

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

April 12, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: President DR. MARK WURZEL; Vice President/Secretary DR. LARRY TODD; Treasurer Ms. CAROLYN DANKO; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MS. TARA KUIPERS, MR. BOB NEWSOME, and MR. DUSTY SPOMER.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, Interim President; DR. GERRY GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MS. DIEDRE ASAY; MS. STACY BEAR; MS. LESLIE BIGHAM; MR. BRAD BOWEN; MS. KAREN BOWEN; MR. DEAN BRUCE; MS. JENNIFER CANNIZZARO; MS. JENNIFER DARE; MS. ELAINE DEBUHR; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MS. AMANDA ENRIQUEZ; MR. BRIAN ERICKSON; MR. DAVE ERICKSON; MS. KIM FLETCHER; MS. MARY FORD; MS. TRACY GASAWAY; MS. NANCY GILMORE; MS. CHRISTI GREAHAM; MR. MICHAEL GUNDLACH; MS. LAURA GWINN; MS. RACHEL HANAN; MS. JOANN HEIMER; MR. WEST HERNANDEZ; MS. DEB JACOBS; MS. DENISE KELSAY; MR. CAMDEN LEVETT; MS. JENNIFER LITTERER-TREVIÑO; MS. CASSIE LOERA; MS. AMY MCKINNEY; MS. CAREY MILLER; MS. NANCY MILLER; MS. CONNIE MOORE; MS. KIMBERLY MOORE; MR. MAT OSBORNE; MR. CORY OSTERMILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MR. SHAMAN QUINN; MS. JEN SCHNEIDER; MS. LISA SMITH; MS. HALEY SORENSON; MS. LINDA SPOMER; MR. GREG THOMAS; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MS. MARSHA WILSON; MR. KEVIN KILLOUGH, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Interim Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees; CampusWorks guests MS. CHRISSY COLEY, MS. LIZ MURPHY, MR. JUSTIN NORRIS.

CALL TO ORDER: The regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees was called to order on Monday, April 12, 2021 at 3:02 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

A APPROVE THE AGENDA: **Board President Wurzel entertained a motion to amend the agenda to include a moment of silence to take place after the Work Session. A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Kuipers to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.**

WORK SESSION: Interim President Watson welcomed CampusWorks representatives Liz Murphy, Justin Norris and Chrissy Coley and invited them to update the Board on their efforts to date.

Liz Murphy began by stating she would be telling the story of the work done relative to transformational planning for Northwest College thus far. Individuals who completed surveys, served in focus groups, participated in the future summit and those sitting on the Advisory Committee have provided information that relates to the vision for transformation. Nearly 400 voices have stated what they believe the world will be saying about Northwest College going forward:

- Nationally recognized academic programs – the ability to harness strengths and opportunities that already exist, such as focusing on renewable energy, software development, environmental sciences, sustainability and transitioning old industries into new.
- Applied Liberal Arts – making liberal arts relevant by teaching hands-on learning coupled with critical thinking skill development that provides a distinctive competence to students that they may not get from another institution.

- Being recognized as an Aspen Institute top 50 Community Colleges – the Aspen Prize honors institutions with outstanding achievement in teaching and learning, certificate and degree completion, workforce success and equitable outcomes for students of color and low-income students. International recognition allows Northwest College to be on the map outside of the region.
- Creating a learning and living destination – a co-curricular experience that provides distinctive programs and experiences.
- Driver of Economic Development – catalyst for growth by supporting emerging industries, encouraging entrepreneurship and being thought leaders in economic development.

Liz stated these items could then be offered to many more students such as traditional-aged, adult learners, residential, online, regional, national and international.

The Advisory Committee will be refining the vision. During the May Board retreat, necessary actions and budget will be determined to line up the path to transformation. Liz stated Northwest College is already amazing and must embrace and invest in what we're already good at and continue to be better at it than anybody else to grab the attention of those seeking education.

