



WYOMING  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMISSION  
**MEETING MINUTES**

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

**October 8**

**Wyoming Community College Commission Meeting**

**Northwest College**

**Yellowstone Building: Conference Center - Room #105 and #106**

**The public is asked to attend this meeting via the Zoom link at:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87622915206>

8:30 a.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners

Commissioner Boal- Present

Commissioner Blikre – Present

Commissioner and Vice Chair Dooley – Present

Commissioner Frederick – Present

Commissioner and Chair Freeze – Present

Commissioner Newman – Present

Commissioner Oakley – Present

Ex Officio Members

Governor Gordon or Lachelle Brant – Lachelle Brant Present

Superintendent Balow or Shelley Hammel – Not Present

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

Commission Staff

Dr. Ben Moritz – Present

Mr. Larry Buchholtz – Present

Ms. Paris Edeburn – Present

Mr. Rob Dennis – Present

**INTRODUCTIONS**

There were no additional introductions included among Zoom attendees. Dr. Caldwell mentioned that Dr. Hicswa and NWC Technical Support staff were also in the room.

## APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

**Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Frederick moved, Commissioner Dooley seconded. Motion carried**

### A. ORGANIZATIONS/ALLIANCES:

- Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees  
Ernie Over from CWC and president of the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees provided an update on meetings held in August. WACCT held a workshop to discuss roles and responsibilities. Their focus is on advocacy and support communication efforts. They also worked on the Executive Director roles and responsibilities, making sure the focus is primarily on advocacy. WACCT also looked at the organizational structure and holding honorable programming. WACCT will have a conversation about the legislative reception and Ms. Taylor will hold a legislative update. He noted a drafting messaging plan and that it is more important than ever to speak with one voice. Colleges are doing well with COVID 19 with only scattered cases. WACCT was really happy to see the colleges held a rodeo and cross country season.
- Wyoming Department of Education  
Dr. Caldwell noted from Ms. Hammel indicated she would not attend the meeting.
- Presidents' Council – Dr. Stefani Hicswa, President  
Dr. Hicswa provided a brief NWC welcome speech. She noted that it has been a privilege to be president of the Presidents' Council. She encouraged communication adding further there have been a lot of conversations about sustainable funding and tuition going forward. She repeated Ernie Over's statement regarding the discussion for an advocacy plan and the need for all too really be in sync. She added all are further along in the advocacy planning than at any time over the past 8 years. The Presidents have done a lot of work on COVID planning and they have been realizing the benefits. The Presidents are collaborating, contributing to the overall effort.
- Educational Attainment Executive Council – Dr. Stefani Hicswa, Co-Chair  
Dr. Hicswa noted that as co-chair of the EAEC with Dr. Ed Seidel, They have completed the 5 & 10 year strategic plan. At the last meeting they went through the plan in detail and now comes the heavy lift of implementation by all the colleges and the University. There are not enough high school students in the pipeline to meet goal. Therefore an Adult student type enrollment effort is needed. This type of effort was initially borne out by the CARES Adult Grant.

- Community College Faculty Alliance  
No report
- Wyoming Public Television – Terry Dugas, General Manager [TAB E](#)  
Mr. Dugas tuned in, noting a copy of his report in the packet yet there was one important addition. Direct TV carries no Wyoming stations in service to the state. DISH would be interested in providing service to certain Wyoming counties via an established direct transmission line. WPTV could potentially provide to other counties via an over the air signal. He is working out technical details to provide service over both Dish and Direct TV networks. He is headed to EWC to host two live debates tonight.
- University of Wyoming President Dr. Edward Seidel  
Dr. Caldwell noted Dr. Seidel is coming to Powell but his flight is delayed. He would like to reserve this bullet to introduce himself and reinforce his focus on partnerships.

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

Ms. Delancy, President of the Wyoming Business Alliance offered comment related to funding sustainability. Three bills were passed collectively by the business community and the higher education community. Wyoming Works, The four year BAS, and changes to the Hathaway program. For her the light bulb went off on the importance of working closely with the higher education community. She offered some comment that the Business Alliance stands ready to have a discussion on sustainable funding. Recognizing there is not enough money to go around, the Alliance wants to be part of public policy conversations, likely to be held in the legislature. There is a high probability of LSRA savings funds use. Many businesses are hanging on by a thread. The Alliance knows community colleges are the bridge to higher education and will be the way to a promising future. She offered her commitment to find solutions that are meaningful and real.

C. COVID-19 Reopening and CARES Act Update

Dr. Caldwell introduced Mr. Buchholtz to detail work done on behalf of CARES Act funding.

- CARES Fund Summary

[TAB F](#)

Mr. Buchholtz presented a slide, previously shown in earlier meetings, showcasing the full extent of the CARES request and what was approved by the Attorney General and subsequently distributed to the Colleges. The extreme right column noted what had been received. The only change is the awarding of line item seven, reimbursement to the colleges for wages, overtime, and staff.

