SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

I. AGENDA
A. Call to Order
The special meeting of the Western Wyoming Community College Board of Trustees was called to order at 5:28 p.m., Wednesday, September 26, 2012, in Board Conference Room 3071, Rock Springs campus, President Shannon Honaker presiding.

B. Approval of Agenda
1. Trustee Eckman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Treasurer Reese and approved by vote.

II. RECOMMENDED ACTION
A. New Business
1. Consideration and Approval of a Letter to all Current Nursing Students
President Honaker read a statement explaining the need for the letter. President Honaker said “Thank you Board members for attending this evening’s special meeting. Pursuant to the Wyoming Public Meetings Act, we provided written notice of this special meeting to each of you and to the Rocket Miner on Saturday, September 22. That notice limits this evening’s business to considering and approving a letter to currently enrolled nursing students. The public meetings act prohibits us from considering any other business at this special meeting, so I do expect our meeting will be brief. Let me introduce the reason for the letter which I’ll distribute to each of you in a minute. Last Friday, as your Board Chair, I was made aware of concerns that Western’s nursing faculty have for our currently enrolled nursing students. Due to conflicting information and various rumors that have been circulating, the nursing faculty is concerned that the students are unclear about the status of Western’s nursing..."
program, and in turn, their own status within the program. According to the faculty, this has become a burden and a distraction for them. As you all know, our nursing program is extremely rigorous and competitive and we want our students to focus on their studies without unnecessary distractions. We’re here this evening to hopefully clarify the issues and remove those distractions. We’re here to serve the best interests of the students and also to demonstrate that our nursing faculty continues to have this Board’s full faith and confidence.

The loss of Western’s voluntary accreditation with the NLNAC has been of grave concern to this Board. As you know, the Board has directed the administration to prioritize this matter and to take all necessary actions to get the accreditation reinstated in the most timely manner possible. But, in the meantime, it is important that everyone keep things in perspective. The Board recognizes the nursing program’s excellent curriculum and high quality instruction notably; the widely recognized problem based learning approach that our nursing faculty uses. The loss of the NLNAC accreditation, concerning as it may be, does not change the fact that Western has an excellent nursing program and that Western’s nursing program falls within the HLC’s accreditation of Western as a whole. This is the subject of the letter which I now plan on passing out to each of you.”

President Honaker then stated that only Board members would receive a copy of the letter at this time to allow for revisions to be completed before the letter is distributed to anyone else. President Honaker stated that the letter was a group effort and all involved are confident that the letter is factually correct. After allowing the Board members a few moments to review the letter, President Honaker read the letter aloud: “Dear WWCC Nursing Students, In view of some conflicting information that has circulated in recent weeks, the WWCC Board of Trustees would like to clarify to all current nursing students that WWCC is an accredited school of nursing. As stated by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), “institutional accreditation is accreditation of all programs, sites and methods of delivery”. Be assured that WWCC is an accredited institution in good standing with the HLC. Specifically, WWCC is an academic quality improvement program institution. This information can be found at [the] http://www.hlcommission.org/ website. Further, pursuant to Wyoming statutes and the Wyoming State Board of Nursing Administrative rules and regulations, WWCC is an approved nursing school for the state of Wyoming. As such, students who graduate from the nursing program are eligible to take the NCLEX exam and upon successful completion will be eligible to apply for a Wyoming RN license. It is also important to note, according to the Wyoming State Board of Nursing, that Wyoming licensed RN’s should have no issues with endorsing to another state. In addition to institutional accreditation and Wyoming State Board of Nursing approval, WWCC has sought to have additional nursing program accreditation through National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). This secondary accreditation is not required for WWCC to offer a nursing program; in fact, 1/3 of community colleges nationwide are not accredited through the NLNAC. Nonetheless, WWCC holds itself to a very high standard and values the additional level of accreditation. Accordingly, the college will begin the process of re-accreditation with the NLNAC which will hopefully occur in 2014. In the meantime, WWCC will continue to offer a nursing program as authorized
through HLC accreditation and Wyoming State Board of Nursing approval, which provides an outstanding curriculum that has received recognition from the state and from NLNAC. Facts to note: WWCC is accredited through the HLC, meaning that WWCC is an accredited school of nursing; Graduates of WWCC’s nursing program are eligible to take the NCLEX and upon successful completion are eligible to apply for a Wyoming RN license; WWCC’s NCLEX pass rate within six months [of completion of the program] was 100% in 2011 and 94% in 2010; WWCC’s program is recognized as an outstanding program by NLNAC [as] “an innovative, creative and problem based curriculum”, “the program options are offered at outreach sites and services are provided to meet multiple needs of the distance student”, “external sources of funding that allow increased capacity to meet student needs in outreach areas”. Sincerely, Board Chair.

President Honaker stated that the letter was in direct response to a need and that the response has been as quick as possible. President Honaker said that she hoped a motion to accept the letter would be forthcoming and that the letter would be sent to nursing students tomorrow. Trustee Plant made a motion to approve the letter as presented saying that it is an excellent letter that covers all his concerns. Trustee Eckman seconded the motion. Treasurer Reese asked if there were anything in the letter that changes anything in the statement from President Honaker at the last meeting. President Honaker said that the only difference would be that she had mistakenly stated in the previous statement that the program was accredited by the Wyoming State Board of Nursing. President Honaker said that the Wyoming State Board approves nursing programs but does not accredit them. Secretary Chadey asked if NCLEX should be spelled out. Dr. Leach stated that the term is commonly known among the nursing community. Secretary Chadey stated that in the interest of consistency, the term should be spelled out as the others are. Vice President Roth said that he would have preferred a personal approach but thinks the letter is good. Trustee Boettcher stated that the letter achieves its goal, is well written, clear and formal and believes it should be approved as presented. Trustee Boettcher asked for clarification on the statement ‘endorsing to another state’. Associate Vice President Caldwell explained that it is recognition of being licensed in one state when applying for licensure in another. President Honaker said that the letters sent out will be personally addressed to each individual nursing student. President Honaker asked if a motion to amend the letter would be forthcoming. A motion to amend was not made by any Trustee. Trustee Boettcher called for the question. The motion to approve the letter as presented was approved by vote.

III. ADJOURNMENT
President Honaker adjourned the special meeting at 5:55 p.m.
NOTE: Additional information (tapes and/or addenda) from this meeting is available in the Board Office.

Above recorded by:

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Kandy Frink

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WWCC Board President

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WWCC Board Secretary