



MEETING MINUTES AND AGENDA

**June 9 and 10, 2021
Eastern Wyoming College
C-Tec/Room 101**

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

**June 9, 2021
Commissioner Workshop
Agenda & Minutes
Eastern Wyoming College**
[Informal discussion, no action will be taken]

1:00 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 – Not in attendance
- Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow – Present
- 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
Christy Klaassen, Policy Analyst - Present
Rob Dennis, Chief Operations Officer – Present

After the conclusion of the Roll Call, Commissioner Freeze asked for those attending in the audience to introduce themselves.

- WCCC 2021 to 2023 Priorities

[TAB A](#)

Commissioner Freeze noted that the first item on the agenda was the 2021 to 2023 priorities which were listed under Tab A on the agenda.

Dr. Caldwell opened by noting the Commission would be introducing the 2021- 2023 priorities. The topic of the priorities was originally introduced at the April meeting. She added the Commission has been formally doing priorities since 2018 and informally prior. Priorities are statutorily required and accompany both the budget submission and request. The current list of priorities were developed from Commission conversations and in part from the discussion of establishing Dr. Caldwell's goals. This document puts them all together in a draft for consideration. She closed noting the Commissioners do not need to take action on the priorities.

Commissioner Freeze reminded all that they had gone over the priorities before in April, but the latest version includes additional edits to make more streamlined and reader friendly.

The first priority is implementation of the Wyoming Educational Attainment Strategic Plan through the sunset date with a focus on messaging the economic impact and including adult learners. She also noted that the focus of this priority should be something all have been talking about for some time, encouraging more adult learners into the system.

She then moved on to priority two, supporting economic development efforts noting the priority focuses on the Wyoming Innovation Network. All should be familiar with the WIN as Governor initiative. She asked if there were any comments or questions on this priority.

Commissioner Freeze moved to priority three, implementation of the Statewide College System Strategic Plan including development of the benchmarks, measures, and metrics. She added that the prior plan were recently sunset and a new plan created. The Commission is now moving forward on creating the benchmarks and measures.

Dr. Caldwell added, as an information item, that implementation of the strategic plan including necessary benchmarks and measures that will allow all to determine the overall progress on various activities is an agenda item on the meeting for June 10th.

Commissioner Freeze continued regarding priority four, facilitation of Sustainable Funding and higher education governance as a part of the biennial budget process and upcoming legislative session. She also noted that the Commission had worked really hard to come up with some recommendations for sustainable funding, and it did not receive the full attention that the Commission would have liked during the last session. The Commission will continue to work to make sure it is something considered until a long term and sustainable plan really does come to fruition.

Priority five includes advancing the value proposition, visibility, impact, image and reputation of the community colleges. Gain community college recognition equivalent to the University of Wyoming and K-12 emphasizing that Article 7 of the Wyoming Constitution contemplated the creation of the community college system. Commissioner Freeze noted there has been a lot of dialogue about the fact that the colleges are not included in the constitution. However, if you really read article 7, it really talks about the one higher education institution which existed at that time and the opportunity that there might be ones in the future. To some extent there was foresight for the community colleges. This priority is very important in terms of statewide visibility and policy recognition that the colleges have equal standing. This issue will be something for the Commission to continue to work on over the coming year.

Commissioner Freeze moved to addressing priority 6, working with the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees and key legislators to identify and formalize a home legislative committee for the community colleges. She noted further this is something discussed a lot and that Ms. Taylor has also spent a lot of time discussing the topic with legislators. All will continue to work to be assigned to a permanent home.

The next priority, number seven, focuses on advocacy for the colleges including fostering a spirit of cooperation and collaboration with the governor, legislature, college presidents and staff, and assist with relationship building among college staff, boards of trustees and other key stakeholders. Commissioner Freeze remarked that over the last few years it has really shown that when we all work together we accomplish great things. Certainly we have different agendas and priorities but working together with all the key players and involving college boards of staff and key stakeholders all as one big effort help to see the end results. She remarked the need for all to see ourselves as one big team and continue to work together.

The last priority referenced continuing to review and enhance the organizational operations, functions, efficiency, and capacity of agency and staff. She noted that the agency is not growing but is taking on additional responsibility so that it is important how we do things and we should look at ways to make operations work in a more streamlined fashion. This is an ongoing project. Over the last few years there has been an effort to review where responsibilities sit within the staff.

Commissioner Freeze reiterated that this is a list of priorities for the next two years. Dr. Caldwell asked if there would be interest in establishing the priorities for a single year. Commissioner Freeze suggested that there certainly is the possibility as times change and as the Commission continues to review the priorities. She then asked if there were comments from any of the other Commissioners or the audience regarding the priorities?

Commissioner Goetz asked if there have been any other changes or major refocus of efforts from prior years other than the WYIN program? She noted if the Commission is taking any different paths. Commissioner Freeze responded there is always some change with a changing Governor, resulting in some transition of the priorities. In terms of overall priorities, they are pretty much the same over the last few years with just the nuance of change and how we carry out certain things and who Commission partners might be to work with to accomplish some of the goals. Commissioner Blikre noted the continue lack of statewide funding and funding for the colleges remains a significant issue. Commissioner Boal added treating the community colleges on an equal footing with K-12 and UW. Given the cuts that the colleges have been experiencing, the Community colleges are gaining recognition as an important piece in the overall education system. Perhaps they haven't always been used that way. Commissioner Freeze suggested there the Commission has also taken a stronger stand on the concept recognized by Commissioner Boal. She noted in the past all were just apt to live with the situation. Now the question has arisen, do we have to live with it and what is to be done to move things in a different way.

Dr. Caldwell included that all the priorities have and continue to evolve. Last year's priorities did include managing COVID, reopening the colleges and all of which occurred in the middle of the sustainable funding efforts. She also added the existence of substantial review regarding Article 7 in light of sustainable funding. The last couple of sets of priorities focused on the sets of activities which were happening including the creation of BAS programs and the Student Transfer Success which lead to the WYO transfer effort. This also leads to movement forward on the strategic plan. She included recognition of the need to institutionalize educational attainment. This has become a part of the daily work. The Commission has really focused on attainment but also significantly on partnership development. Dr. Caldwell suggested that this is a set of more mature priorities which have gone through an evolution.

Commissioner Freeze added that Commissioner Goetz had asked a good question. Sometimes it is necessary to take a step back and see where all have been. She concluded commenting that these will be the priorities moving forward and that they are certainly adjustable over the course of the year. The Commission will adjust moving forward. She thanked all for considering the priorities and understanding the major activities of the Community College Commission.

- Wyoming Department of Education Update

Commissioner Freeze noted that she would deviate from the regular schedule and introduced Superintendent Balow. She noted that Superintendent Balow was able to join the Commission today but would be unavailable to join tomorrow's meeting. All would certainly want to hear what is happening at the Department of Education.

Superintendent Balow apologized for not being able to join the meeting and thanked all for deviating from the agenda. She noted that Shelly Hamel had been working tirelessly on the ESRA III state plan. As most know ESRA III is the ARP or America Rescue Plan funding for K-12 education. The plan also includes funding for some partnerships and transitions into postsecondary education. The first two pots of funding were basically if you want this money, send in a reply and you will receive the money. With ESRA III it was substantially more money under a new administration in DC. WDE has been working tirelessly on a 26-page application to even receive ESRA III funds. It has been a heavy lift for WDE in the midst of cuts and hits to staffing levels. The application was submitted Monday. WDE anticipates a couple of iterations going forward. Now WDE is anxious to implement the plan to get the money flowing for statewide activities and to the school districts.

Superintendent Balow noted a number of training opportunities including the STAR conference which is a general federal funding and education conference. There is also a Literacy Conference scheduled soon. Information about both conferences are on the WDE site. She invited and encouraged any Commissioner to take a part for their own edification and to see how their work relates to K-12.

She paused to say she was only able to attend EWC's commencement. She congratulated EWC, all the community colleges on a successful year and having some excellent graduates walk the stage and receive their diplomas. She thanked President Travers for the invitation to attend and she noted she wished she could attend all the ceremonies.

Superintendent Balow continued with an update on department activities. They have been in crisis mode for going on for a year and a half plus regular work continues. Yet this does not mean there is non-exciting work in WDE. WDE is constantly moving forward. She added that their work also takes the Community College Commission and postsecondary education to continue to move forward too. WDE continues to respond to legislation passed during the recent session and legislation being contemplated during the interim. They are staffing about five different committees. The interim session did not start earlier but discussion did end later. WDE is doing a lot of work right now with the Legislature to calculate their maintenance of effort to continue to receive federal funds. WDE just received information today on a new aspect of the federal funds called maintenance of equity.

This maintenance of equity suggests that any district that has a high proportion of low-income students cannot be disproportionately cut when it comes to budgets. This is a new requirement and one issue that WDE has never had before. There is more to come because it puts a new entrance into k-12 education which she thinks will find its' way into postsecondary as well. And also into noneducation funding areas as well.

WDE is working around legislative mandates on data requirements and placing things in the budget such as implementing Medicaid billing into the schools. As they also work with the legislature on ESRA III federal funds while trying to get money out to school districts. They are also working on the regular federal fund grants.

She reiterated the need to stop and listen to successful programs across the state and the lessons learned during COVID-19 and what not to let go of. One of those programs during COVID that WDE saw success in was the school feeding program. Immediately after schools closed in 2020 they witnessed local food programs standing up in partnership community organizations, such as churches and leveraging federal funds to make sure that children and families were fed. The USDA has extended the summer feeding program and the free and reduced lunch concept for meals through this summer and into next year. It may be extended indefinitely. It is a new partnership that wasn't as particularly developed or mature as it was prior to COVID.

She recognized that some in attendance at the Commission meeting have been involved with the State Board of Education and the profile of the graduate. This is profoundly important to the work that all do in relation to postsecondary education. The profile allows K-12 education to be a little more tailored toward student success after high school and for additional education or training. Not only does the profile of a graduate incorporate the academic acumen but it also contemplates what are the behaviors, expectations, and experiences that high school graduates should have under their belt? Whether they go into the workforce, postsecondary education, workforce training, or into the military. The work has been exciting to watch. There have been many active partners on the profile of the graduate who are interested in the work. The state board is starting to wrap up the stakeholder engagement piece.

WDE has been working for a couple years to identify funding to hire a state school nurse. They were able to do so last month. Health and safety have become front and center. Having the nurse to serve as a liaison to school nurses and their delegates at the local level is really important.

Additionally, WDE has also been working on virtual education. They have taken advantage of many lessons from postsecondary education. She shared a recent story that she had conducted an informal survey of college students at UW. Every single student responded they were taking at least one online course. Zero of the same

students noted they did not take a virtual/online course during high school. That particular moment caused Superintendent Balow to reflect and strongly suggest that we cannot move back to the way courses were taught previously. She included the need for all students and in particular high school students, to have access to online courses. She thinks it is vitally important that K-12 continues to partner with higher education and the community colleges through dual and concurrent enrollment and other opportunities to make sure all students have access to at least one online experience or course during their high school education. This may be the future for some to have more of a hybrid looking education.

Related to postsecondary education, WDE was excited to be able to use a second round of ESRA II funds to roll out an intense FAFSA campaign. This campaign encouraged FAFSA form completion project for students to access funds for postsecondary education. WDE has encouraged Hathaway recipient students to use the FAFSA to apply for aid first before expressing interest in Hathaway. WDE witnessed, especially for those students in rural areas, a significant a drop in FAFSA filings. WDE sees the FAFSA as an onramp to postsecondary education and especially an on ramp to community colleges. The campaign was not just a campaign to say fill out your application to see if you can get money. The campaign was really a, “give this a try, you might find out that community college is more accessible than you thought”. The FAFSA campaign, thanks to Dr. Caldwell and her staff, and others in the Gear Up program as well as staff in the department of education are all working hard and investing a lot of money into a FAFSA campaign which is about much more than an application. As advocates for postsecondary education if someone is looking to learn more about postsecondary education, they would love to talk more with that person as they gear up for the next FAFSA campaign. WDE will roll out a website in August which will promote the FAFSA campaign. There currently is a lot of work behind the scenes.

WDE successfully made it through the recent assessment season. Superintendent Balow has seen some recently aggregated WYTOPP data pertaining to participation rate. She recognized that most states are struggling with positive participation rates, given that most schools have not been open. Most states are really starting with their assessment data at the participation rate with only 50 to 55% participation rate. Going into assessment season she was concerned about the rate, since WDE needs to have the rates above 95%. She was happy to preliminarily report a solid participation rate for Wyoming, and they have started digging into the data, and sharing it out with the public. School districts typically take the information and then work with it to gain insight on the impact of COVID-19 and about the value of the WYTOPP assessment soon. WDE also has ACT vouchers to offer to students who were not able to participate in the ACT this spring. This is not something that every state offered. There were not nearly as many ACT test takers as in other states. She noted they were happy to offer the ACT vouchers.

Commissioner Freeze noted that Superintendent Balow and WDE has accomplished a lot in the past difficult year. She suggested it was great to hear that WDE is taking lessons learned in the COVID experience and applying to the future. It is exciting to see all that K-12 as progressed. She had also received some information from Robin Gambrel and working with two other counties on virtual education and virtual high school. She noted the excitement for virtual learning in a K-12 scenario is great to see.

Dr. Caldwell added that all had heard about the Profile of the Graduate. Dr. Moritz has been actively working on the Profile of a Graduate.

- Biennial Tentative Budget [TAB B](#)
 - Draft Letters [TAB C](#)

Dr. Caldwell opened reminding all that the April workshop at Casper College consisted of a budget workshop. Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Buchholtz lead the budget workshop. Currently a draft budget is up for adoption. She reminded all that budget adoption is a two-stage process, starting off with action on a draft budget. The second stage is approval and final adoption at a special meeting in August. Agency staff will go through a presentation of the draft budget at this time.

