



ACCREDITATION EVIDENCE

Title: Board of Trustees Special Meeting –II. Recommended Action; A. New Business 1. Temporary Suspension, Board Policy 7610A Page 2. IV. Administration Information and Updates; A. Budget Reduction Recommendations Page 4.

Evidence Type: Corroborating

Date: 21 January 2021

WAN: 22-0159

Classification: Minutes

PII: Yes

Redacted: No





Board of Trustees

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2021

Trustees Present:

Regina Clark, President
Dr. Veronica Donaldson, Vice President
Kenneth Lorimer, Treasurer
George Eckman
Carla Hester-Croff
Jim Jessen

Trustees Absent:

Dr. Greg Erramouspe, Secretary

Also Present:

Dr. Kim Dale, College President
Dr. Cliff Wittstruck, VP for Student Learning
Burt Reynolds, VP for Administrative Services
Joy Adams, Assoc. VP of Human Resources
Dr. Dustin Conover, Dean of Students
Angela Thatcher Traci Lacock
Stacie Lynch-Newberg Laurie James
Kasey Damori Caleb Smith
Katie Pastor Pete Candelaria
Joe Uriarte Kami Danaei
Teresa Shafe Jeremy Weber
Kurtis Wilkinson Katrina Marcos
David Martin Karen Lackey
Luke Audette Dorothy Harton
Heather Pristash Amy Galley
Rob Jarosh Robert Lackey
Jessica Dean Beth Gard
Zandra Ritter Chuck Newberg
Audrey Harton Nicole Castillon
Lusi Stephens Kendra Meeker
Aaron Jensen Danette Winn
Linda Day Jason Barnett
Sarah Pauley Ann Rudoff
Jennifer Griffin Molly McClure
DeeAnna Archuleta Jake Mannikko
Dana Pertermann Allyson Cross
Dave Arambel Russ Bates
Maik Pertermann Michelle Zuppa
Randy Goff Kristy Kauppi
Megan Gabol Alex Nelson
Rick Kitchen Robert Byers
Drew Beardall Jennifer Stone
Shane Heavin Jennifer Baguma
Christine Garbett John Aimone
Kim Graham Rosa Reyna-Pugh
Kit Kofoed Kandy Frink

SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

I. AGENDA

A. Call to Order

The special meeting of the Western Wyoming Community College District Board of Trustees was called to order at 6:05 p.m., Thursday, January 21, 2021, via Zoom video conferencing, President Regina Clark presiding.

B. Approval of Agenda

1. Trustee Eckman made a motion to approve the special meeting agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Lorimer. President Clark noted that action items may not be added to a special meeting agenda. The motion was approved by vote.

President Clark acknowledged the numerous employees, media and community members that joined the video meeting. President Clark said the Board and Administration realize these proposed budget reductions are concerning to the public as well as employees. President Clark commended Dr. Dale and the President's Cabinet, saying that they have been as transparent as possible in all of their actions thus far, including the development of the rubrics to collect data to inform the recommendations. President Clark went on to say that the Board knew that the cuts to state appropriations would require personnel reductions, acknowledging that eliminating positions is never easy. President Clark said that the Board held a special meeting in September to listen to concerns regarding the cuts, and those concerns were taken into consideration. President Clark said that Dr. Dale and her team developed a plan to avoid the mid-year layoffs but the State had already projected significant budget shortfalls before COVID-19 became an additional drain on these finite resources. President Clark said the sharp decline in the revenue from the extraction industries had already created the need for steep cuts to funding for all state agencies, which will continue as the State continues to project additional cuts for the next biennium. President Clark said Western is not alone in its budget crisis, noting that all the Wyoming community colleges are suffering and the addition of COVID-19 has created a national funding crisis in higher education on the national level. President Clark said the Board and the Administration realize that these decisions affect human beings and are not just numbers on a piece of paper. President Clark said that the Board is here tonight to listen and they appreciate everyone's participation. President Clark asked that everyone be respectful.

II. RECOMMENDED ACTION

A. New Business

1. Temporary Suspension, Board Policy 7610A

The Board of Trustees and the Administration recognize the impact to employees resulting from the proposed budget reduction plan. Per the provisions of Board Policy 7610A, Board - Staff Communications, employees are required to follow the chain of command in all job-related communications. The Board will suspend this policy to allow employees to comment at the January 21, 2021 special meeting.

