

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

April 8, 2024

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Treasurer MR. BOB NEWSOME; DR. MARK WURZEL

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, MR. MARK GRANT, MS. JILL HARTMAN, 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, 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, April 8, 2024, at 4:02 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building.

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

MISSION MOMENT Shelby Wetzel shared that Northwest College's fourth annual Giving Day was the most successful, raising \$175,735 from 378 donors during the twenty-four-hour period. The total raised was \$38,000 more than last year, with a thirteen percent increase in donors. The Foundation is extremely grateful for the challenge donors who provided gifts to inspire giving and jumpstart participation.

This year, the Foundation utilized a new platform, Give Campus, which provided a more sophisticated tracking process and the opportunity to populate real-time numbers. This allowed people to see the success of the different academic program initiatives.

Shelby stated that the Foundation develops different strategies for Giving Day each year to help drive numbers and activity. With this being the last year of fundraising for the Student Center, the Foundation focused on an all-in promotion for faculty and staff and also rallied retirees to participate. Another strategy to drive giving was the Legacy Wall, where donors had naming opportunities in the study center rooms.

Jill Hartmann, Alumni and Development Coordinator, explained that the "All-In" campaign was an appeal for 100% of current faculty and staff to make a gift to the Student Center. The goal was to offer an opportunity for employees to be unified in their support of the new building and to be proud when the building opened that everyone helped to make it happen.

The campaign was supported by alum Clay Cummins, who offered to match all employee gifts to the Student Center, which meant that employees could have their names added to the Legacy Wall for half the cost. President Watson also incentivized giving by offering each constituency group a reward if 100% of their group participated. Faculty were to receive doubled professional development funds for FY2025 and free lunch in the Dining Hall. The reward for Professional Staff and Classified Staff was a half-day of vacation. Both Professional Staff and Classified Staff reached the goal of 100% giving.

Jill stated that in addition to the All-In initiative, retiree Charlotte Patrick challenged retirees. She offered a 100% match of gifts made to the Student Center, which meant that retirees could also have their names included on the

Legacy Wall for half price. Fifteen retirees took advantage of Charlotte's match; over \$2000 was raised from those gifts.

Cory Ostermiller, Development Manager, stated that the Legacy Wall was an opportunity for donors to leave their mark on the Student Center. Those who participated will have their name permanently attached to the glass on the study room walls. Nearly 200 Giving Day donors participated in the initiative. Different giving levels dictated the size of a person's name on the Legacy Wall. Cory stated it was very successful and heartwarming throughout the day to have alums come in and give in honor of family members who had passed away or for young children who will hopefully become future Trappers. Cory stated that while it was a significant initiative on Giving Day, donors still have the opportunity to leave their mark on the Legacy Wall by visiting the website or contacting the Foundation directly.

Shelby stated that department projects were introduced the previous year as a way for alums to give back to an area of their greatest passion and help students who are following in their footsteps. Seventeen programs joined the initiative this year, and approximately \$25,000 was raised for the various projects. Five of the projects met their goals, and the Foundation is working on plans or possible grants to accomplish the goals of outstanding program areas.

Shelby shared that the Ag department hoped to raise \$2000 for a new drone project. They received the first gift of Giving Day, \$1000, and raised \$4800 in total. It was very exciting to see, and the Foundation wants to continue to have academic projects because people feel good helping provide students with future opportunities.

Shelby stated that the Foundation will soon begin planning for the next Giving Day. They are very grateful to all who supported the event and appreciate the opportunity to present its success to the Trustees.

A CONSENT AGENDA:

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

Trustee Housel recognized the Wrestling team's success at the National NJCAA Tournament, those who placed, and Aziz Fayzullaev, who won his second national championship.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the Regional Needs Assessment research report is considered in draft form and is being reviewed for accuracy. For instance, the assessment states that Northwest College should consider adding an LPN program. The College had a stand-alone LPN program but recently consolidated it into a stacked credential model. Once the report is finalized, it will be shared with Trustees and the campus community.