Regarding the community colleges, item number 15, was a provision to reimburse child care providers for their outlay for either shutting down or the additional amount of time to provide services to emergency responders. He noted that the Attorney General did not approve the original request. As a result, the Governor directed staff to use the next round of GEER funding reimbursing \$1.4 million.

Of the CARES college grant and Adult Grant funding, the Governor awarded \$20 million to assist in primarily food and housing expenses if students had unmet need from other types of aid. Students enrolled at WYOTECH were also able to participate in the funding. The Commission anticipates spending only \$8 million. For the dislocated worker grant, the Commission anticipates using only \$3 million of the original \$7.5 million. The Commission will probably return \$12 million of the original \$20 million and \$4.5 million of the \$7.5 million. The Community College Financial Aid offices administered the grant in the most expeditious, honest, open, manner. They have been outstanding. UW has distributed all \$20 million of the CARES funding received. A portion of the balance we've returned of the original \$20 million will likely be reallocated to UW.

Commissioner Boal asked why the Colleges have spent such a limited amount compared to UW? Mr. Buchholtz responded lodging and tuition is significantly less at the colleges than UW. The FAFSA and the Pell Grant covers more of the community college cost of attendance. He suggested it is in the math for the cost of attendance calculation. He recognized that in some cases there is no gap or unmet need to apply these types of funds.

Ms. Brant provided a little clarification to GEER funds. The Governor had allocated initially \$4.7 million, holding back approximately half for higher education, and more. The Governor gave the other half of funds to K12. While funding for childcare centers was initially denied by the Attorney General with the thought the money was revenue replacement. The Governor's Office worked through those challenges and is continuing to work with the Attorney General to

award funding to the each campus child care center. The community colleges received \$1 million in the first round. The Governor is looking to award a total of about \$1.5 million out of the original \$4.7 million. The Governor's Office is also looking at repurposing some of the leftover funds.

Mr. Buchholtz was reminded that Ms. Brant in particular had reached back out to offer additional CARES act funding to provide for other college needs. The colleges have made additional grant requests on their own. Dr. Caldwell noted the colleges are expending all that they have received as they need the finances to reopen.

- Governor Update

Ms. Brant indicated that the state has about \$400 million left. They are attempting to find out what the greatest needs are across the state. The Governor is also trying to navigate through some of the pandemic costs not initially identified.

- College Updates

- i. Casper College

Dr. Divine noted he has the greatest staff in the world. Staff have stepped up in every aspect and in every way to help students. Casper College is fortunate to have strong enrollment and assistance from the state. The College has an amazing partnership with the local health department. President Divine connects with the Health Department probably two to three times per day. Commissioner Oakley asked, if enrollment is strong, how does it compare to the past year or past five years? Dr. Divine suggested, "Flat is the new up". The credit count was up just slightly year over year by about .2% and headcount was down about 2%. It appears we had a fewer number of students but they are taking more credits.

- ii. Central Wyoming College

Dr. Tyndall shared a screen clarifying that currently 24 people are in quarantine, there are 8 active and 9 recovered cases. He also recognized an epiphany that when there is a positive case and that person interacts with others, it sends a ripple effect through their quarantine numbers. He is happy with the limited number of 24 currently in quarantine. A good protocol manages the ripple effect of those added to quarantine. When the CDC changes rules that also impact the campus, and as such they need to abide by alternate rules.

The other update is mitigation efforts under phase #2. Classes are happening on campus, staff are meeting student needs. Many staff are working from home. Dr. Tyndall noted campus life seems vibrant with clubs continuing. Overall enrollment for both headcount and FTE is down approximately 2%.

- iii. Eastern Wyoming College  
Dr. Caldwell noted that Dr. Travers is not able to join the meeting per a family emergency.
- iv. Laramie County Community College  
Dr. Schaffer appreciated opportunity to share in the new COVID environment. LCCC had made three goals: Keep people safe, deliver the promise of quality education, and keep looking towards the future.

LCCC made a significant shift to online instruction yet still has significant face to face instruction on campus in equine, agricultural, and healthcare programs. They are offering general education coursework with face to face activity. All courses at Albany County are being delivered online.

LCCC has taken an aggressive approach to monitoring and response. They test broadly and frequently and have used considerable resources from CARES funding. They have quarantining or isolating those exhibiting even mild symptoms. Staff have not been able to keep COVID off the campus but have been able to keep the virus from spreading. All need reminders to follow the protocol.

There have been 72 students in quarantine through both athletics and co-curricular. The virus creates incredible challenges for the faculty when large numbers of students go into quarantine.

LCCC is working on the next phase of reopening plans and will continue to be at phase 2, but may not be in phase 3. Dr. Schaffer also noted the great people working in Wyoming's Community Colleges.

