

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

December 11, 2023

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: MS. LISA WATSON, President; MR. DAVE ERICKSON, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. DEE HAVIG, Interim Vice President for Student Services; MS. JILL ANDERSON, MS. ANNA CRAGOE, DR. MARNEÉ CRAWFORD; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; DR. GERALD GIRAUD; MR. MARK GRANT; MS. JO ANN HEIMER; MR. R.J. KOST; MS. JEN LITTERER-TREVIÑO; DR. AMY MCKINNEY; MS. CAREY MILLER; MR. DICK NELSON; DR. ASTRID NORTHRUP; MR. JAKE SCHRICKLING; 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: President Mark Wurzel called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, December 11, 2023, at 3:02 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building.

A APPROVE THE AGENDA: President Watson requested that the distribution of Disclosure of Interest forms be stricken from the agenda. Once the approved depositories are established, this item will come before the Board in January or February.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Spomer to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

STUDY SESSION: Trustees toured the Student Center construction project.

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

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that a payment in the check register to NCHERM Group, LLC is for legal and consulting work related to Title IX.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the modest compensation increases for state employees included in the Governor's budget are designated as going into effect in the second year of the biennium and would amount to approximately a 1-3% increase.

Trustee Housel stated that he appreciates the details provided in the President's report related to work being done in the various pillars of the Strategic Plan.

Trustee Housel expressed his appreciation that the College continues to host the North Big Horn Basin District Clinic and is the only college in the state to do so. He feels it benefits area music students and acts as a great recruiting tool.

Trustee Housel requested that the CDL program provide year-to-date graduation totals in its report that are included in the monthly Academic Affairs report.

Trustee Housel said he is pleased that faculty are participating in educational discussions on artificial intelligence (AI) and associated best practices.

Trustee Kuipers thanked the Enrollment Services department for another successful Preview Day and acknowledged the extraordinary work done with the strategic recruitment efforts.

In response to a question from President Wurzel, President Watson stated that the College should hopefully know by the February Board meeting if the Higher Learning Commission has accepted the Quality Initiative proposal.

President Wurzel congratulated Jeremiah Howe, NWC's Marketing/Graphic Design Specialist, who won the competition to design the new Powell mural that will be placed on the Bean Mill.

Trustee Spomer stated he was grateful for the opportunity to tour the Student Center project. During the tour, he spoke to Jake Schrickling with the Wyoming State Construction Department, who was highly complementary of the College, Administrators, and everyone involved in the project from the standpoint of staying on budget, as it's not common amongst projects across the state. Trustee Spomer expressed his appreciation to those who worked diligently to stay on budget while building a facility that will serve students, the College, and the community well into the future.

In response to a question from President Wurzel, President Watson stated she would likely schedule a tour of the new CTD location at the newly acquired Armory building for Trustees during the February Board meeting.

Upon invitation from President Watson, Jack Schrickling stated the Student Center construction is going very well for a project of its size and scale. Weekly meetings review progress and ensure the project is under budget and on time. The building will look the same on the exterior, while rough-in work on the mechanical systems inside will occur. Exterior work, such as brick and metal panels, will resume in spring.

Jake further explained the project contains an owner's contingency as well as a construction contingency for unexpected expenses that may arise. Roughly \$290k has been expended due to the clay layer discovered during excavation. Also, additional exterior lighting was added. Approximately \$575k remains of the construction contingency. Jake reiterated that the project staying on budget results from diligent work by the College, Groathouse Construction, their subcontractors, HCM, and the design team. This model project has been used as an example by the Wyoming State Construction Department.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda was approved, including the minutes of the November 9, 2023, special meeting/retreat and the November 13, 2023, regular meeting.

DISCUSSION/ INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Marketing Update

Carey Miller shared a handout to be referenced during her presentation and stated that the report is based on the fiscal year 2023. She noted that the target audiences, key messaging, target programs, and primary generations targeted have not changed. The current campaign has been running for several years, although new targets have been added in consideration of the Welcome to Wyoming Scholarship and the Bachelor of Applied Science degree.

Carey stated the College added three new platforms within the last year. The first, Advance 360 Education, is a full-service agency specializing in higher education and runs the campaign's digital arm. They manage a pay-per-click search campaign and Social Lead Generation, including display and video ad campaigns.

