

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

September 12, 2022

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee MR. DUSTY SPOMER

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, President; DR. GERRY GIRAUD, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. KARLA DE LA ROCHA CARDOZA; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MS. NANCY GILMORE; MR. JEREMY HERRERA; MS. SUSAN LARSEN; MS. CHERI MATEO; MS. CAREY MILLER; MS. NANCY MILLER; MS. NAOKO OHNO; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; MS. CAMMY ROWLEY; 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: The regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees was called to order on Monday, September 12, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

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

MISSION MOMENT

President Watson thanked the Trustees for hosting the “Welcome Back” reception for employees that was held before the Board meeting.

President Watson invited Trustees to the President’s Barbecue and Club Fair that is being held the following day on the campus mall. She noted how great it is to have the students back and what energy they bring to campus.

President Watson introduced new employees who were present for the meeting: Jeremy Herrera, Computing Services Coordinator, and Network Administrator; Susan Larsen, Financial Aid and Scholarship Technician; Karla De La Rocha Cardoza, Visiting Fulbright Scholar for Spanish; Cheri Mateo, Interim Facilities Assistant; Naoko Ohno, Visiting Fulbright Scholar for Japanese; and Cammy Rowley, Fixed Term Assistant Professor of Education.

A CONSENT AGENDA: **A motion was made by Trustee Todd and seconded by Trustee Newsome to approve the consent agenda.**

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that state agencies with capital construction projects estimate their cost overruns to be approximately \$50 million. In addition, the University of Wyoming estimates its cost overruns to be \$142 million. The State Building Commission has submitted a proposal to the Governor’s office for consideration in the supplemental budget requests for \$50 million. If the request is included in the budget, Legislators could draft a bill to provide more or less funds than are proposed and also determine how the money will be allocated.

President Watson stated that the bids on the Student Center will close in mid-October, and then the College will have a clearer picture of costs. She also reminded Trustees that an 18% contingency was built into the project to help alleviate potential cost overruns.

President Watson stated that if bids come in higher than the contingency built into the project will cover, the College has two options. Further value engineering to bring costs down or put the project on hold until after the Legislative session to see if the supplemental budget request is supported. President Watson stated that the Governor had noted Northwest College’s

project as the best in the state regarding efficiency, effort, teamwork, etc. The College has done everything to meet the needs of the State on the project, and therefore, she hopes the State will support any potential cost overruns that might occur outside the College's control.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated the Soccer Team was in Great Falls when their bus broke down. Physical Plant staff delivered another bus to the team with minimal disruption and took the disabled bus to the repair shop, where it was fixed.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that Computing Services recently completed an audit concerning regulatory best practices. As a result of Eastern Wyoming College's data loss last year, the colleges hired a security consultant to evaluate each college's cyber security measures. The consultant stated that Northwest College received one of the highest initial assessment scores, which reflects the efforts staff have put into security. President Watson noted that an Executive Session should be held at some point about the College cybersecurity measures in place, as it would not be prudent to have that discussion in an open setting.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the search for the Vice President of Administrative Services and Finance position and the Finance Director position search had failed three times. CFOs are currently at a premium, and salary requirements are out of the College's reach. These positions have been advertised on fourteen different sites over the summer and didn't receive a good response. She has decided to contract with Pauly Group, a community college recruiting company, to assist with the VP position and the Robert Half company, which specializes in accountants, for the Finance Director position. These positions must be filled to meet accreditation and audit requirements, and at least one must be a CPA.

President Watson stated that the position of Finance Coordinator, Jo Ann Heimer's position, will open the following day. Jo Ann has been with Northwest College for 47 years and has announced her pending retirement. She will be able to cross-train the new employee and has agreed to potentially stay with the College part-time to assist in cross-training the other two positions.

Trustee Housel stated that he was encouraged by the significant increase in international students, as referenced in the Academic Affairs report. President Watson said she feels the growth is a direct reflection of the success of the Welcome to Wyoming Scholarship. She credits the hard work of the Communications and Marketing department and the efforts of Intercultural Programs as well as the Athletic Department.

Trustee Kuipers stated she is pleased to see President Watson involved in the economic development agencies in the area, as referenced in her report.

Trustee Kuipers also stated she appreciates the incredible spirit of the Classified and Professional Staff for developing and welcoming relationships with the student-athletes through the meals they provided.