She noted that the week prior she, Mr. Buchholtz, Ms. Taylor and the Presidents met and considered a letter, and two potential draft letters. Mr. Buchholtz had completed a little bit of revisions to the drafted letters. She then turned the meeting over to Mr. Buchholtz.

Mr. Buchholtz shared that all of the related materials were included under Tab B on the Commission workshop agenda. He noted the inclusion of a spreadsheet which has a review of the budget during the current 2021/2022 biennium and what to expect for the 2023/2024 biennium. The first column covers the start of the current biennium. At the conclusion of the legislative session, agency staff started with a review of budget reductions. The first reduction happened in the form of step 1, which included the Governor's hiring freeze and any exception to contracts over \$100,000. Executive branch agencies had to apply for waivers to complete both actions. Step 2 reductions included an additional 15% of the agency general fund budget. The agency took all of the reductions including \$2.5 million, eliminating most of the funding for the Wyoming Works appropriation. Agency staff had assembled a proposal, which was subsequently adopted and submitted to the Governor's Office. The Governor's Office came back to the agency and asked for staff to look at cuts in a different way, program by program rather than cut spread across all areas. Initially larger cuts were taken from some budgets and less of a cut in other areas. The rest of the reduction really came from state aid and the library appropriation. Proposed at the time, was that health insurance take a 10% cut and the

Governor's office declined, instead the rest of the cut came out of state aid to the colleges.

During the legislative session they presented his Step 3 reductions. Step 3 reductions were a little more precise which called for a 5% reduction in state aid. The proposed reductions in Step 3 were ultimately adopted by the State Legislature. The Governor made the decision on Step 2 reductions taking money out of individual line items. The Legislature enacted the final Step 3 reductions.

All Step 3 reductions are included in the presented spreadsheet in the highlighted column, but are mostly reflective of 2.5% not the full 5% (2.5% biennialized going into 2023-2024). The agencies put forward a 5% reduction. The Governor requested that only half of the reduction be implemented which was adopted by the Legislature but at 2.5% biennialized. Thus, really resulting in a 5% reduction overall going into the next Biennium. The biennialization is reflected in the chart along with Steps 2 and 3. But going into 2023-2024 the reductions have to be doubled going into each unit. Including the reductions is necessary as the 2023-2024 budget draft is started. He noted further that typically budgets between biennium's mirror one another.

Mr. Buchholtz reiterated a word of caution that what is presented is a preliminary standard draft budget. The Budget department has not done their calculations and provided those to the agencies. The calculation is expected later in the current month or early in July. What the budget department has may differ from the included figures. He further added, the presented figures are Larry's calculations. He also noted with fair certainty everything the budget office will present will be similar except for the Administration budget. It is the only unit within the budget that goes through a chapter 17 draft review. The Budget Office will review prior biennium's and then adjust. He also noted the reversion of unspent 2019-2020 monies which will affect the 2023-2024 budget.

Mr. Buchholtz walked through the draft, unit by unit. The Administration budget, payroll, travel are all included line items within the budget. For mainframe maintenance, a position on line 3 was removed with a total value of \$160,000. Then the Legislature only took half of the position amount. \$80,000 remains in the budget for a position no longer part of the agency.

State aid is the largest line item, \$183 million, where the budget started. There was \$22.7 million reduction in Step #2, \$4.9 million was also taken as part of the state reduction proposed for Step #3, and then that left an ending balance of \$156 million. At the start of the next biennium, another \$4.9 million biennialized which will be another Step #3 reduction. There is right now a calculation that shows an increase in retirement calculations, which were part of the line item, which the agency reimburses colleges for as part of payroll, appropriation has to be less than it was this biennium. There will be less because of cut positions. The lack of additional salary

expenditures will also reflect less retirement contributions. That appropriation will go down a little bit.

The next topic is recalibration of the base period. Recalibration takes place every four years. Agency staff look at the actual weighted enrollment in 2015, 2016, and 2017 and compare it to this year's enrollment. In comparing the enrollment, it was down about 7% resulting in a 7% to the variable side of the funding in the state aid line. This creates a new standard budget and it is not done by exception request. The last time recalibration was completed, back in 2017 as a result of HB 80, there was a 7.9% reduction in enrollment. At the time there was a year on both sides of the calculation because of how the legislation was written. That recalibration resulted in a \$4.8 million reduction to the standard budget. In 2015-2016 there was a depressed economy at the time and programs took cuts. Since the colleges had already taken cuts at the time on their state aid line item, the Commission asked that the colleges not take an additional cut because of recalibration. As such, the Governor agreed with the cuts and did not make a new standard budget including the recalibration which was then not implemented. The previous standard continued after the original reductions were put into place. Ultimately this resulted in a \$7.9 million reduction to state aid even with the penny aid. The colleges took pretty large reductions back then. He noted the existence of a draft letter that asks the Governor to consider which deals with that situation. It asks the current Governor to waive or not impose that reduction because the colleges have already taken \$33 million in cuts, do not let them take another \$4.2 million. This is a letter to consider and is included in the next tab.

Health insurance was not touched by any of the budget reductions. However, the standard budget for the next biennium does look like it will be less. They no longer have the same number of people with family policies (employee plus spouse and children). It is important to note that the colleges are getting funded for the same number of positions (1,798). This is what the colleges are authorized to have, even though they are not filled. Any vacant position on the books gets funded at the single rate. If that position gets filled and the person chooses the family insurance the pool draws down faster. It is funded at the single rate as it is at any state agency.

Dr. Caldwell noted that it does self-correct. If that vacant position does get filled, and that person has a family, the premium adjusts to the person and their position. The opposite can happen if you hire someone into the pool who does not require as much insurance. It self corrects after 2 years. The issue occurs both ways depending on the insurance needs of the individual.

Library budgets through the system took both a Step 2 and Step 3 reduction. What you see there at the end of 2021 does not include biennializing the Step 3 reduction resulting in a less budget amount for 2022-2024.

The Contingency Reserve is a funding line item that originally comes from coal lease bonus funds. Colleges have not received funds since 2017. The line item serves as a place holder. It is all federal funding and there is no reduction.

Adult Education is a \$3.9 million mixture of federal and state funds. There is a maintenance of effort that goes along with the appropriation. The state must match each federal dollar 2 to 1. Right now that match is made, but there was a 5% reduction in General Fund appropriations. Right now there was a placeholder to ask for an exception request, yet the agency is seeking guidance from the Budget Office. The last time there were similar reductions, the Budget Office included instructions that there would not be any claw-backs. It was stipulated to not ask for money back as a result of cuts. The place holder will remain given that it is unclear if the money will come back or not. Additional guidance will be sought from the budget office because of the need for maintenance of effort. The interpretation from the Budget Office may come back as not being a claw back because of the maintenance of effort.

Dr. Caldwell noted that this impacts the Adult Education programs at the colleges. One of the impacts is it becomes yet another cut to the colleges. It is separate from state aid but still impacts delivery at the colleges. Mr. Buchholtz noted that 90% of Adult Education programs funds to nine programs at the seven colleges. The balance funds programs at the Department of Corrections and one to Uinta BOCES.

High school equivalency was discussed in Step 2 and 3 reductions. There is a long history of not spending any money appropriated in any of this program. Money was kept in the event of a test administration problem. All of the line item, except \$1,000, will be biennialized for 2022-23.

The next couple of items are pretty simple. For the Wyoming Investment in Nursing (WYIN) program 5% was offered up and it will bring down student enrollment. There are probably some possibilities that will present themselves through ARP funding or with other types of student assistance. Dr. Caldwell noted that the 5% cut does not reduce the number of students who can be enrolled in the program, but it reduces the number of student loans or grants available through the program. An effort was made to protect faculty funding. Mr. Buchholtz continued, the next line item, WYIN faculty, was not touched. Any additional cuts would have translated into a full cut at the colleges. He suggested an exception request for this line item as the program was not fully funded and is still short by about \$240,000. An exception request will be presented a little later and tomorrow to make up for the structural deficit. Exception requests were presented in previous legislative sessions and were not fully funded. Loan processing is an appropriation received so that the Commission pays a contractor to service student loans. Additional money may be taken from the processor to shore up the rest of the program. The program pays \$14 per month while students are in school and performing work as a nurse in the state and until the loan is paid back. The Commission covers the service fee of \$110,000

yet the amount is not enough, so taking additional cuts would have not been good. More funding is needed for the number of students, and the current cohort, who are in the pipeline.

The Overseas Combat Veterans Tuition Waiver program has had historically more than half of the funding reverted. Mr. Buchholtz does not expect any issues with this appropriation. Agency staff will keep fingers on the pulse and how program enrollment is trending. It is easy to see when enrollment is increasing because the colleges and UW receive funding for every enrolled student at the end of each semester. The agency is easily able to track enrollment and increased or decreased costs.

The last item, Wyoming Adjunct Professor Loan Program (WAPLR). The program sunset on 30 June 2020. The Legislature has finally taken back, this spring, the \$95,000 funding for the program. The balance will be at zero going into the next biennium.

The next page covers Wyoming Public Television which went through the same budget reduction as everyone else as 100% general fund. WPTV took a 10% in Step #2 and a 5% in Step #3. WPTV took larger than 10% on Step #2 for the WPTV Council as this was an appropriation that does not get used much. Historically this group spends \$500 per biennium. The budgeted amount was reduced by \$6,500 which decreased.

The difference between the presented two charts, indicates a blank left column, the Commission Priorities. The Commission has the responsibility to prioritize these programs. It is the intent by the legislature and Executive Branch, that should an agency take a budget reduction, the lowest priority will be taken in order. Currently the list is in unit order. As standard practice, agency staff provide standard recommendations as to how these get prioritized but it remains totally up to the Commission. Included is the recommended priorities. The Commission can discuss and then follow through with the priorities. Shown as the second chart is the agency staff recommended priority list.

The next series of pages are recommendations which include a list of exception requests Commission staff intend to submit which are designed to augment or supplement the standard budget. Previously presented was the standard budget. Anything over and above the standard budget is considered an exception request. The bulk or vast majority of exception requests are all IT related. There are certain object code appropriations for each agency's budget. Any appropriation object code is considered one-time funding for that current biennium. For any future biennium, the funds must be requested again should the need remain. There is a continual need to upgrade IT equipment, software licenses, and maintenance of software. This is a very similar exception request to that for the 2021-2022 budget. All systems still

need maintenance including across DMARS, WyoTransfer, Academy One, etc. Listed are the exception request priorities per agency staff. All are IT related with big showstoppers. If the agency cannot pay the bill, these programs will stop in their function. Commissioner Blikre noted that most of the exception requests are required by the Legislature. Dr. Caldwell confirmed that in the typical legislation funding must is required to be provided through an exception request. Mr. Buchholtz confirmed and added that the list does include in #6 the Wyoming Investment in Nursing faculty a little over \$1 million. The request fixes the structural deficit from 2021-2022 and fully funds four additional faculty for expansion of existing programs across the system. For every eight new Nursing students added at a program or institution, the statute says, subject to appropriation by the Legislature the Commission should fully fund the position. There is also a place holder for Adult Education program to recoup what was removed by Step #3 reductions. This exception request includes the maintenance of effort description spoken of earlier. Then the requests include a number of IT items.

Then there is a request for Wyoming Public Television. Mr. Dugas has requested an exception for one FTE employee term limited for two years. This is directly related to a request by the Legislature to staff for WPTV to staff, program, and broadcast interim legislative meetings as the state currently does not have that capacity.

Commissioner Freeze asked about needed upgrades to the Commission website. Mr. Buchholtz suggested the agency is using antiquated software to run the commission website. There is a need for a new program, something for the current decade. For whatever software package purchased, there will be a need for setup, implementation, and to provide training. Commissioner Freeze noted that the \$88,000 includes just the purchase price of new software. A separate, \$112,000 is needed for implementation and training. Mr. Buchholtz confirmed her understanding while noting he originally had the exact same question. Ms. Edeburn also confirmed via Mr. Buchholtz that this cost was inexpensive. Mr. Buchholtz asked rhetorically, "Can we survive with what we have, yes? Would it be nice to have, most certainly? Yet this is down on the priority list". Commissioner Freeze reflected that at some point this will stop being just a nice have, but will become essential.

Mr. Buchholtz continued, the last thing on this tab is the calculation of the recalibration of the base period. Presented are all the figures used in the recalibration effort, noting the total columns are the best. It includes weighted enrollment then and now, the percentage decrease, and the decrease going back to the variable cost funding side to the split of state aid. The recalibration is a reduction of state aid with a proposed new standard of the state aid line item. Recall there was a Step #2 reduction and a Step #3 reduction, with only half of Step #3 implemented. Mr. Buchholtz had taken the other half, and inserted it into this calculation because that is where the calculation will start in 2023-2024. Really, the Colleges will keep 7.38%

of 40% of \$4.9 million. Dr. Caldwell added that if the Commission did not have to take almost \$33 million in cuts.

Commissioner Blikre asked if he could live long enough to see an increase in funding? Mr. Buchholtz noted first all need to quantify what is an increase in funding as one time the colleges received \$100 million in one-time funding (2011-2012). Dr. Caldwell noted that this topic goes back to the work done on sustainable funding. She recalled, if the Step #2 and Step #3 were imposed that would be a \$94 million erosion of the budget and since 2010. Add an additional \$4.2 million then the total becomes \$98 million in comparative funding which has been cut since 2010. Commissioner Freeze suggested that this was under the assumption that 2010 was fully funded. Dr. Caldwell responded that agency staff do not make that assumption because all do not know for sure if 2010 was fully funded, these figures are based just on comparative dollars. There is \$98 million in comparative savings.

