



MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDA

April 14 - 15, 2021

Casper College

Walter H. Nolte Gateway Center/Room 225

(The public is asked to attend this meeting via the Zoom links provided, if you desire to attend in person, please do so at the Commission Office in Cheyenne)

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ACTION AND REPORT AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION (ACTION ITEMS IN BOLD)

April 14, 2021

Commissioner Development Workshop

Casper College

Walter H. Nolte Gateway Center/Room 225

[Informal discussion, no action will be taken]

Zoom: <https://us02webzoom.us/j/89405599127>

Meeting ID: 894 0559 9127

Call In Number

(346) 248-7799

(669) 900-6833

1:30 p.m. ROLL CALL

Commissioners

Commissioner Blikre - Present

Commissioner Boal – Present

Commissioner Dooley – Present

Commissioner Goetz – Present

Commissioner Newman – Present

Commissioner Wyatt - Present

Commissioner and Chair Freeze – Present

Ex Officio Members

Honorable Governor Mark Gordon or Lachelle Brant – Present (Lachelle Brant)

Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow or Shelley Hammel – Present (Shelley Hammel)

Community College Commission Executive Director, Executive Director, Sandy Caldwell – Present

Commission Staff

Ben Moritz, Deputy Director – Present

Larry Buchholtz, Chief Financial Officer – Present

Paris Edeburn, Chief Technology Officer – Present

Rob Dennis, Chief Operations Officer – Present

- Annual Commissioner Development

[TAB A](#)

Commissioner Freeze noted the existence of a full agenda for the annual Commission workshop. Topics included Capital Construction, Enrollment, Building Projects, and the Budget.

Dr. Caldwell started by welcoming all to Casper College. She extended a special thank you to Dr. Darrin Divine and the Casper College Staff. She shared her screen containing a presentation for the workshop noting this was part of the annual Commissioner development. She recognized later the introduction of new Commissioners. The workshop also contains preparation for the decision making that happen over the coming months, particularly the June meeting where the capital construction prioritization occurs. The Commission will be presented with the biennial budget for tentative adoption. Director Caldwell added this is an important year because this is a biennial budget year with significant budget cuts to the colleges and it is recalibration of the base period. All of which need to be framed in the role of the Commission.

Dr. Caldwell provided a high-level review of Commission structure including relevant statutes which detail the role of the Commission as a coordinating as a coordinating body. The Commission serves as an independent or separate state agency which is part of the Executive Branch administrative function.

All Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and serve a staggered, four-year term. There are two staggered terms. Commissioners may be eligible to serve two, four- year terms. Should a Commissioner be appointed to fulfill an unexpired term, that Commissioner would be eligible to serve, potentially two terms following the end of the expired term. Second terms are always subject to reappointment. Commissioners do not represent any one area, by intentional design as per the original formation of the Commission in the 1950's. While three or four Commissioners represent a taxing district, the balance of the Commissioners are from outside a taxing district. Each Commissioner works on a statewide level. By not representing any one area the Commissioners are to have a broad perspective and understanding nuances that occur in each of the regions. More than five Commissioners can be from the same party. To keep the Commission balanced and a-political, Governor Gordon and Superintendent of Public Instruction,

Jillian Balow serve as ex-officio. Both are quite active on the Commission. Both each have a designee and both designees are very active.

Meetings occur at least quarterly. We tend to have four regular meetings and a fifth special meeting in August for the adoption of the budget. Last year was an anomaly with the most meetings ever. However, the tentative meeting schedule is listed in statute. Commission meetings do fall under the open meetings act for all meetings, workshops, discussions of business, etc.

The Wyoming Ethics and Disclosure Act applies to the Commission. There is a state board and commission workshop coming up, May 14, 2021, the information was recently sent to the Agency by the Attorney General's Office. The invite will be sent out to all Commissioners later today. Both paper and email copies are available. The workshop can be attended both in-person and virtual. It is highly recommended that Commissioners plan on attending the workshop as it can be very helpful.

To introduce the current Commissioners there are three categories to outline. There are new Commissioners and we will acknowledge them shortly. There are also reappointed Commissioners, who will serve their second term and who were recently reappointed by the Governor, later being confirmed by the Senate. Those Commissioners include Dr. Jackie Freeze and Ms. Julia Newman. Current retained Commissioners (midpoint of their appointed term). Mr. Dennis Boal is online with from Evanston. Vice Chair Kay Dooley located in Powell. Then there is Mr. Gregg Blikre from Campbell County and with us in person at the meeting.

To introduce our new Commissioners who will be sworn in tomorrow. The new Commissioners include Ms. Megan Goetz from Laramie. She was just appointed.

Commissioner Goetz noted her pleasure to be here and thanked Dr. Caldwell and Commissioner Freeze for the introduction. She is thrilled to be part of the Commission. She was recently appointed and noted she had a lot of learning to do. By trade she is an attorney, having worked in the past in school districts and higher education within her role. Commissioner Goetz recently finished co-chairing the Wyoming Business Council with Governor Gordon. She has a lot of Passion for economic development. She is also looking forward to seeing how the Community College Commission and the Colleges tie into growing our state and making it as diverse as possible. She is not originally from Wyoming but considers herself a native after two decades. Her and her husband live in Laramie, with some amazing children. She recognized this as an opportunity to do some exciting work and give her kids a chance to stay in Wyoming should they choose to. She believes in the passion of both the colleges and economic development.

Dr. Caldwell next introduced the other new Commissioner Mr. Micah Wyatt. Commissioner Wyatt subsequently shared his appreciation to be apart of this opportunity. Commissioner Wyatt is originally from Wyoming, raised in Sheridan, almost completely educated at the University of Wyoming. His background, while now working as an attorney, he works in Fremont County at the County Attorney's Office in abuse and neglect prosecution and juvenile delinquency

prosecution. While his current interest is in law, his background is widely varied. His family had benefited personally from the Community College System. He has been an adjunct in the system, teaching ethics and English at Sheridan College. He too is extremely excited to serve at this level too.

Dr. Caldwell noted that for everyone here, there was prior a rather in depth and robust Commissioner orientation for both Commissioners Goetz and Wyatt. This was able to be accomplished last week which also resulted to follow up to that meeting due to the volume of material to learn. Both have started off with a bang. All are looking forward to the formal swearing in which will be done at tomorrow's Commission meeting.

On the agenda for the formal business meeting tomorrow is the Commissioner bylaws. The bylaws are very simple and very direct. The style reinforces the statutes, simplified Roberts Rules of Order, and the swearing in of new Commissioners. The swearing in comes directly from the Commission's Attorney General representative, Mackenzie Williams and it comes right out of the Wyoming Constitution. Swearing in content is also directly replicated in statute. Judge Brown will conduct the swearing in ceremony tomorrow via a virtual, live ceremony.

Commissioner Freeze added that the Governor's Office sends everyone the oath to sign and return to the Office. The Oath also has to be notarized. Commissioner Freeze had gone down to the UPS store to have the oath notarized and sent in. The gentlemen who was the notary at the time, made her actually read it, raise her hand, and take the Oath prior to his notarizing the document.

Dr. Caldwell continued with the other item on the agenda is the biennial election of officers, who will be elected for two-year terms. There are two officers, the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Commission. The two positions are outlined in statute.

Regarding how the Commission functions, so much of which is in statute. The agency was developed in 1951 and given legislative authority in 1967. The Community Colleges are not in the constitution, which is well known. Community Colleges came about after the Constitution was written. Article 7 of the constitution does provide the ability for the legislature to authorize the Commission. The structure of the Commission is listed in statute and parallels that of K-12 and the University.

The mission for Wyoming Community Colleges is spelled out. It was legislatively refined and adopted with the 1991 Omnibus Act. Dr. Caldwell showcased the mission that the State of Wyoming sees for the community colleges. It was refined a little bit in 2009, with some language modernization. In 2009 the Legislature said they wanted to make sure they were really considering the State's interests. The Legislature clarified how the Colleges would be serving the state. The focus of the state's interests includes:

- Educated Residents
- Diversified Economy

- Workforce Development
- Effective and Efficient Systems
- Accountability and Improvement

These points were embedded in the sustainable funding report. As a reminder, this is what the Legislature has asked the colleges to do and as a function of the Commission to coordinate at the state level.

There are seven community colleges, but they cover the entire state. There are large service areas for the community colleges which include all 23 counties. Service areas were codified in 1991 but had existed before codification. There has never been, not once, to change a service area. But none the less, the Agency is making sure the process will exist as it is also a function of the Commission. Each college is located within one county which serves as the taxing district which includes 4 mills. But each college serves all the counties. The colleges do so in multiple ways through 48 locations. The Commission Policy Analyst, Kristi Klassen will be working to update the map should changes be needed based on recent budget cuts. The seven counties and taxing districts include: Natrona, Fremont, Goshen, Laramie, Park, Sheridan, and Sweetwater. There are no Mill Levies on behalf of the colleges within the Service Areas.

Dr. Caldwell continued that the Commission is a coordinating body. There is a very big distinction when looking at state structures for state level work. Coordinating includes governance and how the institutions are run includes at a local level with an elected board of Trustees. The Trustees deal with the policy, governance, and how the institution operates. The Commission's job is to look at the state level not the local level. General Commission functions are outlined in W.S. 21-18-101. Dr. Caldwell also recognized that there are a number of other places where the Commission is recognized in Wyoming statutes. For example, tuition must be as nearly free as possible is located in W.S. 21-17-205. The Commission has a few general functions: Coordinating Functions, Administrative Functions, Approval Functions, Review and Report Functions, Implementing Functions, and then the Biennial Budget and Status of the Statewide College System Strategic Plan. Mr. Buchholtz will detail that the Biennial Budget has to be tied to the Statewide Strategic Plan. Dr. Caldwell noted that for the Commission, everything done is based on the directions that have been given, from the mission of the colleges, State's interests, the statewide college system strategic plan, and then any legislation that has occurred including within the session law.

Budget authority is for the agency. Dr. Caldwell noted that the Agency is rather small compared to other State Agencies. However, the Agency is also one of the big five in terms of budget. There are five agencies within the state who take the largest proportion of the State's general fund budget. The difference being that the Commission is rather small, because the majority of the funding goes towards the colleges as per the roughly 27,000 students. Also included in the agency budget is Wyoming Public Television. That line item budget goes through Central Wyoming College. The Executive Director of WPTV is Terry Dugas who will join tomorrow. The mission of WPTV is closely

parallels the mission of the Commission through educating the State. Also included as a responsibility of the Commission is state Adult Education and High School Equivalency. Adult Education is a federal block grant to the state. There is a directive for that to the Commission but the funding goes directly to the Colleges for their Adult Education programs.

General functions include advocacy. The history behind the role of advocacy is because the colleges are not expressly stated in the constitution unlike K-12 and the University. Advocacy is expressly stated to ensure the colleges have a strong voice. Tuition, residency requirements, administrative computing, and the Statewide College System Strategic Plan are all components of General Functions.

Coordinating Functions include Common Course Numbering which has been a significant topic over the past year. Also, under coordinating is the systemwide data system and IPEDS which is the federal reporting. Academic and Technical Programs and Electronic Internet or Electronic System Technology are also listed.

Regarding Administrative functions, there is a lot around how funding is managed. This area includes the budget, budget preparation, the funding allocation model, capital construction, and major maintenance. The Commission is supposed to be promoting priorities through the system budget. Others include Nursing faculty, Maintaining community college service areas and then administration of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

Approval functions include getting to see some of the programs at the colleges and how they are aligned with the statewide system strategic plan. There is a robust review process before any of the programs come to the Commission for approval. Existing programs are also reviewed, there is a whole process for current program review. Dr. Caldwell noted that contained within the current Commission packet, there is a summary of the hiatus and eliminated programs. Not only does the Commission approve programs, but the Agency makes sure the Commission is aware of the programs the colleges no longer have. For the new Commissioners, this has been a topic as the Agency kept hearing the colleges were just adding, adding, adding programs yet they never end a program. The Agency subsequently realized there was not a mechanism to bring discontinued programs forward. The Commission does not act on an institution eliminating a program. The colleges through their processes manage the hiatus of programs.

Also included in approval functions is enlargement and formation of college districts. This was a significant undertaking in the past year. Formatting the college budgets is also included as a role.

Commissioners will be hearing a lot about CAPCON (Construction, renovation, capital renewal, and major maintenance) in a later presentation.

Review and Report functions include an extensive list of reports. Reports are often legislatively required to provide a progress update. Colleges do or complete individual audits usually completed by an individual firm. The Commission does have the ability to participate, but the Colleges do robust audit policies.

Dr. Caldwell highlighted under Implementing Functions that the Commission could withhold not more than 5% of state appropriations for non-compliance. She added the colleges are very conscientious. The Commission has never, ever had to impose this restriction.

There is a lot of work done on Legislative proposals and done with committees. Rules is also a big part of the Commission's work. Rules are constantly being updated and made sure the Statewide System Strategic Plan is current and updated. The plan forms the basis for the budget request.

Dr. Caldwell highlighted five specific items which are emphasized throughout statutes. Statutes are nonlinear and components happen at different points in time. These components happen in different legislatures and are addressed at different times. Yet the items that happen throughout and are ongoing include: The Advocacy role, Statewide Priorities, Statewide College System Strategic Plan, Budget Authority, and CapCon prioritization. The Commission has made working on these five areas a priority.

The next topic focuses on how the Commission is to complete some of the major areas. The Commission does have a brand, new Statewide College System Strategic Plan, developed last year. Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Dennis, really lead the effort, working across multiple entities. The Commission was required to make sure it included components of educational attainment and that it supported the state's interest in supporting the State of Wyoming. Each of the four listed goals have corresponding objectives. Dr. Caldwell just wanted to focus on the high-level points. Educational attainment is an underlying economic issue and as such a part of this plan. Affordability will be discussed a lot. The Commission is constantly looking at the Colleges, how they are funded, do they have what they need to complete their tasked work, while all keeping higher education as nearly free as possible. Program alignment how does the

Commission make sure that programs meet workforce needs and also make sure the students are successful within the next economic framing. Finally, there is Economic Development and facilitating initiatives leading to Wyoming economic diversification and growth. Which is also an underlying focus of the colleges.

Dr. Caldwell detailed the budget authority which include biennial budget submission. 2021 is a significant budget year as it is not only the biennial budget request but it is also recalibration of the base period. She included a reminder, which will be covered later by Mr. Buchholtz, noting there were complications in the last biennial budget request which pertained to how does the Commission make an exception request for state aid. The Commission and Agency struggled around that. We requested an AG opinion and received technically a memo. The memo was received last August. Mr. Buchholtz will review the memo later which outlines some very specific legislative restrictions.

Then the Agency and Commission are responsible for CapCon. It must be aligned with the strategic plans. The colleges must have a five-year facility master plan which also has to be a part of the capital construction prioritization process. A consolidated list of projects will be shared later. Having a very clear list has been extremely helpful. The Commission will act on the list during the upcoming June meeting. The list or report must be prioritized by June 1st of each year. The deadline is met by letting the State Construction

Department know what is going to be on the Commission packet and that the list is pending Commission action. Dr. Caldwell anticipates an agenda item of state construction at the June meeting. The list had to be revised with the advent of the new strategic plan.

The final area Dr. Caldwell covered was the Community College Sustainable Funding Recommendations made in December of 2020. She referenced these points as it is public information. Part of the outcome of not having a good mechanism to make an exception request was the Commission asking for direction. Heard prior, was the Commission needed to take special action. On January 10, 2020 Commission Chair Freeze and Vice Chair Dooley joined Dr. Caldwell at Joint Appropriations and they asked them to that time to conduct the Sustainable Funding Workgroup. They involved the Commissioners, Commission Staff, College Presidents, and College Trustees who all served on that workgroup. There was a lot of help and final recommendations were adopted. Chairman Freeze presented the final recommendations during the Commission's budget hearing. The information is available for everyone.

The next phase of the workshop is to dig into the details including an enrollment review by Dr. Ben Moritz. Chief Financial Officer Larry Buchholtz will step through three

aspects: Capital Construction, The Biennial Budget calendar and process, and recalibration of the base period as well as fixed and variable costs.

Commissioner Freeze remarked that many of the Commissioners have been through Dr. Caldwell's presentation numerous times. She further acknowledged the importance of being reminded of where we stand and why we are here as well as the Commission's expectations.

- Capital Construction (CAPCON)

[TAB B](#)

Dr. Caldwell introduced Mr. Buchholtz and noted the importance of the discussion given the recent adoption of the new Strategic Plan.

Mr. Buchholtz started by providing a little background. Back in 2009, the Legislature grew weary of the way that the Commission was bringing forward capital construction requests. As a result, they created a new part of the statute 21-18-225, giving the Commission the appropriation and gave the Commission a funded position to create a database that maintained an inventory of all college facilities, maintained serviceability of those buildings, and instructed that the Commission needed to create a prioritization process which would consider enrollment, headcounts, trends, etc. With the appropriation that the Commission received, Pauliene and Associates. Pauliene and Associates is a higher education, facilities consulting company located in Denver. They worked with both the Commission and the colleges on just what this new system was to look like. Through that effort the capital construction model was born. The model went through many iterations to come up with a way to accurately and fairly score the college construction projects against each other yearly. When Pauliene and Associates completed their first draft, and at the first Commission meeting following creation, the Commission had contemplated 22 to 24 different scoring metrics as part of the model structure. Each metric was explained at the meeting. Those metrics were subsequently distilled down to 15 measures. During the first few years of model elimination two more measures were eliminated. Currently, there are 13 capital measures and or 13 scoring metrics. The model now scores each project submitted by the colleges along the 13 metrics. The screen is currently projecting a definition of each measure. Mr. Buchholtz clarified how the metrics indicate how the proposed project might serve the population on the campus, serves the system, complies with the strategic plan.

