

**NORTHWEST COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

July 8, 2019

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** President MR. DUSTY SPOMER; Vice President/Secretary DR. MARK WURZEL; Treasurer MR. LUKE ANDERSON; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL and MR. BOB NEWSOME.
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** MS. CAROLYN DANKO, MS. NADA LARSEN
- OTHERS PRESENT:** DR. STEFANI HICSWA, President; DR. GERALD GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MR. MARK KITCHEN, Vice President for College Relation; MS. LISA WATSON, Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance; MS. JILL ANDERSON, MR. BRAD BOWEN, MS. KAREN BOWEN, MR. DEAN BRUCE, MR. LOGAN BURNS, MS. ELAINE DEBUHR, MS. AMANDA ENRIQUEZ, MS. RACHEL HANAN, MR. JASON HORTON, MS. BETH HRONEK, MS. JENNIFER LITTERER-TREVINO, MS. NANCY MILLER, MS. HALEY SORENSON, MR. GREG THOMAS, MR. NEIL WAITE, MS. SHELBY WETZEL MR. KEVIN KILLOUGH, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. DIANA GWYNN, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.
- CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees was called to order on Monday, July 8, 2019, at 4:02 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.
- A APPROVE THE AGENDA:** **A motion was made by Trustee Anderson seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**
- MOMENT OF SILECE:** A moment of silence was observed in honor of Gerry Danko, former NWC employee and husband of Trustee Carolyn Danko, who passed away recently.
- BUDGET HEARING:** The regular meeting recessed at 4:04 p.m. for the Budget Hearing. After the budget business was conducted, the Budget Hearing adjourned at 4:08 p.m. and the regular meeting resumed.
- MISSION MOMENT:** Foundation Executive Director Shelby Wetzel briefly introduced the mission of the NWC Foundation and outlined their work in supporting the NWC mission through grants, scholarships, fundraising, and asset management. The Foundation currently manages \$40M in assets, most of which has been earmarked and invested, and works with 33,000 supporters. Director Wetzel then had her staff introduce themselves and briefly describe their roles in the Foundation's work: Sue Woods, Foundation Analyst; Cindy Jacobs, Foundation Technician; Tawnya Peterson, Alumni Development Coordinator and Cory Ostermiller, Development Manager.
- A CONSENT AGENDA:** **A motion was made by Trustee Anderson and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the consent agenda as presented.**
- President Hicswa responded to questions on the various reports.
- In response to questions regarding the dining services contract, and at the request of President Hicswa, Vice President Watson explained the reductions in meal plans sold, due to lower enrollment, and subsequent increase in meal plan costs in accordance with NWC's contract with Chartwells. She then explained that there has been a recent transition to the new food service vendor Sodexo.
- In response to questions regarding the Simpson Hall repairs project, President Hicswa explained that though the bid for the entire project came in over the budgeted amount, a revised contract was successfully negotiated and current work is being done to mitigate further damage.
- Motion carried and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the June 10, 2019 regular meeting, was approved.**

**DISCUSSION/  
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

2018-2019 Policy update  
review

Due to the inadvertent loss of one page in the online board book, the Trustees were unable to review the list of policy updates which were made during the 2018-2019 academic year. Board President Spomer requested the list be emailed to the Trustees and that they review it prior to the August Board meeting.

2019 Fall enrollment update

President Hicswa presented a Fall Enrollment update report showing a 7% decline in enrollment, from the same date last year. At her request, Interim Vice President Havig outlined efforts being made to impact recruitment and enrollment:

- Enrollment services has finalized their staffing pattern
- NWC hosted its first-ever Adult-learner night and plans to host more in the future
- Phone calls are being made to all students who have applied and been admitted, but have not yet registered for classes
- Multiple registration days are being held throughout the summer for incoming students
- An increase in enrollment from WUE states has been realized
- A list of students, indicating an interest in a specific area, has been sent to the applicable program/department; more faculty are reaching out to students
- NWC had a table at Stampede Rodeo for two nights; NWC also had a regular entry in the parade and sponsored the Rodeo Queen parade entry
- The Strategic Enrollment Management Committee (SEM) is meeting regularly and following their action plan

President Hicswa reported that there was no SEM committee or SEM plan 5 years ago, and that the SEM team is working very hard to recruit students and to respond to the enrollment decline in ways that have never been done before.

In response to questions from Trustees, President Hicswa reported that she expected enrollment to be flat, but because last year's freshman class was small, this year's sophomore class is also small. She also explained that she hopes the enrollment marketing campaign will help to capture some of the "summer melt" students who may still be deciding which college to attend.

Interim Vice President Havig explained that in conjunction with the new enrollment services staffing pattern, he and his staff have been exploring other ways of restructuring staff and offices, as well as focusing on cross-training of staff, to offer a "one-stop shopping" experience (admissions, registration, advising, financial aid, and testing) located in one centralized area.

Board President Spomer opened the floor to a discussion on how and what the Board can do to respond to the declining enrollment trajectory.

Trustee Housel recommended the Wyoming community colleges collaborate on a state-wide marketing campaign and in seeking funding from the State. He pointed out that there seems to be unfair competition between the University of Wyoming and the community colleges, when there really should be a balance between the two. He encouraged more communication with legislators to help them recognize the issues and to seek better support for community colleges. Trustee Housel also encouraged continuing work to recruit international students.

At President Hicswa's request, Intercultural Program Manager Amanda Enriquez briefly outlined the efforts being made in international recruiting. She reported that

earlier in the day she had attended a function at which a delegation from Taiwan met with Powell Economic Partnership and the Powell Chamber of Commerce to explore the idea of marketing the State of Wyoming in general, and Powell specifically, as an education destination and to promote partnerships. She reported that Taiwan has a large population which could be a viable international student market.