Mr. Buchholtz moved to Tab C of the agenda, noting the two draft letters crafted at the Commission's request. The first deals with the Commission's request to the Governor to waive recalibration of the base period. He reminded all of the process again and the colleges have taken Step #2 and #3 cuts. He added that Commissioners have time and this letter is not a current action item. Mr. Buchholtz is also willing to give Commissioners, The President's Council, and the Presidents the document to complete edits and track changes.

Commissioner Blikre, noted after reading through the letters, he indicated they were well written, and asked for each Commissioner to sign the letter. His reasoning is all are appointed by the Governor and the Commission should be perceived as unanimous.

Commissioner Boal asked if there is anyone who has an idea regarding increasing the standard budget. He asked about what type of feedback have folks been receiving when they have spoken with their elected officials. He noted when he has talked to his local state officials, he as a Commissioner is concerned, that all are perceived as being not concerned about the financial difficulties of the state and rather naïve. He has raised the underfunding issue with elected officials in his area and did not receive much encouragement. He asked if any had a better idea for bringing the issue forward? He had raised the issue with the legislative officials in his area and he did not get much encouragement.

Dr. Tribley noted he does not have a better idea. He noted the suggestions the Commission brought forward last year to the Appropriations committee were pretty solid. He is hearing the same thing. No one has the stomach for implementing, raising, using taxation to get the state out of the current situation. As he personally understands his role, if we do not advocate for the community colleges, who will? He added when this topic was brought up at the same time last year, all were

searching for ways to insulate the colleges from the Step #2 cuts. The goal was to absorb the cuts before transferring them off. He noted the Presidents and the College Boards of Trustees have a lot of grit and a lot of understanding. Since all are not seeing sunlight on the horizon, when the NWCCD board made cuts, they were largely driven by the fact that there was no light at the end of the tunnel. What is not available is seed money, or one-time dollars, to set up a fund, that the Commission can allocate to the Colleges in a noncompetitive manner, to stabilize the system for the next ten years. If the elected officials are not going to change until the electorate changes in their view of taxation. Then the system will need to be stabilized from year to year. There is a need to dismantle the current system and restructure to create a fund that provides stability. If there could be room in the priorities for stabilizing the system using one-time funds. He recognized that Dr. Caldwell has seen other states and considered other scenarios as to how those states stabilize community colleges through tough times. Commissioner Freeze added this is all part of the sustainable funding effort. She added that the Committee had some effort in that direction from a little different stand point as they discussed a pool of money for innovation. She noted these kinds of discussions are important and needed. Then the education process continues to be critical related to sustainable funding just can't stop. It needs to be an ongoing process that occurs day in and day out with everyone whom we have contact. There is that misunderstanding and the Colleges get tied in with everything else. It makes perfect sense that the state is unwilling to increase revenue and of course the colleges are being unreasonable with the ask, but this cannot be let to stop from educating and continuing the dialogue.

President Divine remarked that he finds himself regularly in a conundrum, whether it is department chairs, or faculty members, or team members, he finds himself frustrated for example with department chairs as all the individual is thinking about is their department. They are not seeing the rest of the departments in their school or college. Then he reminds themselves that is what he pays them to do. He noted there are legislators out there that think we are tone death. However, he reminded all that the Commissioners were appointed and the Presidents were hired to make the point again, again, and again. Casper College just celebrated its 75th anniversary but only two out of nine local legislators were in attendance at the celebration. Until we can get people to see the broader impact, all that can be done is to continue to remind them that these are the choices they're making. He suggested until this agency is shut down, all have to continue to remind and make the relevant argument. Commissioner Boal noted his agreement, and if there was a method or approach leading to better results, he cannot come up with a better method to pursue. Past conversations he has had with elected officials have been useless until someone can find a better method.

Ms. Taylor noted we all need to continue with the education effort. She doesn't think there is a better way. The Colleges do have a unique story compared to every other agency that is being cut which resonates with some legislators. Both local mill

levies, receding valuation and enrollment are all in decline which no one else has, including UW. Yet at the same time Legislators, including the Governor, are relying on the colleges to build the local economies and to train the workforce. All will continue to talk about advocacy efforts in upcoming and future Trustee and other meetings. The same advocacy efforts which Ms. Taylor continues to build. She noted that all are getting stronger as they come together. Her hope is that the Governor does take the situation to heart. It is also her hope that the cuts can remain positive.

Dr. Tribley noted the need to set up one-time money similar to the State of Washington, Worker Retraining Program. The State of Wyoming values using one-time funding to set up long term solutions. An example would be the Hathaway program. But could funds be put into an endowment to provide retraining money? The Work Retraining Grant proposed by Governor Gordon, could be put into an endowment, one in which we would only live on the proceeds. The key is it not being too restrictive. One-time money is available right now and we do not know what to do with it in the state.

Commissioner Goetz asked a couple of questions. Is the Governor expecting a letter? She indicated she really resonated with Ms. Taylor's comments and agreed with including an end story and including why this is more of an end solution than an end problem. She noted that the work done for the sustainable funding model, even though it has been chosen to not be implemented is a great opportunity for a solution and not a repeat of a problem. If she were to receive this letter an observation she would have, is that this continues to keep happening. She thought the work that Dr. Caldwell and her team have done is remarkable. The Commission needs to remind people that those solutions and options to alleviate the problem are there. The work has been done on possible solutions, yet we as a state need to consider them as an investment in the long-term.

Dr. Caldwell continued that there are two specific letters. The first letter asks not to impose the recalibration of the base period on a quadrennial basis. This letter was discussed at the last workshop and included some context from Dr. Schaffer. Mr. Buchholtz and Dr. Moritz went to work on the impacts of the standard evaluation and recalibration. When agency staff receive the standard budget in the next few weeks, it is thought the recalibration will not be there, as Mr. Buchholtz has yet to provide them with it. She added there is a window of time for all, including the Presidents, to work a draft of this letter. All will need to see how that standard budget comes back from the state first. She also suggested a need to be a little tactical on when the first letter is sent. The first letter is asking to not impose the \$4.2 million, which would be predicated on the fact that they started at the same point with the state budget. There is a precedent in how the standard budget is brought forward in the first place to the Governor. Dr. Caldwell anticipates sending the first letter in perhaps three weeks. However, it could be next week if the budget office asks for the recalibration number.

Mr. Buchholtz noted that the Budget Office calculation comes first and then the agency asks for adjustments.

The second letter articulates absolutely the direction the Commission wants to go to ask for an exception in state aid. This letter came about after seeking clarification on how to make a request. As Mr. Buchholtz had shared in the April meeting, agency staff did seek an informal opinion from the Attorney General's Office. Dr. Caldwell reminded that the Commission can take action at the August Special Meeting to ask the Governor to consider an exception request for state aid.

Mr. Buchholtz continued that if all wanted to have more conversation about the first letter was desired, which asks the Governor to not impose the recalibration, conversation can certainly continue. The first letter does not include any dollar amount. It will have to be formulated still, but it gives the background what the appropriations were and then draws a comparison out of an FTE. The FTE and House Bill 80 and how recalibration works conversation in that this is not the way we should be done. He noted that FTE really doesn't capture the picture

Commissioner Freeze noted her agreement upon and that of the others regarding the first letter's content and needed submission. She noted that there is redundancy between the two letters and clarified the need to make it as short and succinct as possible. She then asked if there was any concern among the Commissioners for submitting the first letter. She also asked if everyone was in favor of including all Commissioners' signatures. She then asked about moving on to discuss the second letter and assumed there was universal agreement on one to generate this type of letter to the Governor. She received no disagreeing contents with this approach. This is the place where much of the detail about history needs to go. She also noted that if people have suggestions for editing to forward them to Dr. Caldwell who will also work with the Presidents to review and edit. She reiterated value in keeping as succinct as possible.

- Capital Construction

[TAB D](#)

Dr. Caldwell reminded at the April meeting she had mentioned Capital Construction is an annual process. Also, at that meeting she noted changes and revisions as per the strategic plan needed to occur. There are a series of action items for tomorrow's meeting. Mr. Buchholtz will start with detailing the \$12 million which was allocated during this year's legislative session, HB 121. He will also note how staff met with the Presidents and made the decision to move forward on that. There is also a new estimate for the level 2 Western nursing facility.

Mr. Buchholtz started by referencing Tab D which details how the agency keeps track of the escalation factor. By statute the Commission has responsibility to take additional action on any Capital Construction project that goes up in cost 10% or

more from the original presentation. There is a newer process for keeping track of updated escalation factors to raise the ceiling cost of any project if it exceeds the additional 10% ceiling. Previously any time the costs increased, the colleges were originally responsible to fund any escalation. The Legislature would only fund their 50% of the original estimated cost. The state would not cover any increases in escalation.

Back in 2018, which coincides with the tenure of the current Executive Director, the Commission implemented an escalation spreadsheet that escalated construction project costs by an inflation factor provided by the Economic Analysis Division and the State Construction Department that agency staff add to the cost of the project to keep pace with inflationary pressures on construction. There are three different portions which are in sections as to the project age. For the first several on the sheet, the escalation started in 2015. Some of these projects are now complete, but the rest are still in separate phases of construction. The cost limit on the projects has been raised.

Collectively, the Economic Analysis, State Construction Department, and us all think the current factor is low. For 2021 all the projects in the first five lines, list all that is complete and will be complete in the next month. The LCCC RAC project will come off the list as per the \$12 million.

Commissioner Blikre asked if the Central Wyoming College Agriculture and Animal Science facility did actually go up by \$8 million? Mr. Buchholtz responded that project went through several iterations. It was initially funded and brought forward by the Legislature without Commission review. The project was brought forward in the Legislature by a Senator who resides in that county. Subsequently, there was a level II study and substantial change of scope. There was an initial vision and then it became a reality.

Mr. Buchholtz continued that there are five projects that go back four different years. More projects that go back three years and then five projects which go back two years. Another project, the Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC) stand-alone nursing facility was done as a level I, II, and III funding request all at one time. It turns out that the initial estimate was very low. So WWCC, under Dr. Dale's leadership, funded their own level II study. In 2020 the Legislature decided to not take action on any capital construction project. Western decided to defer that project back and not ask for funding in the 2020 session as they were not ready for Level III at the time. The original design did not meet Nursing program accreditation standards. Western funded their own Level II study. That project now has an estimated \$9 million cost. This project will be an action item on June 10. All that is needed is to adopt the escalation factor for all the college projects for the current year raising the upper limit. It does not change the amount of an appropriation passed.

Mr. Buchholtz added there are a couple of footnotes on the slide. Those projects with a single asterisk are those with an approved amount and not included in the construction budget. The Legislature authorized the following projects: NWCCD's construction technology, NWC's Student Center, NWCCD's Construction Technology Center and the CWC Teton County Outreach Center, thus authorizing \$90 million of projects, but provided only \$12 million in funding. Tomorrow's action item is to adopt all the projects with new limits.

The next 18 pages in the included packet are Level II design documents for the Western Wyoming Community College Health Science Nursing facility addition project. The Commission will adopt the new \$9 million construction estimate, rather than the \$3.8 million adopted a few years ago. That project will go forward in the State Construction Department's budget as a stand-alone request. Dr. Caldwell added that this project was and is still prioritized. It was not withdrawn just deferred or delayed until there was a better level II estimate that what was going before the Legislature would better meet Western's needs. Mr. Buchholtz suggested normally, during a June meeting, prioritization for new projects. As per the budget situation the colleges did not submit new projects, there are needs, but not project requests. Should the America Jobs Act Bill come to fruition and should there be an appropriation come forward, the Commission is positioned to run the construction model at any time. Colleges can put projects into the model and the model can be processed if needed and the Commission can have a special meeting to entertain those requests.

Mr. Buchholtz continued, the next part and the last document on this tab, is an overall prioritization of all projects in the system now and that are not funded. The oldest project with the highest number and then the newest project with the priority order. However, the project landed in the year prioritized were reordered. This sheet helps both the Legislature, the State Construction Department, and the Commission by establishing a regular priority. For all of the projects, except those not prioritized for 2022, except for the LCCC Recreational Athletic Complex, which is not prioritized. The other four projects with their increased amounts will return through the State Construction Department, Building Commission, Governor, and on for the state budget bill under the standard process. The four projects will return to the Legislature for 50% funding. Because of the appropriated \$12 million to the colleges, LCCC was given \$10 million to match and complete the RAC project. This left \$2 million for potential funding of Level III construction documents thus giving firm construction amounts for the three other projects to go into Level III construction. Adopting the list is one of the action items on June 10.

Dr. Caldwell included that there were several meetings with the four presidents to see about allocating the \$12 million. The overall goal was to see a project or projects get done and be built. There was a very clear understanding from both the Governor's Office and Joint Appropriations, that whatever projects were going to go forward and

would be built and that the remaining projects would return for funding approval. State construction is ready to go pending more action.

- HLC Accreditation Changes and Draft Rules

[TAB E](#)

Dr. Caldwell introduced Dr. Moritz. She also indicated that there are no rule changes proposed for this meeting. Other Chapter 6 rules are still in process for consideration. She also recognized that work continues with the accrediting body, Higher Learning Commission (HLC) along with the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Moritz, Mr. Williams and Dr. Caldwell met yesterday and attended an HLC region meeting along with Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley, HLC President, along with the U.S. Department of Education. The HLC encompasses a 19 state region. Dr. Caldwell noted rules will be ready for Commission review in October. She added, the agency has received clarification that there will remain regional accreditors but that they will be named as institutional accreditors. At this point all is still okay with the changes as they pertain to current Wyoming statutes. Dr. Caldwell will provide an update at the October meeting.