Mr. Buchholtz provided a high-level review of each metric:

Existing Assigned Square Footage – The model includes an inventory of every campus building and within each room is assigned a space use code. The model knows if the room is for instruction, lab, gymnasium, hallway, bathroom, etc. It includes every assignable square foot within each building. The model can look at every square foot per the headcount or FTE of each campus. The higher of available space per number of FTE, the lower the metric score. Thus, meaning there is a lot of space for the number of students resulting in a lower score.

Classroom Utilization – When the metric was created, Pauline and Associates took the course catalogs from every single institution and the inventory includes how many workstations or seats are in each classroom or lab, cross referenced it with the course catalogue, and came up with seat hours. The more seat hours a campus has, the more time someone is sitting in a chair, the higher the metric score. The less time the space is utilized, the lessor the score.

Laboratory Utilization – This metric serves in a same capacity as Classroom Utilization but focuses on lab space. The more time people are in a lab, the higher the resulting score. Less time, the lower the score.

Total Projected Space Needs – Within the model, there are certain metrics which are imported in every year. Part of that import includes population projections for the next 30 years and an analysis of how much space in each colleges inventory. The model maintains a 5-year history of the campus enrollment trend. The model is able to detail, based on an enrollment trend, for the district and service area, the enrollment is expected to be a certain number. Based on the projected enrollment, the model provides an expected space need.

Total Projected Instructional Space Need – The model also reminds of the projected instructional space need. It does a similar analysis to overall space need, but only considers classroom and lab space against the projected population and enrollment. It projects the potential space needs given the current instructional and lab space on the campus then it provides a separate score.

Change in Student FTE Over the Past Year – Every year certain metrics are imported into the model. The model maintains those imports over the past 4 years. Subsequently the model is able to provide a five-year trend and also a score. Trending up the project would receive a higher score, trending down resulting in a zero score.

Change in Student FTE Over the Last Five Years – This measure is calculated by the change in student FTE over the past five years. The model does another trend analysis with data already in the model, population projections, and mostly with student FTE, it develops a trendline. If the change is trending up, the score is a number, trending down results in a zero.

Projected Population Change in the Main Service Area – From an economic analysis from the State Service Department a projection matrix is created, based on census data from a prime year (2010, 2020). The department creates their own projection of population by county, by age group throughout Wyoming. The matrix is downloaded and uploaded into the model so that it can score this particular metric. The model knows what counties are in each district's service area and completes this analysis. Population projections trending up result in a score, trending down results in a zero.

Supports the WCCC Strategic Plan - This is a metric, inclusive of six questions, each scored by the college, with a score of 1, 2, or 3. The model currently includes the prior strategic plan. In tomorrow's agenda there is an action item, that allows the Commission to change those six questions with newer ones supportive of the recently adopted Strategic Plan. Mr. Buchholtz

noted that he does not plan on changing how the questions are scored, but just question language. Underlying scoring will remain the same. Each college answers the questions and completes the scoring on their own as they enter their projects into the model. One thing as a result of the yearly model review, there have been instances where a college has answered each question in full support of all metrics. The scoring of that single capital measure, resulted in one project having a higher priority over others. As a result, the Commission implemented a peer review for this capital measure. If it is determined that this single scoring metric changes the order of the prioritization, the Administrative Services VP's complete a peer review. The Colleges with a project in the model, have to substantiate how they were able to score each of the six questions. If all college VP's by off on the score, the score remains. If the project warrants a change, the project is returned to the college for scoring review. Revised scores are submitted, and then the model is rerun to determine a revised priority.

Project to House High Growth/High Demand Programs - This measure is subjectively scored based on how does the project support high growth or high demand projects? The model appendix includes a definition of a high growth/high demand program. The colleges will review that definition and make their own judgement as how that program supports one of those industries.

Supports the College Master Plan – Dr. Caldwell noted during her earlier presentation, the colleges have to have a five-year masterplan. That masterplan needs to be refreshed or redone every five years. The Commission maintains a matrix, detailing when the last masterplan was completed and also provide the colleges with an idea as to when their next plan needs to be completed. This metric gives the colleges an opportunity to score how the project supports their own masterplan. As long as the project is in there, and as long as the project contemplated really does what their masterplan is saying. They get to score it.

Address Life Safety Issues - This metric does not get measured with every project entered into the model. If a college is building a brand-new facility. The College is not provided with the option to build a new capital facility. This metric asks how does this project address life safety issues. This metric will only apply to a remodel of an existing facility. Strategically this metric and the final one was introduced to discouraged new construction. The two metrics encourage the repurposing of existing space to meet new demands.

Condition of Existing Space – This metric is not scored for completely new projects. Each college maintains a deferred maintenance log on every facility. If the college is planning on remodeling a facility, they have the option of rating the condition of existing space using a facility condition index (FCI). This is a very simple calculation which is deferred maintenance divided by building value, creating a percent. Based on the percentage a score is identified.

The last two capital measures really get the colleges to think about using existing space in an effort to increase their score and consider remodeling or repurposing existing space rather than building new space.

The first few capital measures mentioned are scored dynamically. The scores are generated by looking at other projects in the capital construction model. This results in competition within the model to create a top score of five or a low score of one based on how the project competes within the model. In the case where a college has two projects in the model at the same time. The model gives both projects the exact same score. Because the metrics within the project are exactly the same (enrollment, utilization, FTE, etc.). Mr. Buchholtz recognized this as the only shortcoming in the model. This year will be the tenth year of using the model. Mr. Buchholtz perceives that the colleges think the model works great. The model does score their projects objectively and it provides the Commission with a prioritization that can be fully supported. Not once has the model changed the priority assigned to the project. In the big picture this is how the Capital Construction Model works and both scores and prioritizes projects.

Mr. Buchholtz transitioned to running through what the model output looks like. He provided examples from a prior Commission meeting packet. The examples are what the Commission should expect to see in June. At that meeting the actual projects will be inputted into the model, run through the model, outputs created, and it will be added to the future Commission packet. Mr. Buchholtz clarified that there may or may not be any projects within the model. If there are not any projects, then Commissioners will see part, but not all of the reports.

The first slide is an actual run of the model and includes a scoring metric. It identifies the College, campus, assigns a project number, gives a project name, total index score, the actual score, and the ranking according to the CapCon model. It ranks and scores every single project based on the 13 or 11(new project) capital measures. The total score is portrayed up there.

Mr. Buchholtz displayed the second part of the model. As a Commission, any project that seeks state funding requires the Commission's approval. Any project over \$1.5 million, that does not seek state funding, such as a dormitory, the State of Wyoming does not fund any part of an auxiliary operation. The State only funds educational operations. If a college wanted to build a dorm with a cost of more than \$1.5 million, it will be brought to the Commission for authorization. In the event there was an opportunity, at some time in the future, for the law to change, it requires Commission authorization to have that facility, be eligible for major maintenance. There is no state funded major maintenance for an auxiliary operation. That could potentially change as early as this year with the America Rescue Plan, America Jobs Bill, or the Infrastructure Bill. There may be an opportunity to allow the colleges to use some of that federal funding to do maintenance on dorm facilities. Without authorization from the Commission, the State Construction Division, and the Legislature the facilities would not be eligible. Likewise, there may be self-funded educational space brought forward by a college. The same \$1.5 million limit applies for educational space which is added or remodeled square footage will become eligible for major maintenance. There are two separate lists within a capital construction model run. The first is a list of projects to be approved and are those projects seeking partial state funding. This includes the same three projects which are prioritized from the first slide, not necessarily in the same order as they are ranked, they are listed by assigned project number.

The next sheet in the packet is projects for authorization. The next series of slides review the exact model output. How the model scored each capital measure and how the college submitted the project into the model. In showing the beginning of one of the projects, Mr. Buchholtz showed sample of how each college scored by individual capital measure or metric. The example portrays each project score for existing space utilization. The next slide tells how each college scored with regional factors such as student FTE, population projections, student FTE over the past five years. All trends are included. Since two metrics are trending down for the college, they received a zero score. All of the colleges over the past year had no additional FTE over the past year. As such they received zero score. The five-year trend showcases Western because they have a score and their trend is going up. All of this is available out in the public eye, Commissioners have the chance to see everything and how it is scored shows up in the commission packet. The last few measures are exemplified on the next slide. Since LCCC is looking at a renovation instead of new construction, they were the only campus to receive a score for the last two metrics. They are renovating existing space.

The next item shown is the actual space needs model. This tells you on each campus, how much existing space they have for each one of the category types assigned in the building and room inventory. The space is assigned a space use code and consolidates the space under each code. Based on the national standard of FTE per student which comes out of the Red Book. By looking at the space needs model, if there is surplus or a deficit of space at each campus. It is good tool to know how the projects were scored for both the Commission and the individual institutions. For the institutions it also serves as a tool to know how the school's masterplan serves into overall space needs. Results are produced for each campus with a project in the model. Commission packets will only include those institutions with a submitted and reviewed project and the underlying conditions which serve to calculate a score.

Mr. Buchholtz highlighted the needs for a start of a project. College Presidents will send Commissioners through the Executive Dr. a letter of justification, a personal note detailing the project, the need, and the institutions intended plans. Each project contains a packet with this letter and subsequent materials. Within the model, actual screen shots will be showcased by the institution inclusive of the new building square footage, building footprint, and construction project purpose (remodel or new construction), the amount of state funding requested are all included in the packet.

The limit of state funding that can be requested by any college for a project is 50/50. The college then informs the model how much funding they are requesting. The ask is in the model so Commissioners are fully informed how much is funded and the value of the request to the State Building Commission.

The project packet includes justification and a narrative as to how it corresponds with the systemwide strategic plan and campus master plan. Mr. Buchholtz concluded his review of the CapCon model noting that all of the materials will be ready for Commission actions at the June meeting.

Another activity done at the June Commission meeting is to approve capital construction projects which have increased in excess of 10% from the originally approved amount. Previous to Dr. Caldwell joining the Commission, time was spent at Commission meetings approving escalated costs. From the time a project submitted to the model, has Commission approval, to a Legislative session, to the time a budget is completed, cost estimates can become invalid. The cost estimates may have gone up, not only by an inflation factor, but possibly by a materials factor. A recently implemented process takes an incomplete project and escalates the estimated costs by an inflation factor provided by the State Construction Department every year. The agency adds that inflation factor into the project packet. The June meeting will include an action item to give each project a new cost ceiling. Mr. Buchholtz next presented a running spreadsheet of projects, their age, and their escalated factor. If the project is completed it is removed from the spreadsheet. He noted a similar spreadsheet will be presented at the June meeting, thus preventing time spent on individual projects to approve their separate escalation factors. This year will be different as the Legislature approved the escalation for the four projects currently in the capital construction model. An escalation factor of 10% over the price given in the capital construction bill last year which was unapproved. They have done a double escalation factor, but it will not be enough. Not only are approved projects, 1 to 2 years from conception, but because of the pandemic, the supply chain, and material availability, 10% is insufficient. The June meeting will include the legislatively approved escalated cost paired with an additional inflation factor given by the State Construction Department. This revised figure should not be interpreted of the project actual cost, just a target of projected final costs given various factors. These projects may come back individually based on Level III document completion and the realization of actual costs. All costs are currently increasing. Our goal is to buffer increased costs as much as possible.

Dr. Caldwell shared, that by having a proactive approach to the escalation factor, is a normal construction industry process. To include the factor has really had an impact over the past couple years, eliminating the big surprises of increased project costs. As the reports are going forward to the State Building Commission and then to the Legislature, there is always a current cost, and avoiding the question regarding the differences in cost with a project. The agency can make sure any project is as close to the actual cost as possible. This has been a welcome approach. All are kind of curious what the final escalation projection might be for the year.

Mr. Buchholtz next shared an example of a list of those projects that are going forward for funding. There are two lists: current year prioritization and then a multiyear prioritization. There are projects which have gone through the model, been prioritized, been approved, but did not receive funding or the college did not move forward. The college may not be positioned to provide their 50% component. A second, multiyear prioritized list that takes all projects in the model which include Commission action, and informs on their priority number in the year it was run through the model. So, the list is provided on how it was prioritized the year it was run through the model. Then there is another list that reprioritizes projects across which have been run through the model which includes the oldest project with the highest score and the newest project with the lowest score. The document is provided to both the State Building Commission and then on to the State Legislature.

Mr. Buchholtz explained the term Capital Renewal. He noted that there is really not a solid industry definition. However, the term is included in the college's statutes. Capital Renewal is something more major than major maintenance but it is not construction. There is one capital renewal project on the list, which has been included for the past two years. It was finally approved by the Legislature and funded at 100% because it is more major than major maintenance but not capital construction. The current case is a project at Western Wyoming College, it has been seen by the Commission for the past 3 years. It went through funding initially. They had gone through Level II studies and received an initial \$3 to \$5 million. In the latest Capital Construction bill, a little over \$11 million was appropriated to Western to actually do the project. The project is all infrastructure related having to do with plumbing and electrical systems. A standard major maintenance appropriation would be unable to fully fund or complete this project, therefore it is a capital renewal project. It is a separate authorization and a separate funding line. A definition for these types of projects exists in rules, chapter 5. This type of project is also not submitted through the model.

Commissioner Goetz asked why there were no projects in 2020, assuming what the world experienced. And why we may not see some in June. Mr. Buchholtz noted that there were projects in 2020. Yet the Legislature failed to pass a capital construction bill. There was no funding, no authorization by the Legislature for any of the colleges to proceed, with their planning documents or anything else. It was totally inaction on the part of the Legislature resulting in those same projects carrying over to the recent session which just concluded.

Dr. Caldwell added that it was not just the capital renewal but also the entire CapCon bill for the state. It held up the institutions additionally in the purchase of property for their projects as the colleges lacked legislative authorization. Thus, placing a couple of the colleges at a real stand still. She also added that CapCon is different than the budget process. CapCon runs on an annual budget year and is an annual process. The regular budget runs on a biennial cycle with an added mid-point supplemental request. The thirteen metrics presented, when the agency goes to the State Building Commission in July, we have been asked about those metrics' multiple times during legislative hearings. The metrics define the substance behind the requests put forward. The process is annual and robust, which is also why the escalation factors are added. Mr. Buchholtz noted further that he had showed documents from 2019 because there were three projects in the model. In 2020 there was only one project in the model and the year did not provide a great representation of the model and how one project may score against another.

Presidents Divine further clarified, from the President's perspective, that the process is expensive. Level I programming is typically paid out of institutional funds. The colleges know right now two things. One, CapCon is always an easy target to be cut. Second, CapCon has become a weapon between the colleges and the State Legislature. Because it is so difficult, for Casper College, in this environment right now, unless we really positively have to have something, they will not spend the time or effort to submit it for consideration. Chances are so poor for the average project, that it is not worth the time or effort, knowing the likely result from the Legislature.

Commissioner Freeze repeated a question asking what is the calculator for FTE. Mr. Buchholtz noted that it is 12 credit hours.

After returning from a brief meeting break, Mr. Buchholtz concluded with some final comments. At the June meeting, Commissioners will see a previously approved project, from Western Wyoming College regarding their Nursing facility. The project will come back through the Commission with a complete Level II. When the Commission saw this originally, it was brought forward without a Level II and with a request to go straight to Level III with construction funding. There are three levels to a project: Level I, Level II, and Level III. Level I is a programming type estimate of the project or a new facility. After a project comes through the Commission and on to the State Building Commission, the State normally funds a Level II study which includes planning documents. The SBC gets involved in a college project at this point. That project then comes back through the State Construction Department (SCD) with a budget request for Level III design documents and construction funding. There are two steps completed by the SCD after a project comes through the Commission, a request for funding for Level II and then a request for funding for Level III. The project at Western was originally programmed as a stand-alone Nursing facility. The project came through the Commission and then was approved to go straight to Level III design and construction funding. When the project arrived at the SCD, Western President Dr. Kim Dale requested that the project be pulled off. Because a Level II was never fully done, the estimates were not even close. Western then funded their own Level II. Some colleges do fund their Level II or they receive funding from the State. Western opted to do their Level II themselves. The project will come back through the Commission and you will see it with new, more valid construction estimates. This project will be one thing that you will see at the June meeting.

Dr. Caldwell added that the project was not completely withdrawn from prioritization. It remained in the priority order. WWCC had just had their Nursing accreditation site visit. The lack of adequate facilities was cited in the report. Western subsequently requested that the project be deferred. For further clarification the project has already gone through the model.

