

## NORTHWEST COLLEGE STUDENT FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

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**1. Please introduce yourself including your name, where you are from, and your major or program of study at Northwest College.**

**Enrolled Students In-State**

- From Powell - not degree seeking student currently
- English Studies and from Powell
- From Lovell - Associates in Elementary Ed

**Enrolled Students Out of State**

- Bridger, Montana. Equine training
- Belfree, Animal Science and Vet Assistant

**International Students**

- Kuwait Middle East, Engineering and Mathematics
- Ethiopia, Sophomore nursing student, soccer
- Turkmenistan, Graphic Design and Art
- Turkmenistan, Engineering
- Brussels, Belgium, General Studies but taking business administration classes
- Brazil, General Studies, soccer

**Enrolled Adult Students**

- Byron – 15 minutes east of Powell, Photography major
- Worland about 90 miles from Powell, National Resource Biology switched from business administration
- From Texas, Allied health, sophomore.
- Lovell about 20 minutes from Powell, Business Management

**FYS Classes (Raymond Floyd's and Jess Jatkowski's)**

- I am a computer science, switched from mathematics. I just moved to Powell from northern California when my parents decided to move here.
- I am an engineering student, and I am from Idaho.
- I live in Basin Wy. I am going to major in Psychology.
- I am from Otto, WY. I started this semester of college 15 years after graduated high school. I am studying Agriculture Business.
- I am from Worland Wyoming, I'm going back to school in Psychology.
- I am from New Zealand and I'm studying secondary education.
- I am from Cody, Wyoming and I am majoring in Social Sciences.
- I am originally from Maryland, but recently moved to Cody WY. I am currently majoring in Computer Science.
- I am from Japan. But I live in WY. I'll take business.
- I am from Japan. I am studying English and I want to take engineering next semester.

**2. Think back to when you were applying to colleges. What influenced your decision to attend Northwest College out of the other colleges you may have been considering?**

**Enrolled Students In-State**

- Close to home- just 30 minutes away -- right size and location -- not too big
- Location and undecided when first started - good price point to test drive some classes

- Originally wanted to go to Berkeley, and was already taking college classes as a high school student and had already earned 30 credits - very affordable (she doesn't have to pay other than for books)

#### **Enrolled Students Out of State**

- Close to home, livestock judging, program I wanted, and its small.
- I was not planning on going to college after high school. Went to Northwest College because a friend went here. She introduced me to the horse equine program.

#### **International Students**

- Scholarship opportunity, initial advisors were fast, answered quickly, since it was a small community, there was good communication. And soccer.
- I spent four years looking at community colleges, my dream schools, animation programs. Then I heard about NWC through the *American Corner*, and some America advisors, also communication with current students. Tuition was affordable. The scholarships and the program I wanted, the course descriptions. Watching the video from the Art Department motivated me to attend. As a visual art student, you want to see what the college does visually.
- I was looking for football, met my needs and expectation. It is the kickoff for my educational journey. My friends sent me some information. What I really liked about NWC is that admissions reached out and answered questions quickly. I did not know about American education and they were very communicative and responsible. Told me information about the college and the college was affordable. Looked at the website, I found about the college's activities. Came for General Studies and changed to engineering. Liked what the international students were doing at the college, how the college worked with international students, and they were very welcoming.
- I was looking for basketball. A friend who was here last year told me about it then I talked to the coach.

#### **Enrolled Adult Students**

- Local. I have kids that have a life and friends here. Staying local was a good thing for me.
- NWC was the only college I wanted to go to. My mother-in-law told me that it was the best bang for the buck.
- Affordability and with the college not being in Cody, some of the rent are more affordable. People in the area, it is a good place to start an education. For me, affordability and not too far but far enough, close to Billings and Cody. Plus, the medical and nursing programs are top ranking programs in the United States. As an allied health major, I plan to get a bachelor's degree.
- NWC was the only college I was considering. Since I lived in Lovell, due to COVID, I was out of work last year. I took the displaced program through Workforce to get a degree. I wanted to have something at the end of the pandemic.