- v. Northwest College  
Dr. Hicswa disagreed with President Divine, noting NWC has the best staff in the world. All have so much gratitude for the heavy lift of educating students in the midst of a pandemic. NWC has many of the same provisions in place as previously mentioned. NWC has created a

COVID connection system that informs the correct people so they can quickly isolate or quarantine. The mental health piece of being quarantined can be very challenging. NWC is intervening just like they have done for advising.

Athletics have been planned for at a higher level. NWC was able to hold rodeo and cross country through the implementation of some very careful protocol. Competition is critical for athlete student retention.

NWC is already for planning for spring. They are concerned students may be withdrawing. NWC knows students are struggling and they are analyzing data to make a plan for this spring.

- vi. Northern Wyoming Community College District  
Dr. Tribley noted colleagues have shared many similar points as those that have occurred at NWCCD. The Colleges are learning together on how to work with the virus. Staff have set up an amazing quick response team which is spun up and provides deep cleaning. The College is under an incident command structure. If there are no more than 3 positive students, all systems are go. The campus is using all modalities of instruction and is very cognizant that student education has been interrupted. NWCCD is offering a mid-semester start of an 8 week term. He finds himself recognizing and reminding all of the need to wear masks.
  
- vii. Western Wyoming Community College  
Dr. Dale noted additional highlights. WWCC is grateful for COVID/Cares funding. WWCC's headcount is relatively flat. Initially enrollment was down 18%, yet it has recovered to being down about 3% with the implementation of CARES funding. Dual Enrollment remained flat, Concurrent Enrollment has increased. WWCC is expanding dual, concurrent, and technical pathways. Instruction has pivoted to ensure more use of technologies. Faculty can do both synchronous and a-synchronous instruction thus changing instruction forever. While relatively quiet on campus, activities are still ongoing. WWCC has a dashboard with the latest statistics and currently there is just one positive case on campus. Western has received the golden nasal swab award with going this far into the semester. Now have 8 students awaiting results.

Moving forward WWCC wants to continue to support athletics and be vigilant in the cleaning process.

Commissioner Freeze suggested drafting an open letter of appreciation to all employees to be distributed by the Presidents. She also added her appreciation for all that has been done to make the semester as positive and normal as possible

D. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING WORKGROUP STATUS UPDATE

[TAB G](#)

Dr. Caldwell shared a summary document update on the progress of the Sustainable Funding Workgroup. She highlighted the section including the background up to yesterday's meeting. She felt it particularly important to complete in advance of the upcoming Joint Appropriations Committee meeting. She reminded all of the large group of individuals who solicited support for an objective process. Dr. Michelau from WICHE and Dr. Tandberg from SHEEO have been facilitating the process and providing a great deal of support through their combined large resources.

The charge statement was finalized after the February meeting and shared with the JAC, Education Committees, and Select Committee on Community College funding. The workgroup is also grateful of work completed by Michael Swank who provided follow up from the LSO.

During the June meeting, the committee direction formalized and established guiding principles. While there are seven members on the workgroup group, many others are involved. Four subcommittees were established, engaging the Commissioners, two college presidents, two college trustees, and Erin Taylor.

Each committee reported out at the August meeting. During yesterday's meeting the state needs and the common language committee came forward. There were a few refinements with the state needs final documents.

The primary focus of yesterday's meeting was the funding strategies subcommittee focusing on strategies pulled together for consideration. Additional subcommittee meetings are planned.

There will be another workgroup meeting via zoom during the first week of December. Dr. Caldwell will provide updates and recommendations will be formally recognized. The presented strategies will be linked to the agenda.

E. BUDGET REDUCTION UPDATE

[TAB H](#)



Dr. Caldwell noted the Commission and colleges are up for Step #3 which is the second round of 10% budget cuts. The next budget hearing between the colleges and the Governor is scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Buchholtz reviewed the actual budget, distilling it down to one page and further noting most of what had been submitted was adopted. The actual reduction has been approved. Step 3 is anticipated to include another 10% or \$25.7 million cut. The agency proposes taking \$700,000 out of Overseas Combat Veteran program leaving the program viable for 2021/2022. Yet, the amount of money a student can claim will decrease reducing to just tuition.

The agency proposes taking a \$650,000 cut to the student side of the WYIN program, offering up an opportunity for institutions to fund a fall semester student cohort. There is now an outlay to teach out the current cohort.

It is unknown if there is enough money to start a spring semester cohort. There is a possibility that there will not be enough money to add new cohorts this Spring. Commissioner Frederick asked if there a lot of new nursing students added in the spring. Mr. Buchholtz responded three institution start nursing rotations in the spring.

Mr. Buchholtz noted the next is a 10% cut from the library's general appropriation, and a straight cut of 10% from adult education, which is a part of the Commission budget. This will impact the nine programs that come through the Commission, to the tune of \$212,000.

The next one is the High School equivalency program, leaving \$1,000 strictly for travel in the event of a testing incident.