Dr. Moritz shared an updated presentation. He started with the accreditation updates are in response to the July 1, 2020 changes from the US Department of Education regarding the institutional accrediting bodies. Those bodies have been rolling those changes out over the course of the last year. The two most impactful activities are the systemic change criteria and then the role of the accrediting organization. Dr. Moritz had discussed the first change in the last meeting. The substantive change modifications which were made somewhat more rigorous. Yet, since the last Commission meeting there have been changes in the federal registry that have clarified where the criteria apply. Criteria now apply at the programmatic and not the course level. Most likely far fewer programs will need to go through the standard change process with HLC, saving time, heartache, and also money. Commission staff have had several conversations and meetings with the HLC liaison. The Academic Affairs council has discussed this at length and the colleges have also discussed this with their liaison officer and the HLC. It is all moving ahead quite well. At the last Commission meeting, Dr. Moritz talked through some of the forms of which all of the colleges have started and will continue to use and started as well with changes within them. Everyone can breathe a sigh of relief because of the clarification within the federal registry. He commented that this process now seems like a far more reasonable project. Dr. Moritz called out the great amount of work that staff and faculty have already put into the effort.

The second area, is a shift away from regional accreditation. The new language drops the “regional” part and calls them institutional accreditors. In recent conversations with the HLC and USDOE representatives, the regional label will still remain in existence in Federal Regulations (C.F.R. 602.11). The HLC bylaws will continue to define their geographic distinction as the 19 states, including Wyoming.

The terminology of regional accreditation will remain. And “regional” is still in the legislation. Dr. Gellman had confirmed that this is still in the language.

During the meeting Dr. Moritz and Dr. Caldwell had heard from other states what and how they are dealing with this change and updating their rules. Most states are making changes in their rules or policies to specifically identify HLC as that regional accrediting institution. One or two are making changes in their statutes. The changes are really determined or reflective of the state governance structure. Wyoming Statutes refer to “the regional accrediting agency” 21-18-202 (e)(iii) and 21-18-205(a)(i) is and will still refer to the HLC. When the USDOE new rules regarding accreditation were initially introduced, it seemed to have created a wild west set up, any institution can choose any accreditor and any accreditor can choose any institution. Currently, it now seems to be just some nomenclature change with very little structural or functional change. Agency staff have heard there are not many institutions in other states rushing to change accreditors or accreditors trying to increase the number of institutions for which they are working. Agency staff also received some positive feedback from the AG’s office and Dr. Moritz appreciated Mr. Williams help with specific questions.

Dr. Caldwell had noticed that some accreditors including the National Association of Independent colleges is no longer recognized. Any institutions that were a part of the NAIC, have to seek a new accrediting body. This change impacts more of the independent types of institutions. When one looks at the bylaws and rules in most states it is really “regional” and not “institutional”.

Commissioner Blikre suggested, that USDOE and HLC are still kind of explaining all of this transition and nobody knows where it will all finish. Dr. Moritz added, the issue is now “more settled” than it was a few weeks ago. There remains some uncertainty but there is far less than a few weeks ago. Specifically, how the USDOE and the CFR is viewing the accrediting bodies in light of the new administration. Agency staff will continue to hear things, yet they are hearing a lot less uncertainty. Dr. Moritz noted there was a lot of uncertainty among his colleagues who were told that colleges were going to shop for accreditation. Commissioner Blikre noted that where he lives there are a whole lot of people who are discussing this issue. As of only two days ago, they were telling Commissioner Blikre that the Colleges could go shop for somebody that would serve them better. Now, today, Commissioner Blikre is hearing again that this is not the case. He needs to know the for sure so that when he talks to people he will tell the facts. He would appreciate being kept in the loop. Commissioner Freeze noted that one thing that needed to be distinguished is there is what is happening at the national level in terms of identifying accrediting agencies and then there is the requirement/expectation within the State of Wyoming. She then asked Mr. Williams to talk a little about what the statute says in terms of the accrediting agency for the Commission.

Mr. Williams reflected on statutes that reference accrediting agencies adding there are a couple of big ones. First the requirement in section 21-18-205(a)(i) refers to the eligibility for state funding. This statute requires colleges to be accredited by a college regional accrediting agency. This was his first concern, as he didn't think when the Legislature passed this law they contemplated that there would be any other type of system then what was in place at the time. He noted that we would not want some change out of the state to have the unintended consequence of defunding the community colleges. He's satisfied this will not be an immediate issue because the state does not care how the Feds are using the term regional accreditor body. What is really of concern is what the Legislature meant when they used the term regional accrediting body, which is still preserved. There may be a desire to change that statute at some future point providing more flexibility. Perhaps the phrase regional accrediting would go out of public use.

Mr. Williams noted in terms of shopping for accreditation, this issue is really in the hands of the Commission. If the Commission wanted to officially say, no it needs to be this particular agency as part of the program approval process for which the Commission has control over, it can do that. There are some benefits and drawbacks to that particular policy decision that Mr. Williams is not privy to as per not working in the field. Presumably there is some benefit to consistency and having to deal with only one accrediting agency. The question that Mr. Williams can answer is, if the Commission has the authority to do that. The answer is yes, with the caveat that he would have to work with the staff to see what that might mean in terms of rule changes. He does not believe this would be a significant obstacle to making that policy.

Dr. Caldwell noted this is what they were able to nail down. Adding from a policy direction, accreditation of the institution will remain but they will continue to serve a distinct region. This is clearly demonstrated in CRF 602.11. All bodies will update in their by-laws and specify the regions they serve. Dr. Moritz noted that he is not aware of any of the associations by laws that they would remove their "regional" accreditation distinction. Even if they were to do so, the rules that they would put into place are coming from the US Department of Education.

Commissioner Freeze reiterated it is the Commissioners responsibility to determine how we handle this if needed to make some changes. But she does not think that institutions should be pursuing their own accreditation without some special use or study.

Mr. Williams followed with noting this is a practical impossibility at this time for the colleges. At this time, as far as he understands it, the accrediting bodies are not incorporating the same particular statement as per the regions they have individually agreed to serve. This might not happen in the future, but it does not appear to be an immediate concern. Dr. Caldwell continued, The US Department of Education

change is not from regional to institutional, but rather to that of a regional/institutional accreditor which was how it was described from the Department of Education. As such each accrediting body will include their regions. Commissioner Blikre asked what is our present policy? Dr. Caldwell responded that it is based in the regional accrediting body, which is how the statutes and rules read. Commissioner Freeze asked if that helped in providing guidance to people in our areas. Commissioner Blikre noted that is not just for where he lives but that it is included in the rules for the state. Commissioner Freeze suggested that anyone interested have a conversation with Dr. Caldwell before spending a lot of time and energy on something that might not be useful.

Dr. Tribley added that having seen the intent or emphasis for Governors or stakeholders who want to seek another accreditor, there are always those seeking a different accreditor for a variety of reasons (difficulty, complicated, etc.). All must engage with their accreditors to improve things. Accreditor's, like the colleges and the Commission have the rules. There are always a different set of leaders interpreting the same rules differently, more flexibly, or easily with the colleges in mind. The interpretation comes and goes. We must engage in the process so that the boots on the ground do not go through a series of needless hoops.

Dr. Schaffer noted that he did not have a lot to add. He has not been less than enamored by the current configuration of accreditation. His staff have started to analyze the pros and cons of shifting to another accreditor. It is a big lift and process to move away from the HLC. The reason why there has not been a major exodus as Dr. Moritz pointed out is because it is a big shift. He thinks that the HLC has taken interesting stances on the interpretation of the changes in the federal rules which has created greater processes and a larger burden for the colleges. He thinks they are doing this purposefully. Unfortunately, LCCC does not have time for this level of antics and the additional workload.

Dr. Caldwell added that the HLC has instituted some of the changes based on recent feedback. All should see some relative relief here soon. Which gets to Dr. Tribley's point that all have to share their concerns and get involved in the process. HLC is simplifying the changes and running a really solid approach. They just announced the changes during a recent call. To answer Commissioner Blikre, Dr. Moritz and Dr. Caldwell attended a Gillette Community College Committee meeting regarding the topic of accreditation and they were able to outline a few things including the changes in accreditation and that they work very closely with Northern Wyoming Community College District accreditors. They also recommended working with the same person at and closely with the HLC. Staff did meet with and will continue to meet with on the topic hopefully make things a little smoother.

Commissioner Freeze concluded and adjourned the workshop by noting that there will be a reception from 5:30 to 7:30 at the north campus ATEC building.

5:30 pm Reception at the EWC A-TEC Showcase
Location: 3401 West C Street, Torrington, WY 82240
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.]

June 10, 2021
Commissioner Regular Meeting
Agenda & Minutes
Eastern Wyoming College
[Informal discussion, no action will be taken]

THE STATUTES OF WYOMING REQUIRE THAT ALL MEETINGS OF PUBLIC BODIES BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, EXCEPT IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THE WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMISSION FULLY SUPPORTS THAT MANDATE.

ALL OF THIS INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY AT:
<https://communitycolleges.wy.edu/about-us/commission-meetings/>

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

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

Ex Officio Members

- Honorable Governor Mark Gordon or Lachelle Brant – Not in attendance
- Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow or Shelley Hammel – Not in attendance – (*Note: Superintendent Balow attended the June 9 workshop and provided the WDE report at that time.*)
- 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
- Christy Klaassen, Policy Analyst - Present
- Rob Dennis, Chief Operations Officer – Present

INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Freeze paused for a second to talk about a somber issue. Sherry Lovercheck’s husband recently passed away. Sherry had been a member of the Commission from 2012 to 2017. All took a moment of silence.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Freeze asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Blikre moved, Commissioner Dooley seconded. No discussion. Motion carried

- A. 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)

Wendy Pollock, who serves as the representative to the Commission and President of the Wyoming Association of Career and Technical Education shared that they are very excited to be creating partnerships across the state. And, they are especially excited to have a representative from the Wyoming Community College Commission, Dr. Ben Moritz, serving on the WACCT board. Next week they will hold their summer conference with Dr. Caldwell and Dr. Moritz in attendance. The organization is hoping to extend career and technical education across all areas through K-16. They are establishing more and more connections with the Community Colleges. One can visit their Facebook page for the latest information but also with Wendy, Lisa or Dr. Moritz.

Commissioner Freeze thanked Ms. Pollock for attending the meeting and all the good work she and WACCT does across the state regarding Career and Technical Education.

- B. ORGANIZATIONS/ALLIANCES:

- Governor’s Office

Commissioner Freeze noted that she did not believe there was a report available for the day.

- Wyoming Department of Education

Commissioner Freeze noted that the Commission had received the Wyoming Department of Education report the day prior. *Superintendent Balow attended the June 9, 2021 workshop and provided the WDE report at that time. Minutes of the Superintendent’s report are available within the Workshop minutes from June 9, 2021.*

- Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees

Regina Clark, President of the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees (WACCT). She thanked the Commission for all the support of the community colleges. She added that WACCT had a very successful meeting yesterday and that all have been through some tough times. Ms. Taylor will supply a more comprehensive report to the Commission.

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

Dr. Divine reported that all the Presidents had met prior to this meeting. Discussion included advocacy plans for the coming year. They had mostly focused on the two letters in front of the Commission. They had also touched on the related topic of sustainable funding for the community colleges. He also thanked Ms. Taylor for her efforts and crafting of messages to “woo” state legislators and her representation on behalf of all the colleges. She has done an amazing job and he wanted to give Ms. Taylor high praise.

All institutions have just come off their graduation season. He reported that the presence of the Commissioners means a lot. Commissioner Freeze attended the Casper College ceremony and in addition to seeing graduates, she also got to see monster trucks up close. There was monster truck event after the ceremony.

Dr. Divine continued with his report that the Wyoming Innovation Network (WYIN) project is receiving a healthy level of visible press from the Governor and President Seidel. Dr. Divine and his colleagues continue to craft the overall projects towards the individual labor needs of the local communities and the colleges are met.

He concluded his remarks by thanking Dr. Caldwell and staff for doing an amazing job in keeping capital construction projects on the front burner. With the agency's help it looks like some of the projects will be brought to fruition.

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

Dr. Dale noted, Dr. Caldwell had provided a great recap of the Educational Attainment Executive Council's (EAEC) last meeting. She went on to highlight a couple of items. The group had a robust, hybrid zoom meeting on May 19th and was very excited to welcome Senator Wendy Schuler to the Council. She is a friend to the community colleges and familiar with this work. An additional meeting highlight was a new adult scholarship program coming to the community colleges.

Dr. Dale noted an article provided by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) group, an organization of people in similar positions as Dr. Caldwell. The shared article touted how highly correlated state appropriations are with states reaching

their educational attainment goals. The more investment, the better the results. The EAEC group had also discussed ARP funding and how the most progress can be made related to attainment initiatives. She continued with commenting, Dr. Kosine at Casper College is doing some remarkable work with prior learning assessments. He is developing a system to put into place and eventually be institutionalized.

During the meeting, the group then broke off into two subcommittees to explore some policy issues and challenges. One focused on policy and barriers. The other on metrics and measures and the other focused on messaging. The policy group focused on messaging and developing some really high-level talking points. How can all do a better job on messaging and what is the relative long-term economic impact on the state? There are some long standing legislators who really do not know about the work of the group at large. Dr. Schaffer lead the metrics and measures group. This group looked towards finding a mechanism to forward and communicate the status of the initiatives.

This committee is supposed to sunset in 2022. It looks as if they will have three large meetings and a couple of subcommittees. Additionally, there is a big effort to continue this work so it is not forgotten once the committee sunsets.

Dr. Caldwell noted that the included tab was not the latest cleaned-up version. However, the EAEC is statutorily required to provide a quarterly report.

- Community College Faculty Alliance

No Report

- Wyoming Public Television – Terry Dugas, General Manager

[TAB B](#)

Mr. Dugas noted a written report was provided and is included with the agenda. He also referenced that Wyoming PBS, with the assistance of Central Wyoming College is adding a staff person for one year under a grant style contract to assist with the expanded legislative hearing coverage which was asked for by the LSO. He noted that later, there will be a budget exception request to fund this position for two additional years through the state budget process.

Commissioner Freeze noted her appreciation for the ongoing report and work done.