#### **FYS Classes (Raymond Floyd's and Jess Jatkowski's)**

- This is the third college in this past 6 months, due to COVID restrictions. I came here since my family lives here.
- I was recruited through soccer.
- Proximity to home ("the distance from Worland to Powell was easier." "Powell was very close to Cody.")
- Only option because single parent
- Local community college ("I grew up here and it's the local community college.")
- Soccer scholarship (for International)
- Location (for International student - near Yellowstone)
- Cost of living
- Decided to attend NWC before transferring for engineering

**3. If you had not attended NWC, what other alternatives were you considering? What did you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of each, as compared to attending NWC?**

**Enrolled Students In-State**

- Berkeley - NWC was more affordable and I was so close to having my degree -- distance from home -- wanted to produce more work at a smaller school -- acceptance rate (almost guaranteed to be admitted).
- UW and the other community colleges especially Sheridan because I had thought about culinary arts -- I did not know what I wanted to do -- Sheridan had an advantage of reputation in culinary world -- Sheridan's price was high compared to other WY institutions. Sheridan was far enough away from home to be independent but close enough to home.
- I was considering going to Black Hills State University but was not ready for the distance. I had prior credits from NWC earned online. Did not want to pay for housing-the price and have a dog , so staying at home was the best for me. I also have a job in Lovell, so it was the perfect option. Some disadvantages where other places the price was SO high. NWC's location was far enough to have the experience and stay home.

**Enrolled Students Out of State**

- I considered a college in Miles City and some other smaller colleges in the area, some were two or three hours from here. Considered track and field, before of my injury. The advantage of coming here is the Livestock judging, and the show team.
- I was not really planning on going to college. I had consider just going straight to work after high school. The Equine center won me over. NWC has the whole community, small atmosphere on campus.

**International Students**

- Flathead Community College in Montana. Needed to transfer, advisor recommended. I like the county side and the small size; this is advantage and disadvantage because I must use Uber a lot.
- I had the option to go to Lang Community College in Oregon and Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia. Also, at a bigger college, I would have to had transportation to get around. I needed to find the right program that would transfer. I also needed technology. I came here by myself, so technology was important to me to communicate. Transportation is an issue for me. I miss having buses like the big cities.
- Kansas. Already had three students that I know went there. The other college advantage was the location, center of the US. Closer to major city, less money for flights. But they did not have as many programs and activities, they did not have engineering, they only had Liberal Arts. I do not really know anything about Liberal Arts. I wanted Engineering. Did not want to be Major-less. Transportation is an issue especially for international students. They used to have transportation between Powell and Cody. For many students living off campus, in the winter it is hard to get to the campus. It would be good to have some need based transportation offered by the school; if someone called, they could pick them up.
- Scholarship. I was thinking about going to college in Nebraska. They only had the soccer scholarship. If I went there, I would not have been able to afford to come here. The scholarship helped me come to NWC.

