

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

January 8, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: President MS. TARA KUIPERS; Vice President/Secretary MS. DENISE LAURSEN; Treasurer MR. BOB NEWSOME; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MR. R.J. KOST, DR. LARRY TODD, and DR. MARK WURZEL.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

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, MS. DIEDRE ASAY, MR. CASEY DEARCORN, MR. DUSTIN DICKS, MR. MARK GRANT, MS. JO ANN HEIMER, MS. JEN LITTERER-TREVIÑO, MS. CAREY MILLER, MR. CORY OSTERMILLER, MR. DENNIS QUILLEN, MS. LISA SMITH, MR. MARTIN STENSING, MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO, MR. JACOB WELLS, 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 Tara Kuipers called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 4:01 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building.

OATH OF OFFICE: Ms. Jo Ann Heimer, NWC Business Office Manager and Notary Public, administered the Oath of Office to Trustee R.J. Kost, whom the Board of Trustees selected to fill the Board vacancy position created by former Trustee Spomer's resignation.

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

MISSION MOMENT: President Watson introduced and welcomed student Jacob Wells, who was selected as the Shaping Wyoming's Future award winner from Northwest College. The award winners will be celebrated at a reception on February 12 before being recognized during the Joint Legislative Session on February 13 in Cheyenne.

Jacob said that he first attended Northwest College in 2014 upon graduation from high school. After joining and completing his time in the U.S. military, he returned to the College to continue his education. He is enrolled in the Criminal Justice Bachelor's program and hopes to serve his country further by becoming a U.S. Marshall.

President Watson stated that Jacob also serves as the Vice President of the Criminal Justice Club and works part-time for Campus Security.

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

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Interim Vice President Dave Erickson stated the Quality Initiative proposal is a requirement of the open pathway accreditation that the College received from The Higher Learning Commission (HLC). It is intended to be an initiative the College takes for continued improvement.

Dave stated that research was conducted on the types of initiatives other institutions have taken on, and campus input was gathered for suggestions for the project. President's Staff considered the many ideas and chose to reinvigorate academic program review as its Quality Initiative since it would have the most considerable campus-wide impact. As part of the initiative, the College will add a demand analysis component that examines labor and

business needs and student interest to ensure its offerings align with area needs. Class delivery preferences will also be surveyed to determine the most beneficial to students' ability to access college courses.

As part of the initiative, the College will also expand its definition of co-curricular activities and create a system for assessment. A rotation will be defined for Support Services Program reviews as well.

Dave stated that it is a comprehensive plan and is hopeful the College will learn of HLC's approval by the end of January.

President Watson stated that HLC's intent is to ensure the College is working toward continual improvement. The initiative could be something the institution is already working on, and it was decided that reinvigorating program review and assessing local economic and student needs is necessary to move the college forward continually.

Northwest College will submit a report to HLC on the Quality Initiative around year eight, followed by the year ten review. The standing committee on accreditation consists of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance, the Vice President for Student Services, the Institutional Researcher, the Library Director, and two to three faculty members. However, working on a comprehensive document of this type is truly a campus-wide effort.

President Watson stated that Lisa Smith, Institutional Researcher, has been named the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), and Martin Stensing, Dean of Instruction, will serve as the instructional advisor to the ALO. They have been participating in training and will attend the HLC Conference as a team.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated the two checks in the register to SHI International Corp. are for Microsoft Renewal. The payments are split between Computing Services and Academic Computing, as certain technology costs are divided between campus operations and instructional expenses.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated that the expenditures represented in the check register related to Trapper Village West are repair costs. A cost analysis performed earlier in the year indicates that the expenses related to remodeling and repair work at Trapper Village West have been recouped as occupancy levels have risen. Deferred maintenance, however, remains a challenge as the units are not eligible for major maintenance funds from the State.

In response to a question she received and as a point of clarification in the check register, President Watson stated that the acronym NCOC stands for Northwest Civic Orchestra and Chorale.

Trustee Housel stated that he appreciated the summary provided at the beginning of the check register and requested that a column be added for technology costs since they have become a significant expense for the College that will presumably continue to rise.

In response to a question from President Kuipers, President Watson stated that the recapture redistribution calculations were typically completed by late summer. However, with the new legislation allowing a month-to-month payment cycle for gas and oil companies, it has been extended to allow for the operational details to be worked out related to payments and the deferred payment options available to producers.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the December 11, 2023, regular meeting and the December 11, 2023, Executive Session, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Cyber Security Update

Casey Dearcorn stated that the annual summary included in the Board packet is a report showing the results of Cybersecurity efforts at Northwest College. He is pleased with the results and has shared them with the campus community to inform everyone that the training is working.

Casey stated that phishing-prone data indicates that while the Education industry has worsened in the last year (4.1% failures per campaign in 2022; 4.6% in 2023), Northwest College has improved by almost 2% (4.2% failures per campaign in 2022; 2.6% in 2023).

Many colleges use fear-based programming, including firing employees who click on a phishing email. Casey feels the better approach is to be supportive and use failures as learning opportunities.