The second platform is Niche, a top ten national college search platform that provides tools for prospective students to find the best school. Niche contains a

profile of every college and university. Northwest College pays for a premium profile, including sponsored listings on competitor profiles, high-intent lead generation services, and cross-interest prospects. It also includes display, social, and search remarketing.

The third platform is CampusReel, a platform for end-to-end student-generated video development and deployment. It includes a college profile for prospective students to learn more about Northwest College through videos. It's considered participative marketing, including real stories from Northwest College students about their experiences at the College. CampusReel also acts as the video content management system for the promotional marketing produced by Ronnie Wolfe, Interim Multimedia Production Specialist. The videos are also embedded with a link for more information if a viewer desires to learn more about the College. It also contains a virtual tour platform for showcasing 360-degree images of campus buildings and facilities.

Carey stated that the original campaign was to have lasted for five years. The College is in its sixth year due to the recent development of the Strategic Plan, which will inform the next marketing plan.

President Watson added that they have learned at recent conferences that the message of location, quality, value, and experience are industry standard marketing messages. Prospective students are looking for these qualities when selecting colleges.

Carey shared analytics from the marketing efforts. The Advance 360 Education campaign generated 101 leads to Admissions and is experiencing a 7.4% click-through rate. The Social Lead Generation has a click-through rate of 1.71% and generated 108 leads to Admissions. Both have outperformed the benchmarks in the Education category.

Carey stated that the Niche premium profile is valuable in many ways. It generated 80k inquiries and cross-interest prospects, 58k total sponsored listing impressions, and 92k remarketing impressions.

There were 72 videos uploaded to CampusReel, of which 19 were student-generated. There were also 18 virtual tour stops. Request for Information forms that were embedded within the videos generated 81 leads.

Carey stated that in the last year, there were 183k total users (177k new) of the website and 1 million views. There was a transition to Google Analytics 4 (GA4) in March 2023, which introduced changes in what is measured and how. Comparing year-to-year analytics will not be comparable again until April 2024.

The engagement rate on social media (unpaid) content rose by 43.9% per impression over the previous year. All platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and X/Twitter, saw increased engagement.

Trustee Kuipers stated that the success of the various platforms highlighted in the presentation is very exciting. It is evident that the decision-making of the Communications and Marketing team has been very thoughtful, and she is grateful for the fiduciary stewardship of the department.

Trustee Laursen appreciated that the data is constantly being looked at and analyzed.

President Watson stated she feels there have been some significant improvements over the past two years. The addition of the videographer has been essential when considering how today's students prefer to receive video

content in messages. Committing budget dollars to the website is also crucial when considering the competition in higher education. Colleges are all competing for a diminishing pool of students.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Carey stated there is a need to poll or survey students to determine which of the four (location, quality, value, experience) was the deciding factor in the choice to come to Northwest College. She would, however, be able to look at the different ads to determine which content received more engagement.

President Watson added that she is always amazed at how many alumni refer to their experience at Northwest College. That may not have been why they chose to come, but they leave having had a positive experience.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Carey stated she relies on the advice of various agencies to help determine how to divide the financial resources between the target programs and the brand itself being advertised. It continuously shifts in response to various contributing factors as well. The generational targeting is done by using the preferred platform for each audience.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:00 p.m.

R.J. Kost thanked the Trustees for considering his application to fill the vacancy left by Dusty Spomer's resignation from the Board.

R.J. stated that whether it's a four-year degree, associate degree, certification, or micro-credential, education provides opportunity, and Northwest College provides options. As Northwest College looks to the future to meet students' needs, options for student opportunities must continue to grow. The Strategic Plan and financial preparation will be leading factors in the continued educational success of the students.

R.J. stated that he would like to participate in this exciting time for the College. He has always supported and believed in the College and has devoted his life to education. He hopes to positively affect the College if he is chosen to fill the vacant seat on the Board of Trustees.

A NEW BUSINESS:

FY2023 Audit Approval

President Watson stated that this is a second reading of the FY2023 audit, and no changes were made from last month.

Trustee Housel stated that it's impressive that there were no findings related to the federal programs because of the difficulty in adhering to all the regulations associated with them. He is also happy to see no findings with the financial statements.

A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Laursen to approve the FY2023 Audit as presented.