In response to a question from President Wurzel, President Watson stated that a formal agreement had not been reached regarding the College's use of the fairground's kitchen facility. The county attorneys are currently drafting the documents, and she has been told to expect them soon.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated Northwest College has a room at the Cody High School that is available for usage on demand. The College held a class there last fall, but the class didn't

meet the minimum enrollment requirement in the spring. The College has placed signage up, and President Watson intends to follow up with the new Superintendent of Cody Schools, Vernon Orndorff.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the August 8, 2022, regular meeting, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Accreditation – Year 4 Assurance
Review

President Watson shared with great enthusiasm a letter from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and their subsequent report advising Northwest College that it has successfully completed its Year 4 Assurance Review with no recommended monitoring.

President Watson referenced Vice President Giraud's report in the Consent Agenda that stated the College provided over 500 evidence documents in its submittal to HLC. Good work is happening at Northwest College every day, which was reflected in the outcome of the report.

President Wurzel noted that while the report indicates Northwest College met the required criteria, HLC also made suggestions in certain areas, such as adopting a master syllabus.

President Watson stated that HLC has hundreds of reviewers across the nation who come from different backgrounds with different opinions. The College must listen to what HLC the organization is saying first and foremost. It must also evaluate suggestions from individual reviewers and determine if they have merit. Next up in the cycle, the College will identify a quality improvement project but will continue its ongoing assessment and improvement through various committees such as Retention, Curriculum, Institutional Effectiveness, etc.

Trustee Housel echoed President Watson's enthusiasm for the results from the review and stated that in his memory, this is the first review in which there were no findings. He referenced the report stating that HLC expressed confidence in the operations of the Board of Trustees. Since Trustees themselves were not interviewed, HLC gathered its information from the agendas, minutes, policies, etc., it was reviewed, and he is pleased with their findings.

Vice President Giraud stated that regarding the master syllabus suggestion, the College utilizes what it calls a universal syllabus. In his conversations with Karen Solomon, the College's liaison at HLC, she reiterated that the College met all criteria and that the suggestions from the reviewers should be used as a resource for the future. Vice President Giraud stated he is very pleased with the outcome of the review and that the College does not have any additional reporting responsibilities.

PACE Survey results

Upon invitation from President Watson, Lisa Smith shared an overview of results from the PACE climate survey conducted every other year to evaluate employee satisfaction in various areas. Four campus climates are measured with questions: 1) institutional structure, 2) student focus, 3) supervisory relationships, and 4) teamwork. Of the 238 employees surveyed, 133 (56%) responded. She stated that overall, participants indicated

satisfaction with the College, and results were significantly higher than those

received from the 2020 survey; 89% of the survey items were higher.

Lisa indicated that in comparison with the PACE norm base, all institutions that took part in the survey, and all small two-year institutions, Northwest College scored much higher on many of the questions than the other comparison groups, especially in supervisory relationships and teamwork.

Questions are asked on a five-point scale, ranging from one, very dissatisfied, to five, very satisfied. The overall average of responses for all items measured was 3.932.

President Watson pointed out that the lowest scoring question is, "I am paid fairly for my work." She stated that advocacy for compensation is a priority and noted it is an item on the President's Office Operational Plan and the Strategic Plan.

Overall, President Watson is delighted with the outcome of the survey and feels the work that has been done through various feedback sessions and ongoing events to promote open communication has been valuable. It will be important for the College to keep communication open and take action, when possible, on the feedback received.

Draft Strategic Plan 2030 outline

President Watson presented the draft Strategic Plan 2030 outline for review and stated it is a result of campuswide workshops that identified strategies and tactical ideas to support the Vision: Distinction or Destination of Place. The first draft of the Strategic Plan will be presented during the October Board meeting.

President Watson stated that Vision 2025 work seamlessly integrated with the CampusWorks efforts and was leveraged in the selection of the four pillars as they relate to the vision of distinction or destination: 1) Innovative Academic Programming; 2) Attract New Students and Quality Employees; 3) Champion Student and Employee Retention and Success, and 4) Revitalize Campus. She stated that the wording was modified to include employees. She feels it is an excellent addition since employees are the heartbeat of the campus.

Strategies and tactics related to each of the pillars were then developed from feedback received during the campus workshops held in May and August. President Watson expressed her appreciation for employees' willingness to participate in the workshops and provide valuable feedback.

Once completed, the Strategic Plan is meant to be a steering document for the campus as we advance. Various committees, divisions, or departments will be tasked with developing and working the strategies and tactics further and operationalizing the goals.