The big reduction is \$23 million for state aid. Mr. Buchholtz suggested one would not see a separate line item reduction for health insurance similar to what previously happened with state health insurance. The whole 10% comes from the state aid line item.

The administrative budget includes eliminating a \$236,000 inclusive of one position. Mr. Buchholtz also proposes taking \$70,000 out of the contracts line item. This strategy does allow for funding of the CSSE contract and lastly a straight 10% from WPTV. He noted, Mr. Dugas is anxious to plead his case and that the cut would be extremely detrimental to WPTV, which needs about \$30,000 to get on satellite TV.

Dr. Caldwell added they took an incremental approach to budget cuts in order to keep and maintain the programs. They had sought guidance pertaining to overseas combat and

WYIN because of the impact on students and faculty. She recognized that while this could be changed by the Governor, there is still a positive intent. Further cuts to veterans and to WPTV could be devastating.

Commissioner Freeze clarified the hearing will be held on October 12<sup>th</sup> and there will be a strong recommendation to use the reserves. Dr. Caldwell will provide a list of the cut priorities including educational attainment, sustainable funding, and funding strategies. Commissioner Freeze noted we have to comply regarding the cuts but it doesn't mean the Commission will not make the argument to try and offset some or all of this.

#### F. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- Executive Director

#### TABI

Dr. Caldwell provided a legislative and CARES funding impact update. She also shared information on the CARES funding impact on enrollment. System wide there was a positive impact. The Commission is looking at headcount, FTE, and velocity of enrollment (how fast we are going and the direction). Velocity is different after the CARES funds. The answer to all three was yes. When CARES funds were first talked about, potential CARES grant values were based on tuition and fees rather than cost of attendance. Initially, NWC was down 29%. System wide we were down 20% which were on track with NUCUBO projections. Financial impacts on students and their families because of COVID was the most challenging.

Financial aid office's really had to staff up. It is clear in terms of headcount (7%) and FTE (8%) that the amount provided had helped close the enrollment gap. The agency had also heard that students who were enrolled took more courses. Most significant was the delta at WWCC which was a 21% on headcount and about an 18% on FTE. The other most significant number was the call back, students who took the funding and enrolled who previously planned to drop. The rate of drop after the beginning of the semester, is one percentage less than the same semester last year. The aid really spoke to the total cost of attendance and not just tuition and fees the funds had to be used for the other expenses. The support for students most in need did really have an impact. Data indicates an impact on retention and persistence. The drop is 1% less than the previous year. The data is compelling, but more analysis will be done.

Dr. Caldwell acknowledged completion of a list of all the meetings with hyperlinks to the relative documents providing a one stop shop. She acknowledged the colleges had taken additional time to pull information together.

- WACCT Update

TAB J

Erin Taylor shared her screen noting Dr. Caldwell and Commission staff have been working hard in front of committees, testifying, data, etc. She suggested there are a lot of conversations around the colleges right now with varied narratives and stories. She is making sure folks have their questions answered and a chance to get the colleges stories out there.

WACCT and others have their ducks in a row in terms of messaging. After actions today the WACCT board will meet to finalize their collaboration. The meeting goal is to talk about what the messaging looks like. Traditionally the colleges would do this on their own. This effort will include a president, trustee and MS. Taylor. The next plan is to hit the streets and start talking to Legislators. Trustees are really excited to advocate to publicly elected legislators.

Ms. Taylor recognized that community colleges are the support for the solution to the future. She shared a document designed to focus messaging on varied audiences: the Executive Branch, Legislative Branch, Commission, and business partners to support the solution. This document provides the background and meat to Trustees so they can detail the same message. There needs to be a recognition through talking to the Executive branch, of the need for a band aid to bridge the gap. Otherwise good programs will be cut and people let go. This is the time to discuss the proper use of LSRA funds. The message has to start with the Executive branch. She recognized the colleges were facing this situation before the pandemic.

WACCT intends to approach the Legislature with a menu of considerations. There is not one priority over another. The Legislature needs to recognize the need for a sustainable funding structure. There is the need for a funding formula that expands a statewide option to recognize all 23 counties receive services. WACCT doesn't have a silver bullet. WACCT is looking at recognizing a series of options. And it is important to recognize the colleges do not have a constitutional mandate.

WACCT is looking for an emergency stabilization tax which would only going into effect when certain funding metrics are hit. In trying to think realistically there may be a sales tax or an ad volrem statewide tax on all 23 counties. WACCT is trying to think creatively. There are opportunities to study equity issues on dual and concurrent enrollment and the BOCES programs.

Ms. Taylor suggested giving the colleges and local municipalities more tools in the tool box such as allowing trustees to impose an additional mill levy. Or there

may be opportunities to offer local sales and use taxes similar to the economic development tax. This is not the big funding solution, but another source of funds.

HB 80 did achieve its goal to provide more certainty and predictability. However some things that it did not address have been accentuated. She suggested it important to message much has changed in the economy since HB 80 went into statute. The allocation formula should mirror or incentivize the consortia and the type of economy we want in the state.