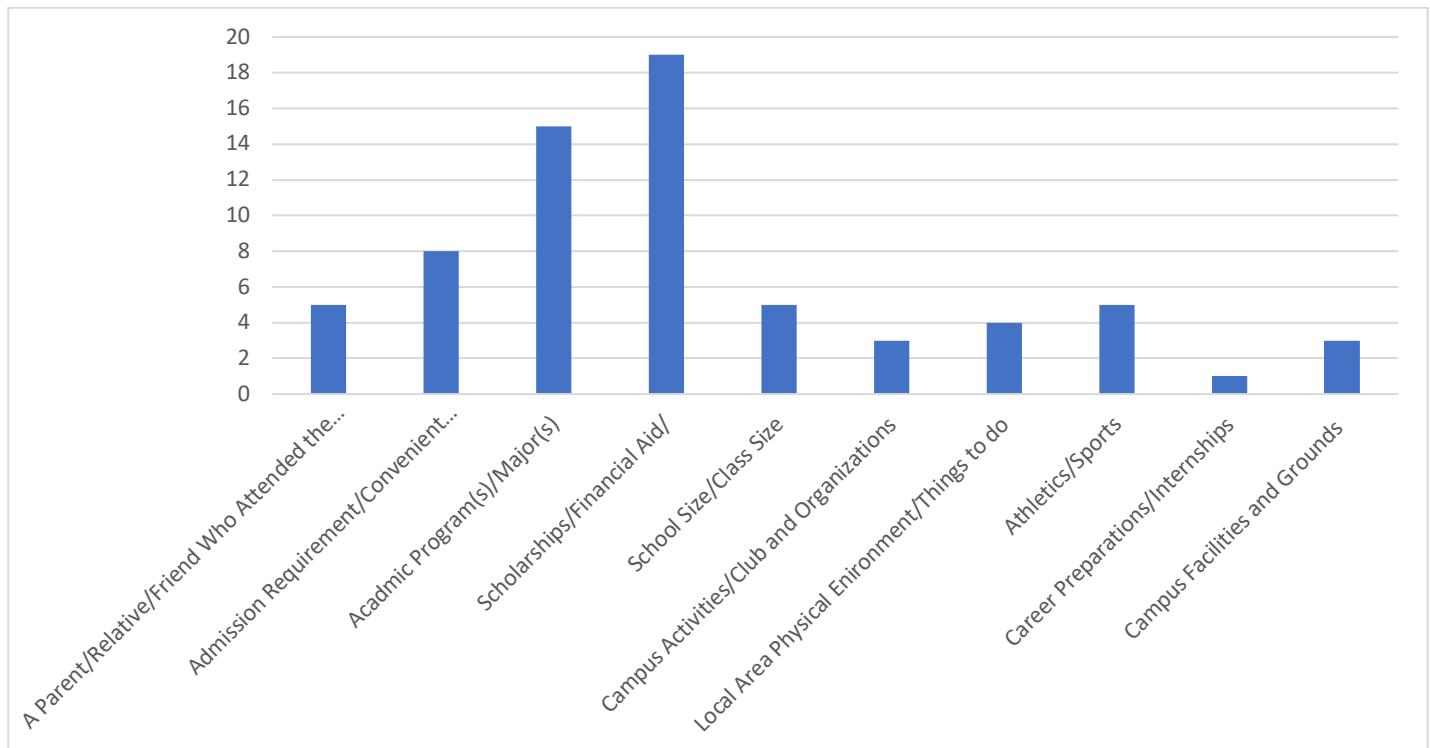
**Enrolled Adult Students**

- I did not have any other colleges in mind.
- NWC is in a familiar area. I had just moved back from Alaska, and I knew about it already.
- I have gone to other colleges and this college was local. I wanted to see what they had to offer. With the other college I would have had to start over, get to know people, get acquainted with the new area.
- I could have looked because with the displaced worker Workforce program, there was a list of colleges to explore, but I did not want to pack up and move anywhere.

**FYS Classes (Raymond Floyd's and Jess Jatkowski's)**

- So, in the fall I was going to attend the University of Nevada, when the restrictions about COVID came out. I decided it was too expensive to go the University if they were only going to be online. I could go to a community college online where it was less expensive.
- Other schools offered me different scholarships. But it was cheaper to come here with the combination of scholarships, especially for soccer.
- I want to go to Respiratory Therapy School. The only school in WY is in Casper. I can do prerequisites through NWC and do most of the Casper program online and then my clinical in Cody.
- As an international student, I received soccer scholarship offers from 3 other schools. They were all in the South, and I preferred this location.
- I looked at Casper College and plan to transfer there after NWC. Advantage is that it is a 4-year institution. Disadvantage is its location – it is too far from home.
- I looked at the University of Colorado in Boulder and plan to transfer there. I was fairly indecisive between CU and NWC but decided on NWC because of the convenient location, and simpler start.
- I selected NWC for the location and program of study.
- NWC was my only option. My family and I are settled down in Cody and don't plan on leaving.

#### 4. College Choice Factors Zoom Poll: Most Important Factors in Choosing a School



#### 5. How well is NWC delivering on the factor that is most important to you?

##### Enrolled Students In-State

- Affordability: Very well -- you pay very little other than books and class materials - it is nice to know you will not have to spend a lot. Class size is good. I like the small class size because it makes the class discussion more robust.
- At NWC, the class size is perfect! I like that teachers can have a bond with students and can make the education so much better and adjust the lessons based on everyone's learning. Affordability is great! NWC offers a lot of great scholarship opportunities! NWC is just so great in communicating and making

every student feel important in all needs and aspects of needs in college. They make you feel like you are always communicating one-on-one.

- Application process just 15 minutes and got letter in 3 days. NWC counselors came to the high school and helped with registration-very helpful and convenient.

#### **Enrolled Students Out of State**

- Animal science is great. Labs are awesome. Went to different places around WY. Vet taught different things to help me become better.
- Did not have expectations. But overall, in the Equine program, you get out of it what you put in. I learned more than I thought I would. Hands on experience that you would not get in other places. Classes are small, good to get one-on-one with instructor.