- Ellbogen Foundation Adult Scholarship - Mary Ellbogen Garland and Becca Steinhoff

[TAB C](#)

Mary Ellbogen Garland, President of the John P. Ellbogen Foundation, joined the meeting remotely to provide more context on the new grant opportunity. She referenced the document included with the agenda that outlines the grant. They are really excited about helping to close the gap for nontraditional students. This new opportunity is a

scholarship specifically for community college students. The vision of the foundation is to empower the people of Wyoming to lead healthy lives and thriving communities. Their mission is to cause change for the benefit of the State of Wyoming through the support science, education, and charity. All decisions are based on donor intent which was originally known about Mr. Ellbogen and what he valued. We were also able to witness her father's philanthropy thus giving direction to their work. Her father's, mother, was a school teacher. He understood the value of education at an early age as a young boy. He talked often about how his education was the key to success to his business. He was explicit about providing support to the University of Wyoming. He and her mom also supported educational programming in the Natrona County School District. Fast forward 20 years and the foundation has supported education extensively and will continuously as well as new opportunities to enhance the focus of education starting with early childhood. The Foundation gives focus to meeting the needs of students and helping them with their lives to become responsible, engaged, citizens who contribute to Wyoming's economy, creates healthy strong families, and civic activity including community service.

The Foundation had a wonderful opportunity to work with Dr. Schaffer and Lisa Trimble at LCCC on their Rediscover LCCC Scholarship, thus setting the stage on the Ellbogen scholarship. It is important to make education a reality by providing some resources including covering the total cost of attendance. Ultimately, they hope that the State of Wyoming will provide the support students need in a meaningful way.

Becca Steinhoff, Foundation Executive Director, echoed Mary Ellbogen Garland's remarks. She continued, the Ellbogen Opportunity scholarship is a wonderful approach to a long-standing commitment to education and leadership for which the Foundation provides across the state. The Foundation is now extending that work to adult students. They are looking forward to the partnership that is ahead with the Community Colleges. The Foundation has taken a simple approach to just getting dollars directly to students. Ms. Steinhoff noted the Foundation would be happy to share information on what they hope will be a wonderful opportunity for community colleges and students across the state.

Commissioner Goetz commented and thanked them for the amazing work done across the state and in particular enhancing educational opportunities. The economic development this contributes to is rather profound. She thanked them for this additional opportunity to enhance postsecondary education. Dr. Caldwell asked Ms. Ellbogen to confirm the amount. Ms. Ellbogen confirmed that the amount committed to the grant is \$500,000. She also added that they will start looking through funding and grant requests' tomorrow. Commissioner Freeze continued that this is an excellent scholarship, targeting those who frequently have limited access to additional scholarship dollars. This area has been a priority for the colleges and the Commission for some time. Dr. Caldwell reminded all that Ms. Ellbogen Garland was a former member of the Attainment Council and many of the items put forward were based on her suggestions and knowledge of the need to address Wyoming's postsecondary attainment. Ms. Ellbogen's commitment to the effort

is incredible. She also offered kudos to Dr. Schaffer for the proof of concept and the success of the LCCC Rediscover program. The colleges are working hard to submit those requests. She asked Dr. Schaffer to talk a little about the Rediscover program.

Dr. Schaffer thanked all for their comments. One of the wonderful things about living and working in Wyoming is working with people who have a deep investment in our combined future. Ms. Ellbogen is one of those people who is constantly thinking about how the state can be made better for future generations. He had the opportunity to talk about the concept of removing the financial barriers for adult students who are already committed to Wyoming to either come back or go to college. This really stimulated the idea of Rediscover LCCC. LCCC's program was really intended to be a proof of concept to demonstrate that removing those financial barriers to adults would increase educational attainment and help students obtain success. He continued that over the years the campus has been able to leverage the gift providing over \$1.2 million carrying to support over three cohorts of students. He can verify that this program works, it engages the population all want to engage, the students are focusing on enrolling in programs aligned with the state's economic future, and they are succeeding at higher rates than the general LCCC population. He also shared the hope that the state of Wyoming will provide a similar opportunity. He closed with commenting that this is exactly what Wyoming needs to be doing if they are extending the economic future of Wyoming.

C. EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE SHOWCASE

[TAB D](#)

Commissioner Freeze transitioned to the Eastern Wyoming Showcase and introduced Dr. Travers. She added that the Commission is always interested in how each of the colleges is doing and that there was a wonderful tour the night before.

Dr. Travers opened with the sharing of a video featuring the Eastern Wyoming College campus, programs and students.

At the conclusion of the video, Dr. Travers shared a few campus highlights and accolades. She first detailed the Nursing programs and all of the great accolades and partnerships. EWC's nursing program is the only night nursing program in Wyoming. She noted partnering with Banner health in both Wheatland and Torrington, Converse County School Districts 1 and 2, The Douglas Care Center, Frontier Home Health and Hospice, Memorial Hospital of Converse County (main hospital and Douglas and Glenrock outpatient clinics), Niobrara Health and Life Center in Lusk, Platte County Legacy Home in Wheatland, Wyoming Behavioral Center Wyoming Department of Health (Converse County, Lusk, Douglas, and Glenrock), Regional West Hospital in Scottsbluff, and more.

The Memorial Hospital of Converse County provided all of the equipment/furnishings to launch the EWC Nursing Program in 2016. Furnishings provided included: electric beds, patient privacy fire resistant curtains, nightstands, IV Pumps, B/P cuffs, learning stethoscopes, an EKG machine,

and other equipment. Additionally, they have provided free housing for 6 months to a new EWC faculty member in 2016 and \$60,000 for the faculty salary with a promise to continue the commitment. MHCC has allowed their full-time staff the ability to work with our faculty as Adjunct Clinical instructors.

Banner Health provided the Torrington Campus over \$60,000 in 2019 to purchase equipment through their vendors: 3 High-fidelity manikins (adult, child, and infant), EKG machines, IV pumps, electric beds with night stands, a gurney, hospital grade crib, Simulated Head Board with Oxygen & Suctioning. Banner Health also allows their qualified nurses to work with EWC faculty as adjunct clinical instructors.

EWC has rock solid support in the communities that they serve. For Gunsmithing program is currently held on the Douglas campus. EWC works with Weatherby to allow students to purchase Vanguards at cost. Weatherby has also donated the savage bullet trap, two cases of shotgun dummy rounds, two cases of buffing compound and buffing wheels, chronograph, non-functioning bore scopes, and miscellaneous firearm parts. They also utilize EWC second year students for repair services.

Other business partners in the area of gunsmithing include Artie Joss, the Cody Museum (who partners with EWC students for education outreach and service), Mack Brothers from Meade County South Dakota (CNC manufacturing for the arms community). EWC also works with Thunder Beast Arms. Many of these firms intend to hire EWC graduates. EWC graduated eleven students in the past year. There were students who were 19 years old and one student who was a senior.

The Vet tech program includes 60 to 70 students per year. Students come from around the country as the program is very well known. The vast majority of our Vet Tech students get hired or are highly employable. Banner Health has donated portable medical x-ray machine for use with animals. EWC also works with Wagging Tails which is the local animal society. EWC students maintain high pass rates on the veterinary technology national examination (VTNE). The program is accredited by American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). EWC program graduates possess a deep understanding of veterinary medicine as evidenced by comments made on evaluations from clinical experience supervisors. The Veterinary Technology Department has and continues to provide education seminars for veterinary technicians in the area including Montana, Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming for over 20 years. Many veterinarians around Wyoming and surrounding states are on our advisory board.

The cosmetology and barbering programs have a 100% pass rate. There are 40 students in that program. EWC's program is unique in that EWC takes all Cosmetology students through the entire nail and esthetics curriculum, which is not a requirement of the board. This also makes a seamless transition for students who complete a certificate program to come back for an AAS program. EWC faculty have over 50 years combined experience in cosmetology and cosmetology education. Shortly after barber boards were given this past July, the Board Administrator called Dr. Travers to indicate that EWC had "clearly done an incredible job over

COVID with students.” Nine barber students had taken July boards and only three had passed; two of the three were from EWC.

EWC has received a number of donations recently including: a portable x-ray machine from Banner Health, cattle from R Lazy S Simmentals and Little Chena Cattle Company, and small animal equipment from Wagging’ Tails kennels.

EWC also works closely with advising students wishing to double major. With EWC’s diligent advising, students coming from out of state can attend additional clock hours to accommodate different state requirements. This is especially good for Barbers because surrounding states require more clock hours in Barbering.

Welding includes 60 machines. EWC has a pretty large welding program with a five-year average FTE of 195. Welding and machining accounts for 9.5% of the Colleges FTEs. The program offers an average of 225 credit hours per year and comprise 8.5 percent of the credit hours offered by this institution. With an average of 17 AAS degrees and 41 certificates, Welding and Joining Technology is responsible for 29% of the college degrees and certificates.

EWC also was the recipient of an interesting Perkins grant which will provide for a precision cutting programing and software development for students in the 6th through 12th grades.

EWC additionally has educational agreements with the Wyoming Department of corrections, providing credit and non-credit classes to WDOC in conjunction with workforce development and/or learning office. Participating students receive appropriate post-secondary credit from EWC upon successful course completion.

EWC industry partners include: Peabody Energy, Cloud Peak Energy, TDS, B & C Steel, Tallgrass and Schlagle Manufacturing.

Commissioner Blikre noted that the staff did an excellent job showing the Commissioners around the ATEC building and facilities. President Travers added that the same two staff are excited to show Commissioners around to other facilities at the conclusion of the meeting. She added that the college really is a huge part of the community and they are so blessed to have the support they get from the community.

President Travers added at the end, that the golf team placed 12th in the nation.

D. FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

- WCCC - Dr. Sandy Caldwell

[TABLE](#)

Dr. Caldwell started with state and federal updates and acknowledged her submission of a written update. She is going to be concise as possible, but the attached document is 46 pages. She highlighted key points. There is a three-page summary followed by all the ARP requests. Many of the requests are in line with earlier meetings and conversations. Also provided is a series of related links.

She continued noting that there is a lot of federal legislation in motion including three really big draft bills agency staff are watching. One of those underway is the Jobs Act. Another is the Infrastructure Bill. The third piece of legislation is the Families Plan, which has specific provisions for postsecondary education and specifically regarding community college tuition. She reminded all that Mary Garland Ellbogen had been very careful talking about the total cost of attendance and not just tuition. There are mirror bills in draft and motion to the America College Promise. Some of these draft federal bills are moving rather slowly. Dr. Caldwell reminded all that Ms. Klaassen spends a lot of time tracking legislation progress and keeping all up to speed. She also regularly attends the SHEEO policy meeting.

At this point it is uncertain but most likely that a special legislative session will not be held. Senate File 118 indicates that a special session can be held up to September 1. The final ARP US Treasury document is not out. She noted that there were a few things that happened related to ARP which will be included in the CAPCON presentation. The ARP has some capital funds that came to the state of Wyoming but none of the colleges' capital projects were eligible for the funding. The \$110 million of capital projects for the colleges were very specific. Agency staff have even looked for other projects where the money could be used including as method to leverage the \$12 million recently allocated by the Legislature for capital construction but none of the alternatives considered were eligible.

Dr. Caldwell shared other priority points including the lack of the colleges not having a home committee. The colleges and the Commission really only respond to the Joint Appropriations Committee. As Superintendent Balow noted, the colleges and the Commission might also be assigned to another committee. For this interim session, the colleges are assigned to the Joint Education Interim Committee, but the colleges are priority number five. And it says in the Committee's priorities that they are to be working in partner with the Select Committee on Community College Governance and Funding which was ended. The Wyoming's Tomorrow Task Force was also ended. The Commission had been working so closely with the Select Committee and the Wyoming's Tomorrow Task Force to move forward the conversation around the community colleges, how the funding works, and recalibration, all was a real eye opener. The Commission and colleges had this as a home committee for the interim only. There are only four meetings of the Interim Education meeting scheduled.

She continued with highlighting current and forthcoming aspects of the ARP plans. There are two sets in the ARP priorities that we want to work. All knew they would have to move quickly to secure ARP funding and she had shared the approach taken by the Governor. The Governor has developed three teams and then those team leaders along with legislators make up the strike force team. Dr. Schaffer was working on some ideas for the three ARP funding phases including: Survive, Drive, and Thrive. This is the way the Executive branch is thinking about the ARP funds. Survive consists of what is needing to be done right now. Next is what can be done to Drive the state in an economic direction. And then how do we Thrive long term as a state. The colleges have done an incredible round of work as we need all ideas on the table. Dr. Caldwell suggested that this is not the time to be conservative. All should think about things that can really change the state. The colleges have had a lot of ideas and been on the forefront, such as adult learners, focusing on regional needs, and working on partnerships. The first phase was pulling it all together. The colleges provided through the Presidents a substantial list that was subsequently consolidated. The colleges presented a large amount of IT requests. Mr. Buchholtz worked with college staff on campus safety and security. With what Dr. Dale and Dr. Seidel have completed regarding the attainment work, for which the colleges are at the forefront, like the adult promise and Wyoming's Tomorrow Taskforce.

Now all are looking at the Survive stage which is not a prioritization. Robin Cooley (workforce and education lead) and Josh Dorrell (Wyoming Business Council CEO) have worked closely within the strike team to pull in the colleges requests. The Commission is primarily focused on IT support. The colleges are also focused on IT and attainment. UW submitted the Wyoming Innovation Network (WIN) requests. When narrowed down, the Survive stage includes first things first, there are no priorities in this stage. Dr. Divine and Dr. Caldwell have spent a significant amount of time on the telephone, narrowing down what to include in the Survive state. Current ideas are not set in stone and as things move forward things will evolve, things are dynamic. Currently, all are waiting to see what the aspects of the submission will be included in the Survive state.