Mr. Buchholtz continued that recently discussed since the Agency has been notified of both the America Rescue Plan (ARP) and the Biden Administration's newer infrastructure plan, which may include \$2.3 Trillion. There is a potential opportunity available. The agency will continue with the regular schedule, running the model in the next few weeks if there are projects submitted. The output will be presented this June. Based on the timing of how the potential funding will come to the State of Wyoming, there is an opportunity to allow the colleges and the Commission to run the model a second time in one year. He had previously noted that before a project is authorized for major maintenance or construction, it will need Commission authorization. There is an opportunity, possibly later in the Summer, possibly after the special Legislative session, to allow the colleges to populate the model again and run again and present results possibly at the October meeting. Or perhaps at a special Commission meeting depending on how timing works out and how the money would filter down to the State. How the state receives the money and how it is dispersed by the Governor will dictate the calendar for project submission and running the model. He further added that there is a sizeable chunk of money

from the Infrastructure Jobs Bill dedicated to infrastructure improvements on community college campuses. Appropriations to four- year institutions currently are not included in the bill. It is targeted at two- year institutions. There will be an opportunity to act on these two pieces of legislation. How it matures is really unknown.

- Enrollment Review

[TAB C](#)

Commissioner Freeze transitioned to the enrollment review. She noted enrollment is very important from the standpoint of how it impacts the budget. The Commissioners need to be fully aware of enrollment and they receive reports on enrollment on a regular basis. This provides a high-level trend analysis.

Dr. Caldwell noted this will be a rather brief presentation as there was a comprehensive overview at the October 2020 meeting. Dr. Moritz had done a substantive enrollment presentation. However, in order to consider the biennial budget and the recalibration, understanding and knowing enrollment is important for all to understand. Dr. Moritz was preparing to complete this presentation, yet Dr. Caldwell will cover the presentation at a pretty high level. Also included is the impact of last fall's enrollment. Dr. Caldwell recently found an error in the current fall report and it will be updated.

In the Commission packet, there is a copy of the fall enrollment report. She noted that there is an ongoing downward trend. One thing that she desires is to remember that the CapCon model looks at FTE and it does not look at headcount. Headcount is really important. It does not matter if a student enrolls in one course or four classes, the college still has to process each student. For student services staff the amount of work remains the same regardless of the student's class enrollment. Headcount matters a lot when discussing the adult population and adult learnings and the total credit load. The difference of FTE versus headcount is important to note especially given that colleges are facing such funding challenge dynamics.

The ongoing downward trend is not unique to Wyoming. This is a nationwide trend with postsecondary education and certainly something seen in community colleges. When the age distribution is reviewed, population studies, and more it is also trending downward. The COVID recession has been very unusual and it has impacted higher education. You tend to see with a typical recession an increase in postsecondary enrollment. That did not happen this time for various reasons, but most obviously is the desire to not want to be around other people and concern about online instruction. There was an opportunity with CARES funds deployed by the Governor which did result positively for enrollment in Wyoming. This also leads to a point in the new Strategic Plan around postsecondary attainment and why the adult grant and the work of Wyoming's Tomorrow Task Force is so important. Wyoming does have a lower postsecondary attainment rate than the rest of the nation. This is an underlying economic issue for the state.

Dr. Caldwell presented a slide which showed non-duplicated head count over eight years. The 2012-2013 was actually a high point for enrollment. It briefly went up and then started to decline. The decline remains the trend needing review when the Commission looks at

recalibration of the base period. The chart includes all seven of the colleges. The downward trend is slower, with a lesser slope than what other states are experiencing. Except those states which have seen significant population growth. She added that their postsecondary and community college enrollment is not proportional to their population growth. The next slide shared, she was uncertain if it included FTE or Head Count. The very bottom bar includes the average impact of COVID for all US community colleges. The average enrollment nationwide as shared by the National Student Clearing House was down 22% nationwide. Wyoming's total enrollment decline for the colleges and the University was down about 8%. There was an impact at the community colleges in the State from COVID-19. A couple of further notes included, colleges going into the fall semester were anywhere from a 12% to 30% enrollment deficit. Information was also provided regarding the velocity of the enrollment. How fast the change occurs prior to the beginning of the semester. We were able to see that it was atypical once CARES grants were released and the Adult Grant from Governor Gordon.

Western for example, there is almost no deficit. Headcount was not impacted and FTE perhaps just a tiny bit. WWCC had about a 22% delta on their change from before to after offering CARES funds and the Adult Grant once the dollars were released. Casper provided another example, specifically to FTE. In headcount, Casper completely eliminated the deficit. There were really significant positive changes in the deficit due to those enrollment grants. It was quite significant. It was tough for the colleges to deploy those funds so late in the enrollment cycle. It really put the financial aid offices hoping. The offices had to almost completely repackage student awards. Dr. Caldwell noted that it was worth the effort.

The second attribute that all observed is how many of the students were actually retained through the fall and then into the Spring semester. The retention rate was actually higher than previous years. Unfortunately, there has not been time to break down the retention by demographics. Geir in the Commission office has really been tracking the students who enrolled in the fall to see the outcome. The grants were only for one semester. There are many students who didn't opt to take it because they couldn't afford to take a second semester. There was a lot of uncertainty on the impact during the second semester. However, the grants really did make a positive impact in the number of total enrolled students.

Dr. Caldwell next shared the changes to the age profile. It has changed a lot in the U.S. regarding who is attending the community colleges. Wyoming is unique for its community colleges then other states. Other states have regional universities. Wyoming does not. The State has one land grant University whose job it is to add to the body of knowledge, complete research, and serves as a research level institution. Wyoming's community colleges serve the same role as regional university's in other states and they serve as community colleges. So, they are unique. This was a topic brought up several times in the Select Committee on Community College Governance and funding. Wyoming's community colleges have residence halls. And as found out today much of Wyoming is not commutable for large parts of the year. Even being relatively close, students cannot commute. The community colleges do serve a large adult population but not to the extent as the rest of the country as the colleges also serve the traditional student age population within the region. The chart illustrates the age mix by respective academic years. The red bar indicates

the traditional age, and each separate color represents a different age group. The community colleges still have a lot of a similar profile of the Wyoming residents.

Dr. Caldwell continued with a slide that gives a total comparison of transfer students versus CTE enrollment at the institutions. The slide is not broken down by institution but is all colleges combined. There are a lot of students enrolled in CTE which also varies by college and by the college's location. A large number of the programs at the community colleges are CTE. Dr. Caldwell noted that colleges serve all of the above traditional, transfer, and CTE. CTE can also be a pathway to a bachelor's degree.

Then there are always opportunities to address the working adult population. This is a high topic for all and part of the discussion in the Attainment Committee and it is in the system strategic plan. She noted further that WyoTransfer did happen and has resulted in positive student feedback. Transfer agreements and equivalencies are increasing. There is a workgroup on prior learning assessment policies.

Dr. Brandon Kosine is the chair of that workgroup. All colleges participate in next gen sector partnerships. Dr. Dale will provide an update on the Attainment Council tomorrow. We see some opportunities too strengthen pathways. And certainly, recognizing the positive impact of CARES funds has been quite beneficial for the state.

- Budget Timeline

[TAB D](#)

Mr. Buchholtz started his presentation by walking all through the timeline on how the budget process actually starts, matures, and then what will be presented in June. And what will be presented later in the late summer or early fall with a focus towards the final budget meeting. At that final meeting the Commission will adopt a new budget and move it forward. The presented table lays out the entire timeline. The Commission has responsibilities related to putting together a budget that requires it to interact with different agencies. The number one item that is present is the ETS business case submission for IT. Not called a business case anymore but now a budget proposal sheet yet it accomplishes the same purpose.

The Commission in its' budget document has a standard budget. Anything that the Commission might want outside of the standard document is called an Exception Request. There are certain things within the budget that do not carry forward from one fiscal period to the next. IT expenses is one example. The Agency has requirements to put together an exception request related to an IT project, which there most likely will not be one this year, but additionally anything that is IT related. This would include the replacement schedule for laptops, desktops, etc. All IT related items require an exception request. There are standard line items in the budget related to IT like, telephone service in staff offices, internet, IT storage capacity, etc. This includes anything that is SLEDS related or Wyoming Transfer related. All is housed through a centralized location as a service provided by the IT Service Department. Those costs continually increase. The Agency will receive an estimate from the IT Service Department sometime in the next ten days to review their estimate of expenses. Then the agency will have to carry an exception request to carry their cost increases. There will be an exception request for IT in the next budget.

There is the annual budget workshop, which is currently underway. Later there will be a preview of material for the June Commission meeting. Mr. Buchholtz referenced some samples which are a makeup of the preliminary input into the state budget system. Previewed will be the intended exception requests and their priority order. Ultimately it is the Commission's decision to prioritize those exception requests. The Agency will have a recommendation, but it will be up to the Commission to adopt that recommendation. Additionally, the Commission prioritizes agency programs. There is a Commission Administrative budget which is a program. State aid to the colleges is another priority program. Also included is Wyoming Investment in Nursing and the Overseas Combat Veterans program. All programs within the Commission have separate budget lines all of which will need to be prioritized. This is done so that when or if there is another budget reduction, the process will include starting at the list bottom to start cutting.

Another aspect seen at the June meeting, which part will overlap with the funding allocation model and recalibration of the base period, is state aid to the colleges is a fixed part of funding. There are no provisions in Commission statutes to ask for an exception request to increase that line item. The Commission does not have that authority, using the budget process to ask for an increase in that line item. Dr. Caldwell talked previously about the AG opinion, which is attached to the current document. Last year the Commission released the AG opinion publicly. This results in the Commission's ability, working with the colleges, to create a letter request to the Governor. The letter will not be in the budget document. The letter will be presented separately to the Governor, most likely at the agencies budget hearing. The letter will possibly note the history of the agency appropriation, experienced budget erosion over the past ten years. Created in concert with conversation with the Presidents, the Commission, and including analysis, looking at past sustainable funding recommendations in the past year. There is now an established process. It was exercised last year during the budget session. The Commission did create and submit to the Governor a \$30 million exception request. This will be the process needing to be approached now and into the future. The Agency is positioning the Commission to be able to do the same process this year. Mackenzie Williams noted that Mr. Buchholtz had provided a sufficient description which had artfully line between too much and not enough detail.

President Tribley of NWCCD shared on behalf of NWCCD, endorse his support to the Commission that they consider asking the Governor for additional support and moving the letter forward. He recognized that there are many challenges in front of the Governor right now. Yet losing our Community College cut by cut, will not help the Governor nor the State. He really feels bold and confident in asking the Commission to take this step. He reiterated his desire that the Commission consider asking for the additional money.

Mr. Buchholtz continued, the other thing done creation of the next budget, all in reaction to HB 80 which was legislative action that happened in 2014. Prior to 2014 and HB 80 there was never a process to administer funding. Unlike K-12 which has a funding model based on a number of varied factors and their budget increases, the Commission has a funding allocation model to distribute funds to the colleges. This model is a fixed method and it stays the same. There was a process when the current funding allocation model was adopted by the Commission, it included a

provision which allowed the Commission to approach the Legislature annually with an exception request based on enrollment changes from one static period of time (academic year) to the current enrollment period. It included the improved enrollment in the academic year thus allowing the Commission to go to the Legislature with an exception request entitled Enrollment Growth. This request is specifically a single line item based on enrollment growth. Every year there was an exception request because enrollment was going up systemwide. The Legislature had the opportunity to approve or partially approve an exception request. Every increase, based on the actual student load was subject to legislative authorization. Historically the colleges would receive about 70% of money that was due. It caused problems because there was never a way for the colleges to plan on the amount of the next biennial budget. There was nothing standardized and it was always by exception request.

The advent of HB 80 was and out come of what the President's wanted to happen which was providing a firm number for two fiscal periods (4-years). Part of the outcome, was the need for the Commission to recalibrate the base period. There was an acknowledgement to set the process up based on enrollment starting with 2012/2013. It was very near the peak of the 2008 recession. Ever since then the enrollment has declined. HB 80 required recalibration of the base period. The Commission went to 13 years using 2003-2004 as a base period. Subsequently there has been a focus on that base period every year.

Now there will be a new base period. The initial base period was 13, 14, and 15. The Legislature inserted a process where that base is recalibrated, based on enrollment by comparing three academic years to the next three academic years. There was a little bit of an anomaly the first time it happened as the first base period was 13, 14, 15. But the first recalibrated budget request had to be in 17 for the 19-20 budget. The first time there was a recalibration the same academic year was included in the process. The Commission is at the point now were it needs to be recalibrated again. The last three years from the prior recalibration (15, 16, 17) and they will be compared to 2018, 2019, 2020. The first calibration showed enrollment had been declining resulting in a calculation that says the standard budget needed to be reduced by \$4.6 million which was then sent to the Governor for fiscal years 19 and 20. The Governor did not adopt the recommendation. He had noted the colleges had taken a large hit in 15 and 16. Neither the Governor or the Legislature adopted that recommendation in their budgets. Mr. Buchholtz noted that the Commission will go through the recalibration again. All appreciate and know that enrollment in 18, 19, 20 is lower than it was in 15, 16, 17. Inherently that will mean a decrease in the standard appropriation. Because of the same circumstances experienced now with step 2 and 3 budget reductions. Step 3 budget reductions are required to be sustained going into the 23, 24 budget period. With the recalibration of the base period, another reduction will result. Additionally, a precedent was set in 2016 because of the reductions, the Commission was not additional forced to take a recalibration cut. The same circumstances apply right now. The Agency will go forward with the same explanation and documentation of the cuts. There are two things occurring simultaneously an ask in the form of an exception to plus up the request and ask that they not enact the recalibration of the base period. Dr. Caldwell clarified that they will recommend the Commission take subsequent action in this manner. She noted that there was in the past a preliminary, then the additional cut occurred, then the recalibration, and then an

additional cut across the counties. All impacted the entire picture. In 2016 going into the recalibration it was an 8% cut and additional loss from the 4-mill resulting in 14% and then the tuition loss. It is important to place all this in context now that there is the potential to draft a letter to create the specific narrative.

Mr. Buchholtz added that the really good estimates on local revenue, 4-mill from the seven taxing districts. The estimates will not arrive until late July or early August. There should be plenty of time to reflect the estimates in the budget documents. There will be a focus on the 17% impact on reduced state aid and highlighting the impact on the mill revenue loss. Documentation will be available to help provide a robust argument. The estimate will be available at the August special meeting. The June meeting will include a draft budget, once approved, it will be submitted to the state budget system. The August meeting will include the standard budget and exception requests which will be passed to the Governor.

After submission, The Budget Office will make their own recommendations on the request. They also in consultation with the Agency will make their own recommendations. The Governor will consider the initial submission, Budget Office recommendations, and any additional items presented in a letter request. The Governor will make a final recommendation which will be presented to the Legislature in the third week of November. The Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) will schedule a series of meetings with every agency head to present their budget. Hearings usually occur in December. At the conclusion of the hearings, the JAC will meet and review each agency's budget, possibly making amendments to the Governor's budget. The budget document is placed into mirror bills to be worked by both the Senate and the House.

Dr. Caldwell added that at the budget hearing in December the Agency would be providing all documentation with it. At this past meeting, last December, Chairman Freeze provided the Sustainable Funding Workgroup Recommendations. At that point too, the Agency would most likely provide the actual letter, which might be authorized at the June meeting to have on record the request to create the letter and it would be later adopted. It would be made known very early going into the process that this consideration is in process to be requested. Our goal is to not have any surprises before the Governor or the JAC. All items would be available to submit to the JAC, who is becoming accustomed to receiving letters from the Commission.

Mr. Buchholtz reflected the detail of the budget process timeline including preparation for the budget request, the budget session which starts in January. The last couple pages attached to the tab is Mackenzie's informal memo on how the Commission should ask for exception requests and it provides options.

President Tribley wanted to make sure the Commissioners knew the timeline and the strategies that can be taken forward this year. He noted that it has been a tough year in a lot of ways. Financially he hoped to point all to back to the original tasking of the Commission by the Joint Appropriations Committee to work with Commissioners, Trustees, and Presidents who thoughtfully reviewed and presented some tough things to the JAC how we might sustainably fund community colleges. The resounding message to President Tribley this year, while being

appreciative of who the Legislators are, that not one piece of legislation came from all that hard work. There is legislation attempting to help CTE students and related to the community colleges, but noting to sustainably fund all the colleges. The Presidents and colleges are locked into a circular thing. Legislators continue to cycle the question noting that this is just the community colleges, but how are we going to fund the state. He had heard from his colleagues throughout the year. He further noted that we are interpreting the constitution as the colleges not being in the institution, and he understands why. Article 7, Section 1. "Legislature to provide for public schools. The Legislature shall provide for the establishment and maintenance of a complete and uniform system of public instruction." President Tribley suggested that Attorney's on the Commission work with a group of Constitutional lawyers to say, "I submit to you ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the complete system of higher education in the United States of America includes the community college system. It does in Montana, Idaho, Washington, California and it does here. Wyoming does not have regionally located Universities. He noted that he is not the attorney but feels this would resonate, he continued with quoting the constitution. "A free system of public instruction would embrace elementary schools of every kind and grade. A University with such technical and professional departments to do public good that the state would require and by the means that the state would allow. And such other institutions as may be necessary." The framers of the constitution did not know of the community college system. But at least 60 to 80% of Nurses are trained and educated in the Wyoming Community College system. He further submitted that it is necessary to have Nurses in the State of Wyoming and therefore in the community college system. The community college system is a necessary part of our education system. When we get tired of not acting, and the colleges continue to take cut after cut after cut, someday we may make a constitutional argument. President Tribley thinks the community colleges are in the constitution.