#### **International Students**

- Scholarship and tuition. I also focused on the safety and environment. I did not want to be worried about shooting and guns. I like to walk in the middle of the night, and here at NWC, I can walk around and feel safe.
- American students have FAFSA, but for us, there are only certain scholarship opportunities you can get. For example, there are nursing scholarships to get money if you are from here [U.S], but for us, we do not have access to that. I am sure that all of us have applied to all the scholarships every year.
- Scholarships. I spent from my own savings. I have applied for scholarships using my art portfolio. I also applied to be a resident assistant, but then it's hard to manage everything. I stopped because it was too hard to study and work. We [international students] pay way more, more than twice then local students. Also, I was fascinated that my first week, how dedicated the faculty were. They treated us great. They motivated and inspired us. They really try to spend time with each student. Some faculty were great with international students and willing to help us through language barriers. They were extremely dedicated. It depends on personal experiences; I enjoy working with faculty in my class.
- Agree with what everyone else said here. Admission process is very flexible- they want to help you to get the necessary documents to get accepted. With other community colleges, I would spend a month to get papers; here I spent only two weeks, and was accepted within two weeks. They value students. They make us feel important. They give us more attention because they know we want to study here.
- Sports. But it really depends on the coach, as they have a certain amount of money to give for scholarships. For us coming out of the country, we do not have access to normal financial aid. It is rare that we get any money. And international tuition is more expensive.

#### **Enrolled Adult Students**

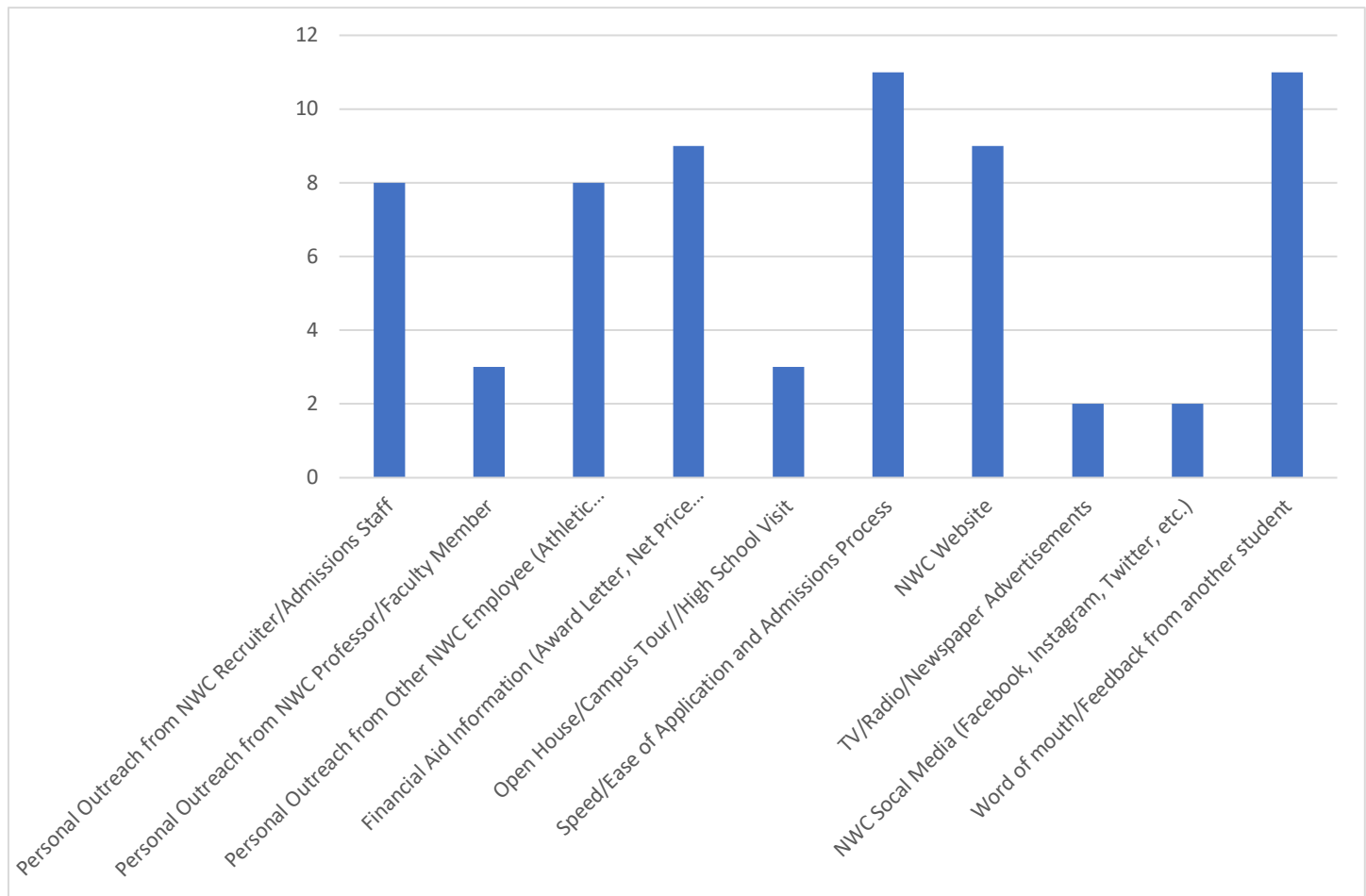
- 10 point out of 10. I am not paying anything out of pocket. My awards are paying the entire cost.
- I have had a very easy time getting scholarships and aid that I needed. They paid in timely manner, there was not any miscommunications. As far as financial goes, it is great.
- I think they are doing well, but back to what was mentioned earlier, there is extra stress. Outside factors that are adding stress. But as far as financial aid and scholarships go, I cannot complain at all.
- My situation was unique. Thirty years ago, I tried to attend at NWC. I guess I had more fun at the time, so when I chose to come back, my books and tuition were paid for by displaced workers – workforce program. I did not qualify this year for other aid. I was 18 then, now I am 50, and I did not know that stuff I did 30 years ago would affect my eligibility for aid. So, I took personal loans. Now with my GPA, I should qualify next year. The tuition process was simple, but it took some time to get the books paid for not sure if it was the college or the Workforce program that I am in.

