

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

August 14, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: President DR. MARK WURZEL; Treasurer MR. BOB NEWSOME; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MS. DENISE LAURSEN, MR. DUSTY SPOMER and DR. LARRY TODD.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vice President/Secretary Ms. TARA KUIPERS.

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, President; MR. DAVE ERICKSON, INTERIM Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MS. TRACY GASAWAY; MS. NANCY GILMORE; MR. MARK GRANT; MS. JO ANN HEIMER; MS. MICHAELA JONES; MS. CAREY MILLER; MR. CORY OSTERMILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. LISA SMITH; MR. MARTIN STENSING; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; 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 Dr. Mark Wurzel called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, August 14, 2023, at 4:07 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

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

President Wurzel announced that the ACCT Leadership Conference, which two Trustees and President Watson will attend, conflicts with the October Board meeting.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Todd to move the meeting to October 16, 2023. Motion carried.

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

In response to a comment from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the CDL simulator was taken to the Park County Fair and Big Horn County Fair. Its presence provides an excellent opportunity for community members to try out the simulator and discuss the program. President Watson expressed her appreciation to Christi Greaham and the CDL instructors who took the time to be there, especially in the evening hours.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated the campus mall lighting project is almost complete. The new lights provide energy efficiency and offer greater illumination and more focused lighting, which increases campus safety.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the Lewis & Clark parking lot project was delayed slightly by rain, sewer line damage, and roof drainage re-locations but is on track to finish by Kick-off Weekend.

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation to Human Resources Director Jill Anderson for attending the Park County Fair to advertise employment opportunities and to all those who participated in the parade or helped at the fair.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated several different providers offer employment law webinars. Human Resources Director Jill Anderson recently attended a webinar by Littler Law firm.

Trustee Housel thanked Interim Vice President Dave Erickson for providing the statistics related to the BAS completions statewide. He also appreciates the history surrounding the course alignment and common course numbering.

President Wurzel also complimented Interim Vice President Dave Erickson on his summary of the WCCT and University of Wyoming Trustee meeting, in which much of the discussion was related to course alignment.

In response to President Wurzel's comment about the IT licensing and insurance costs represented in the July check register, President Watson stated that renewals are typically done this time of year. These expenses keep the College flexible and leading edge for students. The cost of insurance continues to rise annually and is a constant struggle.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, President Watson stated that community colleges are not eligible for the local government liability pool and must purchase their insurance through national companies.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the July 10, 2023, regular meeting and the minutes of the July 10, 2023, budget hearing, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Annual Contract Review

President Watson stated that the contracts listed in the report are ongoing high-level contracts the College holds. For instance, contracts entered for deferred maintenance are not included, as those are pre-approved by the Board on an annual basis.

In response to a comment from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the College is being charged approximately \$25k under the latest contract numbers from other colleges for the annual audit. She expects the audit price could increase with the next cycle because of the increased salaries associated with hiring qualified personnel in a hungry market.

Big Horn Basin High School
Report

Lisa Smith stated that the report is slightly different from what has been done in the past, as she wishes to explain what the data shows for the College and why it is meaningful. The annual report is a summary of student enrollment, retention, and performance from students who come from Northwest College's service area.

Based on a three-year average, 517 students graduated from Big Horn Basin high schools annually. The first year after graduation, 21% of those students enrolled at Northwest College. Of the 517 students who graduated from area high schools, 16% both enrolled at Northwest College and had been concurrent or dual enrolled. Powell, Lovell, and Rocky Mountain high schools sent the largest percentages of their graduating classes to Northwest, while Meeteetse, Worland, and Heart Mountain Academy sent the smallest.

For the Fall 2022 cohort, 28% of the College's first-time, full-time students placed into developmental writing, compared to 27% of Big Horn Basin graduates and 22% of Big Horn Basin concurrent or dual enrolled graduates. Sixty-two percent placed into developmental math, compared to 52% of Big Horn Basin graduates and 41% of concurrent or dual enrolled graduates.

The retention rates are similar for the three cohorts: of Fall 2021 students, 61% of all first-time, full-time students, 59% of Big Horn Basin graduates, and 62% of Big Horn Basin concurrent or dual enrolled graduates returned to Northwest

in the Fall 2022.

For students who started in Fall 2019, 42% of all first-time, full-time students, 40% of Big Horn Basin graduates, and 47% of Big Horn Basin concurrent or dual students graduated from Northwest College within three years. Typically, students who have taken dual or concurrent classes perform at higher rates than other cohorts. Preliminary graduation rates for the Fall 2020 cohorts are in the 30% range, likely due to COVID-19 and the challenges for students associated with the pandemic.

Lisa expressed her appreciation to Admissions Director West Hernandez for providing the information regarding how this information informs the College's recruitment strategy. It will be used by multiple departments that will be collaborating on the development of the Strategic Enrollment Plan. Current efforts include revamping the Trapper Scholarship program, which will provide higher awards to students. They are also planning to increase the involvement of parents in the recruitment process with a targeted communication schedule showcasing the benefits of Northwest College. It is anticipated that the higher award levels and increased recruitment and marketing efforts will positively affect Big Horn Basin enrollment.