Academic Program Approval

Dr. Marneé Crawford, Chairperson for the Health Professions Division, referenced the Paramedic Certificate proposal included in the Board materials and stated the proposal results from many conversations with students, prospective students, and the College's clinical partners.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) across the state are in dire need of additional workers. Northwest College has an active Paramedic program, and

she suggests that students be given an option of earning a certificate rather than going through the complete AAS degree. Students would have the option to take four core courses to complete and be able to enter the workforce sooner if they choose to do so. This also serves students who have already earned a degree, are choosing a career change, and need specialized training.

Students entering the program would begin in the summer and continue through fall and spring, completing the program at the end of the following summer. Students will have the option to enter the AAS degree program at any time or leave the AAS program and earn a certificate as well. The program intends to be a flexible opportunity to increase degree attainment while capturing a population of students not interested in earning an AAS degree, all while building the workforce.

This proposal does not change the pathway, as students must be an advanced EMT to apply to the program. Applications are accepted in the spring, with all participants beginning together in the summer.

Marneé stated that the program does not require additional resources from the College. It provides an additional opportunity for students to choose an alternate pathway to join the workforce. The program aligns with other programs nationwide, as offering a certificate in a paramedic program is standard practice. LCCC currently offers this option, and Casper College is working to establish its program. The coursework, titles, and numbering have also aligned with those colleges.

Marneé pointed out corrections to the proposal in the Board packet. On the last page, the Paramedic III course designator should be changed to EMS 2800, and the Paramedic IV course designator should be EMS 2895.

Marneé stated she has been privileged to have the opportunity to participate in Governor Gordon's statewide WIP-funded Allied Health Consortium. Individuals from around the state gather to discuss and prioritize healthcare workforce needs. The state has many needs, especially in nursing, physicians, EMS, and mental health. It is necessary to remove the obstacles and challenges that students face to reach completion and enter the workforce in these areas. Marneé appreciates the opportunity to represent and speak about the challenges rural areas face regarding healthcare workforce needs.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, Marneé stated that students may choose at any point they wish to take a different path by switching between the certificate and AAS program. There is no point at which they must decide which pathway to take.

In response to a question from Trustee Spomer, Marneé stated these students are adults who must have Advanced EMT. Therefore, they will not likely be living in campus housing.

In response to a question from Trustee Laursen, Marneé stated this is a national certification, and these students will complete the same exam as the AAS students to earn the same certification.

President Watson reminded Trustees that if approved by the Board, the program proposals will go forward to the Academic Affairs Council for review and approval and then to the Wyoming Community College Commission in February.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Newsome to approve the proposed Paramedic Certificate program.

Motion carried.

Dr. Astrid Northrup, Chairperson of the STEM Division, stated that the Software Development program proposal culminates years of collaborative work by a statewide work group. It is a WIP-funded program between many community colleges and the University of Wyoming to increase academic offerings and available resources in the state for the high-tech sector.

The two-year Software Development program will be a two-year AS degree that Sheridan, Western, Central, and Northwest Colleges offer. The first two years are offered in concert with the other community colleges involved, and the University of Wyoming provides the last two years. The vision is that students can take their general education, core Computer Science basics, and Software Development courses at their community college.

The program's curriculum consists of between sixty-seven and seventy-one credits. It includes general education, Math, and Computer Science requirements, plus thirty-six credits of Software Development courses. The Software Development courses will be offered online as part of a cohort by one or two community colleges at a particular time. Online students from all over the state will participate in the cohort. Of the twelve courses that are being proposed, eleven are new to Northwest College.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Astrid stated that the Software Development courses will be taught exclusively online. The department is actively searching for a Computer Science STEM faculty position. This instructor will teach Software Development courses in addition to Computer Science courses. The Software Development courses will be designed in concert with the other colleges to determine which college is teaching what classes at any given time.

In response to a question from President Wurzel, President Watson clarified that the faculty position currently being searched is a fully funded position that was vacated with the passing of Raymond Floyd. The College received WIP funding to aid in the development of the program.

In response to a question from Trustee Laursen, Astrid stated that data indicates that the field is growing significantly in the United States. From 2020 plus ten years, it is projected to grow by 22%. The idea is that if Wyoming has the infrastructure and the trained employees, it will be a desirable location for tech companies.