Recommendation:

To temporarily suspend Board Policy 7610A for the January 21, 2021 special meeting.

Dr. Dale explained that the Board is being asked to temporarily suspend Board Policy 7610A to allow employees to comment during the public comment portion of tonight's meeting. Vice President Donaldson made a motion to temporarily

suspend Board Policy 7610A for the January 21, 2021 special meeting. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Lorimer. Trustee Eckman cautioned employees to be mindful of the appeal process, noting that if individual personnel issues are presented during the comment period, it could have a negative effect on the Board's ability to hear any potential appeal that the individual may wish to pursue. The motion was approved by vote.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Visiting Delegations

Ms. Kit Kofoed read a prepared statement on behalf of the Wyoming Education Association. The statement asked that information be provided on decision-making and plans for moving forward, including: rubric data, enrollment data, graduation data, and plans for student completion. The prepared statement was signed by Angela Thatcher, local WEA chapter President; Kit Kofoed, local WEA chapter Vice President; Heather Pristash, local WEA chapter Secretary and Dana Pertermann, local WEA chapter Treasurer.

Ms. Jennifer Stone made comments in support of the workforce development department, saying that cuts in this area will cause our workforce training customers to turn to our competitors to meet their needs. Ms. Stone said the workforce development department had lost staff many years ago that were never replaced during boom cycles, saying that employees stepped up to handle the extra work in boom cycles and have taken on additional duties without complaint during bust cycles. Ms. Stone said that the Board must decide at which point a department has suffered so many cuts that it becomes unable to function.

Mr. Ryan Desmond, SGA President, said that while he knows that cuts are necessary, he encourages the Board to think of the impact to the students. Mr. Desmond said he has concerns about the cuts being recommended and the negative impact to students. Mr. Desmond went on to say that the quality of the education provided will suffer with these cuts. Mr. Desmond also said it appears that some programs and departments saw significant cuts while others were left intact. Mr. Desmond encouraged the Board to make cuts evenly throughout all programs and areas.

Ms. Teresa Shafe said that while names were not included in the budget reduction memo provided, she was able to determine the affected individuals from the position titles. Ms. Shafe said she believes that local members of the Wyoming Education Association seem to comprise a significant number of the occupied positions being recommended for elimination and/or discontinuation.

Mr. Luke Audette said that math is important to student success and asked that the Board consider the tenants of Western's Guiding Principles in relation to enrollment.

Mr. Shane Heavin said that math and science are needed to provide a well-rounded education and asked that the Board not let COVID-19 influence their decisions. Mr. Heavin said that online instruction is difficult for some learners and students need to have the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with their instructors. Mr. Heavin asked the Board to keep as many local instructors as possible.

Ms. Jennifer Baguma said that she is concerned about being able to complete her degree program, noting that she needs a sociology course to meet her degree requirements. Ms. Baguma asked that the Board not eliminate positions in academic areas that only have one local instructor. Ms. Baguma also spoke in favor of the math department, saying that it is hard for students to ask for help from adjunct instructors.

Mr. Rick Kitchen spoke in support of the math department, saying that Wyoming students need strong math instructors and the proposed reduction could negatively impact students wanting to transfer to another institution.

Dr. Christine Garbett said Western has always offered cultural events to the community and she believes that cuts to the theatre program would result in the loss of musicals and theatre productions.

Mr. John Aimone voiced his support for the math department and Luke Audette. Mr. Aimone said that Western is a community college and Mr. Audette is a wonderful addition to the community. Mr. Aimone also said that math instructors were the most important instructors during his education, saying that it is vital to have local instructors.

Ms. Laurie James spoke in favor of the math department, saying that it is a core subject for all degrees. Ms. James said it would be detrimental to students. Ms. James also said we need local math professors.

Ms. Heather Pristash asked the Board to consider how the budget reductions are being spread out and that they help faculty to understand how specific decisions were made. Ms. Pristash asked that those decisions be transparent and fair.

Mr. Ryan Desmond read an email from Ms. Emelia Thomas. Ms. Thomas expressed concern about being able to complete her degree requirements with the cuts to faculty positions.