Trustee Wurzel indicated that he feels NWC is covering all the bases, but expressed his concern at the time it will take for recruiting initiatives to take effect and have an impact on enrollment.

Trustee Newsome suggested that NWC needs to engage new thoughts and new processes because what has been done does not seem to be working.

Trustee Anderson cautioned against implementing big, knee-jerk reactions, but recommended making incremental changes. He also encouraged recognizing the changes in trends and adjusting to those changes. He stressed the importance of ensuring students get a college experience, not just the 13<sup>th</sup> grade at NWC, as well as focusing on facilities, since they are a factor when students choose a college and a college experience.

President Hicswa reported that a recent study done by Sodexo, NWC's new food services vendor, indicates that 83% of students see physical amenities as more important than the academic reputation of a college. She pointed out that other Wyoming community colleges have paid attention to their facilities by building new buildings and are now benefitting from updated facilities. NWC has not, so focusing on the new Student Center project is important to enrollment.

Board President Spomer stated that the Board needs to be more than just an information receptacle – that looking at these numbers necessitates a determination by the Board to do what they can to affect change. They may not know exactly what to do, but doing something, even if it turns out to be not exactly right, is imperative. He also stressed that the entire NWC organization needs to be entrenched in recruiting efforts.

Trustee Housel reminded the Board that enrollment was the #1 priority after the enrollment decline last year and that President Hicswa and her staff responded swiftly with the full-court-press marketing campaign. He indicated that the ads and social media presence is good, but he recognizes it will take time to realize the effects.

President Hicswa indicated that the general public is unaware of just how affordable NWC is and how much NWC has to offer. She noted that NWC needs to continue to market their exceptional faculty, small class sizes, and affordability, as well as expanding online offerings, doing more program development and working on facilities. She also stressed the importance of NWC in the community – NWC serves as a major economic driver (\$88M), NWC is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest employer in the county, and NWC is vital to the sustainability of the entire Big Horn Basin; therefore, it is imperative to get the community engaged in the success of the College.

**CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM:**

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:25 p.m. There were no citizens who wished to address the Board and the Citizen's Open Forum was adjourned.

**DISCUSSION/  
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS  
(CONTINUED):**

Student Center project update

President Hicswa gave a brief overview of the current status of the Student Center project. She explained that the original plan was well beyond the budget, so a committee worked with the architects to reduce the size and scope of the building. She reported that the Level II work is nearing completion, and that she will present to the State Building Commission on Thursday, July 11, at which time she will request Level III funding. This project is third on the commission's projects priority list. President Hicswa will request funding for half of the projected \$20M cost from the State. The other half of the funding will be sought through a potential voter initiative, fundraising, and potential student fees. President Hicswa then presented a draft fly-through video and floor plan of the new Student Center.

The Trustees discussed the design, utilization of space, and energy efficiency of the proposed building plan.

President Hicswa pointed out that there is a list of talking points included in the Board materials to assist the Trustees as they seek support for this project. She encouraged them to communicate with legislators and the community about the need for this building, its role in the economic prosperity of the area, and its potential for helping NWC remain a vibrant institution. She also explained that the Foundation is working on the fundraising campaign with a central message of "Choose Vibrancy."

President Hicswa reported that she recently presented the Student Center plan to the County Commissioners, which went very well; and though no action was taken by the Commissioners, their comments indicated strong support of the project.

President Hicswa reported that there seems to be a common misconception which has led to a rather negative response from community about the College invoking reduction in force while continuing the work on new facilities. She stressed the importance of helping the community understand that capital construction funding from the State is completely separate from the operating budget – that the money for these types of projects cannot be used to support salaries or operating costs because it does not come from the same funding pool. She also reminded the Trustees that capital construction money is shared by all of the Wyoming community colleges, so if NWC decides not to request funding, the funds will be awarded to the other colleges; She also noted that NWC has only used this type of funding for one project – the Yellowstone Building, while other colleges have used it to rebuild a large percentage of their facilities.

Board President Spomer encouraged securing and using this funding while it is available to benefit NWC.

**A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**A NEW BUSINESS:**

Wyoming Association of  
Community College Trustees  
(WACCT) annual dues  
(first reading)

Trustee Wurzel reported on his attendance at the June 12, 2019 WACCT meeting, during which a major item of discussion was increasing WACCT Annual Dues for the community colleges, which would allow WACCT to increase the salary for Executive Director Erin Taylor. The WACCT Board feels Director Taylor's work has been so effective, that they want to engage her for additional WACCT legislative work. The community college presidents concurred with the WACCT Board's recommendation, but final approval is contingent upon approval by the Community College Boards.

**A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the increase in WACCT annual dues.**

The Trustees discussed whether this increase in pay would equate to a proportional increase in Director Taylor's time spent on WACCT work.

**Motion carried with Trustee Housel opposing.**

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Next Meeting, August 12, 2019, Meeteetse School; carpooling will be available  
State of the College Address, August 19, 2019, 8:30 a.m., Yellowstone Building  
NWC Family Picnic, August 19, 2019, 5:00 p.m., Park County Fairgrounds  
WACCT Annual Conference, September 24-25, 2019, Northwest College  
ACCT Leadership Congress, October 16-19, 2019, San Francisco, CA  
WCCC Meeting, October 24, 2019, Sheridan

**A ADJOURNMENT:**

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 p.m.**

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MARK WURZEL, Vice President/Secretary

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Date