Board President Wurzel stated he feels it would be important to have a connection with other colleges in order to understand how they accomplished transformation. Liz stated CampusWorks typically makes suggestions for connections as Higher Education is very referential and loves to share successes and lessons learned with others.

Trustee Kuipers stated she appreciated the way the liberal arts piece was framed as it speaks to what she has been hearing in the community. In relation to the economic development piece, she would like to see a deepening of the partnership and coordination with professionals in the area and sees that coordination as critical to our success as leaders in workforce development. Trustee Kuipers also stated that while she appreciates the need to appeal to students outside of the region, she hopes Northwest College becomes the first choice of local students as well.

Trustee Todd stated that in thinking about where the College can fit into future landscapes he wondered if CampusWorks is taking into consideration how other institutions in the area are beginning to shift and change. He would like to see us integrate our changes with those around us while excelling in that integration. Liz agreed and stated CampusWorks is researching institutions in the immediate area and beyond. She went on to state that it's not necessary to be a part of the same system to work collaboratively with others.

Trustee Spomer doesn't disagree with sustainable/renewable energy and thinks it needs to be considered by the Institution; however, it's fairly unpopular in the community and state and he feels that should be kept in mind. He also feels the same could be true in considering emerging technologies and the community's perception of the need for that type of curriculum. Trustee Spomer feels the College would need to promote the idea that these kinds of technologies are going to be part of the future and they should be embraced. Liz agreed and stated that's where partnerships with economic developers in the area will be crucial.

Trustee Kuipers inquired about next steps and how to ensure faculty and staff buy-in of the transformational planning. Interim President Watson stated there have been many “behind the scenes” operational meetings and data collecting by many groups on campus. Conversations have continued among departments regarding integration of operations/services, etc. All of this work will come together as action plans to build the roadmap for transformation. Interim President Watson stated that CampusWorks was not hired to “fix” the College. She noted that we are going to “fix this” because the people that are here are here because they love the College and the community and are invested in its success.

Liz stated the methods used to gather information include large meetings, filtering the information and articulating it clearly for discussion, tweaking and building consensus during the next meeting. The goal of CampusWorks is to then leave the College with the tools necessary to be able to execute the necessary transformational work.

Trustee Housel shares Trustee Spomer’s concern regarding renewable energy and the need to be sensitive to the local economy and how it’s derived. He noted the new wind energy development in Montana and stated the possibility of working with the operators of the development. Trustee Housel also stated that in relation to the concept of creating a living and learning destination in relation to Yellowstone National Park, he wished to highlight the marketing video on Facebook and feels it’s an excellent example of the appeal of the area to potential students.

IN REMEMBRANCE:

Camden Levitt, Women’s Basketball Coach, spoke in remembrance of Ralph Newell stating that he was an avid supporter of Northwest College athletics through the Ralph and Maggie Newell scholarship. He was especially supportive of Women’s Basketball and attended many practices and games, becoming an honorary “Assistant Coach”. Ralph was a member of the first football team at Northwest College and also served on the Board of Trustees from 1992 – 2002. He was a good person who will be missed by many.

Trustees observed a moment of silence in honor of Ralph Newell.

A CONSENT AGENDA:

A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Danko to approve the consent agenda.

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation for the care taken in drafting the minutes. He also stated that in reference to the Student Services Financial Aid report, he would be interested to know how many individuals apply for the Hathaway scholarship at Northwest College and how many are granted. He wonders if more can be done to educate local high school students on its existence. In response, Interim President Watson stated Northwest College is strategic in the application of those funds in order to maximize opportunities for students and employs a full-time staff member dedicated to Hathaway. She will collect the data requested and made it available in the next monthly reports for Trustee review.

Trustee Spomer commented that his daughters are in the Powell School District and he feels they are doing a great job of informing students about Hathaway scholarships. In looking at it from a different perspective, it’s possible Northwest College could use it as a recruiting tool as well.

