

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

October 14, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: President MS. TARA KUIPERS; Vice President/Secretary MS. DENISE LAURSEN;

Board that it takes time to complete strategic work while ensuring our main priority of teaching students and helping them move forward is maintained.

President Watson highlighted a few areas on the report that she feels the College should be proud of:

- Partnering with consultants like Ellucian to improve grant writing and secure funding sources for the College that provide opportunities for students that the College may not be able to provide otherwise.
- Focusing on academic program planning, including conducting community needs surveys and assessments; working with service area K-12 administrators and counselors to determine how the College can serve their needs. This ensures that the College offers programs of high interest to students, businesses, and educational institutions.
- Working on accreditation requirements through quality initiative efforts.
- Utilizing new facilities like the Armory and an upcoming new Student Center to enhance program offerings and student experiences.
- Addressing employee compensation and professional development despite budget constraints. Without funding from the Legislature, reworking budgets allowed the College to make some strides in that area. The College has been working with the Foundation to create an endowment for professional development to support employees' growth.
- Managing College finances creatively, including working with the Foundation and contacting Legislators. Being conservative in adding new programmatic areas, knowing that any investment needs to be sustainable.

President Watson concluded by saying that operating with reduced budgets over the past decade has presented many challenges, all while trying to maintain quality education and support for students and staff. She expressed pride in the progress made and the diligent work accomplished on the Strategic Plan.

Trustee Laursen expressed her appreciation for the detailed report and is impressed with the work being done.

Trustee Kost expressed his excitement about the enthusiasm and optimism surrounding future prospects. He stated that great people are working at the College who are like a family, and he is confident in their abilities to face challenges and create opportunities for the future.

President's Operational Plan 2024	President Watson stated that the Operational Plan was re-envisioned in 2024. The President's Office and Staff focused their priorities on the Strategic Plan. She directed the Trustees' attention to the "Status" column of the report to get a sense of the progress made on each activity in the past year.
President's Operational Plan 2025	President Watson stated that ,10 g0 G[)JTJETQ EMC /Span /MCID 40/Lang (en

expenses would not be burdensome to the College with creative fiscal management.

Elaine stated that this change is necessary due to declining enrollment and increased competition for students. She believes the new name would provide better marketing opportunities and help distinguish the college in a crowded higher education landscape.

Elaine acknowledges that change can be difficult but emphasizes that the College's mission and values will remain the same. She sees the name change as an investment in the College's future, helping to put it "on the map" and attract more students in a competitive environment.

Sarah Roberts, a current student and an alum of Northwest College, argues in favor of changing the institution's name. She believes this change would primarily benefit future students and should be of less concern to current students or alums.

Sarah highlights several issues with the current name:

- Confusion with other institutions, such as being mistaken for Northwest College in California.
- Lack of geographic specificity, which can hinder new student enrollment.
- Missed opportunities to capitalize on the College's proximity to Yellowstone National Park.
- The existence of at least 19 other institutions with similar "Northwest" names makes it difficult to stand out.

Sarah emphasizes that the college's location near Yellowstone is a unique selling point that attracts international and domestic students. She suggests that changing the name to something more specific, like Yellowstone College, would strengthen the institution's identity and connection to the area.

As Student Senate President, Sarah has spoken with many students who chose the college for its location and natural surroundings, not because of its current name. She argues that a name change would not erase traditions or memories but could create new opportunities and better represent the College's programs and location.

Overall, Sarah strongly supports the name change, believing it would benefit future students and help the institution stand out in a competitive educational landscape.

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Steve Rockhold, Northwest College Foundation Board President, spoke on behalf of the Foundation Board. The Foundation Board does not support changing the college's name to Yellowstone College. They feel the proposed name change lacks proper research, a detailed implementation plan, and consideration of potential negative impacts on fundraising and stakeholder engagement.

They emphasize that the Board of Trustees has not conducted thorough market research or presented solid rationale for the change. The Foundation Board is concerned about potential harm if the change is executed poorly or quickly.

Their areas of concern are:

- Lack of research on how the name change could affect students, programs, enrollment, alums, donors, and community relationships.
- Absence of a detailed plan with specific outcomes, recruiting targets, growth projections, and a realistic budget and timeline.
- Anticipated negative impact on fundraising and stakeholder engagement based on results from an online survey.

The Foundation stands firm in its vision to inspire advocacy and generosity to create a vibrant Northwest College campus and success for all students. Therefore, the Foundation Board formally opposes the name change, expressing significant concerns about potential negative consequences. They urge the Board of Trustees to consider their perspective on the decision regarding this matter.

Laura Riley stated that she worked in Admissions at Northwest College, her husband was a faculty member, and she has three children who are alums. While working at the College, she didn't experience any confusion over the name.

Laura stated that the College expects increased enrollment because of excitement over the New Student Center. Changing the name for the same purpose so soon will make it unclear which factor helped to increase enrollment.

Jeremiah emphasized the need for bold, innovative thinking to ensure the College's long-term sustainability. He feels that the name change is not about nostalgia but about helping future students discover and choose the College in an increasingly competitive and digital world.

Luke Robertson supports changing Northwest College's name to Yellowstone

enhance recognition and expand beyond the traditional local focus to attract national and international students.

Trustees identified two core model options during the transformational process to move the College forward: The Destination model, in which the College focuses on providing a distinctive learning experience in the Yellowstone Ecosystem, and the Distinctive Model in which the College identifies, emphasizes, and markets its unique features and programs. The intent was for

Volleyball vs. LCCC, Oct 26, 2024, 2:00 p.m., Cabre
Volleyball vs. CWC, Oct 29, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Cabre
Board of Trustees Candidate Forum, Oct 29, 2024, 6:00 p.m., FAB 70
Soccer Region IX Tournament Finals, Nov 2, 2024, TBA
Volleyball vs. Gillette, Nov 2, 2024, 2:00 p.m., Gillette
Advising Day and Early Registration for Spring 2025, Nov 5, 2024
Volleyball Region IX Tournament, Nov 6-9, 2024, TBA
Wrestling vs. U of Providence, Nov 8, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Cabre
Next meeting, Nov 11, 2024, 4:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building
Buffalo Feast, Nov 14, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Yellowstone Building

A ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

DENISE LAURSEN, Vice President/Secretary

Date