#### **FYS Classes (Raymond Floyd's and Jess Jatkowski's)**

- Basically, they have delivered on the financial aid side, where it is not going to be as expensive. But I have spent more here than the other community colleges that I went to. As far as academics, my general education courses have been fine. I was a math major before, and now I switched to Computer Science. The courses in my major are harder.

- The scholarships. But it really depends on me. The better grades I get, the more scholarships I can apply for. And, the scholarships for my major that they offer will be more available to me.
- Scholarships and helping me prepare for my career in what I need in order to get my degree.
- Affordability. And I am very satisfied. TRIO is amazing and so is NWC.
- If I weren't able to do school online, I don't think the timing would be right for me to continue my education. Life is all about timing. I have a little one as well and work full time and there is just no way I could up without online classes.
- Scholarships did not matter for me - I was ready to go to school and pursue my degree for Nursing and use financial aid if needed - but scholarships would be helpful so I could rely on those.
- I went to Cody high school - did not put much attention on scholarships but regret that - could have had a burden lifted off my shoulders - would have been great to have more info on financial aid before school.
- I feel on my own at the college - sometimes feel completely alone finding out info I need. Felt the same way in high school. They did not have announcements - his friends helped him navigate the process.
- If I had not had the help of TRIO, I would have been lost and frustrated.
- I applied for scholarships and had to answer an uncomfortable question - "why I deserve the scholarship more than others."
- I had difficulty in navigating the process and understanding how things work at other institutions – I would go to other institutions' admissions and just get a vague idea of what I needed to do. What got me interested in college was the veteran's benefits, and I wanted to use those. NWC made it very easy to get my benefits and get enrolled.
- I must have a degree to move up in my career. It was "super easy" to get enrolled at NWC. Admissions and student advisors were awesome. I am first gen and TRIO has been terrific - professors so far have been super helpful - could not ask for a better place.
- Having online courses makes it easy to do school from home – I don't have to find babysitters – I appreciate the ease to do this program online.
- NWC came up on my Facebook timeline and that got me interested in returning to school and going to NWC.
- If it wasn't for my sister who helped me go back to school and telling me about scholarships, I would have never known.

## 6. Recruitment Activities and Communications Zoom Poll: What Influenced Your Decision to Enroll at NWC?



## 7. How did you become aware of Northwest College?

### Enrolled Students In-State

- Have always been aware of it. Parent (mother) worked there since before I was born.
- Have always known of NWC. The college is well-known in the town.
- It was great in high school, we had people come and talk about NWC and talk about all the perks. We also had several opportunities to come and visit the college and do a tour and then the school had a day where several schools got to come and tour the college and show us everything on the college which was super great and showed how easy it was to access everything on campus and show how all the classes were very accessible. I became aware based on peers and family that had also attended NWC. Parent (mother) had also attended long ago. Then with it being so close I had always heard about it in school and in the community.