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation for Bob Becker and the two students who traveled with him to Cheyenne to judge and recruit high school students at the Wyoming State Speech and Debate Tournament.

Trustee Housel congratulated Dr. Greg Smith for being awarded a 2024 Wyoming NASA Space Grant for his proposal *CSI Powell: Developing an Upper Division Forensic Anthropology Course at Northwest College*.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the new Forensic Anthropology course will be taught as part of the Criminal Justice BAS program, and the grant awarded to Dr. Smith is for equipment for the course.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that there have been many discussions about partnering with the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and finding projects that serve both. Keith McCallister has been collaborating with them on a river raft trip as part of the Outdoor Education program. These collaborative experiences with the Museum could build excitement and, in turn, enrollment.

Trustee Housel noted the popularity and appreciation for the Senior Citizen's program at Johnson Fitness Center. He feels that the more community members are engaged in campus activities, the more they will be invested in the College.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson explained that the Rocketbooks TRiO students use for note-taking are notebooks that allow the user to save the written content digitally.

Trustee Housel recognized and expressed his appreciation to the faculty leading the effort to bring recycling back to campus.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the Personnel Status Report indicates more open positions than usual as the College is working to convert interim positions on campus to permanent ones. Additionally, some failed searches are now open until filled, so they continue to appear on the report, as do open positions due to retirements.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the national average for the drop in occupancy levels in residence halls from fall to spring semesters due to natural attrition is 12-15%. Northwest College commonly experiences rates within that range. The Fall 2023 to Spring 2024 drop was approximately 15%.

Trustee Laursen noted that the number of students GEAR UP serves indicates that the College meets students' needs.

Trustee Laursen attended Career Day and felt it was an excellent event for students and community members.

In response to a question from Trustee Laursen, Carey Miller explained that the Niche data included in her advertising report reflects February, which is generally a light month for inquiries. Niche is a college search website where prospective students can create a login and search all schools. President Watson explained that Niche is the most commonly used search tool by high school students. While every college has a presence on Niche, having a paid partnership with Niche allows Northwest College to be highlighted and have more control over the information on its Niche profile.

President Watson stated that the College mailed 23,000 postcards, placed social media, and paid advertisements in the newspaper inviting community members to complete the Community Needs survey. It is open until April 30, and everyone is encouraged to participate.

Trustee Housel stated that he appreciates the CDL reports regarding enrollment and completion. He would like to see a similar annual report regarding the Aviation program. President Watson noted that there is a report showing enrollment in all credit programs that can be shared with the Trustees.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the March 4, 2024, regular meeting, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Legislative Wrap-Up

In her President's report, President Watson shared a list of bills approved by the Governor and those vetoed directly related to the community colleges. She stated there were great outcomes for students, such as Wyoming's Tomorrow Scholarship Endowment funding and the kickstart money to fund the scholarships for the first year while the endowment builds. The endowment will be very useful for students and the College because it will provide student scholarships for non-credit programmatic areas. It is similar to the Hathaway scholarship but is for adult learners and has more flexibility.

President Watson stated that community colleges also received funding for inflation, which will provide slightly more operational money for things such as utilities. Local levies, however, are not expected to perform the same as in recent years, so there will likely be a decrease in funding received. Enrollment is expected to be slightly lower across the state and the nation because of lower graduation rates. While Northwest College gained money in some areas, there will be losses in others, resulting in a flat budget.

President Watson stated that the Governor vetoed one property tax bill and signed four others. Three signed bills are backfilled with State funds and won't affect the College's funding. However, one of the signed bills, which caps the rate at which property taxes increase, will eventually affect the funding in terms of growth. President Watson expects property taxes to be an interim topic.

The Governor also vetoed the repeal of gun-free zones. While President Watson is unsure if it will be an interim topic, she expects it will be a topic that will continue to be worked on. There were concerns about the legislation and whether it was specific enough or if it addressed areas of concern for the colleges. For instance, thirty-nine WY students in the residence halls are over twenty-one years old. The repeal of gun-free zones legislation would give those students a right to conceal, carry, and keep guns in their homes at any time, including while residing on campus. All residence halls currently have students who are over and under twenty-one. President Watson stated that the colleges are interested in more work being done to offer safeguards or local control and will be following the issue closely.