Capital construction is still important with major maintenance also being critical. Restoring major maintenance funds remains an important topic. These funds are important to maintaining and building programs. The adult student population is growing and there is a need to push the Legislative branch for continued investment in this area. To meet attainment goals, the adult population needs to be met.

She recognized that the Commission's control is limited to primarily tuition. There is a need to help ourselves without further imposing on the student. A tuition increase is not the first thing WACCT would like to see happen.

She added the need to bring in business and industry partners to support the solution. She is excited for WACCT's great momentum, and building on the conversations held last February. She noted the amount of enthusiasm and collaboration with the presidents is building positive energy.

Commissioner Boal asked about WACCT's recommendation on approving some sort of tuition increase. Ms. Taylor noted WACCT association presidents are not together on the budget at this time. All need to recognize the many moving parts and that others need to be a part of the solution. Yet it needs to be made clear that the colleges are not relying on others to solve the issue. Commissioner Blikre asked Ms. Taylor how many of the Presidents and trustees are in favor of tuition increase now or at a later time? Dr. Tribley responded that all are not on the same page. He added he was not in support of a differential out-of-district tuition. Geography of Wyoming creates challenges putting in-district students closer to other students. He feels a tuition increase should be part of the solution. Yet he recognized colleagues who disagree. He noted the need to tax efficiently to bring industry and businesses to the state. Dr. Tribley noted he feels like a tuition increase should be part of the revenue increase but certainly should wait until the revenue situation is resolved.

Mr. Buchholtz made two observations of studies that might be a little more impactful and that all should use the last ROI from the EMSI study. Referring to the return of each dollar invested. Another note added was that AD Volrem estimates appear to be using 2019 assessed valuations. 2020 estimates are included in the assessment packet.

**G. 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 all items on the consent agenda will be considered together.

**I. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**

- **June 4, 2020 - Commission Meeting** [TAB K](#)
- **June 22, 2020 - Special Meeting** [TAB L](#)
- **August 28, 2020 - Special Meeting** [TAB M](#)

**II. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS:**

- **Enrollment Report Spring 2020** [TAB N](#)
- **Annual Enrollment Report 2019-2020** [TAB O](#)
- **Financial Report** [TAB P](#)
- **Post-secondary Education Options Program** [TAB Q](#)
- **Partnership Report** [TAB R](#)
- **Emergency Rules – Chapters 5 and 6** [TAB R1](#)

**Commissioner Freeze asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Blikre moved and Commissioner Newman seconded. Motion to approve the consent agenda carried unanimously.**

**H. REGULAR AGENDA:**

**I. APPROVAL OF STRATEGIC PLAN ([Executive Summary](#))** [TAB S](#)

Dr. Caldwell noted that yesterday was a presentation at the Workshop on the strategic plan. There were some recommendations and edits made. The Strategic Plan has been under review since last June, and with direction from the Commissioners in 2018. The plan is provided in statute.

Mr. Dennis highlighted the revisions made and the process up to this point based on yesterday. Mr. Dennis noted the process was started in June of last year. There has been a very thorough process which included a review of plans and initiatives underway across the state, many of which were incorporated into this

strategic plan. Significant input had been solicited from agencies, councils, entities and the public across the state. Four primary goals emerged including: Educational Attainment, Affordability, Program Alignment, and economic development. These goals are in line with the mission of the statewide college system and relevant statutes.

After discussion yesterday there were some modifications to Goal #2 Affordability, adding an additional objective detailing sustainable funding and accounting for increasing costs. The wording was taken from the charge statement for the sustainable funding workgroup. Dr. Caldwell noted this text had already been vetted by the sustainable funding workgroup and provided consistent language with other initiatives. The second edit is found in Goal #3 Program Alignment. Language was refined in the first bullet to include looking for program gaps at the state, regional, and local level to expand offerings. Then edits were made to the second objective suggesting identifying unnecessary duplication while ensuring local access to industry aligned programs.

**Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to approve the 2021 to 2025 Strategic Plan, Commissioner Blikre moved, Commissioner Newman and Dooley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

- II. TUITION REVIEW (INFORMATION ONLY) ([Executive Summary](#)) **TAB T**  
Dr. Caldwell noted the agenda from the previous discussion is available. Attached to the workshop materials from yesterday, is a review of tuition information and a review of rates. Mr. Buchholtz will go through the information of which included is a tuition worksheet. Also attached to the workshop materials from yesterday is a letter from the Executive Council.

Mr. Buchholtz provided a broad overview of what was explored the day prior so it is all part of the official record. The current version also includes the actual tuition policy adopted in 2018. Additionally, laid out are the requirements of the staff prior to any consideration by the Commission for making changes to tuition. Also included in the packet are all the documents explored the day prior.