Dr. Caldwell noted that the Governor will be on at JAC this upcoming Tuesday. The list will be released this coming Monday. Some of his quick highlights are very reflective of the conversations we have been having. The highlighted attainment is from the colleges. The colleges have to responsive and move forward on these programs. There are a couple areas of focus including student mental health, which is currently a hot topic within the state. Particularly with the amount of reduction in their wrap around services in their areas, the colleges are having to take this on in an even greater scale. There is also safety and security. There is also a demonstrated issue with IT redundancy. It was recently identified that many of the colleges serve as core router locations. When a core router is disrupted the impact hits many entities outside of the College. There is no redundancy to the state core system. The request was subsequently updated to true up other numbers. Covered yesterday was Adult Education. On the attainment side, the request covers portions of the Wyoming's Tomorrow Taskforce. In visiting with Dr. Cooley, she

reminded that the attainment work is covered in statute, so there is a very strong foundation which can be broke down by year. Knowing that Mary Ellbogen Garland was moving forward with the scholarship provides a bridge for the adult learners and the internships in a couple of bills. That request is in and part of the activity right now. The request breaks it down into a bridge giving an opportunity to explore the long term.

Superintendent Balow talked a little about the FAFSA roll out with the availability of the ESSER funds. The ESSER funds really need to be focused on the K-12 population. But this also gives WDE some ability to focus on the parents of students. She's very aware of the impact of parents on first generation student populations. There is also a FAFSA request that really scales this up for a larger adult population. There is also money targeting promoting higher education awareness. The proposal recognizes how getting the word of postsecondary education messaging out to parents and the program really helps the long-term economic welfare of the state. There is more there in her update but she really wanted to hit these highlights. Thinking about what Dr. Tribley said how do we affect some of these long-term funds. How do we really impact students now including student mental health, Wyoming's tomorrow, and how do we feed long term into the endowment concept that can impact our adult learners. The adult learners are the largest population the state has.

Dr. Caldwell reflected that she provided a lot of the major highlights. A Management Audit Committee meeting is scheduled for next week. It was brought to Dr. Caldwell's attention that the agenda does have the Marsalis Efficiency Study. Only the cover page has been updated. But the study provided a long list of councils and board consolidations that are really oversimplified. She noted that the state does not own all of those councils and committees. It is very much a simplification. What was added yesterday are the recommendations from the Governor's Office (document 12-7). The update includes a recommendation for boards and councils which can be eliminated, those that could be consolidated, and some where Board positions could change. The only proposed consolidation that directly impacts the colleges, the Commission, and Mr. Dugas, is the proposed elimination of the WPTV advisory council. That should not be problematic in terms of any type of consolidation. Mr. Dugas presented the advisory council was formed by statute in 2003. It is currently a very different world in 2021 than it was in 2003. The mission is outlined in statute, yet the advisory council is simply not relevant. WPTV no longer provides tele courses to the community colleges. WPTV doesn't provide instructional television to K-12 classrooms. He did recommend that the advisory council as it currently exists, be dissolved. Should the legislature wish to have another oversight council for WPTV, then Mr. Dugas would be glad to work with the Legislature to craft something better suited to meet current needs of state government and the mission of Wyoming PBS.

- WACCT - Ms. Erin Taylor

Ms. Taylor thanked the Commission for the opportunity to present. She reflected WACCT has been having a lot of conversations about advocacy and messaging. She noted the existence of an opportunity to bridge some previous gaps and utilize ARP funds for safety and security. As well as student mental health, which are all statewide issues and huge conversations happening in the legislative space. A lot of people are unfamiliar with these issues and one that all will be hearing more about statewide.

The Trustees Association meeting recently did not include a quorum of members. There will be another meeting where WACCT intends to take action on the annual budget. Both the Presidents and the WACCT Board took action late last summer to focus on the future of WACCT and the association. The overwhelming consensus was that the focus should be advocacy. Even in terms of Trustee is providing resources and education to help them in their roles in working with Legislators to serve their constituents.

She noted that earlier in the day, they had a little meeting to talk with Dr. Caldwell, the Presidents and WACCT Board members to talk about advocacy, messaging, and how to tackle the next year. They came up with a great tag line "Support the Solution". There are three areas where they will focus immediate attention such as the \$4.2 million discussed yesterday, but instead of a basic request, they will explore how we got to where we are today. Additionally, the recalibration process as it is set in statute. The recalibration process would be completely different if the Colleges had not gone through all of cuts. Ms. Taylor has heard from every college that they are losing their talent to other industries including K-12. The colleges cannot keep or retain talent. She noted further there is a need to keep track of industry partners. She confirmed that the sustainable funding work really did happen and it was the most robust work she has witnessed happening to date. It was unfortunate that the subcommittee was dissolved. There was additional effort by the Management Council to really pair down some of the select and subcommittee work and then return it to a standing committee. That's why the Wyoming's Tomorrow and the Sustainable funding committee are in Joint Education.

Ms. Taylor acknowledged that the legislative Education Committee was really focused on K-12. Now the Colleges are priority number 5 within the Committee, way behind K-12. There is a tough road ahead and WACCT really needs to focus in on those committee members. Those from the house side are potentially a little more favorable to the colleges then those on the Senate side. There is a brand-new Senate Chairman who has never been involved in education. She reiterated that we cannot walk away from the sustainable funding message.

Ms. Taylor suggested the need to focus on what the colleges are doing for their regions to innovate and move the economy forward. There is a need to focus on regional innovation. This is a message she suggests ramping up a little more and that all need do a better job collectively of promoting that message. She suggested that the three messages will not be very complicated. Keeping messages short and simple allows people to focus and recognize that folks are not all over the place. She noted a perception that the

Colleges do not always know what they want. With the Commission's support all can speak from the same book.

A messaging campaign can be a great effort. Even with all the challenges created by COVID a great model evolved, small groups. Ms. Taylor suggests gathering small groups consisting of a President, 1 to 3 Legislators, WACCT Trustees and opening up discussion and a mutual understanding. These meetings were a fantastic opportunity to relay messages, but also allow them to talk and get to know what all are thinking, and what they are not thinking. She added that small groups create a safe place and has been employed as a successful model.

During the budget process WACCT usually offers an annual conference. In the past, WACCT has really focused on emerging issues. She repeated, this year will really focus on advocacy and bringing in Legislators to a public forum to talk. WACCT would love to have Commissioners be a part of the discussion.

Returning to the Education Committee, since perceiving that the colleges are priority number 5, WACCT has offered to have a little one on one or education session with both Education committee co-chairs. If the colleges are priority number 5, she is unsure of how much attention the colleges will receive during the two days. WACCT has also talked about doing an interim reception or host a meeting with all in the room. Some legislators were unaware at the end of the last Legislative session of the effort surrounding Wyoming's tomorrow task force. Previously a similar reception had been held in Cody and it was profoundly successful.

WACCT is planning for a legislative reception during the next session. The reception is proposed to occur during the second week of the budget session. However, this may or may not be a budget week. Particulars are to be determined. She also proposed sponsoring a lunch while many are in town. It is at this reception where WACCT hopes to gain some visibility and support. Also she would like to better utilize students. She also hopes to get alumni involved.

Ms. Taylor reflected that WACCT is in a nice position financially with healthy reserves. WACCT is currently looking at some way to use those resources. Specifically with a communication or PR firm to help with strategy.

Commissioner Boal commented he liked the idea of connecting with the decision makers and listening to them. He was just surprised about the thoughts they had about the community colleges and their perceptions of the role of the colleges within the community. That exchange needs to happen. Ms. Taylor commented about the importance of listening.

E. 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 asked if there are any items to move from the consent. She did not receive a response.

I. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

- April 14 and 15, 2021 (Adopted 06/10/21)

[TAB F](#)

II. ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS:

- Accreditation Reports

[TAB G](#)

Commissioner Newman moved, Commissioner Wyatt seconded. There was no discussion. Consent agenda motion carried unanimously.

F. REGULAR AGENDA:

I. 2023-2024 Draft Biennial Budget Adoption

[TAB H](#)

[\(Executive Summary\)](#)

Dr. Caldwell opened by reflecting on the draft biennial budget workshop held the previous day. She also reflected about the workshop in April to explore the biennial budget. She added that Mr. Buchholtz will take all through the draft budget with the understanding that it will be revised. Final figures are yet to be published. Also to be detailed are potential exception requests, the draft budget know that it will be revised at the August 27 special meeting.

Mr. Buchholtz thanked all for their help and noted he had covered most of the material in yesterday's review. He also added what is displayed on the screen is somewhat of a preamble. On screen is an explanation of the standard budget, exception budgets and the regular process. He continued with noting the packet includes a list of all standard budget items along with a chronology indicating what has happened with the budgets from their starting point in 2021. These figures are draft and preliminary, because Commission staff and other state agencies have yet to receive the standard budget figures from the State Budget Department. Those documents have not been released in the IBARS system, from which all agencies build their budgets. He referred all to the graphic and reminded all of the starting point from where step 1, 2, and 3 reductions were made, the balance at the end of the biennium. He noted, as a course of the process, a double of the step 3 reduction will start in 2023-24. This is why the ending numbers from 2020-2021 are different from the figures starting with 2023-2024 for almost all of the budgets. If there is a step 3 reduction, that reduction is doubled and that is the new starting point. The left hand column includes Commission priorities, which are up to the

Commission to set. The slide after provides the Commission staff priority recommendations of all the programs.

Mr. Buchholtz continued that part of the budget submission includes Wyoming Public Television. Earlier Dr. Caldwell mentioned an effort to consolidate separate committees or councils. As such, there is a recommendation that the Wyoming Public Television Council be eliminated. Therefore the line item consisting of a \$752 budget will go away.

All items are before the Commission. The motion will be to adopt a standard budget draft and setting priorities for the Commission. Included in the packet is the Commission staff's recommended priority list. Overall, top to bottom on the presented spreadsheet is a budget reduction. Yet the priorities are listed in order of importance for funding not a reduction. The priorities are in order based on the expectation that if there are cuts, cuts will start at the bottom of the list or those programs with the least funding priority.

Then there are multiple pages of exception requests. These are primarily for and related to IT (maintenance of software, maintenance of hardware, programs, licensing, software renewals, etc.) There is some items for the IT staff to receive professional development and training. The proposed budget does include an exception request for IT maintenance. The top 15 to 18 priorities are real show stoppers. If the Commission does not receive the money it can have a detrimental impact on operational ability. The Commission has the option of changing priorities as needed.

Mr. Buchholtz continued with items in the list, outside of the IT exception requests. He focused on priority number 6 which details the Wyoming Investment In Nursing (WYIN) program. Currently there is a structural deficit regarding hiring of and funding for program faculty. The exception request also considers funding to hire four new faculty as the colleges are expanding their programs. The exception request does provide for the necessary funding. Agency staff desire to fund new faculty to benefit those colleges where there is need as per extending their programs over the 8 students per faculty limit. The agency seeks to fund those faculty members.

Priority number 12 seeks more funding for adult education, enabling the Agency to match the required maintenance of effort. This program took a Step #3 reduction. This priority seeks to restore those Step #3 reductions primarily so that the Commission and state can meet the maintenance of effort requirements for the federal funding portion of this program. It does seek to match the Commissions ability to match federal fund dollars. If the federal allocation granted for the program increase, the Commission and the colleges do not have the ability to match the increased federal funds because of the reduction. The reduction was taken because of the amount of the funding taken this year. Unfortunately, the federal funding level for next year is unknown. On a national level, there is a push to provide more money to these programs. If that allocation goes up, then our maintenance of effort goes up, the money will need to be restored to the budget. Mr. Buchholtz will see if there is a prohibition for making such a request in the budget

instructions. There was such a clause in the budget instructions the last time such cuts were taken. Discussions will continue with both the Governor's Office and the State Budget Office about a way around not doing what was originally termed a claw back, which is just trying to restore the money previously taken as a budget reduction.

What might look like a glaring omission from the request, is a request for Wyoming Works. The Commission has the authority to do an exception request every biennium for Wyoming Works. Agency staff think recommends not doing an exception request right now because, everything Wyoming Works does might be covered in an ARP request. If by the time that this actual budget is submitted, and what will be seen at the August special meeting could change. An ARP request for Wyoming Works may come through. If not, Mr. Buchholtz intends to add an exception request for Wyoming Works. This will be used as a stop gap should the ARP request not go through.

That is the status of all the exception request. He reiterated the request to fund one or two full time staff for two years to help WPTV broadcast legislative meetings as per the request from the Legislature.

Dr. Caldwell added, many aspects in the IT exception requests are statutorily required and laid out. The Commission is statutorily bound to make and must make these exception requests. For the IT and Wyoming Transfer, the Commission must make the requests. The structure is imposed by the state and creates an interesting dynamic requiring the Commission to return and talk about those items. The Commission should be thinking during the August meeting, what it hopes to have the Governor to consider. All should thoughtfully consider the exception requests and the tremendous effort around adult education and Wyoming Works. Thinking about what the situation looks like as heard from Ms. Taylor, the way the request is made, once the final budget is adopted in August and once that budget is submitted has to align with the WIN, priorities as discussed yesterday forms the basis to be able to make the request. There has been tremendous educational efforts around the exception request topic and how Commission staff approach the AG as per requests for the colleges for their specific programs and not through the standard budget process. This strategy can only be employed for specific programs like Wyoming Works. This creates stability for the colleges to plan for the long term, but was an important reminder on some of the budget restrictions and nuances. The process is the same with the WYIN faculty and is statutorily required including having 8 students per faculty member. The college's front-load the expense. Dr. Caldwell indicated that there is a draft budget ready now. The Commission will need to give a lot of thought behind what to include in the letter to state aid. Commissioner Goetz observed that in the whole budget process and setting priorities is that the colleges and the Commission are so tasked with ensuring priorities meet economic development and program diversity but are so hamstrung by the budgetary statutorily required process that it really places all in a unique predicament. She asked rhetorically, what input do the colleges have into our priority system? How has the system evolved and changed over the years? She asked further how does the Commission demonstrate in the budget

that the colleges and Commission are meeting the Survive, Drive, and Thrive priorities. And how does the Commission demonstrate that all are meeting the requirements that the Legislature has in fact identified needing to be accomplished?