President Kuipers stated that she serves with Trustee Wurzel as Northwest College's representative to the Wyoming Community College Trustees (WACCT). WACCT is considering writing a letter of support for the Governor's veto of the repeal of the gun-free zones bill.

President Watson stated that the community colleges are not advocating any particular interim topics this year. The Community Colleges work closely with the Education Committee and will provide updates throughout the year, including during the interim.

Northwest College's final headcount for fall 2023 was 1,389 students, and FTE was 1,145. The report shows that while NWC's enrollment has declined over ten years, it is consistent with the enrollment trend of other state community colleges.

Since tracking began in 2000, Northwest College has had the highest percentage of full-time enrollment of all community colleges in Wyoming. However, in recent years, the part-time percentage has increased while the full-time percentage has decreased. Most College students take 3-5 credits (25%). The following highest percentage of students take 12-14 credits (22%) and 15-17 credits (20%).

The largest population of Northwest College's students is under 18, including dual and concurrent students. The next largest group is 18-19 years old, including some dual and concurrent students. The older age ranges trail off in percentages.

Most Northwest College students come from its service area (71%). NWC is tied with LCCC with the highest percentage of enrollment from states bordering Wyoming (10%), tied with three other colleges with enrollment from all different states (4%), and has the highest percentage of students from international countries (7%).

Northwest College students typically seek a transfer preparation (AA/AS) degree (37%) or are non-degree-seeking (41%), many of whom are dual or concurrent students. Fifteen percent seek only career/technical education (AAS), 5% seek multiple degrees across transfer and CTE areas, and 2% are in BAS programs.

Northwest College has the highest percentage of students enrolled in distance education (61%), the highest percentage of dual enrollment (21%), and the lowest percentage of concurrent enrollment (19%). Four percent of students take remedial classes, and four percent take co-requisite courses, which are developmental classes.

The community colleges' funding model is based on the level of instruction (LOI). Every course is assigned at the state level to a level based on its characteristics. Sixty percent of NWC's FTE is from Level 1 (lecture) courses, 27% from Level 2 (lab) courses, and 13% from Level 3 (high technology) courses. The high technology courses are described as having ancillary equipment used to teach them, such as in Welding and Nursing classes.

In response to a question from Trustee Kost, Interim Vice President Erickson stated that twenty courses are taught at Northwest College with the LOI 3 designation. These courses use a lot of technology, are very expensive, and are much more "hands-on" than other classes.

Storm Drain/Retention Basin Project Update

President Watson stated that the Facilities Committee has been working on an agreement with the City on the storm drain/retention basin project and is close to bringing it to the Board for approval. The President has been working with the City, and the document has had many revisions. The College wishes to ensure that some value will be received if it surrenders the land under an easement to the City for the project. The College had heard that the City has until October 1, 2024, to sign a contract with a vendor.

President Watson reiterated that the proposed project is not a retention pond but a retention basin that would hold water for a short period and defer the flow

to the storm drain in the event of a major storm. The College would like to make sure that the water table is accurately identified to ensure that the basin operates as intended when necessary and is otherwise an open grassy area that can still be utilized.

President Watson stated she has negotiated with the City to allow the College to connect the watershed of the Yellowstone, Lewis and Clark, and Simpson Hall fields and parking lots to the City's storm drain.

Trustee Housel stated that the Facilities Committee recognizes that the project is in the public's interest. The Committee addressed ambiguities in the original agreement to ensure nothing was left to chance, such as the high water table during irrigation season. The final detail to be worked out is that the agreement contains a provision identifying the exact location of the water table.

President Watson stated she had been working with a lawyer on how the water table relates to the basin's design. The Committee's feedback has been constructive in working with the City and its engineer. Once the water table has been established, the floor of the basin will be designed to be set one foot higher to allow flexibility if the water table fluctuates over time, serving the best interests of the College and its neighbors.