The Commission traditionally considers tuition policy during odd numbered years, currently we are in an even numbered year. The year chosen does have some impacts on how the numbers are modeled and how the numbers fit into the framework of the policy. Proceeding through the attachment is the policy, the cap, the term, and the statutes. The policy indicates tuition is usually considered on an odd year, but can be considered at any time. Faced with the current

economic conditions, and community college limited funding, this is an extraordinary time.

Dr. Caldwell also noted the Executive Council sent a letter in 2018 recommending implementation of a cap. She reiterated the tuition history and the Commission's option to take an incremental increases in light of increased cuts. In October 2019 a tuition increase was deferred to explore the impact of the earlier increase and the impact of the recently implemented tuition cap. Subsequently there have been significant cuts leading to the extraordinary situation.

Mr. Buchholtz continued as he modeled tuition based on the policy requirements and amount going into state aid. The first modeling provides \$176 million. To cover the immediate cost and maintain funding at 23% would include an \$8 tuition increase moving tuition to \$107. The next model was done based on the reality what we know has been done as of today, indicating a \$158 million in state aid. Since the funding pie portion has been reduced, it takes less tuition revenue to get to the framework of 23%, overall \$1.91 to get to the net framework.

All the same information presented yesterday is shown at the tuition workshop with the various changes in the consumer price index. The next slide show's comparative data and tuition and fees among all 50 states. Wyoming remains very low on the comparative state. Primarily it details changes in fees across the community college system showing where we are a 45% increase over the last 5 years. The Commission has not raised tuition much over the last 5 years.

Commissioner Oakley asked about fees being specific or discretionary and could they be used by colleges to make up needed funds? Mr. Buchholtz responded that fees are charged per credit and range from \$35 to \$51 across the system. The fees are at the discretion of the college's boards to adjust annually. The amounts are mandatory fees and do not include specific course fees related to consumables. The fees are identified specifically by each of the colleges. Dr. Caldwell added that the fees include IT and student service fees for services applied directly to the students at the colleges. The amounts are mandatory fees and do not include specific course fees related to consumables. Commissioner Freeze noted the fees are identified for a specific service or program.

Commissioner Freeze facilitated the discussion by starting with the 15 hour cap. Dr. Hicswa added the President's council is in favor of removing the cap. Commissioner Freeze noted removing the cap would turn tuition into a linear system.

**Commissioner Boal moved and Commissioner Newman seconded a motion to discuss removal of the cap.**

Commissioner Blikre asked if most of the colleges in surrounding states and UW had caps? Dr. Caldwell noted recent information received from WICHIE and Complete College America was limited. The original hope was if a cap was implemented, it would encourage students to complete more credits. As per a one year analysis, the defining factor is not driven by credit, but by total cost of attending. Montana and Colorado no longer have a credit cap. Need based aid and the Adult Promise scholarship are much more supportive of student degree completion.

**Commissioner Freeze called a vote for those in favor of removing the tuition cap. The motion carried to eliminate the cap.**

Commissioner Freeze asked Dr. Hicswa as a representative of the President's Council to address the opinions of the Presidents regarding the out-of-district tuition issue. Dr. Hicswa responded that the Presidents did not agree and that the opinion varies, and thoughts range widely on out-of-district tuition issues. Some president's think out-of-district adds parity and balance to the districts who do pay taxes to the counties that do not pay taxes. The contrast is that out-of-district tuition is very difficult to administer and confusing. Students may not know what "in-district" means. The predictability of \$99 per credit disappears. It also assesses a higher tuition on those counties with student populations who are less able to pay. Arguments are solid on both sides and it is a very difficult decision. The general consensus from the Presidents was to wait on the out-of-district discussion until it was more clear what the Governor desired or if some of the sustainable funding initiatives were to be implemented.

Dr. Schaffer shared the LCCC Board of Trustees met yesterday and took action, voting to oppose support for creation of an out-of-district tuition rate. Commissioner Oakley clarified that it would be any student coming from another district undercutting the others. Dr. Caldwell added that having two different options around out-of-district was discussed yesterday. Based on conversations any of the students from one of the seven districts would be considered in-district.



There would be seven in-district and 16 counties considered out-of-district. Commissioner Freeze noted this is viewed as a temporary suggestion. The temporary nature would be based on the development of a sustainable funding model. Once a sustainable funding model is implemented, it would thus eliminate the need for differential tuition.

Commissioner Freeze asked if anyone desired to make a motion to address differential tuition. She received no response.

The topic subsequently died for lack of a motion.

**III. CONSIDERATION OF TUITION RATES 2021-2022** [TAB U](#)  
([Tuition Worksheet](#)) ([Executive Summary](#))

Commissioner Freeze transitioned to consider an overall motion to review the staffs' overall suggestion, which was included in the executive summary to increase tuition to \$105 in-state, \$158 WUE, and \$315 out of state, which is using the same formula to determine WUE and out-of-state. The increase would be from \$99 per credit in state to \$105.