Dr. Caldwell responded that staff met in April and obtained an informal opinion from the AG on how the Commission could even make a request. Statute requires the Commission to have a statewide college system strategic plan. The plan and the priorities within tell the story. A couple years ago the plan and priorities were strengthened. Governor Gordon did implement a requirement to provide an update called The State of the Agency. Within that, it gave all the opportunity to embed some of the good work and accomplishments. IT exception requests come from the colleges with direct input. The actual numbers were as of June 4th. Many of these specific included budget components are required by the state legislature. The standard budget sets the standard. All need to be thinking about how the ARP funds might work and ways to fill identified gaps as per the letter. The very next thing in the budget is always state aid then after that health insurance followed by adult education and then the libraries. Faculty and libraries are funded through the colleges block grant. The story can be told a little bit stronger through the state of the agency report. Then the strategic plan really tells the story in the past year on a statewide level. Then the colleges have the opportunity to tell the story further and on a local level.

Dr. Divine remarked that Dr. Caldwell provided a great summary.

Commissioner Boal asked for the priorities of the standard budget. He noted that if we took another 10% hit, there is there enough money to cover priorities number 6 through 10 to take such a hit? Mr. Buchholtz responded, "No". Commissioner Boal responded that we have already hit those programs. His concern is the need to match the priorities. Let's talk about what adult education means in this budget verses what is meant about adult education in this program. Adult Education is the vanguard program currently. He does not see advancing that program higher than its' current level or above those ahead of it. It means about bringing to this program. Mr. Buchholtz offered more context on what adult education means in the budget versus what has been heard about educating adults. Adult education in this program is \$4 million. It supplies funding to the institutions to bring our population ages 16 and above who have not completed high school. That is who this program educates. The program prepares adults to take the high school equivalency program and provides a pathway into postsecondary education or a pathway into a career or job. This program is a different set of adults. The adults regularly discussed ages 25 to 64 are part of the attainment goals and they are the largest population in the State of Wyoming which is the other population that we are chasing. These folks are partially covered in priority number two, and financial assistance for that population is included in ARP funds. They are also covered in Wyoming Works and similar tuition assistance programs. Commissioner Boal noted that the population and the programs should have another name. It was clarified by Mr. Buchholtz that adult education is the federal program name. Dr. Caldwell added that adult education is in both the college's mission

and the larger state mission. The colleges are the one delivering the long-term program. Additionally, the Department of Corrections and one BOCES program offers Adult Education. Should the funding be reduced in that area then that subset of the adult population is where the burden lies on the colleges in fulfilling that need. In essence it becomes another funding hit to the colleges. Then the colleges are in a difficult position to decide on other funding. She asked rhetorically if there is another way to take that 10% cut and the answer is no. It will then hit those programs and then state aid which will really impact the colleges. The colleges have already cut a lot of personnel and programming. This is why the ARP requests are so important. Consideration around what the ARP and other funding will be around will be included in the letter at the August meeting.

Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to approve the tentative budget, the list of exception requests, and staff recommended priorities. Commissioner Dooley moved, Commissioner Blikre Seconded. Motion carried Unanimously.

II. CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PRIORITIZATION AND APPROVAL, CAPITAL RENEWAL, AND AUTHORIZATION ([Executive Summary](#))

APPROVAL:

- **Escalation Factor of Prior Approved/Authorized Projects** [TAB I](#)
- **Approval of New Cost Estimate for 2020 Deferred Projects** [TAB J](#)
- **Reconciled Multi-Year Model Prioritization** [TAB K](#)

Dr. Caldwell reminded all of the Capital construction presentation at yesterday and the April workshop. She reintroduced Mr. Buchholtz.

Mr. Buchholtz noted that the escalation factor was the first thing for Commission consideration. He referenced an escalation factor document provided yesterday and again today. There is an automatic escalation of an overall cost of a project. This is provided for all projects based on an overall factor from the Economic Analysis division of the State Budget Department and the State Construction Department. The escalation document includes three different sections detailing 1, 2, and 3 year old projects. There are also newer projects which have yet to be completed. These projects have been approved, authorized, and previously prioritized by the Commission. Agency staff have raised the limit on those construction costs to also keep them from repeatedly coming back to the Commission for re review. Approval of escalated construction costs is statutorily required of the Commission. This is done as a preemptive step to adjust costs by an inflation factor to keep up with increased construction costs. In 2018-2019 the factor was at 5%. Today or 2021, the factor is set at 7.2%. There is consensus the latest figure is not accurate and not realistic in today's construction environment. There is a realization that the cost to build today has increased by about 20%. As a reminder, the Legislature does not kick in for increased costs. Any and all cost overruns are a burden on the college. The Commission's role is to keep track of the overall project cost. This

tracking is primarily done because of project scope changes in a project which subsequently impacts major maintenance. The factor provides a mechanism to keep up with inflation.

There are a couple of projects which are different for consideration. First there is the stand-alone nursing facility at Western Wyoming Community College. In legislation the name is now a Health Science addition to the existing facility. In the interim, Western Wyoming Community College funded their own level II study. The original level II was brought back and rescinded. Now WWCC, after funding their own Level II, is now back with a \$9.158 million project. Approval of the new construction costs will be a subsequent action item for the Commission. The new estimate will include funding the project at 50% of the new construction costs as per the second Level II study.

Mr. Buchholtz noted the four projects in the capital construction bill were recognized by the Legislature with a dollar amount attached. The Legislature had recognized and applied their own inflation factor of 20% or 15%. The projects are now higher than what the Legislature left them at in 2020. Mr. Buchholtz applied this year's inflation factor to that of the Legislature. It is 7.2% higher than what the Legislature left on the table. Therefore some of the figures are much higher than 7.2%. The Legislature took action on the LCCC RAC, The Northwest Student Center, Central Wyoming Jackson Outreach site, and the Northern Wyoming Community College District Construction Technology (Advanced Manufacturing and Applied Science facility). All of those have increased by some amount by legislative action and the standard escalation factor. Dr. Caldwell reminded all that including an inflation factor in project costs is a best practice across states and within state construction.

Commissioner Boal commented that he has listened to this presentation a couple times. He asked what the Commission was achieving by adding the inflation factor? The colleges know how much they will receive from the Legislature. They are also responsible for all cost overruns whether that be inflation, poor specifications, etc. He asked why is the Commission adopting an escalation factor that may or may not be based on reality seems to be a futile exercise. I have been patient and tried to see where all are achieving something with this process. Commissioner Boal made an initial motion for the approval of the escalation factor. Commissioner Freeze responded that staff are recommending the approval of all capital construction components in one motion. She also asked if staff would like an opportunity to respond to Commissioner Boal's voiced questions.

Mr. Buchholtz noted that the Commission is statutorily bound to approve as a course of action within a Commission meeting, whenever a construction project exceeds its originally authorized amount by 10%. Commissioner Boal noted his understanding of the statute, but followed with noting that the Commission was not authorizing any more money. Mr. Buchholtz confirmed that statement. Commissioner Boal added that the Commission is not approving an increased scope of the project so that it does not affect

major maintenance. He asked, "What is it that we are achieving?" Mr. Buchholtz responded that the Commission is achieving a one-time annual action. Absent this, and what was done prior to 2018. Commissioner Blikre suggested that Mr. Buchholtz continue as per new Commissioners. Mr. Buchholtz noted that by completing this process, it keeps the agenda clean. If not done as a onetime annual event, potentially at every meeting, the Commission would have an action item to approve a project exceeding 10%. There would be an agenda item for a project or projects at every single meeting throughout the year. All projects are at different phases of completion. Dr. Caldwell answered more directly on the why rather than the process noting that Ms. Taylor can attest to this as well. The process also ensures transparency in the cost. One of the things regularly heard, that individuals are surprised by the amount. The amounts had kept changing. The Legislature receives this total list. They know when the Commission took action and how these projects and their cost are changing over time. It is also an important education tool. And when costs change, it does not affect in the long run major maintenance. Dr. Caldwell continued, being very clear on the front end, provides an acknowledgement that these costs do change. At the end of the day, the colleges are having to bear out those cost changes in a forward approach rather than in a retro approach. Previously the Commission and agency staff were receiving numerous questions regarding the continual changes of cost on a project. Now the Commission is being proactive in the process, helping with communication and transparency. Ms. Taylor added that Dr. Caldwell was correct on the communication tool. Prior to the last two years, CAPCON was kind of a nightmare. Legislators had questions all over the place about the list, how it was prioritized, where did the numbers come from. This created a lot of questions and confusion. With the educational and communication efforts from and through the Commission and WACCT has really helped this entire process. Legislators now understand there is a 13-point, weighted review and evaluation process for the Commissions ranking and approval. This is now a well-balanced process which has come a long way. She noted the communication piece is the primary reason for the Commission to organize in this manner.

Commissioner Boal commented that this is not an accurate reflection of costs. This year we are using a number in which everyone thinks is unreasonably low. To Commissioner Boal it is one of those bureaucratic exercises that all need to attend to.

Dr. Caldwell noted that the next tab is the estimated amount for the Western Project or \$9.1 million which is posted on the prior document as well. Commissioner Freeze added that people have had a chance to look at the letter and asked if there was any need for additional information on why Western had done the second level II study on their own. Nobody asked further questions.

Mr. Buchholtz continued that the next tab is a multi-year prioritization of capital construction projects. Included are all the current projects previously approved by the Commission for funding. The Commission has two processes completed annually. The Commission approves or denies projects which are asking for general fund funding. The

Commission also authorizes projects which are not asking for general fund funding. Once the Commission authorizes projects, they are done for the most part. They are still in the escalation factor as they fall under approval. The funding part of things is tracked a little differently. The projects continue to evolve and go back to the Legislature. The presented list includes all approved projects which are not complete and not funded. To keep all informed and knowledgeable of how it is progressing in the system the year a project was approved and the overall priority of all projects. The approved list will ultimately go to the State Building Commission. It will prompt the State Building Commission to enter the projects into the capital construction budget. This is the same document that has gone forward before and will go forward again for legislative action. The LCCC RAC project has been pulled out of the priority, which has \$10 million committed as per the legislatively funded \$12 million capital construction appropriation. \$10 million of which will be used for the RAC project. The remaining \$2 million, with a \$2 million match, will go towards the funding of Level III documents with state construction for those three other projects. This will provide the colleges and the Commission with much firmer construction costs. If those Level III studies are complete by the time the legislature meets, they will be able to consider funding at a real cost. This list provides the Commission with an overall priority of the projects 1-5, an explanation of what was done with the \$12 million, and an explanation of the LCCC project.

Dr. Caldwell reminded that the State Construction Department is awaiting the Commission's prioritized list. They can move forward the Commission's packet of projects until they receive an email from Mr. Buchholtz notifying them that Commission action has taken place. Once received they will allow the packet to go forward.

Commissioner Freeze entertained a motion to approve the multiyear prioritization and funding request, Western Wyoming Community College's Nursing addition additional project costs, and the annual escalation factor. Commissioner Boal moved, Commissioner Blikre Seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

III. STRATEGIC PLAN MEASURES AND METRICS

[TAB L](#)

Dr. Caldwell introduced the topic of the recently adopted and new strategic plan. The upcoming metrics and measures are presented as an informational item. Dr. Caldwell confirmed the need to keep all data current which will provide a strong platform by which success stories will be clarified. This is a strong foundation of information which will be heavily relied on in communicating with the legislative branch and the LSO. Having the data is really critical.

She continued that Ms. Christy Klaassen got a crash course in tracking legislation and then really jumped into the metrics and measures. The following provides insight into her recent work.

Ms. Klaassen opened by noting that all have been looking at ways to measure plan progress. She will be presenting the matrix for the Wyoming Community College System Strategic Plan for the years 2021 through 2025.

She recalled that in October 2020 the Commission adopted the new plan for 2021-2025. The plan includes four major goals and a list of related objectives. To measure progress towards goals and objectives, a tool is needed to capture and organize information. So that tool will be a matrix. By organizing internal and external measures and quantitative and qualitative data, the Commission can develop a baseline of the current position and measure progress forward for each goal and objective. She presented a basic snapshot or template for one of the goals. Included are individual objectives followed by cells for all relevant data. She proceeded providing possible data examples, noting that presented bulleted examples are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative of a starting point for thinking about data related to each objective. The example gives all a feel of types of data to insert. She has started to add individual data bullets to each of the templates for the four goals. And she noted she would welcome suggestions from Commissioners regarding the types of information that should be included in the matrix for any of the goals and objectives. Next, she walked all through the various goals laid out in the strategic plan.

She noted the first goal is Educational Attainment. Continuing with the first objective under the goal noting the bulleted information describes types and examples of data related to this objective that may be collected and organized in the matrix. The data elements are not exhaustive but intended to be a starting point for this presentation. The data will give all an idea of what has been done and accomplished. For instance, comparing by year, the number of enrolled adults in each of the seven community college service areas with the total amount of adults between the ages of 25-64 who live in the counties of each service area who have yet to attain a post-secondary degree. This information would help establish a baseline of the actual percentage of adults in each college service area who are enrolled and contrast with those who are not. The information would provide an accurate way to measure progress towards reaching percentages identified under the objective and progress made in growing adult enrollment in areas of the state. The Commission would also have to consider the in-migration and out-migration of those areas as a factor in the analysis. Another measure may include types of adult specific scholarships available and their impact on adult enrollment. A third measure for the objective could include policy efforts and/or changes that are meant to create greater access and attainment for adults. Ultimately the matrix will include actual data that can be analyzed to create a baseline to measure progress over time.