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:

Major Maintenance Projects

President Watson stated the Major Maintenance project update is presented annually to inform the Board of upcoming projects and the status of those already underway.

President Watson clarified that the memo contains a duplication in FY2024 Major Maintenance projects. Line thirteen is to be stricken as it is the same project described in line eleven.

President Watson also noted that in FY2025, the Major Maintenance project, "Fire Detection Panel Upgrade Phase II," for \$65,000, should be added pending design and bid. Phase I of the project is listed in FY2024 projects. The existing panels are past their life expectancy, and replacement parts are difficult to find. The College will begin replacing the panels through a phased approach, prioritizing the areas of greatest need.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the concrete repairs listed in the report refer to the slab that is north of the Student Center and the Cabre parking lot. While the sidewalks around the new building are included, this concrete is outside the project scope. The concrete was previously damaged by age and use and was identified to be replaced after the construction work. There will also be landscaping improvements made to that area.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the Major Maintenance projects as presented. Motion carried.

State of Wyoming Matching
Designation

President Watson stated that the legislation regarding the appropriated donor matching funds for community colleges requires the Board of Trustees to designate the purpose of the matching dollars. The Foundation requests that the Trustees designate the purpose to support the Student Center, scholarships, and campus programs.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that early discussions regarding using funds include using \$500,000 toward the Student Center, which would close out the Foundation's campaign.

Match dollars always appeal to donors as they can increase the impact of their contribution to their areas of interest. For example, a few years ago, the College eliminated soft-dollar athletic scholarships. The Foundation began a campaign to replace the soft-dollar amount with hard dollars, and a discussion was held with the President and Foundation Director about using some of the match funds to continue the endowment growth for student-athletes. Match funds may also support other endowments in areas of interest to donors. While discussions are ongoing regarding the use of the match funds, these areas have stood out as needing growth opportunities.

President Watson stated that the Foundation will receive the \$1 million designation upon submission of the board-approved Designation. The State and the WCCC must determine how to allocate the remaining \$1.3 million among the colleges. NWC and the Foundation stand ready to act on the \$1.3 million funds.

A motion was made by Trustee Todd and seconded by Trustee Housel to approve the State of Wyoming Matching Designation as presented. Motion carried.

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

May 13, 2024, upcoming:

- Review President and Board Budget
- Preliminary budget presentation
- Renewal of the President's contract
- PVCE contract for services renewal
- State Fall Enrollment Report
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Faculty & Staff Recognition Luncheon, April 11, 2024, Yellowstone Building
Concert Band, Choir, & Percussion Concert April 15, 2024, 7 PM, NPA
Advising Day, April 16, 2024, All Day
Stothart Readings, April 18, 2024, 12 PM, Hinckley Library
Commission Meeting April 18-19, 2024, Casper
Northwest Civic Orchestra, April 20, 2024, 7 PM, NPA
Small Ensembles: Woodwind, Sax & Guitar, April 22, 2024, 7 PM, NPA
Student Academic Showcase, April 26, 2024, Yellowstone Building
Brass Ensemble, April 29, 2024, 7 PM, NPA
Zach Paris Percussion Recital, April 30, 2024, 7 PM, NPA
CTD Open House, May 1, 2024, 4-6 PM, CTD/Armory
Brass Recital, May 1, 2024, 7 PM, NPA
Paramedic Coining Ceremony, May 3, 2024, 4 PM, Yellowstone Building
Faculty Jazz Concert, May 6, 2024, 7 PM, NPA

Final Exams, May 8-10, 2024, NWC
Nursing Pinning Ceremony, May 10, 2024, 3 PM, NPA
Graduation/Commencement, Saturday, May 11, 2024, 10:30 AM, Cabre
May Board meeting, May 13, 2024, 4 PM, Yellowstone Building

A ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

DENISE LAURSEN, Vice President/Secretary

Date