Trustee Kuipers inquired about the continued work on the Wyoming Innovation Network that was mentioned in the President’s report. Interim President Watson stated there are groups that have been formed within the

colleges and the University working on WIN and to ensure the goals are measurable and attainable. She will be traveling to Casper later in the week to attend the Wyoming Community College Commission meeting and will be meeting with community college presidents as well as UW President Ed Seidel to discuss the initiative further. There are questions regarding the \$8 million from the Legislature designated for WIN and how that will be distributed and for what purpose. There are also many variables regarding the utilization of the Federal stimulus funds from an economic stimulus perspective. An Executive Director, Mr. Steve Barkus has been appointed from UW. VP Giraud, Dean Bruce and Dean Thomas are actively working on the initiative for NWC.

Board President Wurzel inquired about the virtual fair in Brazil that was mentioned in the Academic Affairs Intercultural Program report. Interim President Watson stated that College participants met with 28 agents whose job it is to assist with the recruiting process. Board President Wurzel also noted the accomplishment of Jeannie Hunt being named as the Wyoming State High School Forensics Tournament Director.

In reference to the Intercultural Program report, Trustee Housel inquired about the MOU with the high school and junior high school in Japan. Interim President Watson stated the intent is for students to participate in a short exchange program in which they come to campus and have an immersive experience. This also provides an opportunity for Northwest College to build relationships with those schools.

Motion carried and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the March 8, 2021 regular meeting, as well as the March 8, 2021 minutes of the Executive Session, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Legislative Session update

Interim President Watson stated the Legislative Session wrapped up the previous week and the College has yet to receive updates/interpretations of the actions taken by the Legislature and what they mean for Northwest College. There has been no formal update on the WIN money nor the \$12 million allocated to the community colleges for capital construction. The Legislature is tentatively planning a special session in July to address the federal stimulus funds. Part of those funds are allocated for higher education and healthcare capital construction projects. Interim President Watson stated there is some question as to whether the College could apply for a portion of those funds to use as our 50% match of the Student Center project. Interim President Watson also stated Legislators were asked to form an interim committee to address sustainable funding of the community colleges.

Federal stimulus funds

Interim President Watson referenced the financial report, prepared by Finance Director Brad Bowen, that is included in the Board packet. She stated Mr. Bowen has done an excellent job of tracking the federal funds received to date. The report shows the distribution of funds through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. The guidelines have held a component that funds must be distributed to students, and through that action, funds can then be utilized for institutional COVID-19 expenditures. The federal stimulus money is different, as is the federal capital construction money, in that the student support component is missing. The guidelines are unknown at this time, but the Governor has indicated he is developing a task force to look into how best to utilize the money within the state. As was done with the CARES money,

Giving Day results

Northwest College will work diligently to secure funds and utilize them to invest in areas that make a difference for the College as well as the community.

Interim President Watson referenced the Giving Day results memo in the Board packet and noted her desire to celebrate the success of that very positive day for the College. She invited Foundation Director Shelby Wetzel to expand on the outcome.

Shelby Wetzel stated that without previous experience, the Foundation wasn't sure what to expect and their main goal was high participation. They hoped for newer and younger donors and worked to generate excitement about supporting Northwest College. The outcome exceeded their expectations in that the number of gifts and dollar amount doubled their original goal. The effort to pull together the campus community was very successful and over \$100,000 was raised in one really special day.

Trustee Housel stated he feels more is being said than mere dollars and cents and noted the significance of the match dollars. He stated Clay and Lynn Cummins have done so much for the College and once again came through with a generous gift. The Paul Stock Foundation which was to have dissolved many years ago is still giving generously to Northwest College. Shelby commended Development Manager Cory Ostermiller for facilitating the challenge match dollars. Trustee Housel commented on the generosity of donors to the Equine, Music and Forensics programs. He also noted the strong support in memory of Berry Bryant. Shelby stated a friend of Berry's led the charge and generated support from many Riverton residents. Interim President Watson stated that as a result of the money donated in Berry's memory, a scholarship will be developed, and a memorial will be placed on campus. Planning is also underway to hold a memorial service on the anniversary of Berry's death.

Trustee Kuipers stated she appreciated the energy behind the event and was engaged in the social media feed.