Astrid stated that this program is ideal for people who want to work in the computer industry but don't want to go through the math requirements necessary to earn a degree in Computer Science. While Computer Science requires Calculus I and II, the Software Development program requires College Algebra and Statistics. It is focused on developing applications within the Computer Science industry rather than forwarding the field itself through research.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers, Astrid stated that the Software Development program is not a locked cohort. Students in other programs, such as Computer Science, can take the classes as long as the prerequisites are met.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Astrid stated that there is no data on the current job market in Wyoming because most of the Software Development work is done by out-of-state consultants. The job opportunities are online and flexible for workers seeking employment.

In response to a question from Trustee Laursen, Astrid explained that the University is still working to complete the curriculum for their program. There are many people involved in the creation of the Software Development program, such as the Governor, the WIP initiative, the community colleges, and the University. All desire the program to succeed, and the way to keep moving the State forward is to work together to make it happen.

A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Housel to approve the proposed Software Development program. Motion carried.

Project Pay – VPASF duties

A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Spomer to approve the project pay in accordance with policy and as outlined in the memo presented to Trustees to President Watson for performing VPASF duties. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Trustee Housel and seconded by Trustee Laursen to move into executive session. Motion carried, and the executive session convened at 5:58 p.m.

A motion was made by Trustee Housel and seconded by Trustee Kuipers to adjourn the executive session and move into open session. Motion carried, and the executive session adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

A NEW BUSINESS (CONT.)

Board Vacancy

President Wurzel thanked the applicants who expressed interest and applied to fill the Board vacancy created by Trustee Spomer's move out of Park County School District #1.

The Board elected R.J. Kost to fill the Board vacancy position via secret ballot.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There were no unfinished business items on the agenda.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS
AND COMMITTEE
APPOINTMENTS**

Trustee Spomer presented the nominations for officers proposed by the Nomination Committee of himself, Trustee Kuipers, and Trustee Todd as follows:

- Trustee Tara Kuipers as President
- Trustee Denise Laursen as Vice President/Secretary
- Trustee Bob Newsome as Treasurer.

A motion was made by Trustee Spomer and seconded by Trustee Todd to elect the nominees to serve a one-year term as follows: Trustee Tara Kuipers as President, Trustee Denise Laursen as Vice President/Secretary, and Trustee Bob Newsome as Treasurer. Motion carried.

President Kuipers announced the recommended committee and delegate appointments. The assignments will become finalized in January once Trustee Kost is consulted regarding his appointments:

- Facilities Committee: Trustees Housel (Chair), Newsome, and Laursen
- Finance Committee: Trustees Newsome (Chair), Todd, and Kost
- Policy & Student Success Committee: Trustees Wurzel (Chair), Todd, and Laursen

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) will be as follows:

- Park County School District #1 (Powell): Trustees Wurzel and Laursen
- Big Horn County School District #2 (Lovell): Trustees Housel and Kost
- Big Horn County School District #3 (Greybull): Trustees Newsome and Todd

President Kuipers and Trustee Wurzel will be delegates to the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees (WACCT) and the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC).

President Kuipers will serve as the NWC Foundation Board representative.

ANNUAL SIGNING OF THE BOARD CODE OF ETHICS

Trustees signed the Board Code of Ethics.

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

January 8, 2024, upcoming:

- Disclosure of Interest form completion
- Legislative session talking points/advocacy
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Faculty Jazz Christmas Concert, December 11, 2023, 5:30 p.m., NPA

Final Exams, December 13-15, 2023

Women & Men Basketball, December 15-16, 2023, 5:30 p.m. Cabre Gym

Nursing Pinning, December 15, 2023, 3:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building

Residence Halls Close, December 16, 2023, Powell

Campus Closed Holiday Break, December 22, 2023 – January 1, 2024

Next meeting, January 8, 2024, 4:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building, Powell

Trustee Wurzel thanked Trustee Spomer for his years of service, expertise, and willingness to be forthright and direct when it was called for. He will be missed.

Trustee Spomer stated that it has been a privilege and pleasure to work with the Board and that while some of the tasks were difficult, he is proud of the good work done during his tenure. He thanked the Trustees for letting him serve with them.

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

DENISE LAURSEN, Vice President/Secretary

Date