### Enrolled Students Out of State

- I went to one of the volleyball camps when I was a sophomore in high school.
- I first learned about the college through the Equine program. My older sister had looked into it when she was younger, but she did not go. I did not know about the other things about the college at the time. I just paid attention to the horse shows because I was really interested in the equine program.

### International Students

- When transferring from Flathead, my advisor recommended NWC.

- A former student recommended it to me.
- I had heard about it from a current student and from advisors.
- The website, after I looked at it, I learned more about the college.
- A former student from Belgium recommended.
- My manager was talking to the coach, and she told me about the college. I went to the website, and I saw that they had a lot of Brazilian students here.

#### **Enrolled Adult Students**

- Local knowledge. The college is well known in Powell.
- Agreed. The local knowledge that the college is well known in Powell.
- I grew up here, it is the college that has always been around. The college has a good reputation.

#### **FYS Classes (Raymond Floyd's and Jess Jatkowski's)**

- When my parents decided to move here, I looked for a community college so I could live with them and go to college. They moved here just because they liked the area.
- The soccer coach approached me at a camp (college coaches come and watch us run some drills). I came to the college on scholarship weekend, and took a tour of the campus.

### **8. What one word do prospective students think of when they think of NWC?**

#### **Enrolled Students In-State**

- Easy
  - application process
  - website is not confusing like other schools
  - the campus is a manageable size, and the location is convenient
  - teachers are easy going -- "they are willing to work with you"
- Affordability
- Accessible

#### **Enrolled Students Out of State**

- Small - smaller classes
- The unique experience. NWC has a unique experience for its students. Other schools do not have this, small town, and the localness, offers a unique experience. Livestock judging gives an opportunity to experience things during your college years that other college would not have for you. The experience is not just in the classroom.

#### **International Students**

- Small and mysterious. But when you go there, the people have big hearts, so it doesn't feel like a small college. I went to a university and the community college in Flathead, and a making friends depends on you, but the admissions office helps us, as they communicate with us for advising for our program but also with us as a person and friends.
- Variety of courses they offer for students.
- Affordable or welcoming community. It was easy making friends because there are a lot of international students. You can talk to them; they are very friendly. I have trouble had making friends with local friends. We had to be the ones to make friends with them first. Making friends is easy here. Intercultural program does great with us. The pandemic makes it hard on the new students who just came here this year.
- Diversity, student body diversity. Small community for international students. It is a great place for us to be. It is easy to make friends here than other colleges in the area.
- Athletics

#### **Enrolled Adult Students**



- Opportunity. Because I feel like NWC has a wide variety of programs and courses. They have lots of intramural activities. They even had a trading cards group. So many things to do here that I would assume that other major college do. Anyone wants to get together, they can. People can be themselves.
- Well rounded. It has a decent blend of activities. The tuition cost is reasonable. There are a lot of places that you can transfer to. You save a lot of money by not going to the university.
- A good college. It has been the top 15 as far as the nursing program. They have good medial, rodeo.
- Affordable. Within this region, it is relatively low cost. Billings colleges are expensive. But I am assuming that the other community college in the area are probably the same.

#### **FYS Classes** (Raymond Floyd's and Jess Jatkowski's)

- I only knew about NWC a few days before I was registered.
- Stepping stone, preparation for transfer. I have not decided where I am going to transfer yet, it will depend on soccer and my well I do in my major.
- Attainable
- Teachers are easy to work with and they want to see us succeed
- The way the teachers teach, they make it easy to understand - they are so helpful
- Devoted
- Helpful
- Kind
- Successful
- Positive
- The teachers are great
- Affordable
- Convenient
- Cost Effective
- Attainable

### **9. What 1 word do current students think of when they think of NWC?**

#### **Enrolled Students In-State**

- Community - it is an excellent community - always someone there to help you -- Res Life and Student Activities makes it feel like a big family.
- I am going to different schools, and each one uses different systems and have different communications and resources -- at NWC, I always know how to see how I am doing in the class - professors are always willing to help and I can always find my grades. Could not describe in one word – perhaps worry free, stress free.
- Easy - the ease of teachers and communicating. The campus is great and accessible. The town and community are great and everything you need is on campus for the most part if you don't have a lot of access to traveling around town.