Dr. Hicswa added the college presidents have met and the Commission has heard some of their discussion. They are not in agreement on a tuition increase or recommendation either. Some Presidents felt strongly that tuition needed to be increased because of the current budget situation and to continue to offer the same level of resources, services, and instruction. The other end of the spectrum is, especially during this time, many families have lost jobs and a tuition increase would further disadvantage our most disadvantaged. Financial aid is not enough to cover the increase. There is a continuum of perspectives and both are right. This summarizes our conversations. The final recommendation is that no tuition increases go into effect until after what happens during the Legislative session is known in terms of cuts or sustainable funding initiatives.

Commissioner Freeze asked if there was any discussion about required fees for 2021/2022. Dr. Hicswa said that they have not had that discussion yet together. She also suggested fees may be discussed later after the direction and discussion today. Fees can be assessed based on very specific things not just generally on a tuition shortfall. Conversations would be based on increased expenses.

Commissioner Freeze reminded all that we are exploring tuition for the 21/22 academic a year going into effect in the fall of 2021. She also reminded all that

should any action be taken there is an opportunity to rescind the action after more is found out from the Legislative session.

**Commissioner Freeze asked for a motion to establish the tuition amount at \$105 in-state, \$158 WUE and \$315 out of state. Commissioner Oakley moved and Commissioner Boal seconded further discussion for tuition increases.**

Commissioner Frederick asked if WUE fees are set through contract with WICHIE, and how is out-of-state tuition set? Mr. Buchholtz responded that he did not know why but there is a 300% charge policy for out-of-state tuition. He suggested it has been in the policy for a long time. Commissioner Freeze noted her belief that the policy was to ensure out-of-state and international students pay all of the substantial cost of their tuition so the State of Wyoming was not subsidizing the education of out-of-state residents. Dr. Caldwell added the WUE rate is established by the compact.

**Commissioner Freeze repeated the motion to adopt a tuition rate of \$105 in state, \$158 WUE, \$315 out of state.**

Commissioner Dooley asked how \$108 tuition would impact funding allocation. Mr. Buchholtz responded that it depends on which model is looked at. He noted it takes less money to move to the funding and policy bottom of 23% of the policy framework. By going to \$105 it puts us at 24.5% or in the range of policy. Commissioner Freeze suggested this would be the first time they would be within the range of what the policy hoped to accomplish. Commissioner Oakley noted that the combination of a couple things has her supporting a tuition increase. One is the demonstrated need. She repeated Dr. Tyndall who said that at this point there has not been a revenue solution from the Legislature. Second, there will be an opportunity to revisit this issue, should the need arise. There is still so much yet to happen with funding cuts.

Commissioner Boal added the only thing that gives him pause is there is a group telling us to hold off and wait. He also commented that if they waited, perhaps a Legislator could say things aren't that bad because we didn't raise tuition. He then asked for someone to take an additional shot towards him to try to advise him why it would be good to hold off, he would like to hear that. Commissioner Freeze suggested her openness to hearing anyone's perspective on holding off. She also suggested the need to take the 30,000 foot view to look at all the pieces and how they come together using a different lens and how taking action or not

taking action might be perceived by those who control funding sources. She also reached out to anyone Zoom who felt waiting was the right thing to do.

Dr. Schaffer noted the Presidents did find some agreement on the timing of their decision to make this decision in an even year, not an odd year within the policy. The fundamental belief here is that the students should be the last place anyone turns for recent funding or revenue for the community colleges. But by the sequence of the timing that is the first place the Commission is turning. He encouraged, now is not the time to make the decision, especially knowing there will be individuals who will be taking up the conversation on sustainable funding in this Legislative session and in the Governor's office. He suggested that we are doing everything we can to impact the affordability of higher education to our students. The colleges have to do their part and so to the Legislature.

Dr. Caldwell hoped to address Commissioner Boal's statements regarding why don't we raise tuition. For full transparency, when the Commission has to provide documentation for the LSO, and when asked to present this topic in Legislative committees, it is verbatim for what Commissioner Boal asked, "Why haven't you helped yourselves first, why are you coming to us when other funding is not considered and so we really had to push on the tuition policy. There was great pressure to address the tuition policy. No one wants to raise tuition. The policy is public information and easily available.

Commissioner Frederick added an issue he has is the lack of incremental increases. Tuition was not raised at all last year. If it is chosen not to be raised again, then next year, an odd year, there may be an even greater increase in order. In just having a child go through college, having a series of small incremental increases always seemed better than a giant increase. A giant increase can potentially be more of a hardship on the students and those all are trying to help. He expressed his favor towards gradual increases to hit the mark. The Commission should explore further incremental increases instead of a one-time sizeable increase.

Commissioner Freeze noted an incremental increase during an off year would be better than a significant increase at a later time.