Diamond Jubilee discussion

Interim President Watson stated the 75th anniversary of Northwest College will take place on September 10, 2021. She has asked Dean of Instruction Greg Thomas to chair a committee to integrate the celebration with Paint the Town Red festivities and other events and activities to celebrate throughout the year. The celebration will culminate in the spring with Paint the Campus Red. Interim President Watson stated it's important to celebrate the history of the College with the community and invited Trustees to share their ideas for celebrating 75 years of Northwest College.

Trustee Spomer stated the Heart Mountain Run and Hike is a nice part of the Paint the Town Red festivities and he's had community members expressing interest in taking part if the event is held again. Interim President Watson stated Paint the Town Red happens to coincide with Homesteader Days and therefore events will be planned in cooperation with that event. She will take his suggestion back to the committee for discussion.

Trustee Housel inquired if there was a budget associated with the celebration. Interim President Watson stated there isn't a specific budget yet and therefore it will be important to capitalize on events that were already planned. Trustee Housel inquired about the possibility of the Diamond Jubilee being represented in the Cody Stampede parade. Interim President Watson stated committee members have indeed discussed the possibility.

Budget reduction review

Interim President Watson stated the original Budget Reduction Recommendation memo, including notations of decisions already made as well as those yet to be made, is included in the Board packet. This has been a very difficult process and while the College works on transformational change, it will take time. Funding is impacted by outside influences as well, such as the Legislature and local levies. The conclusions represented in the recommendation come after much discussion and analysis at the College as well as the Trustee level. She commends the Board for their interest in gathering feedback, but noted it's difficult to hear the comments shared tonight and consideration must be given to those who will be most affected by the reduction in force. Interim President Watson stated she doesn't see the situation improving and noted she has not made any changes to the recommendation before the Board tonight.

Trustee Danko stated the Finance Committee is meeting the following afternoon, but the Committee stands behind the recommendation.

Board President Wurzel stated the decision in January indicated that action would be taken no later than April. He stated there needs to be a motion to either take action on the recommendation this evening, or to table it further.

A motion was made by the Finance Committee to move forward the Budget Reduction Recommendations for purposes of discussion.

Trustee Spomer stated the Finance Committee wanted to have further discussion this evening and allow another month to gather input and make a decision during the regular meeting in May. He also noted there is no indication that there would be additional information over the next month that would impact the decision. There are compelling arguments about the high quality of people and programs that will be affected by these cuts; however, it does not change the fact that we have to cut \$2.6 million.

Trustee Danko stated when the decision was delayed in January, Trustees did not realize the Legislature would take so long to come to a conclusion. There was also hope they would see value in supporting the colleges with additional revenue.

Board President Wurzel stated the voices for "getting off the fence" so there is certainty for those affected are beginning to drown out the other voices. He also stated that while we have focused on dollar amounts, we also need to consider that with declining enrollment, there is no longer a need for the same number of faculty.

Trustee Kuipers stated she felt the delay was specifically requested by many community members and doesn't feel the delay was needless. She noted that while there hadn't been discussion during the Board of Trustees meetings, there was ongoing discussion and analysis behind the scenes that was critical in building understanding.

Trustee Newsome stated the prognosis for Wyoming's economy in the next few years does not look to be any better than it is today. Enrollments have declined and finances have taken a steep dive. We also need to realize the other six community colleges and the University of Wyoming are in the same situation. He stated that we are faced with really hard facts and must be as forward thinking as possible.

Trustee Todd stated there has been a lot going on since January and he was supportive of delaying the decision in order to gain a clearer picture of the transformational efforts. Although there has been a lot of work done by

CampusWorks, it remains nebulous in terms of how it relates to personnel and courses and the decision before the Board. He stated policy is being followed and he doesn't feel there will be a structured plan for transformation between now and May.

Trustee Housel raised a point of order asking for clarification on the motion.

Trustee Spomer clarified his motion was to take action on part two of the Budget Reduction Recommendation that was tabled in January.

