs. harder.

President Watson stated she is not opposed to clear and measurable goals but also understands that if circumstances change, such as State funding levels, this could affect the possible outcome, requiring the plan to be modified.

Trustee Newsome stated he believes goals can be a moving target, especially when considering enrollment. There is a shifting population base that is unpredictable. However, he feels that a target should be established that

everyone is working toward and could be modified if needed. He doesn't want the College to accept being "as good as" other colleges. He feels that the transformation initiative indicates that it's everyone's job to ensure that it is better. He agrees with Trustee Housel that the Board need not establish numerical goals but could suggest that "increased enrollment" is the actual goal.

Trustee Kuipers feels there is a need for clarity and setting goals and targets to hopefully generate enthusiasm and excitement and deepen understanding of what is possible. She stated she doesn't see Trustees' involvement ending with this document. She feels it bookends the CampusWorks phase and indicates the beginning of the next phase of work which is strategic planning.

President Wurzel stated he has heard support for the memo as it reads but is also hearing that it could be improved. He suggested that each Trustee draft a summary statement that ties the vision to the strategic plan. He feels the memo could be improved upon to inspire more enthusiasm and reminded the Trustees that the memo would be addressed later in the meeting as an unfinished business item where further discussion and action could occur.

MISSION MOMENT

Shelby Wetzel, NWC Foundation Director, stated the Foundation is excited to hold its second annual Giving Day on Thursday, March 31, 2022. With Northwest College celebrating its 75th anniversary, the Foundation has elected the 75th as its theme for Giving Day. Last year, the Foundation received 464 gifts, and the goal this year will be 750 gifts in the 24-hour blitz. There will be ten bonus opportunities for every seventy-five donors to keep the spirit building throughout the day. The ultimate goal is more about engagement in Northwest College than the dollar amount raised.

Michaela Jones, Alumni and Development Coordinator explained the three main areas of giving. The Student Center will be the main push, followed by Academic and Athletic scholarships.

Michaela explained that there would be students in the Student Center promoting Giving Day, and the Foundation has developed fun challenges for students to garner participation. Playing off the 75th Anniversary theme, every student who donates \$7.50 will be entered to win a prize such as Air Pods, Flex Bucks, and sweatshirts. Department challenges will return from last year, encouraging departments to compete and reach out to their alumni for participation. The Foundation will offer five \$1000 bonus opportunities for the most successful departments.

Building off of the momentum of Giving Day, Michaela stated the Foundation would be hosting the annual Gala event in Yellowstone Building. Sodexo will provide catering, and the Faculty Jazz group will be performing during the social hour. There will also be a virtual component with a home celebration kit for those who aren't able to attend in person. 2020 and 2021 Distinguished Alumni recipients will also be recognized during the event.

A CONSENT AGENDA:

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

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation for Finance Director Brad Bowen's report on the Student Center. He finds it informative and helpful in keeping the project foremost in the Trustees' minds.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel regarding the outcome of the Legislative session, President Watson stated that permanent funding for increased compensation was approved. It is still unknown how much

Northwest College will receive for compensation. President Watson stated the Legislature also approved \$7.5 million to address fixed cost increases for the colleges. Both funding increases are permanent and will be distributed through the funding allocation.

President Watson stated that Capital Construction was approved and funded. She expressed her appreciation to everyone on the campus who has worked on the project from the beginning. Trustees and attendees clapped to celebrate the upcoming construction of a new Student Center!

The establishment of an endowment for Wyoming Tomorrow's bill for adult learners passed. The endowment must reach \$50 million before scholarships can be allocated. The Legislature approved \$10 million in funding.

The Legislature addressed redistricting by adding more seats to the House and Senate. While the College's district did not lose representatives, the redistricting dilutes the representation of the Big Horn Basin as a whole.

Lastly, the Legislature approved \$200,000 for community college rodeo teams. This is a biennium number, and while President Watson has not seen the amendment this legislation was derived from, it is her understanding that these are ongoing funds to support the Rodeo teams.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Vice President Giraud indicated that a survey was created to gauge interest in a BAS degree in Criminal Justice and was distributed to current students, alumni, and law enforcement agencies. Preliminary results indicate significant interest. The survey will end on March 15.

Trustee Housel also noted the Academic Affairs report, which contained information regarding an exhibit in the library of photos from the first forty years of Northwest College. He expressed an interest in Trustees touring the exhibit before it ends.

Trustee Housel stated he was pleased to read of the College's ability to offer ACCT Level I Practitioner certification in the Outdoor Education program. He was also pleased to see the number of outdoor courses offered at Northwest College.

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation to Shelby Wetzel for hosting the two Presidential Candidate receptions in her home.

