Happy Holidays,

As we come to the close of this semester and the start of a well-earned winter break I would like to highlight a few items from the Fall term;

- In August we started the semester with Welcome Week. This event included numerous activities designed to get students acquainted with Western and adjust to college.
- WWCC welcomed many new faculty and staff including; a new Vice President of Student Learning, Dance Instructor, Spanish Instructor and Director of Admissions.
- Our Fall athletic teams; volleyball and men’s and women’s soccer, were true student/athletes, with achievement on the field and in the classroom.

I would also like point out some important items for Spring semester;

- Construction will begin on our new Student Success Center: Mustang Central.
- Our winter athletic teams; wrestling and men’s and women’s basketball have started their seasons and they will continue competition through March. Please show your support for WWCC and attend our home games.
- Commencement will take place May 15, 2015.

We are grateful that your students have chosen Western Wyoming Community College for their education. Thank you from the faculty and staff of WWCC.

Mark Rembacz
Director of Student Engagement & Completion

MUSTANG CENTRAL - THE NEW STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

Demolition and construction will begin later this month on the new Student Success Center, named Mustang Central. The new center will be built on the Rock Springs campus in a space that encompasses the current information desk and the old dance studio. The Student Success Center might be described as a “one stop shop” for all enrollment services. When construction is complete in July of 2015 the new space will bring together the services of admissions, financial aid, housing and registration and records, including student billing.

The mission of Mustang Central is to create an environment where student success is a priority by providing excellent service and support through the integration of enrollment service functions in a welcoming and inviting central location. Mustang Central will allow Western to continue our emphasis of connecting with students as they navigate the process of entry to the College, including the minimization of run around from office to office. Other goals of the Center are to:

- Provide an attractive, comfortable and accessible space.
- Serve students so that questions and needs are addressed in a single visit by a single staff member.
- Provide seamless and transparent service to students.
- Cross train staff allowing for enhanced services.

The new space will be open and bright with glass walls and windows as a main feature. It will have a clearly designed flow to aid in the enrollment process and will include a meeting space and a computer lab for accessing Western’s online services and the FAFSA website.
THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY

Britta Joy Peterson, Dance Instructor

Dance Instructor Britta Joy Peterson, MFA, who joined Western’s Performing Arts Department in August, believes that learning the art of dance teaches students far more than simply how to perform on stage.

“It’s not a vocational skill, which I think some people think that it is,” Peterson said. “The students who work with me will be incredible communicators and really articulate writers. They will be creative thinkers and incredible problem-solvers. All of that comes from dealing with issues in both an artistic and an analytical sense.”

“I think that’s what the workforce needs; that’s what employers are looking for - versatile thinkers. And artistic practices are the best way to learn how to do that,” she added.

Peterson, 28, earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota and her Master of Fine Arts from Arizona State University. She comes to Rock Springs from Seattle, where she had worked as a Teaching Artist and Operations Manager for Velocity Dance Center, and where she has a show, an original duet entitled “Recurring Reverie,” debuting this month.

So how did a metropolitan dance artist from Minneapolis by way of Tempe and Seattle find her way to Rock Springs?

“What drew me here was the relationship between the dance program and the musical theater program, because I live in both worlds,” she said. “I grew up in the theater. I was a vocalist. I played violin for 10 years. I performed with the Children’s Theatre in Minnesota. I choreographed my first play - it was ‘Guys & Dolls’ - when I was in ninth grade. I choreographed 120 middle-schoolers in that show. I do approach theatrical work and concert dance differently, because the nature of the work demands that. But they both feed each other.”

In her first semester, Peterson found herself working with Assistant Professor of Musical Theater Chris Will and Assistant Professor of Music Josh Wentz on the production of “Singin’ in the Rain.” She worked with a large cast of dancers – some of whom had not danced on stage before – in nine-hour rehearsal sessions, and arranged much of the show’s choreography.

She praised the working relationship with her faculty colleagues. “My colleagues are incredible,” she said. “I feel like I hit the jackpot, because my students are so hungry and they’re inspired, and they’re incredibly hard workers, and they’re diverse. They come from all these different places, and I get to spend my time with colleagues who love what they do and want to be pushed.”