He continued it is graduation season. All over the state there are graduates whose lives will be forever changed by the education they received. He looked forward to the Commissioners who will be on that stage to join the celebration. He also reiterated his and NWCCD's support of the sustainable funding workgroup recommendations.

Commissioner Freeze noted her appreciation for the passion behind President Tribley's statements. She then noted a couple of comments about what has been done and where they hope to do in the future. The ability to present the letter was a big step forward. It is something that has not been questioned for years and years. The Commission had known they did not have the ability to ask for additional dollars. The Commission knew that the letter was a first step in a long-term process. The sustainable funding effort was an excellent effort and was received well by the JAC. It was unfortunate that it did not go further this year. Yet the Commission appreciated that it was an especially difficult funding year. They were reluctant to take on any new initiatives that would suggest taxes in any way. Commissioner Freeze added that she thought President Tribley is being heard and all know there is more work to be done. The Commission will certainly continue the effort to make sure the community colleges have their due place in Wyoming education. Commissioner Freeze asked Ms. Taylor from WACCT on her perception of how the colleges were received by the Legislature in the past year.

Ms. Taylor responded positively to the opportunity to address this area. She recognized that it has been a tough year. A lot of what all had just heard from the Chairman in terms of dynamics really played out the question. The antitax sentiment is really strong right now. With a growing majority of Legislators, WACCT is seeing that there is a real challenge to thinking outside of the traditional funding model. She also saw this in other issues as well, not just the colleges issues or higher education. K-12 funding is definitely the elephant in the room right now. You've read all about K-12 funding and the lack of a solution. She is uncertain as to how the K-12 funding will eventually play out. She noted she has a sinking feeling that positive steps for sustainable funding for the colleges will not happen for a few years. If there is a tax involved, including all the counties, Legislators and industries will scream. The current dynamic is tricky. She doesn't see this challenge going away. Yet she also sees this as an opportunity, and all need to hit their educational efforts hard. There are a lot of people who do not understand the fact that community colleges are not only being cut by the Legislature but also by the reduction in the local mill levy and enrollment. They just don't understand all the funding dynamics. WACCT put forward a very robust effort over the past year. They feel they were able to meet with a very good number of Legislators. The opportunities that all have are still there. She also suggested that Legislators are seeing all (Commission, WACCT, Presidents) come at them with the same message. They are looking more closely at the budget process than they have before. They are now hearing the same thing. Which she thinks is rather remarkable.

President Dale also contributed some comments. She shared with everyone more on how assessed valuation will impact all the colleges. She has been there for two years and is still learning a lot about assessed valuation and recalibration which is rather complex. In relation to the three-legged stool of state aid, local aid, and tuition that all comes together through a formula. What has happened in the past, the Western local valuation has been high (oil and gas, local area, Trona). What it had meant for western is receiving less state aid because of local property values and property taxes have been higher. Things will change this year for Western. They were first told by the local assessor that the college would take a \$2 million budget hit. Now it may be down to \$1.5 million cut in local property revenue. Western will require more state aid in the calculation. She questioned the impact on the rest of the colleges. She suggested further consideration as the colleges impact one another.

Mr. Buchholtz recognized that the budget is complicated. He added that it will really depend on what happens across all seven districts. When the Agency does recapture and redistribution, the playing field is leveled. There is an estimate used from a worksheet that uses the Assessor's valuation. Based on what the actual receipts are the State Aid is rebalanced. If more revenue was taken in then previous estimates then aid is rebalanced. Aid is taken away from a college that received more revenue and then handed off to a college that received less revenue. Based on some preliminary numbers, the Commission is expecting a really big hit to Sweetwater County. There is a commensurate increase in Laramie County thus helping the system. The five in the middle are the question right now. It is really complicated. Initial distributions through the funding allocation model, may result in a college receiving more money or less depending on recapture or redistribution. It is unknown how it will all play out. Estimates are not available right now. However, the Agency has a basic idea. The impact of various counties will level the

state aid. If estimates remain for Laramie County continue positively, this may result in more state aid for Western. Those with more local revenue will receive less state aid. Those with less local revenue will receive more state aid.

Commissioner Blikre also pointed out that there is more to the puzzle than just local revenue. Sublette, Campbell, and possibly Converse counties produce a lot of income for the State producing potentially less to contribute to the pot where the state aid comes from resulting in a serious problem.

Commissioner Blikre asked additionally, when Dr. Tribley was talking, he made a point that the Commission should consider, the Commission did, including everyone in this room worked really hard to develop the Sustainable Funding Plan as requested by the Legislature. The Legislature basically never even considered it in his opinion. He suggested representing the plan so as the Legislature see again. If it can, it should be given the amount of work by all to develop the plan. The plan was hardly noticed. Commissioner Blikre added further, recognizing that Legislators were so busy, because of the catastrophe faced, he suggested offering it a second time.

Commissioner Freeze responded by suggesting this would be a discussion point and it could be incorporated into the letter and any other steps decided to be taken. She indicated that it will be reflected in presentations as well as offer to move it forward in a positive direction. We will finalize all of this in August.

Ms. Taylor added some additional comments. WACCT received a lot of questions regarding the impact of Gillette College on the budget and new taxes. They are continuing the conversation.

Commissioner Freeze noted that the community colleges do not have a home committee at the Legislature. There is not an automatic place for these types of issues can be considered or moved forward in a systematic way.

Dr. Caldwell wrapped up with Dr. Dale's previous comments which will circle back to what she noted earlier during the last time recalibration hit. There is a smoothing out if there are counties that drop versus those that gain revenue. But if all counties contract system wide, it does contract the pie. At some point if there is not enough of a balance from some counties, then it is possible the entire amount can contract. This is what happened the last time recalibration occurred. The total hit on the state budget was 8%, but the total hit among the colleges between state aid and the 4-mill levy was 14%. She also noted she had taken the almost exact same discussion points to the AG and Mackenzie Williams when we were doing the Sustainable funding. It allows the Legislature the opportunity and potential to create the Commission but it doesn't subsume that we are in it. It is fascinating in that the topic came up through the sustainable funding workgroup.

Mr. Williams did not want to add anything in particular to the comments previously made. He noted that there would have to be a lot of policy discussions if the focus is Constitution. As far as actual law interpretation of the constitution with regard to higher education, there is not a whole

lot out there. At this point it would be more of a policy discussion and dialogue between the Agency and the Legislative branch.

Commissioner Freeze noted there is always a tradeoff between deciding to pursue these things at any given point in time. The goal is to have the best result from any request.

- Funding Allocation Model

[TAB E](#)

Mr. Buchholtz continued with an overview of how the funding allocation model works. He reiterated some of the items that make the budget go along and attachments which are included in the tab. Right now, state aid consists of about 55% of total college funding, 21% the 4-mill levy, and 24% tuition and fees. Tuition and fee revenue to the colleges is not included in the funding allocation model. It is there revenue, and not touched by the Commission. Both the state aid and the mills are dynamic. If the 4 mill goes down and then state aid goes up as a percentage without getting another dime. People will observe this and respond that the colleges are being funded at 60%. Be aware of the dynamics in the numbers as they are presented in the public domain. It is very similar to the tuition discussion last October. Tuition percentages may change if the other two numbers decrease. This is a framework.

The Tab includes a twelve-year history of budgeted college operational funding. A handout that shows tuition and fee rates for several years. He provided the materials as this process is done every year. The Commission sets flat tuition rates across the system. The colleges set their own fees. The Commission does not have control over student fees. The revenue from student fees and tuition are in college purview as operational funding it is not mixed with the allocation model. There also is included an eighteen-year history of state appropriations. You will note that when tuition and enrollment was high, colleges were receiving \$200 million plus. The current biennium started at \$176 million. With step #2 reductions the budget is at \$157 million. Step #3 reductions take the budget to \$147 million.

What is done and how, it is laid out in the tabs. Including the statute authority to maintain the funding allocation model. There are rules to back that up and how the model works. The Community College System and the State Agency gets funded on a biennial period. The Colleges prepare annual budgets. They complete this process every year. In the intervening year the Commission can submit exception requests. This year there was a negative supplemental budget taking money away from the original budget.

The purpose of the funding allocation model is to determine adjustments to biennial funding. The adjustment to the standard budget for base period recalibration is every three years. That is the only way besides a legislative reduction or addition to the state aid line item that the Commission can adjust the line item, outside of submitting the letter as discussed. Handouts include: An eleven-year history of budgeted operational revenue for the colleges, the college current fee schedule.

Dr Caldwell highlighted what Mr. Buchholtz had mentioned earlier is the challenge of the recalibration, even though it changes with enrollment, it assumes that everything else is flat. It does not include the value of a dollar and that the fixed costs never increase. This is a fundamental challenge. There is a perception that the base increases and it does not. Base does not increase unless there is a change in FTE. It also assumes that with FTE costs are never different. She noted that she cannot pay her bills on 2010 rates.

Mr. Buchholtz noted that another handout included on the agenda is the history of state aid appropriations. The next page is history of tuition rates. Then there is an overview of the funding allocation model and how it works. This is a high-level document of the state aid appropriation. The funding allocation takes in the local revenue and starts with a new biennial period with actual local revenue from the previous two-year period. This number is divided by two and then added to the allocation model. And then there is an amount that is actually distributed to the colleges.

From that the amount is split by the College's fixed versus variable cost calculation. This is another recalibration done every four years, which is also occurring right now. The new split, calculation will not go into the model until 2024, which will be a whole separate presentation. As an estimate 60% of college costs are fixed, 40% variable. Of the variable cost split, half is given to the colleges based on the prior two-year academic enrollment. The other half is split 50/50 and that is distributed to colleges based on successfully completed credit hours as a proportion of the system for each institution, and successfully conferred weighted degrees and certificates. And it is split based across the total degrees across the system.

Mr. Buchholtz next presented the actual funding allocation model for the current period (21/22 model). The top line indicates where the model ended from the previous period showing the previous distribution to each college. The next line shows the allocation pre-budget cuts. If there had been some adjustment to the base it would show. Using Casper College as an example, \$38,890,509 does not show any adjustments. Between 2019/2020 the amount remains flat. The next green shows how much local revenue was captured after reallocation, redistribution from the previous fiscal period. The next line, \$51 million shows their biennium amount which is later annualized. And then it is split between fixed and variable costs. The 60/40 split factor is attached an annualized. You can see that in the included columns. Then the enrollment (weighted credit hours) for the previous two academic years is indicated. Then there are the two-performance metrics. Then there is the actual variable cost (40%) is split in half and distributed. The second half is distributed based on weighted credit hours. There are four levels of credit delivered by an institution. An online course carries a value of .8 of cost. A Level I lecture course has a value of 1. A lab course has a value of 1.25 which is a level II. Then a level III course which is a restricted enrollment, high cost, high equipment receives a value of 1.5. Credit hours are weighted based on the credit limit and course content. Based on these calculations is the percentage of the successfully completed

weighted credit hours for Casper College from across the system for each college. That performance metric is weighted and the money delivered. The same thing is done for weighted degrees and certificates. Of the variable cost funding. Half is separated out for enrollment. Half of what is left, a quarter of which is separated out for completed credit hours. The other quarter is separated out for successfully completed weighted degrees. It is done in the model as a static line with two metrics pre-calculation. Then there are two metrics post calculation where the money is shuffled between institutions based on proportional share of the metrics. A college with a higher proportional share of delivery of those metrics, credit hours or degrees, the money is shuffled. This is done through the allocation model. There is one set for fiscal year 21 and one for 22. The numbers for 2022 have not been included yet. As such there is no post shuffle.

Mr. Buchholtz noted that he had provided a very high-level overview of the model and how it works. The Commission receives its allocation, it is split, weighted, calculated it, re-split it, and then it is distributed. One thing not shown in this example is that in fiscal year 2019 the Budget Division made a fiscal adjustment. They held out \$660,000 from the state aid line item, meant to be used to pay for retiree health insurance. There was a break holiday over that biennium. No agency had to pay that amount to support paying retiree health insurance contributions to the state health system. This was pulled out of the allocation. However, this was not taken out of the appropriation at the top of the model. It was not the starting point, it was taken out at the bottom of the model as a proportional share of the overall fixed costs. It was a deduction, lower in the model, that did not affect the original allocation. The original allocation has to match the previous biennial periods' ending position. The appropriation was \$660,000 less, but it cannot be shown that way in the model. One must start with where they ended, with adjustments later in the model by taking the money away.

Mr. Buchholtz clarified that during this fiscal period two things will happen. The money that was held out, \$660,000, will be added back such that \$643,189, based on college employee salary amounts, will be inserted back into the model. Additionally, in fiscal year 19 the college employees received a legislative pay raise. It was for one year in the previous biennium. That dollar amount biennialized was added to the state appropriation line item. The model did not distribute the original allocation and therefore it was not the ending position. It gets added into the bottom of the model. The proportional share of fixed costs, that amount of money gets divided and added back into the appropriation. Half was added back in for each year of the biennium. So, the ending on the model is truly the beginning for the next fiscal period. The same would happen should the Governor and or the Legislature act on the model and give an additional appropriation. Since it is not the starting position, it is added later in the model. After the original cuts or splits are made. Pretty high level, pretty quick. Mr. Buchholtz asked if there are any questions.

The next couple of slides provide examples, originally presented June going into 2021-2022, of what will be included in the June meeting packet. The materials will look

similar going into 2023-2024. Provided will be a list of exception requests (what, how much, recommendations, priority order). Additionally, discussed is the statutory authority for the Commission. What is the authority to do a budget request for the community colleges and WPTV? Next there is a detail of the programs administered out of the Commission, their performance measures. The actual program prioritization and the order in which they are considered and used in reverse should there be a need to implement budget reductions. This order was used in the past to some degree. However, there are certain things within the budget that impacts the approach. The original plan was to start at the bottom and just cut, which just cannot be done with education programs. Strategic cuts were made, not straight across the board cuts, leaving programs sustainable, partially funded, but still in existence. With them remaining in the budget, there may be an opportunity to receive more money in the future to bring the programs back up to whatever demonstrated need there is for the programs. Commissioner Freeze expressed her appreciation for Mr. Buchholtz presentation. She added that it was very informative, very thorough. And while it is sometimes hard to digest, she appreciated the need to hear it every year so as to understand how the entire thing rolls out.

- Recalibration of Base Period (4-year cycle)

[TAB F](#)

Mr. Buchholtz proposed given the short amount of time left on the agenda, rather than proceeding through the next series of slides, let's just talk about it. Recalibration of the Base Period is very much like what we have already talked about. It is like comparing the actual weighted FTE enrollment in years: 2015, 2016, 2017; verses years: 2019, 2022, 2021. Mr. Buchholtz proposed given the short amount of time left on the agenda, rather than proceeding through the next series of slides, let's just talk about it.

Enrollment is down resulting in the moving forward of a reduction. Numbers are not validated or verified, yet right now it may be a reduction in the \$4 million range. There are some other discussions which will need to happen as to how we will do what is actually needed to do to step #3 reductions as it effects recalibration of the base period. Even though the reduction will not be experienced in the next fiscal year. The reduction will impact the 2022-2024 biennium which is the basis for formulating that budget. Mr. Buchholtz suggest, right now, the Commission take the \$5 million out of the funding allocation model. Then proceed with a recalibration of the base period thus mitigating the impact. There will be less money in the model. There are things that the Administrative Services Council (ASC) needs to walk, talk, and step through the recommendations. They will need to bring forward to the Presidents, then the Commission to make a final decision. In review, weighted credit hours in prior academic years compared to the next three academic years, factored by variable cost funding. Variable cost funding is only adjusted during recalibration. Fixed cost funding is not touched. The complete exercise is included in a separate tab.

- Budget Fixed & Variable Recalibration

[TAB G](#)

Mr. Buchholtz continued with detailing the fixed and variable cost recalibration. This too is in the model and part of Commission Rules. The Rules dictate that every four years the Commission complete the recalibration process. This process is also spelled out in the same tab. Different cost categories at the institutions have different splits.

Instruction for instance, The Agency pulls down out of the database housed at the Commission, the general ledger for all the institutions. This is pulled down, inserted into a spreadsheet and sorted. The spreadsheet is built such that the costs between functional categories and variable versus fixed. Instruction for example is 10% fixed and 90% variable. Physical Plant is 100% fixed and 0% variable. Based on fund codes and how money was spent over the last two years, is how fixed and variable cost calculation is adjusted. Very high level. All on a spreadsheet and very transparent. The agency pulls it, segregates it, send it to the colleges, it receives their validation and confirmation, they move things around and

make any needed adjustments, and then place it in a different split if needed. The revised number will go into the 2023-2024 allocation. There is an example provided in the tab. Northwest College was used as the example school.

Commissioner Freeze asked if there were any questions. She also noted that at some future point, the Commission might want to do a more thorough review of fixed and variable costs.