Ms. Kim Graham expressed her support for the math department. Ms. Graham said she struggled with math and it would have been extremely difficult to successfully complete an online math class. Ms. Graham said we need local instructors and asked the Board to look elsewhere for reductions.

Ms. Rosa Reyna-Pugh asked if other factors were taken into consideration.

B. Questions/Media/Public

Mr. Caleb Smith, Rocket Miner, said that he is pleased with the attendance at tonight's meeting with 109 attendees. Mr. Smith said many good questions were asked and that he would like to receive a copy of the list from WEA.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION AND UPDATES

A. Budget Reduction Recommendations

Dr. Dale presented a brief timeline of the cuts to state aid and local appropriations, saying that the Board chose to avoid mid-year layoffs. Dr. Dale read through the budget reduction recommendations from Administration. Dr. Dale asked Vice President Reynolds to discuss the budget details.

Vice President Reynolds presented a spreadsheet showing the general fund revenue and expenses, noting that if the Board chooses to reject the recommendations from Administration, Western will have a \$2.4 million deficit and will have to use \$2.2 million from reserves to balance the budget. Vice President Reynolds said the Governor has indicated an additional 2.5% reduction in state aid will be forthcoming which would be added to the 10% cut already announced for the biennium. Vice President Reynolds said the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) increased tuition but because Western is forecasting a 3% decline in enrollment, the increase would only provide an estimated \$200,000 in additional revenue. Vice President Reynolds said Administration is estimating a small amount of income from a state match program on donations, noting that the donations must be received by December 31, 2021. Vice President Reynolds also said that the decrease in local appropriations may not be as large as originally thought, although that is only his personal opinion and is not supported by any data or revenue trends. Vice President Reynolds provided figures on the reductions to employee benefits, noting that the Board has already approved a \$300 per year reduction in the employee stipend. Vice President Reynolds said Administration is recommending an additional reduction of \$300 per year for a total reduction of \$600, which would leave an annual amount of \$2,400. Vice President Reynolds said this was a deliberate attempt to ensure that the stipend would still cover the premiums for the employee's health insurance. Vice President Reynolds also said the amount the employee contributes to their own retirement is being increased. Vice President Reynolds said that Western has historically chosen to cover both the employer and the employee portion of retirement contributions, although the Board has already approved a recommendation to increase the employee contribution to 2.0%. Vice President Reynolds said Administration is recommending an additional increase to the employee contribution of 1.5% for a total of 3.5% which is still well below the other Wyoming community colleges. Vice President Reynolds also said Administration is recommending that the Vice President for Student Services position remain vacant for the 2021-22 fiscal year for a savings of \$170,000 in salary and benefits. Associate Vice President Reynolds said the recommendations also include a reduction in travel that will provide an estimated savings of \$250,000.

Dr. Dale thanked Vice President Reynolds for his presentation. Dr. Dale said these are hard decisions to make. Dr. Dale also said that it is important to continue the advocacy efforts with Joint Appropriations Committee and the legislature to keep Western in their minds as they deal with the significant deficit at the state level. Dr. Dale went on to say that Western has incredible talent and Administration realizes the impacts that these recommendations will have. Dr. Dale said Administration is confident in the recommendations.

Trustee Eckman said that some legislators want to cut state aid to 33% and he believes that is unrealistic. Trustee Eckman also said that it would jeopardize our ability to compete if the state appropriation was decreased to 33%. Trustee Eckman also noted that the recommendations include the elimination of salary adjustments that may be appropriate once the current salary study is completed. Trustee Eckman said that is not a permanent elimination of those increases but rather a temporary suspension. Trustee Eckman noted the inclusion of a statement regarding Board approval of the strategic plan and asked when the Board will be asked for their input on the plan.

Trustee Hester-Croff said she is reviewing the documentation and the Board will take everyone's comments into consideration.

President Clark thanked everyone for their comments, saying that the Board will take those comments into consideration. President Clark thanked everyone for attending.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to act on, President Clark adjourned the special meeting at 7:26 p.m.

NOTE: Additional information (tapes and/or addenda) from this meeting is available in the Board Office.

Above recorded by:

Kandy Frink

WWCC Board President

WWCC Board Secretary