**Motion called by Dr. Freeze. Motion carries.**

**IV. NEW PROGRAM APPROVAL REQUESTS ASSOCIATE DEGREES AND CREDIT CERTIFICATES (ACTION ITEM):** ([Executive Summary](#))

Dr. Moritz reminded that the Commission is responsible for approving new academic programs after they have gone through a substantial vetting process. Beginning at the community college itself, then it goes through the Commission's Academic Affairs Council. For this meeting there is one new program, a Spanish in the Workplace Certificate, is up for consideration. Dr. Caldwell reminded that the Executive Council also reviews programs prior to full consideration by the Commission.

- Laramie County Community College [TAB V](#)  
Dr. Schaffer shared an overview of the pending Certificate program, noting a consistent theme heard from the business community is the need to embrace growth of the Latina population and develop an applied approach to the use of language. It is using existing faculty and building off of other programs.

Ms. Brown-Herbst commented that through the guided pathways program it was determined that the Associate degree in Spanish was not meeting local community needs including in law enforcement, health care, etc. The new program recognizes the Spanish speaking population is growing throughout the region, serves workforce needs through delivery during nontraditional hours and evening classes. It was identified originally as a face to face program in a pre-covid world. The program is a 24 credit diploma spread over 3 semesters with some workforce specific proficiency developments. Commissioner Blikre commended LCCC for bringing this forward as a certificate.

**Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion for approval of the Certificate program in Spanish at LCCC program. Commissioner Dooley moved Commissioner Newman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**V. UPDATE ON PROCESS AND LISTING OF TERMINATED PROGRAMS (INFORMATION ONLY)** ([Executive Summary](#)) [TAB W](#)

Dr. Caldwell clarified that the process of updating and terminating programs is a very conscientious effort undertaken by the community colleges. Yet there has been an even more comprehensive effort recently. Dr. Moritz suggested he would not review the report in great detail. All are aware of the program approval process and the levels of approval. Perhaps the commission is less aware of how

the colleges remove less relevant programs. The WCCC has a 5 year rotation where we look at enrollment and needs. The responsibility for putting on hiatus or removing programs rests with the colleges. To provide an idea of the scope, the agency has compiled the number of programs reviewed on a regular basis noting that the increases and high numbers relate to colleges who have overtaken an overhaul of programs such as LCCC and development of guided pathways. The report lists by college all the programs placed on hiatus.

Commissioner Blikre questioned why the programs are listed by the fiscal year instead of academic year? He was noted listing by the academic year might make more sense. Dr. Moritz responded that the project began with an LSO request and by the fiscal year.

I. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT :

[TAB X](#)

Dr. Caldwell provided two specific updates as part of her report.

- o New Community College District Application and Process Status Update
  - i. Timeline, Public Hearings, Special Meeting  
Campbell County had submitted an application for a new college district formation August 31<sup>st</sup>, commencing the 90-day timeline. Since submission the agency has been gathering various materials. She then reviewed specific critical dates noting the first of two listening sessions chaired by Commissioner Freeze. Listening sessions will be considered special meetings yet there is not a requirement for the Commissioners to attend. October 14 will be the second public listening session. Friday, October 9 public comment opens. Chairman Freeze will detail questions to the audience to facilitate discussion.

WICHE and NCEHMS are hired to complete the assessment. WICHE is recognized in unrelated Wyoming statutes. The Commission will conduct a special meeting November 20 to approve or disapprove the application. Additionally, the meeting agenda will include consideration of an extension of regular rules and rules pertaining to NC-SARA.

Commissioner Freeze added that questions asked at the upcoming hearing will focus on the impact of a new district, the cost of the new district, and the impact to the state. The goal is to keep the discussion going. Dr. Caldwell also noted that agenda space will provided for Campbell County to make a presentation.

- Service Area Rules Process Timeline  
Within the Commissions purview, are changes in district service areas. The agency plans to bring forward at the February meeting draft regular rules for consideration pertaining to consideration of amending service areas.

J. OTHER BUSINESS:

- Good News from the Colleges [TAB Y](#)  
Commissioner Freeze encouraged all to review the good news from the colleges and their accomplishments.
- Grants  
Dr. Caldwell provided a few updates on grants received. WCCC's Chief Technology Officer has been working with the SLEDS and E-Board groups to submit an augmentation to the SLEDS grant for an additional \$400,000. The submission was successful. She also updated that the Educational Attainment Council did pursue additional opportunities. They have been invited to apply for a technical assistance grant through agency strategies. Dr. Moritz noted that he has been working on an OER grant through the U.S. Department of Labor.
- UW President – Dr. Seidel  
Dr. Seidel briefly presented that he is committed to working closely with all. He noted he has a lot of ideas focused on economic development through a system wide view. Commissioner Freeze welcomed him to the state and shared her excitement to be partners to the benefit of the state. Dr. Caldwell noted that Dr. Seidel had met with the Educational Attainment Executive Council.

ADJOURNMENT –

Meeting adjourned 12:16 PM