Josh Wentz, Assistant Professor of Music

Josh Wentz, Ph.D., probably could not have selected a more ambitious piece than Handel’s Messiah for his first concert as Western’s new Assistant Professor of Music.

Actually, the work was suggested to him by the department during the interview process, and, being very familiar with it, Wentz accepted the challenge of uniting the Green River and Rock Springs Chorales, the BOCES Orchestra, and musicians from around the state to present one of classical music’s most popular holiday presentations.

“I said I wouldn’t do the whole thing. I would do Part One, if we were to do it,” Wentz said. “The biggest thing was getting the choir directors on board with it in both communities, and getting the orchestra committed to playing it. Everybody seemed pretty excited about it.”

Wentz, 31, comes to Western from the University of South Carolina, where he earned his Ph.D. in Voice Performance last spring, and where he also taught part-time for three years. The Ohio native grew up on a horse farm in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, so Rock Springs offered a certain familiarity, he said.

“It’s very similar to Rock Springs in a lot of ways,” Wentz explained. “I feel more at home here even though this is the furthest I’ve ever lived from home. This is my first trip out West. I’m liking it.” Wentz expressed amazement at the level of resources allocated to performing arts at Western and said that factored heavily into his decision to teach here.

“When I walked into the band room and saw the percussion equipment, I thought ‘This is a community college?’ I couldn’t believe that we have the resources in place that some of the universities don’t have,” he said.

“And I really liked Chris. I could foresee having a really good working relationship with him,” he continued. “(The Performing Arts faculty) all really jelled. We’re all on the same path and we have the same goals for the department.”

Wentz’s path into music was a detour. He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Voice from Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, but music was supposed to be his minor, while international business was his major and the program that was meant to lead him to law school.

He wound up earning degrees in both but remained committed to law until an audition at the University of Akron earned him a full assistantship to pursue his graduate degree in music, instead. Though Wentz eventually would complete his master’s degree in voice performance at South Carolina’s Winthrop University, that audition helped to secure his future as a music educator. Along the way, Wentz also earned a master’s degree in college student affairs from NovaSoutheastern University.

Now, having completed his doctorate in May 2014, Wentz is firmly ensconced at Western, preparing to stage an ambitious holiday concert featuring vocalists and musicians from across the region and the state. And he couldn’t be more thrilled.

“So far, I’m not pulling my hair out. I am feeling very comfortable with where we are in the process,” he said. “I’m happy, because it’s a great time to be here.”
The Mustangs Women’s Basketball program enters a new era under first year Head Coach Garett Sherman with four returning sophomores from their 26-8 season last year. The returning sophomores include: Whitni Syrett, Alisa Peterson, KC Gubler and Sadie Mortensen. In addition, two transfer sophomores Ashley Chestnut and DawnSha Heath join the team to help provide experience.

The Mustangs have nine freshman joining this year’s team: Tia Tiller (Wyoming), Macayla Arrington (Wyoming), Shayla Strauss (Wyoming), Larissa Knight (Idaho), Reece Bauer (Idaho), Tenesha Davison (Alberta) and Alisha Lewis (Utah), Sydnee Ward (Utah), Hailey Hardman (Utah), Tristin Bills (Utah).

This team strives hard to be successful both on and off the court. They are focused on working hard, together, and improving each day. They hope to play an exciting style of basketball in order to compete for a region championship and an opportunity to go to the national tournament at the end of the year.

Please visit our website at http://www.wwcc.wy.edu/athletics/default.htm for a listing of athletic events and results
MEN'S BASKETBALL

With the Mustangs top three scorers and two of its top three rebounders departed from last year’s team, the Western Wyoming men’s basketball team will look to the returning group of seven as well as seven newcomers to provide the scoring and rebounding punch necessary to continue moving toward the top of the conference in Ryan Orton’s third season as coach. After a sixth place finish in his first year, the program had a five game improvement and finished in a tie for fourth in 2013-14 in addition to a 14-17 overall record.

