

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

March 4, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice President/Secretary MS. DENISE LAURSEN; Treasurer MR. BOB NEWSOME; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MR. R.J. KOST, DR. LARRY TODD, and DR. MARK WURZEL.

MEMBERS ABSENT: President MS. TARA KUIPERS

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, MR. DUSTIN DICKS, MS. JEN LITTERER-TREVIÑO, MR. CORY OSTERMILLER, MR. DENNIS QUILLEN, MR. JAKE SCHRICKLING, MS. LISA SMITH, MR. TED SMITH, 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: In President Tara Kuipers' absence, Trustee Dr. Mark Wurzel called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, March 4, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Cody Center, Room 2014.

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

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

President Watson recognized and congratulated the Trapper Wrestling team for finishing eighth in the nation and noted that Coach Zeigler has had teams place within the top ten for many years. Northwest College had eight wrestlers who qualified for Nationals this year. Wrestler Aziz Fayzullaev earned his second consecutive national title, Cody Pinkerton placed second, and Orrin Jackson placed fourth.

President Watson thanked Trustee Kost for bringing the Senior Strength and Balance program to the Johnson Fitness Center. The College has partnered with Deb White, who facilitates the grant that allows twenty-five Senior Citizens to attend workouts twice weekly.

President Watson reminded Trustees that Giving Day will occur on March 21-22 this year. There are many match opportunities, and there will be an "all-in" emphasis on employee participation in supporting the Student Center. The Foundation will provide a follow-up report during the April Board meeting.

Shelby Wetzel added that the DeWitt family will provide a match opportunity for donors who support naming the Student Club space after the late John DeWitt to carry on his legacy.

President Watson stated that representatives from the State Construction Department, architects, and contractors visited the Student Center project site earlier that day. Upon President Watson's invitation, Jake Schrickling from the State Construction Department gave an update on the Student Center project.

Jake stated that the project is progressing nicely. Since his last visit in December, the drywall on the first floor has been finished. The second floor is framed and roughed in, and inspection was passed earlier so drywall can be installed. They also met with the artist and viewed the public art display renderings. Time was also spent with Keith McCallister to discuss logistics for the Outdoor Rec space.

President Watson stated that she plans to provide another tour for Trustees later this spring or summer.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel related to the Governor's comment during the Commission meeting about his interest in moving the colleges' dependency off the legislature, President Watson stated she is unsure if he meant he would like more stable funding for the community colleges with fewer variables from the legislature. She is also curious about his meaning.

Trustee Housel thanked Trustee Wurzel for agreeing to serve as the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees (WACCT) Vice President and appreciates the time commitment involved.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that if a student has money left over after their scholarship is applied to their bill, the College issues refunds directly to the student, which can be used for other expenses. Most scholarships don't have constraints that state a student must return the money if they withdraw from school.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that while the College has policies and procedures for addressing minors on campus, insurance companies require a more comprehensive policy. A new policy is being developed; it will go through the proper shared governance processes at the College, then to the Board Policy and Student Success Committee for review, and finally to the Board for consideration.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the new FAFSA and redundancy requirements necessitated the College restructure its Financial Aid staffing. Adequate staffing is necessary to ensure the College follows best practices related to the federal regulations.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated that Financial Aid Director Shaman Quinn is responsible for Northwest College being the second Title IV institution to use the new process to complete the Application for Approval to Participate in the federal student financial aid programs. Shaman is considered an expert in the area and has been asked to provide feedback to address the process's shortcomings.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated that Institutional Research Manager Lisa Smith and Finance Director Mark Grant have submitted documents seeking approval for Northwest College to be a Title III-eligible school. This designation is based on service to a needs-based student population and would allow the College to be given additional consideration for specific federal grants.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated that the Nursing, EMS, and Criminal Justice programs are collaborating to create training for a mass casualty event. The scenarios are not college-related, but they will allow the students to work together within their scope of practice.

Trustee Wurzel reported that the PCSD#1 BOCES Board is interested in supporting a program that would teach all kindergarten and first graders how to ride a bike. They intend to purchase a van, trailer, and bicycles and travel to different elementary schools to ensure all students learn to ride a bike.

Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the February 5, 2024, regular meeting, was approved.

**DISCUSSION/
INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

State Performance Indicators
Report

Lisa Smith shared highlights of the Wyoming Community Colleges' annual Performance Indicators Report, based on yearly data each WY community college submits to the state. The link to the full report is included in the Board packet.

Of the first-time degree or certificate-seeking students who started at Northwest College in Fall 2022, 58% of full-time students graduated by or returned to Northwest College in Fall 2023 (state average: 61%), which is the full-time retention rate. Of the same cohort, 68% of full-time students graduated by or enrolled at any institution in Fall 2023 (state average: 69%), which is the full-time persistence rate. The part-time retention rate is 22% (state average: 39%). Northwest College's rates have typically been comparable to national two-year institutions, which ranged from 60-63% during the past decade.

Of the first-time, full-time, degree, or certificate-seeking students starting in Fall of 2019, 42% graduated within three years (state average: 38%). Northwest College has maintained completion rates above the state and national rates for most of the past decade. Lisa feels that retention efforts on campus, such as first-year seminar classes, co-requisite math and English courses, course maps for student program completion, etc., have all contributed to the increasing rates.