#### **Enrolled Students Out of State**

- Hands on. With small class size. Like in the labs, you get the chance to experience more things. Everyone gets a chance to try it. You get to do and remember it.
- Hands on. Trying things for yourself helps me learn.

#### **International Students**

- Homey
- Student oriented. I got so much to like here. I like my program and I am amazed to how much they give us one on one. It is just amazing.
- Support from advisors and professors. You can have a very hard time here but the professors at NWC are not rejecting. They want to make sure that you are succeeding.

- Opportunities. Sports academics and stuff. I feel like the teachers are trying to push me and give me advice. I have never been to another college; I just think it is just cool that teachers are behind the students.

#### **Enrolled Adult Students**

- Wonderful. They have been very helpful with me like getting me registered (the DSS – services for the disability students). They have helped me work with professors, in a way that I can do the work without missing the standard. They have been extremely helpful.
- Life. An education, you cannot take that away from someone once you have it. It has given me so much opportunity.
- Disappointing. The first semester was great [Fall 2020]. The professors were very involved. But the second semester [current – Spring 2021], most of my professors were detached. Some people say that it is because of zoom, but it was better the first semester and we used zoom. I am struggling, my grades are ok, but I am trying to stay engaged and positive, it is a struggle to get engaged.

#### **FYS Classes** (Raymond Floyd's and Jess Jatkowski's)

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### **10. What are your suggestions or concerns?**

#### **Enrolled Students In-State**

- I have been involved in Residence Life. I have noticed that students from outside the service area, out of state and international students, have a hard time with transportation. There is no public transportation in this area. The college could promote or advertise that there is no public transportation so that students know this before they decide to come here. Or the college could provide transportation options for students.

#### **Enrolled Students Out of State**

- Not really sure because I don't live on campus.
- I have had a good experience. Do not really have anything that they need to change. I know that the one thing after living there for two years, (it is my third year at the college) but because it a small town, there is not a lot to do outside the college. The transportation is a challenge especially for international students, they have a hard time getting around. International students really have no choice but to live on campus. Both personal transportation and to the campus is a challenge if you do not have a car.

#### **International Students**

- To be an international student NWC, you must stay at the housing the first year. This is an advantage and disadvantage because you must stay a year. The time is too long for me. It is noisy with the drill alarm. Alarm goes off every time someone cooks. I would have liked to live somewhere else, but I was not the right age to live off campus.
- Colleges are business oriented, NWC wants students with good GPA. An advantage, the college lets students get a good education. But the faculty are not doing a not great job in programs like welding. They [welding faculty] do not take the student seriously.

#### **Enrolled Adult Students**

- As a Photography student, I have had good experiences. I am taking more classes; they have been very accommodating. Having to deal with kids, I have not had any troubles. If I get off work late, they give me an extra day or two. I had heard about how some students are hearing impaired, they have supplied additional teachers to help with that. They have provided professors with clear masks. I think that is cool. What I was saying earlier, if you have special needs, they help you. My professors help me with my essays, since I get off work late, they help me with deadline date extensions. All photography department professors are wonderful, and I would like for them to know that.
- I would like to suggest one thing. It would be good that the college focused on disability staff who are trained in developmental learning, so that students can get their work done. I worked as a special education student. I help students like this. Simple learning tools to help disabled students.
- The hospitality program could be expanded and expand some foreign language opportunities. We take on so many travelers. Hospitality certificates so that we can take care visitors.
- Being more involved. The college faculty and staff should act like they would if we were on campus. I do not have anything to compare it to since I came here after COVID. They want their students to be engaged, but the professors need to be more engaged and guide the class. I can read the PowerPoint that they sent to us three weeks ago. I need more interaction and discussion about the subject. I read the PowerPoint, then they read the PowerPoint in class word for word. Waste of time. Also, I have a class that meets twice a week. That professor has missed three classes. Now, we must make up the work. Three out of twelve seems excessive. If I missed it would be different. If a student misses class, 2-5 % gets taken off our grades. Fall semester [Fall 2020] was very engaging but spring term [Spring 2021], it was like someone pushed the "I don't care button."

#### **FYS Classes** (Raymond Floyd's and Jess Jatkowski's)

- I think that the hardest part is the mix between in person and online. I think it only works when you are either one to the other, asynchronous works better for me. So, like, when the class meets three times a week, and we don't do anything, that is not a good use of my time.
- Everything is going well.