Returning point guard, Isaiah Parros (Denver, CO/Highlands Ranch HS), was the team’s fourth leading scorer at 9.2 points per game as well as lead the team in assists. Backcourt mate, Dimitri Saliba (West Valley, UT/Hunter HS), who led the Mustangs in rebounding (4.3) will provide a dynamic 1-2 punch defensively. Stefan Wright (Adelaide, Australia) started 18 of 31 games last season on the frontline and will be looked to for more production on the interior in 2014-15. Namdi Okonkwo (Dallas, TX/Allen HS), who led the team in blocked shots in 2013-14, will need to continue to provide rebounding and rim protection on the defensive end. Other returning players for the Mustangs include Jeremy Head (Nome, AK/Texas A&M International) and two redshirt freshmen in Jarred Laws (Anchorage, AK/East HS) and Jonas Santana (Gran Canaria, Spain).

On the perimeter, newcomers to the program include in-state product, Josh Fearing (Cheyenne, WY/Central HS) who helped lead his team to a state tournament berth last year. The Mustangs continued by adding quality players from the state of Alaska in Tyler Wells (Fairbanks, AK/Monroe Catholic) a three time state champion in boys basketball during his prep career. Zack Funk (Hansen, ID/Kimberly HS) will be returning to the hardwood after serving an LDS Mission. His size and strength should prove valuable to the group of Mustang perimeter players.

On the frontline, Logun “Gunner” Javernick (Canon City, CO/Canon City HS) has a combination of size and mobility that coach Ryan Orton has been looking for since his arrival to Western. He is providing valuable rebounding and interior defense for the Mustangs. Brandon Davies (West Valley, UT/Hunter HS) is an active, versatile forward that could potentially see time at three different spots on the floor. Rounding out the squad is yet another Brazilian product in Felipe Meirelles (Santo Andre, Brazil). His ability to stretch the defense and understanding of the game are strong assets for the Mustangs.

Western has 13 home games that span over the months of November, December, January and February including two tournaments. They had their annual Thanksgiving Holiday weekend classic as well as an invitational tournament the first weekend of December. Their first seven games were on the road before opening the season at home on November 25th. It is important for this group to stick with the process and gel together quickly to prepare for the always difficult Region IX conference schedule which begins in January.
As the 2014-15 wrestling season began, the Mustang Wrestling team have a brand new home. The building of the new Exercise Science building, opened in August, 2014, boasts a new athletic weight room, fitness center, and many other amenities, and will also be the new home to the wrestlers. The wrestling room features a state-of-the-art design, including a locker room and an office. The new looking Mustangs, led by Head Coach Art Castillo (6th Season) returned 3 national qualifiers from last year’s squad. Brenn Schiess (133lbs), Ryan Slaugh (149lbs), and Damon Mele (165lbs). To add to the experience of his eight returners, Castillo brought in 14 freshmen to Western. The Mustangs will use their strength of schedule to once again prepare them for post season action. The action began October 24th for the Intrasquad dual at home in our Rushmore Gymnasium.

125 – 3X state runner-up and Utah single-season pin record holder, Ronald Wardleigh, a SO from Fremont, UT, returns after an LDS Mission and will have his hands full from Aaron Allard a FR from Temescal Canyon HS.

133 – RSFR Brett Jones from Fallbrook, CA, returns from an LDS mission hungry and looking to make some noise. Also competing for a spot will be Jaydon Rogers, a state champion from Fremont HS in Utah. Returner Arthur Tomax from Kearns, UT, will redshirt this season.

141/149 – These are two weight classes that will have several Mustangs in the mix for the two starting spots. Leading the way here will be returning national qualifier and 4-time Idaho state placer, Brenn Schiess. Brenn put on some tremendous size this offseason and has moved up two weight classes. 4-time Utah state placer, Logan Stewart, a returner from last year has gained some muscle from last year and will move up in weight to challenge. Two freshmen, 3-time WY state placer, Zeke Mamalis, from Green River, WY, brings a solid work ethic to the team. Arizona state placer, Ulisses Lopez, from the storied Sunnyside HS in Tucson, AZ, will vie starting roles this season.

157 – RSSO Ryan Slaugh, a returning national qualifier in round 12 at the national tournament is back for his sophomore year. The Rock Springs, WY, native, who put on some muscle in the off season, looks to move up a weight class. Returning national qualifier and former Utah state champion and RSSO Damon Mele will battle to find his place in this year’s lineup.