Lisa further explained that combining completion and transfer rates gives a more complete picture of student success. For the most recent six cohorts, 56-60% of students completed or transferred within three years of starting at Northwest College.

Lisa stated that the transfer rate without a degree has decreased over the past ten years, whereas the completion rate has increased. She attributes that to the College's efforts to encourage students to finish their degrees before transferring.

2024 Legislative Update

President Watson said this is the last week of the scheduled Legislative session. She included a chart created by Erin Taylor, WACCT Executive Director, listing the community college's interests and their standing between the House and Senate bills.

A few items align with the House and the Senate, such as WIP funding and support for Rodeo teams. Differences lie with inflation adjustments, employee compensation, etc. There will be continued shuffling during the week before the colleges know what will be supported.

The funding is currently stable, but inflationary funding would be beneficial. Utilities contracted services, and most expenses continue to increase.

President Watson reminded Trustees that the governor's budget included employee compensation for the second year of the biennium. She has heard in the community that the perception is that the community colleges have already received 16% pay increases. That amount is an average obtained by all state agencies; however, the colleges received a 3% increase one year, followed by a 4% increase, for a total of 7%.

There are also many different bills moving through committees related to property taxes.

President Watson stated she is unsure how the repeal of gun-free zones will turn out. She noted that the bill states that students would not be allowed to carry guns in K-12; however, there is currently no language in the bill that allows for local control or limitations on a student's ability to carry guns on college campuses. Faculty across the state have voiced concerns about their rights regarding students carrying guns in classrooms.

President Watson stated that the DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) bill is in committee. If passed, it would eliminate any diversity, equity, or inclusion activities funded by the colleges. No such activities are funded, nor are any academic programs focused on DEI at Northwest College. Currently, student fees fund student clubs. Several questions remain if the bill passes.

President Watson is not optimistic about a timely reconciliation of the budget. A \$1 billion difference between the House and the Senate will be difficult to reconcile in the next few days.

Schedule Spring Board Retreat

President Watson reminded the Trustees that Northwest College won a free retreat facilitator from ACCT. Once the facilitator's availability is established, Trustees will receive a Doodle Poll to determine a date.

CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:01 p.m.

Ted Smith expressed his appreciation to the Board and Northwest College. He earned degrees in 2021 and 2023 and will earn another in 2024.

Five years ago, Mr. Smith's circumstances changed, and he enrolled in computer classes. He then interned at a veterinary clinic and earned a degree in Agriculture Education, followed by a degree in Elementary and Secondary Education. He will complete his Range Management degree next year.

Thanks to his education, Mr. Smith began working as a custodian at the Park County Complex and is now the Horticultural Program Coordinator for the University of Wyoming Extension.

Mr. Smith said he wouldn't trade his education at Northwest College for one from Ohio State, where he started. He again expressed his gratitude for his excellent education as a Northwest College student.

A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There were no unfinished business items on the agenda.

A NEW BUSINESS:

FY2025 Proposed Meal Plan Rates

President Watson stated that the proposal in the Board packet calls for an increase of \$110 on all meal plans. A new premium package option, which allows students to eat three meals daily and includes additional Flex Bucks, has also been added.

President Watson explained that the ongoing construction project into the fall would still require consumables, food transportation costs, etc. Operations will shift once construction is complete, which has made determining rates for the upcoming year difficult.

The fairgrounds kitchen will be utilized until Sodexo is moved into the Student Center, which is expected over the holiday break. President Watson expressed her appreciation to the County Commissioners for their willingness to support the College and ensure its ability to feed students.

Instead of an "all you care to eat" meal plan, the new plan consists of a block

meal, which means that students go through the line once, but the serving sizes are much bigger than the original plan. The block meal plan will begin in the fall so students can get used to the new design.

A motion was made by Trustee Laursen and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the FY2025 Proposed Meal Plan Rates as presented. Motion carried.

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

April 8, 2024, upcoming:

- State Fall Enrollment Report
- Major Maintenance projects update
- Spring Board Retreat reminder
- Other TBD

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Last day of Legislative session, March 8, 2024, Cheyenne
MBB/WBB Region IX Tournament Play-In Game, March 9, 2024, TBA
NWC Spring Break, March 13-17, 2024
MBB/WBB Region IX Tournament, March 14-16, 2024, TBA
Nursing & Allied Health Career Fair, March 20, 2024, YB
NWC Foundation Giving Day, March 21-22, 2024, 12:00 PM – 12:00 PM
Stothart Readings, March 21, 2024, 12:00 PM, Hinckley Library
Pops Concert, March 21, 2024, 7:00 PM, NPA
Experience Day, March 22, 2024, NWC Campus
MBB/WBB NJCAA National Tournament, March 24-30, 2024
Spring Recess, March 29 – April 1, 2024
Phi Rho National Tournament, April 1-6, 2024, Reno, NV
Jazz Night, April 6, 2024, 5:30 PM, YB
April Board meeting, April 8, 2024, 4:00 PM, YB

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

DENISE LAURSEN, Vice President/Secretary

Date