Trustee Kuipers extended her appreciation to all involved in the Presidential Search process: the search committee who invested numerous hours; all who attended the public and constituency forums; the IT department and the technology made available; and Jill Anderson in Human Resources, among many others. Trustee Kuipers found the entire process to be a valuable learning experience as a Trustee.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of February 9, 2022, special meeting, the minutes of February 14, 2022, regular meeting, the minutes of February 24, 2022, special meeting, and the minutes of the March 3, 2022, special meeting, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Workforce Development
activities report

VP Giraud stated that Dr. Marneé Crawford and Christi Greaham exemplify some of the points made in the work session regarding motivation, excitement about transformation, and dedication to the success of the College. He also

recognized Dr. Crawford, who has doubled the enrollment and the number of graduates in the RN program over the last few years. The Allied Health program is an excellent example of sustainability and partnerships and satisfies a great need in the community.

Dr. Crawford stated that the Center for Training and Development (CTD) is devoted to establishing and maintaining business partners in the community. Their broad spectrum of students includes high school-aged, those looking for a career change, first-timers, those seeking to enhance their current skills for job enhancement, and those seeking personal enrichment. The College delivers training in Powell, Cody, Lovell, Meeteetse, Basin, and Worland within hospitals, high schools, the outdoors, industry partner locations, and campus. There is also an extensive list of online courses offered.

Christi Greaham explained that CTD offers both apprenticeships and internships. Apprenticeships include electrical, plumbing, and HVAC, while Internships are provided in the Meats course, plumbing, and HVAC. The difference between the two is that apprenticeships must be a two-year program that consists of at least 2000 hours.

Dr. Crawford stated that the CTD had established many industry and economic partners locally and across the region and state. These partnerships drive students' opportunities and provide a pipeline of communication for the Center.

Christi expressed her gratitude to the Foundation and noted its vital role in helping to get many of the programs started and providing scholarship funding, including for the CDL program. As of February 2022, individuals can no longer obtain a CDL without completing a program with a federally accredited school. Northwest College's CTD met its goal of receiving its certification before that date. There are currently 53 students in the program, and it continues to grow. They are presently training U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management employees, school district employees, and many local companies' employees. Christi has received calls from employers as far away as Salt Lake City, UT, who want to enroll their employees.

Christi explained that many of their programs are born from conversations with various businesses that express their training needs. For example, a local employer expressed a need to have several employees receive welding certification. The Center has worked with the College's Welding department and will be able to fulfill that need for the employer. Employers have also expressed a need for heavy equipment certification, and CTD is currently waiting to see if they will receive a grant to develop the program.

Dr. Crawford explained that the opportunities for CTD are deep and wide. Existing and new partnerships generate ideas and opportunities for the Center to provide a bridge between students and employers.

State Performance Indicators Report

Lisa Smith stated that the report highlights the most recent cohorts' annual retention, persistence, and completion rates. Of the first-time degree-seeking students who started at NWC in the fall of 2020, 54% returned in the fall of 2021 (retention rate), making it the lowest retention rate for the past ten years and the lowest of the Wyoming colleges. Of the 2020 cohort, 63% returned or transferred to another institution (persistence rate), the lowest rate of all colleges. Of the part-time students, 53% returned to NWC in the fall of 2021, which is the highest rates among the colleges.

Lisa stated that because NWC typically has one of the highest retention and persistence rates in the state, she examined the post-attendance survey of students who did not return, and the reasons given were:

- 66% completed degree or certificate
- 20% transferred to another institution
- 17% got a job
- 7% didn't want to take classes online due to COVID
- < 5% didn't have money to continue, had a poor experience, were taking personal enrichment coursework from NWC, were primarily involved at another institution, medical reasons, or had non-health safety COVID-related concerns

Lisa noted that in 2012, NWC saw a dip in retention rates to 54%, which was concerning at the time. However, it was just a one-year dip, and retention increased the following year. While it may be an anomaly and retention rates will increase in the future, Lisa stated the College should continue monitoring since it typically experiences some of the highest rates in the state.

Lisa stated that when looking at all enrolled students (not just first-time, full-time students), there were 1442 students enrolled in fall 2020. When looking at the entire student population, 75% persisted or completed a degree or certificate. In comparison, in 2017, when retention rates were higher for the first-time cohort, 77% of the entire population persisted or completed, indicating the overall persistence and completion rate remains approximately the same.

Lisa stated that the College had seen a steady increase in completion rates over the past ten years. This includes first-time, full-time students who graduate within three years of starting at NWC. In the most recent cohort of students who began in the fall of 2017, the College had the highest completion rate on record at 44%, which is also the highest in the state.

Lisa stated that since student success is measured by completion and transfer rates, combining the two indicates that 59% of NWC students completed or transferred. This rate has been relatively steady for the past four years.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:00 p.m.