In response to Trustee Housel's concern over the diminished number of graduates from Cody and Meeteetse high schools enrolling at Northwest College, President Watson stated that the numbers reflect a smaller population of graduates from Meeteetse. Also, while the College sees increased dual and concurrent enrollment from area high schools, it cannot transition a large percentage of those students to full-time. The students on a college track are being heavily recruited by the University of Wyoming, which also offers scholarship opportunities. Finding the right program for the right student is challenging, especially if they've already received several college credits, as they are likely being swept into UW.

President Watson stated that superintendents have changed over the years, as has their focus on where they are encouraging students to enroll. She feels there will be a significant shift with K-12 and that the College needs to meet with superintendents more to understand their desires and meet their needs. Being available to meet those needs will grow the College's enrollment options.

In response to a comment by Trustee Housel regarding the expensive marketing efforts of UW and Northwest College's inability to compete financially, President Watson stated that it's essential to find ways to connect with younger students by going to high schools, bringing them to campus for various activities, and making memories with the students and also, working with the high schools to determine how the College can be a part of their students' success and long-term goals.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Lisa Smith stated that she would check with UW to inquire if they publish the breakdowns of their enrollment by county. Data regarding students who applied to Northwest College but decided to go elsewhere is also available.

In response to a question from Trustee Laursen, President Watson stated that Northwest College does not necessarily saturate one market over another. The College visits all the schools and participates in all the college fairs. The College is always willing to go to all the schools, but there can be challenges with whether the schools want the College to come in. She feels that school counselors are challenged in finding the best fit for all students. There is a path

for everyone.

President's Contract

President Wurzel informed the Trustees that the details of the President's contract have been completed.

Citizens' Open Forum
Procedure Review

President Watson explained that Trustees review the Citizens' Open Forum guidelines each year and discuss if they are sufficient or if adjustments are needed.

President Wurzel said item #8 reads, "...the Board will determine if the issue(s) presented should be addressed as an agenda item at a regular or special meeting." He questioned if the word *future* should be added before "regular or special meeting."

Trustee Housel stated that since the agenda has been set and approved at each meeting before the Citizens' Open Forum, it is unnecessary to clarify in the guidelines that if the Board chooses to address an item, it would be at a future meeting.

President Wurzel pointed out the last statement, which reads in part, "...Board members will listen to comments, but will not respond to individual citizens nor ask questions." Sometimes, Trustees have asked questions to glean more information, and he feels it is necessary to have the ability to do so.

Trustee Newsome agreed that it would give more discretion to the Board to ask questions to gain more clarity if they feel it is necessary.

Trustee Housel agreed that the Board should be able to ask questions but doesn't feel they should respond to comments until or unless it becomes an agenda item at a future meeting.

Trustees agreed to change the last sentence to read, "Board members will listen to comments and may ask questions for clarity but will not respond to individual citizens."

Naming Policy Review

Shelby Wetzel presented Board Policy 6610, Naming of Buildings, Facilities, and Memorials, as a review. She also provided a map indicating areas designated as naming opportunities in the new Student Center.

Shelby stated that there are approximately a dozen spaces already spoken for by donors. She will bring the naming proposals in batches to the Board, seeking approval over the coming months.

Once the Board approves a naming submission, President Watson, as the Board of Trustees signatory, Shelby Wetzel, on behalf of the Foundation, and the donor, all sign a contract that documents the gift, the payment plan, and the obligation for the naming. The facility naming opportunities are associated with the lifetime of the building.

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:**

September 11, 2023, upcoming:

- Year-end budget adjustments
- Quarterly budget adjustments
- Strategic Plan Update
- New employee introductions (past year)
- Course/Lab fee proposals (for Spring)
- Reserve Overview
- Other TBD
- Future and follow-up topics:

In response to an inquiry from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated the College stopped providing a monthly reserve report because it became stagnant after reserves were set for the year. The information is now provided annually as a Reserve Overview Report, which will be presented next month.

Trustee Housel stated he would like to discuss the placement of the College's reserves next month when the Board is presented with the report. With the current favorable interest rates, he would like to extend an opportunity to the local financial institutions to hold the College's reserves if they can provide competitive rates.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the recycling on campus was discontinued during the pandemic because Powell's recycling program could not continue to accept our recycling without additional sorting.

In response to a question from Trustee Laursen, President Watson stated that students will begin arriving on campus Friday evening and Saturday morning to check into the residence halls. As part of Kick-Off Weekend, there is a barbeque, a dance, outdoor games such as archery and laser tag, rafting, and various informational programs designed to welcome and engage students.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Faculty Orientation, August 17-18, 2023, Main Campus
Kick-Off Weekend, August 19-22, 2023, Main Campus
State of the College Address, Aug. 21, 2023, 8:30 a.m., Yellowstone Bldg.
1st day of fall classes August 23, 2023, 8:30 a.m., NWC
WCCC Commission (special) August 25, 2023, Casper or Virtual
Paint the Town Red Event, August 25, 2023, 4:00 p.m., Powell
International Student Welcome reception, TBD
Next Board meeting, September 11, 2023, 3:00 p.m., Yellowstone Bldg.
President's BBQ & Student Club Fair, Sept. 13, 2023, Campus Mall
WCCC Commission meeting October 5-6, 2023, 8:30 a.m., Sheridan
ACCT Leadership Congress, October 9-12, 2023, Las Vegas, NV

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.