Casey stated there is a significant amount of training pushed out every month. He is extremely pleased with the College's various groups' completion rates. In 2022, nineteen of the twenty-five groups on campus completed above 75% of the training. In 2023, twenty-two of the twenty-five groups completed above 85% of the training.

Casey has learned from the other colleges that their representatives struggle to get employees to complete the training. He feels the positive as opposed to punitive approach has proven more beneficial. He noted that Powell High School will implement the same training that Northwest College uses because of its success rate.

Casey explained that being vigilant with students' personally identifiable information (PII) is also essential. Training focuses on keeping data safe and not readily available to those walking by a workspace who may take pictures with a cell phone and capture sensitive data.

The phishing emails that are being sent are getting more sophisticated. While many are blocked, keeping employees updated on the growing number of cybersecurity threats is essential.

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:

Course Fee Proposals

President Watson clarified that in the proposal in the Board packet, one of the classes (CHEM 1030 – General Chemistry II) was inadvertently listed twice.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that she is unaware of students who have chosen not to take a particular class because of its course fee. Course fees are driven by the need to maintain the quality of those classes and the experiential learning the students receive. She has asked Finance Director Mark Grant to analyze course fees across the state to ensure that the College's fees are comparable and reasonable.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the course fee proposals as presented. Motion carried.

Temporary Dining Building
Conversion Project

President Watson stated that the memo included in the Board packet related to the Temporary Dining Building – Soccer Fieldhouse Conversion is before the Board and will go in front of the Commission in February. From a compliance perspective, the purpose is to clearly state that the intent has always been to convert the building into a soccer field house.

President Watson explained that State Construction is in favor of the conversion, and it is understood that Northwest College will be funding the project. The State recommended that it be clearly stated that the Northwest College Board of Trustees understands, supports, and approves moving the project to completion.

President Watson outlined the various funding sources for the Student Center project and pointed out that the current projected surplus cash available for the Soccer Fieldhouse conversion is \$630,000. Once the Foundation's campaign is complete, the available funding could approximate \$2.1 million.

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Newsome to approve moving the Soccer Fieldhouse conversion project forward with funds provided by Northwest College. Motion carried.

Set Date for February and March
2024 meetings

President Kuipers stated that the WACCT reception honoring students named Shaping Wyoming's Future award winners will occur in Cheyenne on the same date as the scheduled February Board meeting. The March meeting is scheduled to take place during Spring Break. Therefore, alternate dates will need to be set to accommodate those who may be off campus during those times.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Kost to move the February Board meeting to Monday, February 5, 2024, and the March meeting to Monday, March 4, 2024. Motion carried.

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

February 2024, upcoming:

- Designation of depositories
- Disclosure of Interest forms
- Completions and Transfer Summary
- FY2024 Proposed residence hall rates
- FY2024 Proposed meal plan rates
- FY2024 Proposed mandatory student fees
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MBB/WBB vs. MCC, January 9, 2024, 5:30 p.m., Powell, WY
State of the College, January 11, 2024, 8:30 a.m., YB, Powell, WY
MBB/WBB vs. RMC/Jump Start, January 12-13, 2024, Powell, WY
Salt Lake Invitational, Forensics, January 12-14, 2024, SLC, UT
NJCAA Wrestling Natl Duals, January 12-13, 2024, Miami, OK
Classes begin January 16, 2024, Northwest College
MBB/WBB vs. WWCC, January 19, 2024, Rock Springs, WY
MBB/WBB vs. Casper, January 20, 2024, Casper, WY
MBB/WBB vs. EWC, January 25, 2024, Powell, WY
MBB/WBB vs. LCCC, January 27, 2024, Powell, WY

MBB/WBB vs. CWC, January 30, 2024, Powell, WY
MBB/WBB vs. Gillette, February 02, 2024, Powell, WY
WACCT Student Awards, February 12, 2024, 6-8 p.m., Cheyenne, WY
Next meeting, February TBD, 2024, 4:00 p.m., YB, Powell, WY
MBB/WBB vs. LCCC, February 9, 2024, Cheyenne, WY
MBB/WBB vs. EWC, February 10, 2024, Torrington, WY
WACCT Meeting, February 15, 2024, 4-6 p.m., LCCC, Cheyenne, WY
WACCT Leg. Reception February 15, 2024, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Cheyenne, WY
WCCC Meeting, February 16, 2024, LCCC, Cheyenne, WY

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Trustee Todd and seconded by Trustee Laursen to move into executive session. Motion carried, and the executive session convened at 5:14 p.m.

A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Laursen to adjourn the executive session and move into open session. Motion carried, and the executive session adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

President Kuipers stated that Trustees initially discussed the President's evaluation during its Fall 2023 retreat. The Board expressed its appreciation for several qualities that President Watson embodies, such as her focus on collaboration and partnership both on and off campus and her straightforward and transparent way of communicating. President Watson's knowledge of the campus, including the people, facilities, budgets, and activities, is notable. She also has the respect of her peers across Wyoming. The Board continues to support President Watson and her professional development.

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

DENISE LAURSEN, Vice President/Secretary

Date