Dr. Caldwell noted prior to ending the workshop, she was notified that Commissioners will change room location for the next meeting. Commissioners will convene in open session and then move into executive session. Mr. Williams added that the best thing to do would be, since the Commission is currently in an open session, the Chair could go ahead and handle the motion, second and vote for executive session, and then subsequently reconvene in the new location in executive session thus making things easier procedurally.

Commissioner Freeze asked for a motion to convene into Executive Session as per statute.

A motion was entered to move into Executive Session to provide for personnel purposes, legal matters, in accordance with Wyoming Statute 16-4-405 (a)(X). Commissioner Blikre moved, Commissioner Newman Seconded Motion Carried Unanimously.

5:30 p.m. **Convene Executive Session**

- To provide for personnel purposes or other legal matters, in accordance with W.S. 16-4-405(a)(ix)

Adjourn Executive Session

7:30 p.m. **Informal Reception**

Community College Boards of Trustees, Community College Presidents and staff, Commissioners and WCCC Staff, and WACCT discuss items of interest specific to community colleges and the WCCC.

[Informal discussion, no action will be taken.]

April 15, 2021
Regular Meeting
Casper College
Walter H. Nolte Gateway Center/Room 225
Zoom: <https://us02webzoom.us/j/82833806056>
Meeting ID: 828 3380 6056

Call In Number

(346) 248-7799

(669) 900-6833

8:00 a.m. Commissioner Photo Session - Gateway Rm. 403

8:30 a.m. **CALL TO ORDER**
ROLL CALL

Commissioners

Commissioner Blikre - Present

Commissioner Boal – Present

Commissioner Dooley – Present

Commissioner Goetz – Present

Commissioner Newman – Present

Commissioner Wyatt - Present

Commissioner and Chair Freeze – Present

The presence of a full quorum was duly noted.

Ex Officio Members

Honorable Governor Mark Gordon or Lachelle Brant – Present (Lachelle Brant)

Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow or Shelley Hammel – Present (Shelley Hammel)

Community College Commission Executive Director, Dr. Sandy Caldwell – Present.

Commission Staff

Ben Moritz, Deputy Director – Present

Larry Buchholtz, Chief Financial Officer – Present

Paris Edeburn, Chief Technology Officer – Present

Christy Klaassen, Policy Analyst - Present

Rob Dennis, Chief Operations Officer – Present

INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Freeze continued with having individuals present within the room or on zoom introduce themselves. Introductions included College Presidents, staff, WACCT representatives, College Trustees, and others.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Freeze asked for a motion to approve the agenda as it stands. Commissioner Dooley moved, Commissioner Blickre seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

A. SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMISSIONERS BY JUDGE BROWN

- MICAH WYATT
- MEGAN GOETZ

[TAB H](#)
[TAB I](#)

Commissioner Freeze paused the meeting briefly to move into the swearing in of the new Commissioners as performed by the Honorable H. Steven Brown of the Circuit Court of the 7th Judicial District, Natrona County, State of Wyoming.

Dr. Caldwell acknowledged that all are very fortunate and grateful to have, in person, the Honorable H. Steven Brown to conduct the swearing in ceremony. She asked if the two new Commissioners, Commissioner Goetz and Commissioner Wyatt, join Judge Brown, at the end of the room, for the ceremony.

Judge Brown asked if all were ready to proceed. He next acknowledged that it was nice to be invited and be here today in person. He asked all those taking the oath today to raise their right hand and repeat after him.

“I do solemnly swear or affirm, that I will support, obey, or defend the Constitution of the United States. And the Constitution of the State of Wyoming. That I have not knowingly violated any law, related to my election or appointment. Or caused it to be done by others. And that I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity.”

After leading Commissioner Wyatt and Commissioner Goetz in reciting the Oath of Office, Judge Brown acknowledged that he had signed off on oath administration. The note is ready for further distribution. Then he wished both new Commissioners congratulations.

Commissioner Freeze welcomed both Commissioner Wyatt and Commissioner Goetz to the group and noted her appreciation for have the two of them on board.

B. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Freeze moved on to the Election of Officers. She then offered either a silent vote at this time or a general discussion and perhaps a motion if people are interested in doing it that way.

Subsequent to the discussion she noted fellow Commissioners can vote on paper or make a general motion.

Commissioner Newman asked about the possibility of a motion?

Commissioner Newman motioned to have Commissioner Jackie Freeze and Commissioner Kay Dooley retain their current positions as Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioner Blikre seconded. No Discussion Motion carried unanimously for Commissioner Jackie Freeze and Commissioner Kay Dooley to retain their positions as Chair and Vice Chair.

- C. PUBLIC COMMENT (Comments should be limited to 3 minutes duration for each agenda item. Please state your name, affiliation, locale, and agenda item(s) to address)

Commissioner Freeze asked if there were any public comments. She also reminded presenters that they are limited to three minutes and that they should relate it to agenda items as well as provide their name, local and agenda item one would be speaking to.

Ms. Lisa Johnson was introduced later in the meeting to provide her comments as she was experiencing technology issues.

Ms. Johnson presented comments as a representative of the Wyoming Association of Career and Technical Education. She expressed their sincere appreciation to the partnership the organization has with the community colleges. Following on the Legislative recap, one of their priorities was work based learning. Today House Bill 239, which was the student learner agreements. The community colleges will play a significant role in that effort to get those students out into the workplace to gather valuable preparation experience. Thus giving those students the opportunity to explore careers. One aspect of the bill is flexibility in which community colleges can serve those students statewide. Community colleges already partner on various programs. She is happy to be here and observe today's meeting as well as partnering to provide more opportunities for technical education.

D. ORGANIZATIONS/ALLIANCES:

- Governor's Office

Dr. Caldwell noted that Ms. Lachelle Brant was not on the meeting at this time as Dr. Caldwell believed that Ms. Brant had a schedule overlap. Ms. Brant has prepared some summary points. If she is able to join, she would like time to provide updates.

- Wyoming Department of Education

Ms. Shelley Hammel provided the following updates from the Wyoming Department of Education.

In response to COVID there has been and continues to be significant work occurring with both federal and district partners.

In regards to federal funds for use in responding to COVID, districts continue to utilize their ESSER I allocation. All ESSER I State Reserve funds must be awarded prior to May 29 or be reverted to the federal government. WDE just opened a grant allowing districts to apply for remaining funds with the intent of depleting the remaining \$1 million. As far as the district allocations, 3 districts have completely drawn their ESSER I funds. There has been a total of \$14 million drawn. Thus indicating that districts have accessed about half of the ESSER I dollars.

In December of 2020, the WDE received Wyoming's ESSER II allocation of \$135M. In March of 2021, WDE received notification of the ARP ESSER/ESSER III. Districts just recently received access to the ESSER II grant in the WDE grants management system. Many are working on completing an application.

The ARP ESSER funds are a different. The state received 2/3rds of the funds. The full Wyoming allocation is just over \$303M. The 2/3rds are making their way through state processes at the same time that WDE staff is working to create an application in the grants management system. WDE anticipates funds being available sometime around the start of the new fiscal year. The remaining 1/3d will be made available after the WDE completes an application for USED that has yet to be made available.

The WDE is also charged with the oversight of the Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools/EANS funds. As required by federal statute, WDE has identified all eligible non-public schools in the state and determined that five schools are interested in accessing reimbursement for allowable expenses and equitable services going forward. WDE has been working with five non-public schools on the reimbursement and has a meeting set for next week for consultation to discuss on-going needs. There is a 6 month time limit on funds availability. Any funds remaining after the 6 month mark, will revert back to the Governor's office as part of the GEER II funds. ESSER I funds. A main focus of those SEA Reserves is to increase educators' knowledge of literacy development and an understanding of identification of challenges and appropriate interventions. WDE is offering LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training to all K-12 educators across the state--which is focused on strengthening educator's understanding of the *what*, *why*, and *how* of literacy instruction. The program kicks off in the fall and follows the 9 month school year. Collecting of names of any interested K-12 educators continues for the fall cohorts. WDE is very pleased with the level of interest experienced statewide. The original goal was to see 25 Administrators participate in the LETRS for Administrators Training, at last count there are 65. WDE's goal with educators was for 200 across the state, and currently there are 580 registrations.

Federal Accountability –

WDE submitted an addendum to the State's consolidated ESSA plan. The addendum requests the ability to shift timelines forward for identified long-term goals in the areas of academic achievement, graduation rate, and progress in achieving English Language Proficiency. It also identifies the state's interest in revising indicators that are used for federal accountability determinations for the 20-21 school year for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools and Targeted Support and Improvement School status.

This addendum is necessary because Wyoming is unable to calculate its system of annual meaningful differentiation because of missing data from the 2019-2020 school year and now for the 2020-2021 school year.

As a reminder, prior to submission to USED, the WDE provided opportunities for public comment and consulted with the Governor's Office. Additionally, consultation letters were sent to the Eastern Shoshone and Northern

At the Commission's last meeting in February, Ms. Hammel reported on the WDE's support of districts with the state set-aside portion of Arapaho tribes, and staff participated in multiple meetings with other education stakeholders to discuss the addendum. Public and stakeholder input overwhelmingly supported the addendum.

WDE also submitted a waiver in identifying schools for targeted support and improvement (TSI) status for fall of 2021 based on lack of necessary data to make appropriate identification. The WDE will continue to support schools that had been previously identified as CSI and TSI and any school interested may seek additional technical support from the WDE.

State Accountability—

In late January, the Wyoming State Board of Education (SBE) approved State Accountability Exception Requests based on their Chapter 3 Emergency Rules for all 48 school districts. As a result, School Performance Ratings will not be calculated for the 2020-21 school year.

All schools that were in a TSI status prior to COVID-19 remain in this status. The WDE continues to provide resources and supports as identified in the ESSA State plan. We have also opened availability of these resources and supports to every school across the state.

The WDE has had initial contact with USED about the submitted addendum and waiver requests. USED requested additional clarification which was provided. WDE is once again awaiting a response from the USED.

Work continues around the Profile of a Graduate with anticipation that this may become an interim legislative topic. More will be known by tomorrow afternoon once the legislative Management Council meets and finalizes the topics. Topics around literacy, funding, and equity, among others, are anticipated by WDE.

One piece of legislation that WDE has already begun work on is SF115. This bill broadened the SBE's authority over pupil-teacher contact time and acknowledges instruction outside of the physical classroom. The WDE is working with the board to add a definition of pupil-teacher contact time to Chapter 22 rules on the School Day that will make Classroom-Based Virtual Education in Emergency Ch. 41 Rules unnecessary. The tentative timeline is to present draft rule changes to the board in May, and ask the board to adopt emergency and regular rules in June, so they can be filed July 1.

Work around content standards is on-going. Recently, public comment closed on proposed 2021 Science and ELA Performance and Standards. The WDE is currently seeking public comment on Math Performance Standards. Anyone wanting to provide input can complete a public survey available on the WDE's website through April 28. There will also be two public input meetings. The first is April 22 from 4:30-6:00 and April 26 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Information to join either meeting is available on the website.

The WDE is preparing to kick off the annual series of summer and fall conferences. The first is the Summer Technical Assistance Retreat (STAR) Conference that will be held virtually June 21-25, 2021. The STAR Conference focuses on the Grants Management, Homeless Education, Consolidated Federal Grants, and School Safety. From June 21-23, the sessions will focus on Federal Programs management with the annual McKinney-Vento Homeless Education post-conference being held on June 24-25.

The Embracing Literacy Conference will be held in July virtually each Tuesday and Thursday the first three weeks of July. Presenters represent both national and state literacy experts.

The 2021 Native American Education Conference is scheduled to be held on-line Aug 11-14. A call for presenters has been issued and open through April 30. Registration will open in May.

The fall conferences, Wyoming Education Summit (WES) and Innovations in Education Conference are in the works with more information to come.

All conference information can be accessed on the WDE's website.

- Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees

Ms. Clark opened with her appreciation to the Commission for the opportunity to provide an update and welcomed the two new Commissioners. She noted a recent board meeting with lots of good discussion. The board felt that the Sustainability of the Wyoming's Community Colleges remains very important. Out of the discussion, the board felt a resolution was needed. Ms. Taylor assisted with the drafting of that resolution and is currently receiving feedback. Ms. Taylor hopes to take the resolution to the Management Council with the hope of college funding finding a new home.

She also acknowledged her appreciation for all the work done by the Commission and the Agency on behalf of the Community Colleges.

- Presidents' Council and Wyoming Innovation Network
 - Dr. Darren Divine, President

President Divine provided an update on a busy semester as all transition back to something more normal for the campuses and students. He noted it has been a double edged sword this spring. While it has been a supreme challenge to juggle all college athletics during the same semester, none the less, athletes have to play. All presidents are proud of the fact that they were able to compete.

All schools at this time are preparing in person graduation ceremonies and look forward to having one or two Commissioners at each ceremony.

He thanked the Commission and Commission staff for everyone's tireless effort in making sure that the capital construction projects for some of the schools were not forgotten. Those projects

have languished a little bit because of state politics. But Commission and Commission staff have done a wonderful job of keeping focused on the projects.

He also recognized all for their continuing support for keeping the sustainable funding efforts moving forward.

He also called out the wonderful work of Ms. Erin Taylor over the year. COVID brought on significant challenges. Ms. Taylor did a fantastic job. All Presidents council colleagues are so grateful.

Regarding the WIN program. He told a colleague that all have to stop using Wyoming as the first word in a program title as it leads to the same acronym. The Wyoming Innovation Network includes all the community colleges and the University of Wyoming. All are working to identify new and innovative projects, especially those centered around workforce development and technical job skills. The goal is to find some synergy around these areas to support new and emerging industries, but also getting adult learners and traditional students into the workforce. Work is just beginning. President Divine will keep all apprised as the work moves forward.

He ended with an invitation to attend the latest stop in the college rodeo circuit event in Casper later that evening.

- Educational Attainment Executive Council – Dr. Kim Dale, Co-Chair [TAB J](#)

Dr. Dale provided a brief update on what is happening with the Attainment Council. There are a number of good documents included in the meeting packet including what was discussed in great detail at the council meeting last February. Significant take-a-ways during that meeting, affirming of the Council strategic plan and identification of two subcommittees. One subcommittee is looking at policy barriers to achievement of attainment. The other is looking at metrics and how to measure success.

They also discussed the Legislative session. She too recognized the hard work of Ms. Erin Taylor. Weekly meetings were held during the session to provide updates on legislative tracking. Ms. Klaassen was instrumental in organizing those meetings. Included in the packet is a memo that Dr. Dale and Dr. Seidel sent to the Senate Education Committee to help educate legislators to the attainment work. A number of members testified and sent emails. She recognized the unbelievable collective effort during this recent session.

She underscored that Dr. Caldwell and the Commission staff are incredible. Staff were consistently up to speed on the changing nature of legislation. They were keying President's in at the right time. She also underscored the work of Ms. Taylor. She provided amazing effort while she was at the Capitol morning to evening. Presidents were also on call. The dynamic scenario was exhausting, but it is important to recognize the effort of the solid team. She noted that this group is really working well together.

Not all bills, as hoped, were passed. But Legislators now have a greater understanding of attainment and the importance and work done by the community colleges.

It is known that \$1.1 billion of ARP money is coming to the State of Wyoming. The EAEC group is considering requesting some funding for outcomes related to the strategic plan. With the help of Robin Cooley, Dr. Seidel, Dr. Caldwell, and Dr. Dale are drafting a request for some ARP funding to help move the attainment work forward.

There will be another meeting in May held in Rock Springs. She encouraged all to join.

- Community College Faculty Alliance
No Report
- Wyoming Public Television – Terry Dugas, General Manager [TAB K](#)

Mr. Dugas referred all to a provided written report. The only addition to the report is relevant to some of the discussion. There was an unexpected attempt to reduce WYPBS budget by an additional 15%. Fortunately, the public affairs producer, Craig Blumenschein, was able to let all know about the bill. The Foundation Director and Mr. Dugas, were able to contact a number of Legislators who are supportive of Wyoming PBS. Those Legislators were able to speak on the floor against the proposed funding reduction. The attempt to divert the funds was set aside, for which Wyoming PBS was able to get through without additional cuts. Earlier cuts were not rescinded as was done with some of the cuts for the Commission. However, the necessary steps were implemented to account for the reductions. Staff reductions were made last August. WPTV was able to continue with their plan thus accommodating the cuts.

E. LEGISLATIVE WRAP UP

- WCCC - Dr. Sandy Caldwell [TAB L](#)

Dr. Caldwell started with the Commission viewpoint of the legislative session. She thanked Dr. Divine for hosting the Commission meeting and hosting the reception last night. She noted the written report attached to the agenda. It does not have what was posted for Management Council concerning the proposed priorities. It will be attached by the time the report is ready for the public. Those priorities were finalized Monday morning.

She added there was a whole lot to the session. Dr. Caldwell acknowledged the dedicated work of Ms. Christy Klaassen who started in January. She did a fantastic job, tracking close to 500 bills published. It does not include the number of bills never making it to Committee. There were a lot of those too which some needed to be worked through the legislative interim committee. Unique about this session, while active in March, it started in January. But it really starts in December with a review of the tentative budget.