Jeremiah Howe, Marketing and Graphic Design Specialist stated he has worked at Northwest College since 2018, graduated from Northwest College in 2009, and was a first-generation low-income student. He is grateful for the role the College has played in his life. He is motivated to speak to ensure the success of the College and in support of renaming it "Yellowstone College" as part of the transformational effort. There are currently 64 US Colleges with "North" and 32 Colleges with "Northwest" in their name. Jeremiah cited the looming enrollment cliff in 2026 when the number of high-school graduates decreases significantly due to low birth rates. All Colleges will be competing for a much smaller pool of traditional-aged students. The College's service area is too small to provide a sustainable enrollment, and it must target a larger population of students looking for a quality, affordable and unique college experience. The digital world allows parents and students to search for and learn about colleges much easier than years ago when the name "Yellowstone College" was first considered and subsequently rejected. While many factors affecting enrollment

are out of the College's control, changing the name does not require approval by Legislators nor by accreditors. Jeremiah also noted that the College is closer to Yellowstone National Park than any other college. Many colleges using locations in their name are much further away from their namesake. Jeremiah feels the name change would generate much energy and excitement among those in marketing and responsible for recruiting students. He feels renaming the College is the best way to remain relevant, stand out and attract prospective students now and into the future.

Elaine DeBuhr, Associate Professor of Art and Chairperson of Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts Division, stated that her comments represent her personal views on transformation. She is an advocate for the "Yellowstone College" name change for what has been stated previously and what she has personally experienced and observed. Northwest College is well-known in the area, but there is work to do beyond that. For example, at the Wyoming State Art Symposium, attended by hundreds of Wyoming high school students and where she and her colleagues recruit, they are asked several times, "which College in the north are you?" Elaine noted that up to 6% of students confuse our College with another Northwest College where they are trying to apply. She has also informally polled her current students, and the majority favor the name change. A faculty survey indicated that the majority of those who responded support the name change. While alumni are an important voice and an integral part of the Foundation, Elaine hopes the opinions of current students, faculty, staff, and community members are considered in the name change decision. Northwest College has always had nationally competitive programs and student achievements, but the competition in higher education is becoming fiercer. The College must be prepared for the enrollment cliff that is inevitable. During strategic vision gathering sessions over the past few years, Elaine heard comments from alumni and retired faculty that understood the College is different than when they either attended or were employed. Programs have changed, as have students' interests, values, and goals. Population, industry, and the state's financial picture are also changing. The College must be flexible in the quickly changing landscape of higher education. Through the work of CampusWorks, Elaine was pleased to note that the College already does a number of the strategies identified. Transformation is not about survival but about becoming better. The name change is about vision, long-term investment, and a clear identity. "Yellowstone College" is a unique and recognizable name to prospective national and international students. An increase in enrollment is necessary but won't happen without a significant increase in marketing resources. Elaine feels a name change can easily be folded into the campaign. In this electronic age, the cost of a name change is significantly less than it would have been years ago. To be forward-thinking is part of the mission statement of the College, and it is the Board of Trustees' objective to ensure the mission and vision are accomplished.

A NEW BUSINESS:

Course/lab fee proposals

A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Danko to approve the Course/lab fee proposals as presented. Motion carried.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Transformational Memo

A motion was made by Trustee Housel and seconded by Trustee Danko to approve the Transformational Memo.

Trustee Housel stated he was supportive of the memo without further editing. He feels it encapsulates the discussions that have taken place over the previous eighteen months and provide a general direction for transformational change. He feels the goal-setting and action plan should be developed by the administrators of the College.

Trustee Spomer stated that he appreciates the work and effort of those who drafted the memo but feels it lacks a summary statement or specific and measurable goals pertaining to the direction the Board would like the College to take. He feels the language should be tightened for the intent to be clear and attainable. He agrees with Trustee Housel that the Board should not overstep and become involved in operations but feels that in their role in setting the policy and approval of the budget, the Board should give guidance. He doesn't feel the College should be run by looking at the past but should instead focus on being predictive of how it will be sustainable long-term.

Trustee Kuipers agrees that the memo needs more work, whether it's additional language in the memo or the form of continued work on transformational goals. She does not have a preference whether the work to be done is outlined in this document or a future document.

Trustee Danko stated that the words "move" and "motion" in the document indicate that the Board and the College will continue moving forward with this work.

President Wurzel stated that he feels the memo represents the public face of the plan and feels the document could be improved upon to make it more motivational and inspiring. If the motion fails, he is interested in seeing what other Trustees have in mind to make it better.

Motion carried, with Trustees Danko, Housel, Newsome, and Todd in favor and President Wurzel and Trustees Spomer and Kuipers voting opposed.

A EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Housel to move into executive session. Motion carried, and the executive session convened at 5:47 p.m.

A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Housel to adjourn the executive session. Motion carried, the executive session adjourned at 6:24 p.m., and the regular session resumed.

A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Kuipers to invoke Policy 5200 and approve project pay for Lisa Watson at 25% of the Vice President for Administrative Services salary, as 25% of her duties as Vice President were retained while also serving as Interim President. Motion carried.

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

April Upcoming:

- Major Maintenance projects update
- Marketing report
- Spring/Summer retreat date
- College/Board priorities
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next meeting, April 11, 2022, at 3 p.m., Cody
Commencement Exercises, May 14, 2022, 10:30 a.m., Cabre Gym

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

LARRY TODD, Vice President/Secretary

Date