165 – SO Hunter Riggs looks to rebound from his finish last year at regionals where he was undersized. After a solid off season where he gained significant muscle, he is determined to punch his ticket to Des Moines this year. FR 4-time Utah state placer, Kaden Campbell, from Union HS in Utah, will give Hunter all he can handle at this weight.

174/184 – Heading into the season, it is uncertain who will fill these two weight classes. RSFR Colby Barlocker, a 3-time Utah state champion and a returning missionary from Tokyo, Japan, Chris Restad, a powerful, heavy handed FR from California, and FR Adrian Mack, an athletic 3-time state placer from Colorado Springs, CO, are grappling to earn the two spots.

197 – 2014 state runner-up, Aspen Naylor, a hard working FR from Syracuse, UT, and Conner Hendry, a 2-time WY state placer is mixing it up at this weight.

HWT – RSFR Dylan Sackett, a Utah state placer from Layton, UT, 2014 state runner-up, Dexter Bess, from Smoky Hill, CO, and 3-time WY state placer, Kaleb Clark, from Kelly Walsh HS are deciding who the big guy on campus literally is!
U.S. Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Gillette) visited Western Wyoming Community College on Thursday, October 23, to tour the recently completed W3TC facility and to learn more about the campus’s Technology & Industry programs.

In July, Enzi and his Senate colleagues passed the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA), which aims to help job seekers access the education, training, and support services needed to acquire skilled employment, and authorizes funding to support such programs. WIOA was spearheaded by Vice President Joe Biden and passed by an overwhelming and bipartisan majority in the Senate.

Enzi said his support for WIOA reflects his longstanding interest in Wyoming workforce-development programs that strengthen the state’s industries and economy. He particularly wanted to visit Western, Enzi said, because he’s heard many good reports from industry about the excellent preparation Western provides to current and future industry employees.

“I’m very impressed with the training facilities here, but I am even more impressed with the businesses that I have visited who have said, without any prompting, how responsive this College is to providing training in the specific areas that they need, and how well the students who come out of here are doing when they hire them. You’re doing a good job here.”

Enzi and members of his staff toured each T&I classroom and training lab, on a tour led by Workforce Development Director Carole Shafer. In the auto tech lab, he chatted with Assistant Professor of Automotive Technology, Tracey Hind, who gave the Senator a piece of friendly advice. “When you go to Washington, go ahead and give ‘em hell,” he said.

Enzi noted that Wyoming has many skilled positions available for folks who have the proper training. In many cases, he said, the available jobs exceed the number of people qualified to perform them. WOIA is intended to assist the states in matching the right people to the right training and education so that those jobs can be filled, he said.

Enzi cited welding as one example of a high-demand profession in the state, which Western’s popular welding program helps to meet.

“This is filling a huge need, but it is not fulfilling the huge need, because it’s much bigger than what can be turned out by any one of the colleges,” he said. “The nice thing about the community colleges is that they can turn on a dime and provide a need for some industry that is coming in. The universities don’t have that kind of flexibility.”

**WWCC BOOKSTORE**

Remind your student that the bookstore will be open at the following times for the textbook buyback:

**Friday, December 12**
8:00 AM-5:00 PM

**Monday, December 15**
8:00 AM-7:00 PM

**Tuesday, December 16**
8:00 AM-5:00 PM

Your student must bring all CD’s and supplemental materials purchased with the textbooks. Check buyback prices online at our website.

*All rental textbooks must be returned by Tuesday, December 16

**FINAL GRADES**

Final grades are due from faculty on Wednesday, December 17th. Students will be able to access their grades through Mustang Cruiser. Students who have “D” or “F” grades will receive a printed report of their grades by mail sent to their local (not permanent) address on file with the Registrar’s Office.

**ON CAMPUS FOOD SERVICES**

On campus food services will be closed during the semester break.

Mitchell’s Dining Hall will be closed from December 17 - January 11.

The T-Rex Grill will be closed from December 22—January 4.

Flex dollars for the Fall semester must be spent by December 16 or your student will lose them! Flex dollars do not carry over from semester to semester. If your student wants to change their meal plan options for the spring semester, please contact the housing office at (307) 382-1845.