Last year was a tremendous year. All worked through the proposed budget cuts. A number of special meetings working on the Sustainable Funding to bring the final proposal forward. There was a one-day session in January. Additionally, there was an online session for a week. Then

committee work commenced. In reality the session started with one day, yet prior was all the work on the budget recommendation, hearing, mark up, etc. Once the session kicked off in January, it continued on until closing the night of April 7th. Also, recognition to Erin Taylor for the amount of time she put in. There were a lot of times where information was needed and had to be pulled immediately. All kept up the combined voice on Sustainable Funding and the impact to the colleges throughout the session. It happened right up until the budget was adopted.

Some interesting things in the process of the budget. As previously heard from Mr. Dugas and WPTV, that was a surprise to see an amendment come in, which was unknown, and then responding immediately. The goal was to not allow further gutting of Wyoming Public TV. Through the process it was important to establish and continue to reiterate the Commission's position of which there was success especially on the Senate side. The Senate said they were trying to fix the cram downs, which were acknowledged. A positive outcome was funding for school facilities. This provided a funding source and prevented the elimination of a position. This went above and beyond the proposed cuts, as we cannot eliminate another position. Within this process also, regarding the Step #2 and #3 cuts, the way written in the budget on that line item happened. Then the colleges were granted an \$8 million reprieve for the upcoming fiscal year only. Important to note, those cuts don't end, but there was a one-time offset. A conversation Dr. Caldwell had two days ago, was correcting the misperception that the colleges got eased up on either by \$8 million for each college which is not the case. When discussing sustainable funding, keeping the message out front is very important. Discussed yesterday in the budget workshop, there were a lot of eyebrows raised. Chairman Freeze shared with the Joint Appropriations the work and recommendations which were adopted by the Commission on the impact of the limited funding to the colleges. That helped messaging throughout. It did not result in a funding bill for the colleges, but it did in this respect. Based on 2010 until now, if you look at the erosion with no external cost adjustment. This is a very different narrative from K-12 and also UW. Even the recalibration doesn't account for increases in costs. When considered compared to 2010 and prior cuts, the colleges were already at \$53 million. Add in the health insurance deficit, and then step #2 and #3, that amounts to \$94 million up to this biennium. Getting an \$8 million reprieve is very welcome, but they are still \$86 million in the hole. This is an important narrative which needed to be reiterated over and over. In the budget wrap up those were some good outcomes.

Earlier CapCon was mentioned and how that bill came out was to allow for some ARP funding be structured into the bill. All are waiting on guidance from the Treasury Department. Agency staff met with the staff at the State Construction Department. Staff are waiting on the construction AG's on how to interpret the language which was included. Projects were authorized which was also welcome news and incredibly important. Additionally there was a little funding provided and the ability to use ARP funding for construction projects when it comes through.

Dr. Caldwell detailed a few bills. The Commission heard Dr. Dale talk about three bills which were being tracked regarding the attainment work. Unfortunately, none of the bills made it through. One has to do with Wyoming's Tomorrow which we are expecting to come forward

possibly in the ARP plan. The Credit Retention bill made it through which is an interesting bill because the colleges already have credit retention. The ban on funding abortions with state funds, colleges are already not funding abortions with state funds. The Wyoming National Guard instate residency for guard members who may live in adjacent counties in other states. This again is already occurring. This codifies it in statute as well.

Management Council is coming up. Ms. Taylor will talk about it in more detail. The Council meets Friday. Staff will be attending the meeting. Dr. Caldwell had reached out to LSO, Matt Obrecht, to talk about the Select Committee for Community College Governance and Funding as it was not on the list of committees. Dr. Caldwell was concerned about this because it is really critical that there is some sort of a platform to continue to discuss the lack of funding. Joint Education is interested in it, but the Commission does not have a home committee. Chairman Freeze, Trustee Clark, have all brought up this important topic. She hoped to put this on the Commissioners radar as they are talking about and establishing their priorities in June. No bill came out of the Sustainable funding piece yet all are starting to get the message through on that and that we do not have a home committee. We did hear the Select Committee members will be appointed.

For a moment on the ARP and federal side of legislative updates. The Governor has established three focused committees to establish a path for spending on the state's ARP funds. There will be three teams: Health and Social Services, Education and Workforce, and Economic Development and Diversification. In reality the community colleges, because of their comprehensive missions, intersects with each of the three teams. The colleges are assigned to the Education and Workforce team. Chairs will be meeting shortly. Dr. Cooley of the Department of Workforce Services will be chairing the Education and Workforce team. The first round of those ARP ideas that the colleges contributed was amazing. ARP funding will be considered in the special session which will happen the week of July 12th. This is where they will consider the ARP funds and possibly other bills, for example the ones pertaining to attainment. The intent as far as known is to present proposals similar to a budget request. It will evolve and be an iterative process. The Colleges and the Presidents will start thinking about their proposals. The last aspect is the America Jobs Plan. This is still in the works but will potentially change. As Mr. Buchholtz noted yesterday, agency staff anticipate that it will pass in some form or another, because it is an infrastructure bill. Infrastructure and construction are triggers for economic activity and long-term economic growth. A regular CapCon prioritization is anticipated, and the colleges were asked to look at their five year master plan and for them to see what could potentially be pulled out for ARP funding. There may be a second running of the model to have the colleges positioned as quickly as possible to leverage those funds.

Ms. Klaassen mentioned a couple of bills for information. There were a couple of bills that did pass through the process. Senate File 23 which was a public meetings bill providing for executive sessions allowed for Trustees to meet in executive session to discuss security and security planning. This bill passed and is now a law.

Senate File 58, was the Gillette Community College bill. Most people know, that has moved through and was mentioned in the work session the other day. House Joint Resolution 9 which passed and signed by the Governor. Which allows for Government entities like our college boards to invest in stocks and equities if the voters are to favorably pass an amendment to the Wyoming constitution. Thus providing a new possible area for investment and fundraising for budgets. She expects Ms. Taylor to talk in more detail about Wyoming's Tomorrow and Senate File 127 when you learn.

Dr. Caldwell acknowledged she was remiss in that she missed talking about Gillette Community College, which was the district that did move forward as Senate Enrolled Act 47. There was a public signing. The Commission's responsibility was to notify all and was done so the day it passed, by sending notice to Campbell County Commissioners via the Campbell County Clerk thus triggering the election process. Notice was also sent to Dr. Tribble and the NWCCD Board of Trustees to update the status on the enactment of the legislation. The agency did receive the official reported version of the bill with the chapter number assigned. Hard copies were sent out to Campbell County, Campbell County Clerk, and Northern Wyoming Community College District. By statute the election must occur in August. There is not any leeway, and agency staff had to keep straight while hearing various testimony on many things including the impact on funding for all the colleges. Corrections were made on interpretations as to how the funding allocation model works. The model is different from K-12. That election is in process and set to happen in August and the County has received official notification. All wait to see what happens when it goes to the voters.

- WACCT - Ms. Erin Taylor

[TAB M](#)

Ms. Taylor provided an update to the Legislative Session while recognizing members of the Commission and guests. She thanked Casper College for hosting WACCT yesterday.

She opted to not repeat what has already been said. But she noted the fantastic job done by Ms. Klaassen during this legislative session in walking folks through the bills.

She touched briefly on what was heard earlier from Trustee Clark. WACCT did discuss the issue of the colleges not having a legislative home. This has been talked about for years. It is finally time and all get more firm on this issue. She has tried to talk to Management Council members about this exact issue. The WACCT board moved quickly and swiftly. Last night Ms. Taylor put together this resolution that is similar to the other resolution on sustainable funding. The State's interests, the impacts to the colleges, developing a diverse workforce, attainment, and why it is important for a standing legislative committee to understand these areas. Ms. Taylor will share finalized copies of resolution with the Commission and President's as well.

To talk about the Legislative session, as mentioned by Ms. Klaassen, there were a lot of good little bills which passed and were helpful to the colleges. Those were nice to see move through. There were also some challenging bills like the abortion bill funding bill. She saw the real issue in the Senate where they were trying to have control over the use of other and federal funds. She

clarified when she testified on the bill that the Legislature does not have control over other or federal funds. The Senate did a good job amended. Then there was the transfer bill. WACCT and others were successful in amending the bills so that they were livable for the colleges.

It would not be a legislative session if guns in schools was not discussed. The one bill that WACCT was opposed to, died in the house for lack of a hearing before a legislative committee. Similarly through that process, that was how other big community college bills ended up dying for not having a legislative hearing. It is a tool like to be seen sometimes and a frustrating tool when it does not go the other way.

She acknowledged the really great successes in the budget. The Appropriations committee currently is working really well together both the House and the Senate. It is a refreshing place to be when with a committee which has control over budgets and impacts to the community colleges. They were proud of finding another \$8 million dollars total the colleges. The CapCon bill was really remarkable with the colleges ending up with an additional \$12 million with a lot of flexibility. She is really excited for some of the opportunities for CapCon. All will be happy to run with it and see what more might need to be done. Even though cost escalators may not be enough.

The challenges seen at the end of the session. The top priorities were really funding and Wyoming's Tomorrow. To not even have a vehicle for funding was a huge frustration for those who collectively worked on the sustainable funding efforts and recommendations. She noted the effort the staff at the commission put forward was volumes. She expressed her appreciation and added that the agency staff are really carrying the water for higher education in the state with regard to all the reporting. Legislators are seeing the effort.

Wyoming's tomorrow fell victim to a lot of things and not just the lack of a hearing. Perhaps, "someone else's name", or "not my idea but someone else's". Egos and politics all tied up in this particular bill. Misunderstanding and lack of understanding pertaining to what was trying to be done with some underutilized Hathaway funding. The purpose was clearly explained and a more modern way to utilize the funds to get a better bang for the buck was not clearly understood or unwillingness to listen.

A frustration which was amended into the Earn While You Learn bill and it became a nonstarter for the Senate. There was not a possibility of a conference committee as the two parties just declined to have any further hearings. It does sound like there is an opportunity for Wyoming's tomorrow to move forward in the Special Session. Ms. Taylor continues to remind legislators about the effort. She has seen a little movement, if that was a failed bill, it should be moved forward in the special session. The bill did not fail, it just did not get completed.

What is ahead for the next Legislative session as Management Council is talking tomorrow. She will forward the resolution to the Council and where is the larger conversation going to happen about sustainability for the community colleges. It tends to go towards appropriations when it is the harder topic. Some folks do not want it in education because of their focus on K-12. There

are other dynamics in play. She believes the select committee will continue to move forward. The Select Committee needs to report out to someone such as a standing committee and that standing committee needs to take action by sponsoring legislation. This is the main point she is forwarding to the Legislators. It cannot be just a report, it needs to be a directive that they will take action and sponsor a bill.

Some conversations are centering around workforce and earn while you learn, as well as apprenticeship type of work and Wyoming's Tomorrow and Wyoming Works. The question has been posed, how does this all tie together. There are a lot of really great programs. Legislators are asking if we can grab a focus and tie together knowledge and expertise on how these programs all work. This summarizes the work done over the last few days.

Ms. Taylor reflected that Dr. Caldwell had discussed the special session. The only other item to talk about was the unprecedented nature of this session and how there were almost 700 bills drafted. Not all survived, but perhaps the most ever seen. There is a shift in how many individualized efforts are moving forward. There are also shifts in the political sway of the Legislature presenting challenges for leadership. There are a lot of different dynamics then 10 to 15 years ago. Politics is really different now then how it used to be.

She added that the working relationship between WACCT and the Commission and the community college family is the best it has ever been. Ms. Taylor thanked the Trustees for being so timely in responding to her action alerts. They were fantastic in reporting back Legislators comments and reactions. The Presidents were literally on call this year. Because of COVID they stayed home and did their part. Folks were lined up to testify and there was always someone available. She thinks the combined presence was really seen this legislative session. Lastly, she thanked Dr. Dale for her work done to boost the communications on the partnership with UW on the higher education attainment council to support some of the bills. Her effort was really important. It was important for Legislators to see that partnership with Dr. Dale's and President Seidel's signatures.

Taylor completed during the difficult session. It was great to see all the activity on behalf of the colleges. Ms. Taylor referred all to the WACCT legislative tracking sheet. And she noted that there were no taxes passed this year. She is unclear what will happen in terms of revenue raising issues. This will be a challenge when discussing sustainable funding for the community colleges if it includes any form of a revenue raising measure such as property or sales tax. Her crystal ball is cloudy, full of caution with added patience and a lot of opportunity. A majority of Legislators only understand K-12 funding and not the Community College allocation model. They also regularly lump the colleges in with UW. There is an incredible opportunity for advocacy. WACCT will approach the interim with small low key, informative meetings.

Commissioner Freeze added the thanks of the Commission for all the difficult work Ms.

F. CONSENT AGENDA ([Executive Summary](#))

[All items on the Consent Agenda will be considered together and incorporate the respective actions recommended for each item. A commissioner may have any item removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda.]:

Commissioner Freeze noted that all items in the Consent Agenda are considered together. Respective actions for each item will be approved as part of the consent. She asked if any Commissioner at this point would like to have an item removed.

I. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

- **February 5, 2021** [TAB N](#)

II. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS:

- A. CAPCON Model Annual Review** [TAB O](#)
- B. Financial Report** [TAB P](#)
- C. Interest Rates for WYIN, WAPLR, and TSLRP** [TAB Q](#)
- D. Fall 2020 Enrollment Report** [TAB R](#)
- E. Performance Indicator Report (Corrected)** [TAB S](#)
- F. Fiscal Year 2020 College Audits Reports (Revised)** [TAB T](#)

III. Eliminated or Hiatus Programs [TAB U](#)

IV. CONSIDERATION OF AND ADOPTION FOR CHAPTER 5 REGULAR RULES [TAB V](#)

- **Chapter 5 - National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)**

She entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda as in the agenda. Commissioner Blikre moved, Commissioner Newman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

G. REGULAR AGENDA:

I. COMMENCEMENT SCHEDULES (INFORMATION ONLY) [TAB W](#)

Commissioner Freeze noted that the commencement schedule was just an information piece. She also asked that the Commissioners look at the schedule and that they are listed at the right place. Institutions should note the Commissioner and in some places the staff person who will be attending the commencement exercise. She did make a quick comment that some institutions are still limiting attendee numbers. As such, the Commission never wants to be in the position of a Commissioner or staff person taking the place of someone like a faculty person or any one else directly involved in the process. If there ever comes a time when there is a tradeoff, certainly

know that it would be acceptable to not attend a ceremony in if it means someone on the campus is not able to do so.

Dr. Caldwell added that she had publicly posted the latest schedule for information. In addition, there will be Ex Officio's attending some of the ceremonies on behalf of the commission. Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ms. Jillian Balow has let Dr. Caldwell know that she will be at both Eastern Wyoming College commencements. Dr. Caldwell is in communications with Ms. Brant in the Governor's Office to find out if they can publicly recognize which ceremony the governor will attend. She noted they are literally working on it right now. She reminded all of the importance of commencement. When all reflect on the last year and the ability to have these ceremonies, it is the Superbowl of the community colleges. Community colleges say we are in the life changing, dream building business as one can walk in the door and recreate an entire pathway for life and family. To have an opportunity to celebrate that and the formality it has is important. All this work we do, all of it, is so this happens. It is something to celebrate, but the celebration is really critical.

II. NOTIFICATION OF MODIFIED PROGRAM PER ACCREDITATION CHANGES (INFORMATION ONLY). [EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:](#) [TAB X PRESENTATION](#)

Commissioner Freeze resumed the meeting after a break starting with Item II, Notification of Modified Program Per Accreditation Changes. Which is an information only item.

Dr. Moritz proceeded to review this item which will be detailed at the June Commission meeting. He noted that the information item is related to the changes to the Higher Learning Commission processes and policies that were recently approved and will have a significant impact on the colleges in relation to substantive change requests. He provided a power point presentation.

In 2020 during the prior administration the US Department of Education made some changes, of which you may be aware, to how regionally accrediting institutions operate and their respective policies. These policies were gradually implemented by the Higher Learning Commission, previously known as the regional accrediting body for Wyoming community colleges and the University. It is now simply the institutional accrediting agency.

Some of the policy changes included opening up the regional boundaries so that colleges and universities, college or institutions could work with any higher education accrediting institution in the country rather than their regional accreditor. Dr. Moritz did not focus on that today unless the Commissioners have questions. Rather in the interest of time, Dr. Moritz will focus on the criteria relative to substantive change forms and approvals. Prior to 2021 if a program changed by more than 25% in the following categories (number of credit or clock hours or if a contractor was used for outside resources). Currently after changes were implemented by USDE if a program changes by 25% or more in one of the following categories then the accreditation requires substantive changes. There are more categories and rather than 25% change across the board it is 25% in any one of the four categories. Meaning that many more changes which previously

required HLC approval through the substantive change process will now require approval. This is also retroactive to the last accrediting visit or the last accreditation action undertaken by a college. In some colleges, this means that the college may need to go back to as early as 2016 and review all their programs to identify if there was a 25% change or more took place over any of the four new categories. If that is the case, they will need to complete the substantive change process.