Encouraging access and infrastructure development is another listed objective under the goal of Educational Attainment. Ideas for the type of data that could support this objective include surveying the colleges on how they are integrating hybrid classroom models in their course offerings. Or the number of students enrolling in BAS degrees, credential programs using distributed and/or workforce learning, and whether the

colleges are offering high demand programs. This information could be compared against other college gateways like dual and concurrent enrollment participation, financial aid use, and potentially new federal policies impacting access and infrastructure development mentioned earlier.

The next objective includes collaboration with state and federal agencies. Listed here is monitoring the common transcript/transfer process between UW and the community colleges. Other measures include the alignment of strategic plans of educational entities and state agencies, identifying barriers for students to attain degrees and certificates, and surveying the community colleges on their efforts to reach out to high schools and community partners.

The last objective for the goal is facilitating the empowerment of all students to discover their academic and/or workforce potential, achieve goals and continue growth through lifelong learning and enrichment. A proposed measure might be the quantifying of different services community colleges are offering to empower students to achieve their goals. The data could include a review of opportunities being developed to increase and integrate apprenticeships, internships, and externships across post-secondary credential programs. Progress could be measured by monitoring the types of career guidance training and programs being offered by the Department of Workforce Services.

The next goal on the strategic plan is Affordability. The first objective listed is to support sustainable funding options for community colleges that result in a net addition to allow for increases in costs due to external cost adjustments for both fixed and variable costs as per inflationary pressure, increased compliance/regulations, and modern operations and technology. One option for monitoring progress would be to monitor the Governor's budget and the Legislature for support for support of the recommendations by the Sustainable Funding Workgroup. Ms. Klaassen reminded that she has started to assemble ideas to think about. The next objective is to encourage structures supportive of administrative and institutional efficiency, academic quality, and safe learning environments. She noted possible measures include tracking community college cuts on instruction, academic support, and student's services as a result of tightened budgets and the related impact on students. Or quantifying different structures of support offered by community colleges, such as student live and wellness, campus culture changes, ease of services like the augmentation of tuition and record keeping.

The next objective under the goal is to engage colleges in prioritizing infrastructure, capital construction, facility resources, and technology supporting quality programs and positive student outcomes. The plan could track the number of project requests and the prioritization structure. Or the Governors decisions on the Education and Workforce's strike team ideas and requests for spending ARP funds as well as those funding requests from the community colleges. She suggested tracking related legislation at the federal level along with the America Jobs Plan for infrastructure and broadband expansion. Another measure to consider is quantifying facility resources, like student housing and

athletics, and technology to support programing that the colleges use to support quality programs and positive student outcomes.

For the objective of ensuring and sustaining financial aid programs for special populations by eliminating financial and access barriers. The Commission could compare the number of students by service area who use federal grants like Pell, WIOA and SLDS to pay for post-secondary education compared to their attainment rates. Or reports could be generated on the number and kinds of students who apply for various scholarships (WYIN, Veterans Tuition Benefit, Ellbogen Adult Metallica Scholars, and Hathaway). On the last objective under this goal, facilitating accurate reporting and analytics for increased efficiencies and enhanced student outcomes. Already a lot is underway. By creating the matrix efficiencies can be better analyzed by objectives and do the work to evaluate student outcomes.

The next Goal within the Strategic Plan is Program Alignment. The first objective is to identify degree, certificate, apprenticeship, and training program gaps at the state regional, and local level to expand offerings meeting industry, workforce and economic needs. A couple of ideas presented include evaluate the current and future industry, workforce and economic needs to see if the colleges are offering programs and certificates to meet those needs. The colleges could also be surveyed to track the demand for new programs. Ms. Klaassen also noted she has listed a number of sources where current information is available. The next objective is to utilize program review and approval process to identify unnecessary duplication while ensuring local access to industry-aligned programs. Listed possible measures include recording Academic Affairs Council, Executive Council, and WCCC's final decisions on program proposals. The Data Management and Reporting System could be explored to ensure unnecessary program duplication is not occurring. The colleges could be surveyed to collect information on local access to industry-aligned programs.

The next objective here is to promote initiatives encouraged course transferability, articulation agreements, student retention as well as facilitate pathways to student degree or credential completion. Possible tools for measuring this objective include looking at the success of the launch of Graduate Wyoming articulation focusing on post-secondary educational attainment. Or, evaluating the use of common course numbering and transcripts transfer. The Commission could quantify student retention, degree and certificate completion, and persistence to graduation. The last objective under this goal is to expand access to remote learning for all programs including noncredit and community enrichment. A few potential evaluation criteria include the types of courses available for remote learning compared by year in the service areas and measuring enrollment in remote learning courses The last goal listed in the strategic plan is economic development. The first objective is to continually evaluate program offerings and encourage those leading to diversification. Ms. Klassen had listed three bullets on her slide pertaining to possible criteria to evaluate this objective. The listed criteria include comparing final vote on program proposals, comparing Wyoming Works programs and

the number of students receiving grants. The third included monitoring progress on policy goals set by the Educational Attainment Executive Council and other groups. Another objective included support the colleges in leveraging economic development, partnerships, and consortia. Included for evaluating is a report on statewide economic and development partnership groups. The last objective is the partnership with other entities to facilitate initiatives and strategies to attract, develop and retain a technically oriented workforce. She suggested again monitoring goals set by the Educational Attainment Council and other similar groups.

She closed with an overview of the template and a request for suggestions and other evaluation tools. She added that the Commission is just getting started on this project. The primary goal was to have a tool that could measure results and outcomes. Therefore, the creation of the matrix. It is a tool to capture and organize information to analyze trends, create a baseline, and measure progress for each goal. With the information, it is easier to better inform policy leaders and decision makers to tell the story.

Commissioner Freeze noted her appreciation for the very thorough introduction.

IV. NEW PROGRAM APPROVAL REQUESTS (ACTION ITEM): [\(Executive Summary\)](#)

Dr. Caldwell noted the new presented programs were recently reviewed by the Executive Council on June 4, 2021. Dr. Moritz noted a responsibility of the Commission was to review and approve new programs presented by the colleges. Prior to submission to the Commission, each program is reviewed by the Academic Affairs Committee, the Program Review Committee, and then the Executive Council before being presented to the Commission. Today one new program is being submitted for approval. Western Wyoming Community College is requesting consideration of a program in Teacher Technical Education. Dr. Moritz introduced Dr. Dale to detail the first program.

- **Western Wyoming Community College**

[TAB M](#)

Dr. Dale noted that this was an exciting time to present this new program while there are meeting guests representing career and technical education. She commented that the presented program has been in the works since 2019 when Western's staff and faculty recognized the need to train teachers in career and technical education instruction, in specifically the trades. Originally the program was a vision from Representative John Freeman. He remains passionate about the program and would be excited to come before the Commission.

The degree is designed to transfer to the University of Wyoming. The agreement and partnership with UW has been in the works as well. Western's faculty have been working with the Professional Teaching Standards Board to confirm the

program curriculum and requirements ensuring that teachers can teach K-12 in their local area. The degree will serve the high demand for teachers in rural areas of the state. The degree, by design, is more generalist, providing teachers the option of teach a variety of subjects. Students can stay in the service areas and also take UW classes online. The program meetings many strategic plan criteria, goals, and objectives.

Commissioner Freeze asked if the program will draw many of those who already have an education degree and might return for additional certification. Dr. Dale confirmed that was her and the College's hope. Dr. Dale also added the program is oriented to the adult population providing another pathway or option.

Commissioner Wyatt asked about this program being going through the program approval. Dr. Dale deferred to Dr. Moritz. She added that this is not a Bachelor of Applied Science degree at Western. The Community Colleges have been partnering with UW to make this an option. Also, this is an option that is available online, providing access for students. If a student desires to go into this field, such as adults, they may have to move to Laramie. There have been conversations going on with UW for a while about career and technical education. Dr. Moritz added that there had been a previous program for CTE at UW that required four years, in residence at UW Casper. Enrollment and graduation rate numbers were very low. It did not address the growing need for CTE teachers. Over the past couple of years, there has been a taskforce involving a lot of stakeholders across the table that brought UW and the college programs. Western's new AAS in teaching in general is really the first instance of a community college creating something very specifically for transfer into this program. Most importantly at the CTE generalist level. Many rural schools cannot afford to hire one CTE teacher to teach just welding. Teachers need to have endorsements from multiple areas, of which the program offers.

Commissioner Freeze, seeing there were not additional questions entertained a motion to approve the Career and Technical Education Associates of Applied Science at Western Wyoming College. Commissioner Newman moved, Commissioner Boal seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

G. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

[TAB N](#)

Dr. Caldwell noted she would be brief regarding her report as a written version is provided. Commissioners have been hearing all of the activities underway over the past two past days. She started by recognizing commencement as a wonderful celebration. She gave kudos to the colleges and the trustees. Attending commencement ceremonies at the colleges was really wonderful. The ceremonies put the names, faces and work done behind the scenes at the Commission.

She continued with highlighting the reliance of the state on the community colleges. Specifically, when it comes to core router site hubs around the state. The colleges are the router hubs for the Wyoming Unified Network (WUN) within their regions when the state has internet responsibility and to serve the region. She mentioned the situation earlier with the revised ARP request. Dr. Caldwell noted that Ms. Edeburn worked very closely with the CIO's and ETS related to something they have been telling all would be a problem and it evolved to be a worse problem. Highlighted, in a moment, how reliant all are on the colleges and specifically Casper College regarding Ms. Edeburn will be meeting as Commission CTO with all college CIO's and ETS directly to do a white board session on how to move forward on both location and switch redundancy.

Dr. Divine shared with the Commission his recent on the ground experience. On the Friday of the Memorial Day weekend, a pipe burst in a 60+ year old Casper College building having corroded from the inside out. The leaking pipe probably ran for 2 to 3 hours filling the building with water. At 2 am a water sensor went off in the ceiling, located one floor below. Then the fire department showed up and provided an alert. There was no fire, but all the water caused the damage. Next the Halon system was sorted and triggered. These events knocked out a core router.

He noted that there is Casper College the "College" and then Casper College the "Site". He continued by sharing the importance of redundancy. Redundancy needs to be classified into three buckets: electronic (data and programs), hardware, and the third access. Some years ago, Casper College and LCCC IT staff got together and each serve as the other's back up site. All data is exchanged so if something happens, like it did, Casper College has a data backup.

The second kind of redundancy is hardware. Casper could get the program back on campus because of the number of machines. Casper College had already been working on redundancy with data rooms. Casper is fortunate in this regard. Some colleges currently are not as they lack resources.

The tough one is internet or access redundancy. The state fiber or internet comes into one Casper College building and then goes out to the rest of Casper College's buildings and over 143 state sites. All of these sites were down. Not only was the campus down but the rest of the region was down too. If the registration goes down, theoretically the campus could get back up because of the different sites within the campus and the internet could simply be rerouted. But, because the only redundancy the State has is in switches. They do not have core redundant sites. Casper College the site was mostly down for about 7 days. Casper College because of their prior redundancy was only able to bring in 250 megs from Century Link versus 2 gigabytes. The really disappointing part, was the state ETS has two main contractors. Century Link, who was fantastic. And the other contractor who provided the main switch. The other contractor sent replacement parts such that they were received 7 days after the flood. Their version of urgent is not President Divine's. There's data redundancy of which most colleges have. Some colleges have redundant systems on their campus. Some or most of the colleges are reliant to provide a

redundant or alternate path. Century Link was able to temporarily route most of the rest of the state resources into different areas, providing a temporary fix.

To give an idea of just how devastating this was, the Fire Department arrived and internet was shut down to the entire campus. Later, the largest battery backup system for the server room, a lithium unit, 55 hours later it spontaneously combusted. It was not a fire event because it didn't harm the building. The fire slagged the steel all the way around the battery case. The IT insurance adjuster has indicated that everything in the room is a total loss, north of \$1 million to replace all the equipment. Dr. Divine reminded all that there are multiple types of redundancy. He suggested that there is no redundancy in the case of the state and core router locations. Tragically, had this been an actual fire and it took out the room, Casper College would still be down today as it would have taken out actual fiber.

Dr. Caldwell concluded her report.

H. OTHER BUSINESS:

- Good News from the Colleges

[TAB O](#)

Commissioner Freeze encouraged all to review the good news items from the institutions. Also provided is a copy of the SLEDS Federal Audit.

Dr. Caldwell pointed the direction towards Ms. Edeburn, Commission Chief Technology Officer for a quick update.

- SLEDS Federal Audit

[TAB P](#)

Ms. Edeburn pulled up part of the agenda pertaining to the SLEDS event. She noted that between annually and every 18 months an audit is completed to confirm that continue to receive Federal grant money. The audit agenda was created by the SLEDS committee and covers only those items that the state had said they would do. The agenda was extensive. There were quite a few people involved including multiple staff from the colleges. She is grateful for all their assistance. WYCCC's preliminary results review were noted by the Feds to provide a very deliberate and thoughtful approach. Additionally, there is excellent governance approach and appropriate questions were asked at the appropriate time. Ms. Edeburn noted that the Feds suggested that what has been created, will benefit many states who have been doing this kind of work for years. The Feds gave additional kudos for involving multiple agencies and all interested entities up front. Executive and leadership support is phenomenal. They noted the virtual site visit was one of the easiest done because of the thoughtful and the way the committee went about bringing them and having meetings with all the participating entities. Overall it was a really good event and kudos to all on the team for doing such a great job.

Commissioner Freeze congratulated all who had worked on the project. She noted that it had been a difficult effort and had been going on for a number of years.

F. TOUR OF EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE FACILITIES

Dr. Travers noted that there would be tours and box lunches available when the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT-

Meeting adjourned.



Dr. Jackie Freeze
Chairman

10-7-2021

Date



Dr. Sandy Caldwell
Executive Director

10/7/21

Date