

SWOT Survey Analysis





Survey Participants

Faculty and Staff Survey

(n = 71)

- Faculty (33)
- Staff (33)
- Administrator (2)
- No response (2)

Community Survey

(n = 61)

- Trustee/Trustee Emerita (6)
- Alumni (11)
- Retiree (7)
- Foundation Board (9)
- Community Member/Leader (13)
- Business Partner/Owner (2)
- Elected Official (3)

Strengths

Faculty and Staff Unique Perspectives

- International students and programs (e.g., diversity of student body, presence of diverse cultural backgrounds and traditions)

Shared Perspectives

- Student-centric culture of the institution
- Quality of academic programs and teaching
- Personalized attention (e.g., small class sizes, mentoring opportunities, field studies)
- Caring and committed staff and faculty
- Geographic location of college and proximity to Yellowstone National Park
- Affordability

Community Unique Perspectives

- Variety of academic program offerings
- Community support of the college

Weaknesses

Faculty and Staff Unique Perspectives

- Reticence to change
- Workload and prioritization of workloads with recent budget cuts
- Reliance on transfer programs
- Feeling connected to the community and having the community feel ownership of the College

Shared Perspectives

- Budget & Funding
- Facilities
- Shared governance and shared decision-making

Community Unique Perspectives

- Recruiting new students
- Alignment of academic programs to industry, business, and community needs

Opportunities

Faculty and Staff Unique Perspectives

- Increasing recruitment and expanding programming for international students

Shared Perspectives

- Creating new academic programs
- Centering academic programming, revenue generation, and applied learning opportunities that are connected to the Yellowstone National Park ecosystem
- Increasing applied learning and hands-on training opportunities for students
- Workforce and middle skill programming (e.g., hospitality, tourism, culinary, drafting)
- Partnerships with businesses, community non-profits, and other programs (e.g., Native American reservations, Heart Mountain, geological/ecological partnerships)

Community Unique Perspectives

- Creation of certificate and micro-credential programs

Threats

Faculty and Staff Unique Perspectives

- Higher education governance and public policy development
- Economic conditions and impact on student recruitment (e.g., income and ability to afford education)

Shared Perspectives

- Public funding of higher education in the state of Wyoming
- Decline of natural resource production in Wyoming and tax revenue
- Demographic shifts with an aging population and a decline in the population of high school students in the Northwest College service area
- Impact of COVID-19 on enrollment
- Prevalence of higher education online providers as well as non-accredited education and training providers (Coursera, EdX)

Community Unique Perspectives

- No unique perspectives



Community Perspectives Pride in Northwest College

- The vision and the commitment of the Powell community, later joined by the rest of Park County, to stand up a college carry it forward for 75 years.
- It has been a long standing fighter for providing good education to the students of the Big Horn Basin. We need to expand that and still keep in mind this is our little gold mine and we need to keep it shining and producing. And I love the idea of holding proud to the name of NWC.
- I am most proud when I hear of students who transfer to other colleges who feel they are better prepared and educated than students who started at a four year college.
- This little college has educated so many distinguished citizens for the state of Wyoming and beyond.
- I'm proud that I went from NWC to a big city college and graduated at the top of my class. I'm proud that my little Wyoming college gave me what I needed to compete in the big leagues.



Faculty and Staff Perspectives Pride in Northwest College

- The students make me the most proud. So many of them come to college daunted and disinterested in school, or feeling like they must endure it as a type of torture in order to get the degree they need. So many of these students graduate and transfer not only with their degree, but with a new and lifelong appreciation and enjoyment of learning.
- The ways that the College blends tradition with innovation in a way that makes sense to our local situation. For example, the Buffalo Feast.
- I am proud to have attended Northwest and to now work here. I am also proud to be a part of a college that is helping students become a productive part of society. Some of the students that come to Northwest experience a lot of firsts in life here. First time away from home, first time in college, their first job, their first time making life long friends. I feel proud to be able to help students navigate all of these firsts in life.
- Despite growing up roughly 20 miles from the college, I knew very little about NWC before working here. In a short time, though, it became clear to me that everyone shares a common goal of helping students. Saying you're student centered and actually being student centered are two different things—NWC truly lives up to its mission.



Community Perspectives Northwest College's Legacy

- Historically our legacy has been as a premier transfer institution that also offered selected vocational opportunities. I hope that is the legacy that will be carried forward.
- A strong, student centered faculty offering a quality education, whether in the transfer programs or vocational certificates.
- Blending the "four year experience" with a "two year program," giving students the best of both worlds
- I hope the legacy of a small-town college with big town quality will continue. The David beating Goliath by playing the game our way.



Faculty and Staff Perspectives Northwest College's Legacy

- That we are small enough to adapt quickly to educational needs while still providing personal attention to our students with unique programming that doesn't compete with our region.
- I want this school to be known as a jewel of the West, for serving a diversity of students from various ages, geographic backgrounds, family status, ethnicities, political and social perspectives, economic backgrounds, and majors and career paths. . . . It's not a perfect melting pot, but it's such an incredible and rare environment.
- This is a place that many alumni hold dear and deeply in their hearts because of their memories and experiences of Northwest College. The phenomena stretches back decades. The way some of our alums talk about Northwest College in a way they don't talk about the other schools they attended, even big universities, the way they value the support they received and the friends they made. It's pretty exceptional for a community college of any size, let alone a relatively small college in such a rural place. It's extraordinary.
- Student-centered everything!
- Quality education in a unique setting