Trustee Housel stated he didn't feel the motion stated that clearly.

Trustee Spomer rescinded the Finance Committee's motion.

Trustee Housel stated that since the proposal was not listed on the agenda as an action item, he would be opposed to voting on it at this time. Instead, he proposed scheduling a special meeting of the Board to take place prior to the regular meeting of the Board in May..

Trustee Spomer stated the agenda was set up tonight to have discussion on the recommendation, which is why it's listed on the agenda as a discussion item with the intent of it being an actionable item on the May agenda. This delay between the two was to allow additional input as well as to provide all information in order for the Board to be able to make an informed decision.

Trustee Kuipers noted that the January meeting minutes state specifically that action would be taken no later than the April regular Board meeting. She also clarified the portion of the original motion that was tabled was invoking the Reduction in Force, according to policy 5510.

Board President Wurzel stated the agenda could be amended to include the Budget Reduction Recommendation under Unfinished business, which is an action item, or Trustees could choose to hold a special meeting.

Trustees discussed dates they would be available for a special meeting and decided to hold a Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees on Monday, April 19, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. in Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

Interim President Watson stated she would recommend a meeting notice be sent along with an agenda indicating the final decision for the budget reductions would be made during the special meeting. She stated a Citizens' Open Forum could be part of the meeting and the website comment option is still available as well. Interim President Watson reiterated that all departments have been reviewed and much analysis has gone into the recommendation and Trustees will need to be cognizant of that when making a decision.

In response to a question, Board President Wurzel stated that although there has been ample time for individuals to provide feedback, an additional opportunity should be provided at the special meeting. Trustees agreed to include a Citizens' Open Forum.

Trustee Spomer stated that if Trustees needed further clarification or have unresolved questions before being able to make a decision on the budget recommendation, he suggests those requests be submitted to the Finance Committee before their next meeting, which will take place on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

Interim President Watson stated she has sent potential dates for the May retreat to Trustees for consideration. The retreat agenda will include items such as Board governance and best practices, transformational change and moving from data gathering to coming to a consensus on the initiatives and the

investments necessary for transformation. She requested Trustees provide dates they would be available to Keli or herself.

Board President Wurzel stated he would like Trustees to have their thoughts ready on standing committees as well as special committees going forward.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 4:58 p.m.

Michael Gundlach stated he is an Instructor of Mathematics and also supports the Education department. He reminded Trustees he spoke at the January meeting regarding how the Board was handling the public feedback and he appreciates how the Board ensured the public felt heard regarding the budget reductions. While he appreciates the Board's desire to receive more public input, he feels the College has existed in a state of uncertainty for the past two-and-one-half months. He noted there has been no discussion regarding the budget reduction at the last two Board meetings and it's his understanding the vote will be delayed another month. Extending the uncertainty is having real consequences for the College. Specifically, with Advising Day being held tomorrow, he noticed a required class for the Elementary Education degree is missing from the fall 2021 schedule. With it not being on the schedule, he is unsure what he is to tell his advisees. Also, he is concerned that Education, the fourth largest program on campus, will be covered by a single fixed term instructor. Michael stated the 10 specific individuals who are likely to lose their jobs have spent the last three months unsure if it will happen. They are having to make difficult personal and professional life decisions and he feels the delay has treated them poorly. While Michael hopes the treatment was unintentional, he stated that if he was offered his position again, he's unsure if he would be interested in taking it due to the way he and others have been treated. He understands the personal cost of making this difficult decision but feels the Board has avoided the responsibility and challenges them to take action on the recommendation tonight.

Board President Wurzel read a letter presented by Patricia Lovell, as she was unable to attend the meeting personally. Patricia is an alum who cares deeply about the school and its future. She and her husband currently work full-time and her two children attend the Children's Learning and Care Center. When they heard of the potential closure, they made other childcare arrangements. Her children were unhappy because the care and education were not comparable to what they had been receiving and so she moved them back to the Care Center. Patricia feels the closure of the Children's Learning and Care Center will be a devastating loss to the community. The staff are outstanding and trustworthy professionals who are irreplaceable. The care provided to her children has allowed them to thrive. She has spoken to others in the community who also feel it will be a huge loss as quality childcare is difficult to find in Powell.