Trustee Housel commended President Watson for completing the work in such a timely fashion. He appreciates that she met the request of the Board to develop the Strategic Plan and present it during the September meeting, in addition to her many other tasks.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the purpose statement reads Distinction or Destination of Place vs. Distinction and Destination of Place is to prevent eliminating strategies or goals that would be unique to one or the other.

President Wurzel stated he feels it is a very comprehensive document and covers everything well. He expressed his appreciation of the amount of work

that went into the development.

Trustee Todd stated he feels it is a very well-designed and effective roadmap. He commented that he would like to see the tactics expanded under the strategy of “promoting and enhancing academic programming that aligns with the distinction or destination of place.”

President Watson stated it was the one strategy that was difficult to expand upon and develop during the summer months when faculty were not on campus. She looks forward to developing it further now that faculty have returned.

Big Horn Basin High School Report

Upon invitation from President Watson, Lisa Smith shared the annual Big Horn Basin (BHB) High School Report, which shows three-year averages of area high school students who enrolled at Northwest College following graduation. For the past three years, 521 students graduated from BHB high schools, and 125 students (24%) enrolled at NWC. Of those, eighty-nine had been concurrent or dual enrolled. The schools that sent the largest percentages of their graduating classes to NWC were Powell, Rocky Mountain, Lovell, and Cody.

In Fall 2021, 17% of NWC first-time, full-time students were placed into developmental writing, compared to 16% of BHB graduates and 13% of BHB concurrent or dual enrolled graduates. Fifty-three percent of NWC first-time, full-time students placed into developmental math, compared to 46% of BHB graduates and 38% of BHB concurrent or dual enrolled graduates.

Of Fall 2020 students who started school that semester, 54% of all NWC first-time, full-time students, 47% of BHB graduates, and 53% of BHB concurrent or dual enrolled graduates returned to NWC in Fall 2021. While these are lower numbers than the College typically sees, preliminary numbers for students who began in Fall 2021 and returned in Fall 2022 are trending up.

Northwest College has a very high graduation rate as a college and former BHB students. For the cohort starting school in Fall 2018 and completed in three years, 46% graduated. Of the former BHB students, 33% graduated in two years, 46% graduated in three years, and 51% graduated in four years or more. BHB students who are concurrent or dual enrolled tend to retain and graduate at higher rates than the College’s average.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel regarding the lower number of Cody and Meeteetse high school students enrolling at Northwest College, President Watson stated she has had many conversations with Meeteetse Superintendent Shane Ogden. The school district is revising its academic design and plans to split students into a career and technical track or an academic track. Conversations continue regarding how the College can best serve the students.

President Watson stated she had met with the former Cody Superintendent several times, which was the genesis of the classroom in Cody High School. She will be meeting with the new Superintendent soon to continue discussions regarding additional ways the College can better serve Cody students.

President’s Operational Plan 2023

President Watson shared the President’s Operational Plan for the next fiscal year. She noted the duplicity is intentional, as there are several focus items this year, and they align with the Board’s and President’s goals and priorities that Trustees earlier set.

The first page of the plan focuses on the Strategic Plan from a project

management perspective. Four parts encompass plan development, review, approval, and operationalization of the plan.

The next page consists of advocating for compensation and benefits; updating and implementing the Marketing Plan and the Strategic Enrollment and Retention Plan; participating in the Wyoming Innovative Partnership (WIP); and finally, leading the construction of the new Student Center.

Trustee Kuipers noted the duplicity in the Operational Plan and the Strategic Plan and also the duplicity in some of the prior reports about some of the same issues, such as compensation and the Student Center. She feels the redundancy refines the focus of the Board on the areas of importance for the year. She appreciates the timeliness and organized way all of these items have been presented.

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:

Course/lab fee proposals

A motion was made by Trustee Danko and seconded by Trustee Housel to approve the course/lab fee proposals as presented. Motion carried.

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

October 10, 2022, upcoming:

- Longitudinal Enrollment report
- Marketing report
- Academic program development update
- Facilities Master Plan update
- Distribute Board self-assessment
- Schedule Winter Board Retreat
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Paint the Town Red September 16, 2022, 4:00 p.m., Downtown Powell
Vocal Jazz Academy, October 1, 2022, NPA
WCCC Commission mtg., October 5-6, 2022, 8:30 a.m., Gillette College
Next meeting, October 10, 2022, 4:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building
ACCT Leadership Congress, October 26-29, 2022, New York, NY

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

LARRY TODD, Vice President/Secretary

Date