HLC understood that this will represent a significant change and challenge as well. They put forth a suggested process for all colleges and universities. First, all programs be reviewed for any change in the four categories undergone since the last accreditation action. Next any program with any amount of change should be submitted through the free HLC screener form developed by the HLC. The HLC promised prompt review of the forms within two weeks. The screener results will include a combination of the following: No Sub change needed, Sub change needed through staff action and IAC Consent Agenda, and Sub change needed through full IAC process.

The Commission staff through the Academic Affairs Council undertook a review of the form and processes used to review a program change. The goal was to align with the new HLC process to provide support for the colleges so that they had all the documentation that they needed to fully support their substantive change request. And to whatever extent needed align such that the agency and Commission did not create any additional labor to the Academic Affairs staff at the colleges. The staff put forward as a suggestion to the AAC a modification of the forms used. Previously any program undergoing modification required AAC and EC approval and was an information item for the Commission. There was not a truly functional definition of what was modification versus what was a new program. There were risk programs would change gradually over time and if they changed slowly enough they would never require approval through the Commission. And after time they would evolve into a different program then what was originally approved. To address this situation, the Commission staff put together a three-tiered modification approach using the forms which are used for the Academic Affairs Council. These were then approved by the AAC in the March 24 meeting. The first tier is less than a 25% change which would not require WCCC action, but AAC notification is encouraged to share best practices. Tier two includes a 25% to 50% change which would require approval up through the Executive Council but would remain an information item for the Commission. These are changes that would require a substantive change through the HLC and all wanted to ensure there was Commission documentation to support efforts. Finally, more than a 50% change, the staff define this as a new program. Those programs would have to go through the new program approval process. These were forms put together by the staff and proposed to the AAC. The AAC then approved and are now in use. These are not reflected in the rules. Yet at the next meeting, the Agency will propose some rule changes for Chapter 6 that reflect this process, clean up the language, and provide a more useful definition of modification and program change, to align closely with these forms, and align with new HLC policies. The proposed new rules have yet to be finalized but will be done in the next couple months. The staff looks forward to receiving feedback from both the Executive Council and the AAC as the rules are revised.

The next slide provided an overview of the WCCC Revision Process. It breaks down what has been done so far, what to expect for the April meeting, and what is planned for the June meeting.

To summarize one last time, The US Department of Education changed their rules, HLC then had to change theirs, and then the Commission is interested in aligning our policies, forms, and rules to align with the other entities in an effort to support the colleges to help make their processes more efficient as possible. Dr. Moritz asked for questions.

Commissioner Blikre noted that because of all the changes our colleges hurried up and did and did well for delivery because of COVID, now they have to go back and spend energy, time and money, to get approved what they did which was commendable? It is almost ridiculous.

Dr. Moritz responded noting that Commissioner Blikre had an accurate synopsis of the situation. He is sure there is frustration across the colleges. It is a costly and time intensive process.

Commissioner Blikre wanted to go on record as saying, he didn't think our colleges should have to go through with the process. But I guess we have to.

Commissioner Freeze noted that Higher Learning Commission was in a bit of a bind because the USDOE changed their rules. So, one could keep passing the buck to another entity in terms of why these changes were necessary. Regardless, we will do the best we can to make it work. She also added related to the HLC topic, Dr. Moritz also previously mentioned; There is no longer a regional accrediting association, but there is institutional accrediting. Institutions can opt to move in a different direction should they wish to do so. We will be addressing the whole issue and writing into agency rules the expectation that the Wyoming institutions will remain with the Higher Learning Commission for consistency purposes that should be the important part. This will be an upcoming discussion.

Dr. Caldwell added her appreciation for Commissioner Blikre's comments. One thing learned in particular through the BAS process and expectations understood is that the State must have their processes in place for all the colleges. The other thing realized, and Dr. Moritz mentioned it briefly, is that Agency's desire to give the colleges a strong backstop and platform and leeway to be able to do this in somewhat more of a batch process instead of one by one. The goal is to give the colleges the latitude to say this will be on the next Commission meeting will give the colleges wide latitude. She gave credit to the Academic Affairs folks and Dr. Moritz for their work together with the HLC and with other states to see how they are managing this change. All regional accrediting bodies will be moving to this format. The USDOE has removed accrediting bodies from this specific role. It is an interesting dynamic seen right.

Dr. Tyndall commented briefly noting that CWC was contacted recently. They had spoken with their accrediting agency, the HLC, and they indicated they are passing out about 50,000 forms a week. They are trying to cover every little ridiculous thing that is changing. National organizations including the national equivalent of WACCT and the American Association of Community Colleges they have spoken with. Both had no idea since mostly the accrediting

bodies just take on a project and get it done. Now they will be speaking to the USDOE as it is a ridiculous level of bureaucracy. It is now on their radar and they did reach out to the HLC for further information. All will see if Washington D.C. bureaucracy can be mitigated on this. Wheels are in motion.

Dr. Schaffer asked for some clarification he may have misheard, but for context the changes with the accrediting agencies no longer being regional, he has asked his staff to explore other options that may exist with shifting accreditation to another accreditor, specifically the Northwest Association of Colleges and Universities. It is exploratory at best, noting there is no secret of his frustration with the Higher Learning Commission's approach and honestly the level of bureaucracy and cost that involves institutions, which is probably only matched by one other accreditor. He suggested that he thought he heard the chair say that the Commission would require the colleges to remain with the Higher Learning Commission and that their may be some future conversation. If there is he would like to have some time to discuss. He believes changing to a different accreditor is something all should explore to really make sure remaining with the Higher Learning Commission is really the best thing given the changing landscape.

Commissioner Freeze responded noting Dr. Shaffer was bringing up a good point so that all could be prepared to have that discussion. She confirmed that she had said staying with the Higher Learning Commission, but certainly that can be a discussion. The key here for all to remember is the importance of Wyoming schools to remain under one accrediting agency especially if certain programs are compared as well as creating certain procedures. She added that this will be a discussion coming up sooner rather than later.

Dr. Shaffer offered to not take his comments as disagreeing with that intent. Continuity and consistency for accreditation is incredibly important. As per President Tyndall's comments it is not lost on Dr. Shaffer that the strongest voice in the negotiated rule making process leading up to these rules was the HLC and its current CEO. He suggested there will be room for change given the new administration. LCCC has been a bit skeptical of the interpretation of the new rules from the USDOE and the level of work which will now fall to the institutions. He questioned if this is the only approach, or should the Commission

III. PROGRAM APPROVAL - CREDIT CERTIFICATE AND ASSOCIATE DEGREES (ACTION ITEM): [EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#)

Commissioner Freeze introduced Dr. Caldwell in Dr. Moritz's absence. Dr. Caldwell then acknowledged that she would soon turn it over to the institution. She provided a reminder to the Commissioners to move the program approvals for the degrees and certificates as an action item after the college presentation. Just for all to know this goes through an important review process. She wanted to know what is presented and heard by the Commission. During the last few legislative sessions, it was heard a lot that the colleges never eliminate programs. There was a program elimination report included in the consent agenda. There is a misperception that

programs are just approved but no programs are removed. The reality is there is a process in place such that by the time it comes to the Commission, the program has been through the process established in rules and the Academic Affairs Council, works on and modifies these programs to make sure that it is meeting that requirement at the state level. Then the programs are approved to be reviewed by the Executive Council. Then the Executive Council approves the programs before they are presented to the Commission. The Executive Council includes all the Presidents, Dr. Caldwell, and Erin Taylor. Not everything makes it through the process, yet the Commissioners do not always see what is turned down. Dr. Caldwell wanted to make clear publicly that the process is rigorous and that there were program changes. Commissioners do not have programs before them that have not made it completely through prior reviews. She wanted to make sure there was awareness that one of the institutions realized that this was not the approach and went to Executive Council directly. The Council talked about the process and made the decision which was a good one. She clarified that when these programs come before the Commission and you approve them as they relate to the Statewide College System Strategic Plan, that they have been through a rigorous.

- Central Wyoming College

[TAB Y](#)

Dr. Brad Tyndall introduced Dr. Kathy Wells the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Central Wyoming College. She presented before the Commission and included in the packet four certificates related to the Criminal Justice program offerings. There are three, two semester certificates, and one one-semester certificate. At the college, these are called certificate ones and certificate twos. The first three certificates range in credits from 34 to 37 credits making them two semesters/one-year certificates. These were born from the current Criminal Justice Associate of Applied Science Degree program. Through the program assessment and program review process, and in conjunction with lots of conversations with the advisory boards related to the Criminal Justice and prelegal programs. It was evident that the Associate of Applied Science degree in Criminal Justice needed a bit of an overhaul. Information coming from the advisory committee members, made up of industry experts and various aspects of the Criminal Justice field, they were hearing from interested, future, criminal justice officers, as well as those currently serving that they wanted smaller achievements or groupings of courses. These groupings would then feed into an Associates Degree. As they worked through the entry level and career ladder in their field, they could complete small segments of their degree. All of these certificates do feed into the AAS in Criminal Justice as well as the transfer degree (AA) in criminal justice as well.

The first three certificates are divided into different areas of the Criminal Justice field. So, a student can focus in an area of interest. Or if a student is unsure they want to go into the more generic criminal justice area or maybe work in corrections, school resource officer, they can obtain some baseline experience and exposure, and knowledge to determine a best fit. The three areas of the certificates are: Corrections, School Resource Officer, and general focus of Criminal Justice. The fourth program certificate, one semester or short term, is a general focus of Criminal Justice. These general offerings

and certificates do feed into the other Associate degree offerings. She concluded by asking for questions on the proposed certificates for criminal justice.

- Western Wyoming Community College

[TAB Z](#)

Dr. Cliff Wittstruck shared more details on the new programs. He noted his excitement for the program presenting. One of the challenges found at Western is a number of the students who come to Western that want to go into the health field, initially are thinking they would like to go into nursing. But because of various reasons as they go into clinicals, because of a very small yearly cohort (40 students). The challenge with this cohort, because of the expectation for clinicals and the challenge of finding clinical sites, given the area, we have a challenge to determine how large the program can grow, for the nursing students to land, and be successful. As noted in the documentation, the program setup is such that some students could move forward, prelicensure with a transcript, allowing students to move on to Utah, Colorado or some other state. A number of students are interested in radiologic technology. WWCC has a relationship with Weber State for their program. Also, Dental Hygiene, Physical Therapy. The nursing courses can comprise a lot of different future options within one degree and with added flexibility. The reason for the flexibility is once a student starts with Western and they change minds or determine pursuing a slightly different area, they do not lose credits as they move forward. Credits cost money and for a lot of students, every dollar is important.

This program was developed by faculty in the health science area in conjunction with the those in the math and sciences area. It is felt this new degree will be exceptional to provide for their students. He asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Blikre asked if a student could also transfer to Laramie County Community College for their Radiology Tech programs?

Dr. Wittstruck responded that by the time a student is set up for transfer, that the student would be headed towards a form of a bachelor's degree. The transfer programs are set up to go into a bachelor degree granting institution or program.

Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to approve the new certificates in Criminal Justice at Central Wyoming College and the Associate of Science in Health Science at Western Wyoming College. Commissioner Blikre moved, Commissioner Dooley Seconded. No Discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. STACKABLE PROGRAM CERTIFICATES (INFORMATION ONLY):

[EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#) (Stackable workforce preparation certificates approved by the WCCC Program Review Committee; no WCCC action required.)

Dr. Caldwell made brief remarks as Dr. Tribley approached the podium, she shared to the benefit of the new Commissioners this is a non-action item, but it is required information item for the Commission. There is no action taken on this one, because this is called a stackable credential because it is imbedded within an already approved degree program or certificate. It is required to be presented before the Commission but there is no action required. It does assist in helping with awareness in the local considerations that the colleges have in customizing their programs and certificates.

- Northern Wyoming Community College District

[TAB AA](#)

Dr. Tribley continued that this is an information item regarding a 15 credit, stackable certificate in the visual arts. It will not require any new faculty or courses. It is curriculum which has been assembled to give credit for work done. It is also a recurring part for students to see a valuable experience. While the 15-credit certificate compares to the foundation in 2D and 3D arts in both their interpretation and the technical ability of their art. Students are expected to have some understanding of arts. Think of a K-12 educator who may not have an endorsement in the Arts but is expected to use the arts in their classroom. This would be a valuable part of their education. There is a creative economy in many of our cities. This program is focused for technicians who may work for nonprofits or other areas that need this form of technical training or certificate. There were no subsequent questions.

V. PROGRAM APPROVAL - BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE (ACTION ITEM): [EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#)

Dr. Caldwell provided a little context before the Commission, noting that the program before the Commission today is different than those presented in the past specifically the Bachelor's of Applied Science degree. She noted for the new Commissioners, up to this point, there has been a very in depth and robust approval discussions as they brought forth their degree programs. This one is different because Central Wyoming College has already been approved to offer the Bachelors Degree program. This is the big distinction before the Commission today. When a college is first moving forward in the process, they must go through a very robust process which is outlined by and work closely with the HLC to make sure it is in place. The first one approved by the Commission approves that the institution can deliver the Bachelor of Applied Science with some very specific criteria and approves the first one or two programs depending on what is brought forward at the time. There is a whole lot of activity that has to happen to substantiate the institutional readiness. Central Wyoming College was the first one to complete the process. They really helped the Commission define and outline what the state processes were going to be. They were approved and they have received their approval from the Higher Learning Commission. They were also the first institution to be able to offer these degrees. Wyoming community colleges are permitted to offer up to two BAS programs can have areas of emphasis or tracks. There will be two areas or tracks before the Commission. The process must be completed separately as per the review process function and the needed documentation provided to the parties involved. The Commission has a new program approval for today, creating CWC's

second BAS degree. There will also be a modification of an existing program. The modification is really recognizing the local, regional and general needs of the community. This allows the institution the ability to customize the degree based on local workforce needs.

- **Central Wyoming College**

[TAB BB](#)

**VI. PROGRAM MODIFICATION - BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE
(ACTION ITEM): [EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#)**

- **Central Wyoming College**

[TAB CC](#)

Dr. Kathy Wells acknowledged that Dr. Caldwell had set the bar very high. CWC is seeking approval for their second Bachelors of Applied Science Degree. To provide historical perspective, this degree was very close to being the first BAS degree. During initial degree development time period, when the school was working with the Commission, Commission Staff, and the Higher Learning Commission on the ability to offer BAS degrees from Wyoming Community Colleges. Dr. Wells was working on almost parallel tracks. One of the groups was the Superintendents from the school districts, there are nine of which in Fremont County. When word was received by the Superintendents that the community colleges were potentially offering a baccalaureate degree, they insisted that a degree in some form which could include endorsements in special education. CWC did not go with this degree as their first degree, but very quickly finalized that curriculum development process, which included work with Superintendents, educators from other community colleges, and representatives from the Professional Teaching Standards Board. All helped create the degree presented to the Commission today. The packet of the degree does include all the curriculum. The packet looks very different because the institution did not have to complete all of the template as this was the second, degree request. The degree does consist of 122 credits and it meets all the requirements for HLC and the Commission as far as general education credits and number of higher level (3,000 and 4,000) credits. Work was done very closely with the professional teaching standards board to ensure that their proposal met their requirements for certification. CWC has actually already received approval contingent upon full approval in the various levels that the college has to go through for graduates of the program to be certified as pre-K through third grade educators. It also meets the requirements for those graduates to get an endorsement in special education. This is very important for CWC's service area based on the input which the superintendents continue to provide.

Commissioner Freeze asked if CWC was considering offering some of the curriculum online? Dr. Wells responded that the majority of the coursework will be offered in some sort of a remote fashion. It may not be 100% asynchronously online, but will be available from a remote perspective. This will be done for students who are interested in this program in Teton County can also participate in the program completion opportunity. Remote students will be able to complete 100% of the program through a variety of

delivery methods. Commissioner Freeze added she expects tremendous demand and offered her congratulations.

Commissioner Goetz asked if within the accreditation and degree development, what kind of synchronization and coordination go with the workforce and the demand other than the Superintendents seeing that the program is happening. She is curious from a high level how that process works.

Dr. Wells responded recognizing the level of collaboration with industry experts varies depending on whether the degree is a transfer degree that is under development. Obviously the college would be working with transfer partners to meet a workforce need or if it would be career and technical education where the intent is to prepare students to enter the workforce upon completion. In general, from Dr. Wells's perspective, she did not want to speak for the other academic units at the community colleges, but in the preparation for a workforce degree and one is working on the curriculum, is a much more comprehensive approach in working with industry partners. The college staff and faculty are not only working with the curriculum experts and educators on the campus to follow the internal curriculum approval process. Those faculty are most likely working with colleague faculty at sister community colleges, they are working with workforce departments, they are working with their advisory committees who meet with college faculty once or twice during the year, and they may also be working with any entities that then have to certify such as industry required licensure, certification, etc. The college is also working with those types of organizations to ensure that the curriculum adequately prepares graduates for meeting those workforce entry expectations.

Commissioner Freeze added the application if she recalls, requires the research on expectations in the field both nationally, regionally, and locally. The research is part of the overall application.