Kimberly Moore stated she graduated from the Nursing program in 2018. While reading the local newspaper, she became concerned when she read articles describing budget reductions at Northwest College and also an article describing the salary of former President Hicswa as well as the salary of current Interim President Watson. She understands that Presidents are important, but asks who the students remember and who impacts them the most. She also noted that in the budget reduction recommendation, it mentioned seven programs that had expenses larger than the revenue the generated. She asks if the President brings in revenue in excess of their salary. She feels the transformational work that is being done is a great opportunity for

the College to change the model. She feels Northwest College should not be offering liberal arts classes that students have free access to online. She feels the College should be looking to develop more trade programs such as nursing, welding, plumbing, construction, electricians, drafting and cosmetology. It will be a big shift in thinking, but one she feels is necessary.

The Citizen's Open Forum adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There were no unfinished business items on the agenda.

A NEW BUSINESS:

COVID-19 response update - Fall

Interim President Watson stated she asked ICS Planning and Operations Chief, Shaman Quinn to take over as the Incident Commander and work with the team to put together a plan for fiscal year 2021-22, including the Summer session. She stated she receives questions as to why we are continuing with the current protocols to which her response is that all students are not on campus and many are taking advantage of distance learning and we need to be consistent with instruction. Also, the opportunity hasn't been available for the campus community to be fully vaccinated. Interim President Watson noted that all community colleges as well as the University of Wyoming plan to be fully open in the fall. She stated that to go back to "normal" would be premature based on what is still going on in the world around us related to COVID variants. While the plan is to return to live classes, we will also need to be cognizant of the changing environment and be prepared to respond in order to keep health and safety in the fore front.

In response to a question from Board President Wurzel about the availability to students to get vaccinated in the fall, Interim President Watson stated there may not be a need if vaccine availability around the nation is high up until that point. None of the colleges in the state will be requiring vaccines for their students. Northwest College hosted a vaccine clinic on April 1, with 136 participants; the second shot will be available on April 22. She expressed her deep gratitude to Marneé Crawford, nursing faculty and nursing students for facilitating the vaccination clinic.

Board President Wurzel noted the flexibility of the plan should conditions change, to which Interim President Watson stated the College has invested heavily in order to provide flexible instruction and operations. She stated Northwest College has done an amazing job of keeping students in school and learning and keeping campus open and sickness levels in check. With the skills that have been learned and the tools that have been purchased, the College is prepared to be flexible moving forward.

A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Danko to approve the COVID-19 response plan.

Trustee Spomer inquired if all classes will be offered live and online. Interim President Watson responded that faculty have been encouraged to offer live instruction with a hybrid model when possible to allow for distance learning. Dr. Giraud stated the College has always offered live as well as online classes and will continue to do so. There is now the option of synchronous Zoom delivery and we don't want to abandon that option. For example, the BAS courses will be offered in all three formats to provide flexibility to students.

Motion carried.

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

Interim President Watson stated she has added future agenda topics to the agenda in order to inform Trustees of what is likely to come before the Board at the next meeting:

May Upcoming

1. Major maintenance projects update
2. Powell Valley Community Education (PVCE) contract for services renewal
3. Budget reduction recommendations
4. Preliminary FY22 budget review
5. Reduction in Force policy review
6. Board of Trustees budget review
7. President's Office budget review
8. Other TBD CampusWorks study session

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

WCCC Meeting, April 15, 2021, Casper
Juried Student Art & Design Exhibition, April 13 – May 8, 2021
Nurse's Pinning Ceremony, May 7, 2021, 3:00 p.m., NPA Auditorium
Commencement Exercises, May 8, 2021, 10:30 a.m., Cabre Gym
Next meeting, May 10, 2021, 3:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

LARRY TODD, Vice President/Secretary

Date