Dr. Caldwell added that, Dr. Well's presentation had wowed us. She emphasized a little on the PTSB, Dr. Caldwell did talk with Dr. Coagula as this was moving forward. There were some interesting communications which occurred. It is important to recognize that Central Wyoming College under Dr. Wells and Dr. Tyndall's leadership really wanted to make sure that when this came before the body. There was really strong recognition that this was going to be an approved program. They wanted to make sure that assurances they would be delivering a degree that may or may not meet accreditation or teaching licensure requirements. This process was reviewed in their public PTSB meeting and it is on record with public documentation. When Dr. Wells was talking about working within, they were very intentional, as this was also an important milestone for PTSB as well. And how they could really make sure that everything was prepared so when the college brought this forward, and if there were others, that there process was also in place.

Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to approve Central Wyoming College’s Bachelor of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education. Commissioner Blikre moved, Commissioner Wyatt seconded. Unanimous vote. Motion Carried

Commissioner Freeze transitioned to the next Central Wyoming College Bachelor of Applied Science Program.

Dr. Well clarified that this a request to modify the existing Bachelor of Applied Science Degree in Organizational Management and Leadership. She added that as Dr. Caldwell prefaced earlier in the agenda, degrees can have different tracks or options. Central Wyoming College’s first degree does in fact have that model in its’ design. The BAS degree in Organizational Management and Leadership currently has two options. The first is a Business Entrepreneurship Leadership option. The second is a Tribal Leadership option where students work in an immersive experience with various departments of tribal government and tribal social services to learn leadership roles and what is needed to function effectively with tribal governments.

Central Wyoming College is requesting modification to add a third option to the current existing BAS in Outdoor Program Leadership. CWC has a strong Outdoor Program and Leadership structure right now at the Associates Degree level. In conversations with industry experts, folks looking to hire graduates, and graduates themselves which are current and former students who are graduates of the current Associates Degree in Outdoor Leadership or Outdoor Recreation programs they are hungry for the next step in their education. They are really looking for a Bachelors level degree with this particular area of emphasis which is also flexible for them to complete the degree in various modes of delivery. Similar to our now BAS in Early Childhood Education which was just approved, this degree will have lots of flexibility built in. If approved there will be a combination of onsite delivery of particular coursework that requires safety monitoring skill demonstration, certification in courses similar to white water rescue, or swift water rescue, or wilderness first aid which require hands on, in person education. This will be combined with remote learning both synchronous and asynchronous learning. This mode will give those working in the field, who want to continue their education, in a leadership perspective, the business flavor so they are prepared to perhaps start their own business or support existing businesses that are so important to Wyoming’s tourism industry. This is a proposal for a third option in the existing BAS in Organizational Management and Leadership. The third option continues to be focused in Leadership similar to the previous two which was a significant focus of the Higher Learning Commission. That consistency has been maintained with this particular request.

Dr. Tyndall added and bragged a little about this very important program which is important for Central Wyoming College but also the state. Considering that the state has beautiful location. Some states have done a really good job at branding themselves as mountain outdoor leadership states such as Colorado. You might recall 20 years ago, Utah where they branded ski Utah on their license plates. He thinks there is a huge

opportunity for Wyoming in terms of tourism and the great outdoors. What has been done at CWC, is the rebranding of the Outdoors in terms of science. What is very unique about this program is that it ties in strongly to science, and with much gratitude to Wyoming PBS and what they have done for the community college sector, there is a video of the glaciers of the wind, where CWC students and students from other schools went out and measured glacial melt as part of the Alpine Science Institute. All of which is part of the Outdoor Leadership Program. Students have to learn how to climb glaciers, where crampons, rappel, and most recently had to rescue someone who fell into a crevice. The students were trained so that they could conduct science and more. With the video of Glaciers of the Wind, it brought the region to national prominence which became one of the most widely recognized PBS productions and one people like to see. There have been congressional visits from D.C. Most recently Senator Whitehouse from Rhode Island met with students. There have also been sponsorships from famous rock and roll bands for fund raisers in Jackson. There have been some great partnerships. CWC is in the Winds and the Tetons, there is this huge opportunity. What has hurt the college is that this is just currently a two year degree. There is an ancillary campus, not officially an HLC campus, but a site in Sinks Canyon, next to the state park, that has been branded as the Alpine Science Institute locale. There are cabins, dormitories, and it is mountain living. This is better than where Dr. Tyndall's previous location Colorado Mountain College which has branded itself very well in the Denver Airport. What had hurt CWC is people's recognition that the current degree is only two years. It has been two much trouble to figure out where to transfer next. There are a lot of cars in the parking lot from out of state individuals who have and want experience locally. There is a big push from the Kums Foundation in Jackson to get the youth in Teton County, especially disadvantaged youth, into those careers. There needs to be a close, nearby, pathway. This is huge. For Wyoming to have in the Winds and in the Tetons offer a great outdoor education that embeds science. One will not just be a river raft guide, but additionally students will learn good business and management skills. This will help students start up and take leadership roles in different organizations. To Dr. Tyndall this is very historic for the state. CWC has done a lot to brand this right, or position right. They are marketing via Jackson's big network. There are a lot of people who have ties to Jackson. The local paper the Buckrail has readership clear across the nation. There is extreme huge potential that can leverage this program nationally. They have also had students invited to present in Austria because of the incredible experience. CWC has also tied Anthropology to the program. At the Alpine Science Institute, students have discovered the highest buffalo jump in the world. There is also a holy trail that goes up to Gannett Peak above the Dinwiddie Glacier. There is incredible work taking place of national prominence. But it has killed CWC that it has been just an Associate Degree. This will be really important for the state.

Commissioner Boal noted that he has always been concerned about creating degrees that promote leadership. He has found them to be amorphous and he worried that the education process is being watered down. He has always desired the articulation what is being taught in this degree that is unique or special. In listening to this one concerns him.

He would like to understand better why there is a need to create a degree for Outdoor Leadership? Why it is necessary? He is concerned that we are making the Bachelors of Applied Science Degrees a bit trivial. He is welcome to having his concerns addressed. He is aware that some of the other Commissioners have had similar previous concerns.

Dr. Wells responded that she was happy to share her perspective on as a response to his question. She also recognized that Dr. Tyndall would respond as well. She acknowledged her appreciation for his question as she agrees these are important opinions and questions to address. She thanked him for always pushing the colleges to go a little farther in their justification of the degrees.

She continued. In regard to why this focus and this leadership degree, she can provide some insight into the types of skills and knowledge these students will receive. To preface on how this option in the existing Organizational Management and Leadership Degree is different than the already existing options, If one reviews the number of course credits related to the focus areas of the courses, they are only about 24% different in credits with this particular option when compared to the existing BAS degree. The majority of this curriculum is centered on the fundamental building of knowledge at the Baccalaureate level for organizational management and leadership. We are only talking about less than one quarter of the required number of credits that will be focused on outdoor education. She is aware that the template for modification request paperwork has a long list of courses. Yet if one reviews the disclaimers regarding those different sections. Those are all listed so that it is clear to the commission that students are choosing a select small number of credits from these lists of already existing courses. The outdoor focus or leadership focus of this degree is quite small to the total number of 120 credits that are required. In the larger portion of this degree, those students are getting those, golden ticket, employment skills. They are learning about business ethics, they are learning leadership skills in four different leadership classes that are customized or contextualized in the types of environments that these students hope to work in which has led them to seek this degree to start with. They are learning skills in Business Accounting, Business Financial Management, Statistics, all so they have the knowledge to evaluate current research in their field of research to determine if the data is telling them what is and is not good research. The fundamental focus of the degree is not Outdoor Leadership is more the context students will be learning this information at the baccalaureate level.

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Commissioner Goetz asked a higher level question and was unsure where to direct the question. She is interested in learning more about the collaboration that occurs between the colleges to identify where in the state these degrees and programs are most effective? And balancing the collaborative nature among the institutions with competition. Perhaps it is a question for another day. But she is interested in how the determinations are made and identify that for example, Central is the right place for this type of outdoor leadership degree? And the southwestern part of the state is ripe for Welding and how we maximize those programs for both availability and workforce development.

Dr. Tribley first acknowledged how proud he was of Central Wyoming College for bringing this modification forward. When colleges train leaders, they put them in uncomfortable situations, and they learn more about themselves then they would in a comfortable classroom. As a student, he would look forward to being out there and applying some of these principals. There is a very famous school in the state the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), and every astronaut in the last twenty years has had to spend some time out in the wilderness. It is truly a brilliant idea. He is also very proud in speaking about what a community college can do, to looking at that leadership option in tribal management as to an example of what a local community college can give you. From his perspective there are times, we don't duplicate efforts. There is a very strong opinion in the state right now that we should not ever duplicate efforts. There are right degrees to keep in one school and not others. But frankly we are so spread out in this state that frankly duplication is a word that gets interpreted many different ways. Every college should probably have a Nursing program, a welding program, transfer program, because any or most of Wyoming's students are place bound. We think of the adult with children, needs to have access to a community college education, versus the 17 and 18 year old who is very much welcome to come to the dorms. He thinks sometimes the critique wanting like standing a program in different places is unaffordable. It is well

known that a comprehensive University would have a business program. Yet a local community college can make sure that the Business program is tailored to the precise needs of its community. I feel, that it is much more importantly, successful to the students that are place bound in that region to for them to take a step forward and a step up. Build themselves, build their industry, and build their community. It is a very strong perspective from the Commission to be concerned about duplication or how we are going to share, but in reality, in a big state like ours, we will never ever out compete a major university. We have an undereducated populace that needs more access to higher education. This is a great step forward.

Commissioner Freeze asked for Dr. Wells to talk about the role of the AAC in reviewing new programs for each institution as well as talking about competition.

Dr. Wells responded with a resounding yes. And again she thanked the Commission for their many questions. She also recognized that it was good to revisit how some of these processes work for folks new to the Commission. Yet before getting to the role of the AAC, she added on response to a portion of the question regarding collaboration with other folks in the community. Dr. Tribley mentioned the National Outdoor Leadership School, whose world headquarters is in Lander. A number of their employees teach adjunct for CWC in the outdoor education leadership programs. CWC worked very closely with those industry experts who teach this very specific program type worldwide. They also worked very closely with the faculty and the Dean at the Haub school at the University of Wyoming to make sure that their higher level courses, in this degree at the 3000 and 4000 level, were consistent with the rigor with which they were offering in their Bachelor's degree. Of those collaborations, some conversations came about opportunities for their students and CWC students to join forces in different areas to expand leadership opportunities both institutions as they cement and embedded those schools. They are working on what that schedule looks like to get those groups of students together. Those are examples of the wonderful things that can happen with collaboration as curriculum is designed.

Dr. Wells further explained that once the individual curriculum is approved by the institutions individual curriculum process, it then comes to the Commission. The Academic Vice Presidents review the draft of what has been approved at each college. The group discusses possible overlaps with other programs in the state. They also discuss from a realistic perspective if those program overlaps are appropriate for the state. They talk about areas of gaps or unmet need that the particular program could offer even for other colleges. A good example of that will be in the discussions at the AAC level, of CWC's BAS in Early Childhood Education. In working through the details of that degree, how it would delivered, and how existing degree programs in early childhood education would move seamlessly into that particular program. The group compared curriculums, opened college catalogs and looked at how a student would move from Western Wyoming Community College to CWC to complete the degree in Early Childhood Education. One of the conversations had, as example, The Academic Vice

President at Western, Dr. Wittstruck, sent a text message to his faculty to see how much they were aware of the degree proposal. The response back from the WWCC faculty was, we helped them design it. They acknowledged the opportunity to have lots of input to the faculty at CWC on what they felt was needed to be included in the curriculum. And oh by the way, we are already telling our students who are graduating this spring from the Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education to go ahead and complete the application at Central under the assumption that the degree will be approved, and the students can transfer and go right into the degree. We are already recruiting for them. Those kinds of conversations happen at the AAC level. And they are very open, frank, and transparent discussions. Additionally the AAC will kick back and forth ideas of duplicated efforts asking, “what is different in your service area such that you need this program”. When five other community colleges are offering the program. As Academic Vice Presidents, they need to represent that perspective. For the considered program to move through that required step of approval before it then goes to the Presidents and then goes before the Commission for a final vote in a meeting packet for approval. Hopefully that provides some perspective on what happens before it is seen in a Commission meeting packet.

Commissioner Goetz noted that she was very confident that the process was occurring, she is really excited for the information to be disseminated so that folks who are not in the academic field get to experience that really good conversation and evaluation that is already occurring.

Dr. Caldwell thanked Dr. Wells for such a great explanation of the academic affairs and those discussions. They are quite robust. She also mentioned to the Commissioners and Ms. Taylor and the President’s know this, that together they talk very frankly and frequently about distinction between replication and duplication. The two approaches are very different as to why something would be replicated in an area and not be a duplication. Dr. Wells detailed that. With the Bachelors of Applied Science, it is also done with the University. The Commission is very careful in making sure that there is not duplication, yet very localized and regional programs compared to the Bachelor of Applied Science at the University. When this legislation went through, these courses for the community colleges at the upper level are a part of the Common Course numbering system. The Common Course numbering system includes the community colleges and the University. Including how those courses would transfer if in fact a student was to move from the community colleges to the University with those courses. It has been rather rigorous bringing programs to fruition.

To also bring up another point related to what Commissioner Boal asked, tourism is one of the four economic pillars the Governor has identified, and continues to come forward as a very important pillar in building Wyoming’s diversification. Tourism and outdoor is within the Wyoming Innovation Network (WYIN). The program subcommittee has already identified this area as a focus. Dr. Caldwell had been reading the summary included by Dr. Moritz and Kyle Moore, who is UW’s Associate Vice Provost, talked

about this program specifically coming forward. There is a whole lot related to this one program and the depth that it is moving forward. This area, modification, or track is aligned with the statewide focus on tourism and outdoor as well.

Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to approve the modification to Central Wyoming College's Bachelor of Applied Science and Organizational Management Degree. Commissioner Blikre moved, Commissioner Wyatt seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

H. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

[TAB DD](#)

Dr. Caldwell noted that they have already heard a lot from her over the course of the day. She referred all to the written Executive Directors Report. What is also included with the report is a Bio for the two new Commissioners. All very much appreciate having them on board. She proceeded to hit on a few points. As noted earlier regarding the work that had gone on during the Legislative session, that good work happens all the time from Ms. Taylor and the Presidents. One cannot imagine the early mornings and the late nights, the text messages that go on is very much appreciated. What doesn't always get appreciated is the work such as that done by Christy Klaassen and the yeomen service that Mr. Buchholtz and Dr. Moritz do. When all this information and data gets pulled, Dr. Caldwell is able to get it pulled and provided to Ms. Taylor, the Presidents, or directly to Legislators who have called asking for it. The requests send Dr. Moritz and Mr. Buchholtz to work very frequently, many times right before it needs to be said. She wanted to take the time to share her appreciation for what Larry and Ben do, Christy, Paris, Geir, and Mr. Dennis.

A few things she hoped to bring up and speaking ahead before the June meeting. In the Executive Directors Report, she did bring up the priorities for 2021. The Commission and staff have been very focused on that and those will be brought forward during thoughts and discussions on 2021/2022. As well as the biennium, 2021 to 2023. She was really taking notes over the past couple days on the discussions. She has, be thinking about budget and sustainable funding. There will be a need to take a lot at those topics. The concept of the home committee, agency staff already have a copy of that resolution. Thank you to Ms. Taylor and the WACCT Board of Directors. That too will be ready for the Commissioners consideration. Thinking about the June workshop, and starting to frame what the Commission wants the staff to have ready to move forward. In looking at the budget discussion there was a very thorough overview yesterday. This will be a conversation all will want to have. Looking at the biennial budget request and the potential for a letter to the Governor considering exception requests. It will be important to consider the impacts of the Federal Stimulus. The proposals will be in by that time, and it will be important to look at what ARP requests are put forward. All have heard a lot about them today. This has been threaded throughout conversations yesterday and today. Dr. Dale, the colleges, and others talked about the requests and are working on them right now. That proposal and what might happen by that time with the America Jobs and the Infrastructure Bills. Dr. Caldwell additionally noted that an accreditation

workshop and how to review and look at that within the rules as well as the needs of the state and manage it in a way through the rules that will meet both the state's needs and consideration of the institutions.

I. OTHER BUSINESS:

- Good News from the Colleges

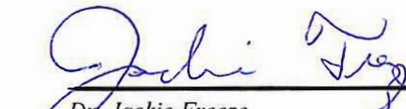
[TAB EE](#)

Commissioner Freeze noted that under Other Business the good news items are included in the packets, and her hope that everyone will read them. She congratulated all the institutions for the recognitions they have received over the last couple months. And too the athletic teams, including the Casper College women's team who has yet to play at the NJCAA tournament. They had an amazing season. Western's wrestlers also had an amazing season.

Mr. Buchholtz noted that on the very last page of the financial report is the updated distribution of all the CARES Act, CARES Act II, ARP grants. There is comprehensive list there as the last page of the financial report. It contains the best known information he has right now of what the distributions will be within the America Rescue Plan under HEERF III. Commissioner Freeze thanked him for the reminder as that is good information for the Commission to look at again.


Seeing that there is no other business and that the meeting has ended as 11:22 am, as per Mr. Buchholtz goal, there is no other business.

Meeting adjourned.



Dr. Jackie Freeze
Chairman

6-10-2021
Date



Dr. Sandy Caldwell
Executive Director

6/10/21
Date