

**NORTHWEST COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

December 8, 2025

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** President MS. DENISE LAURSEN; Vice President/Secretary MR. R.J. KOST; Treasurer MR. BOB NEWSOME; and Trustees MR. JOHN HOUSEL, MS. TARA KUIPERS, MR. SHANE OGDEN, and DR. MARK WURZEL.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**OTHERS PRESENT:** MS. LISA WATSON, President; MR. DAVE ERICKSON, Vice President for Academic Affairs; MR. TOM HAVRON, Vice President for Student Services; Mr. Burt Reynolds, Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance; MS. JILL ANDERSON; MR. JOSHUA BUHMANN; MS. JACQUE COBOURN; MR. DUSTIN DICKS; MS. TRACY GASAWAY; MR. MARK GRANT; MR. RYAN MANGUS; MS. CAREY MILLER; MR. DENNIS QUILLEN; DR. GREG SMITH; MS. LISA SMITH; MS. LINDA SPOMER; MR. MARTIN STENSING; MR. OSCAR TREVIÑO; MS. SHELBY WETZEL; MR. ZAC TAYLOR, *Powell Tribune*; and MS. KELI BORDERS, Executive Secretary to the President and Board of Trustees.

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Denise Laursen called the regular meeting of the Northwest College Board of Trustees to order on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in the Yellowstone Building Conference Center.

**A APPROVE THE AGENDA:** **A motion was made by Trustee Ogden and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**

**A CONSENT AGENDA:** **A motion was made by Trustee Kost and seconded by Trustee Ogden to approve the consent agenda.**

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that she and Interim Dean of Extended Campus and Workforce, Ty Flock, met to discuss the results of their meetings with area high schools. Ty will also survey the high schools to gather feedback on their experience with the visits. She reminded Trustees that they shared the results of the Hanover survey when they visited the schools. A capstone summary report of the results of all Hanover surveys will be shared with Trustees in the near future.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that some redesign has enhanced the NWC home webpage, which includes increased visibility of activities, events, and images. Website Coordinator Keith Smith continues to work with programmatic areas and departments for redesign and improvement.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that two new spring initiatives are rolling out to drive enrollment that have not been done before. New degree-seeking students can take one free class, which may encourage some to enroll in additional courses, and could also encourage those who are reticent to start College. Trapper Scholarship funds have also been made available for spring enrollees. All Trappers Scholarships have historically been awarded to those who enroll in the fall; however, unclaimed fall funds have been made available for spring scholarship use.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the College works with PEP and Forward Cody to support a healthy economy and community, and to be a resource for local businesses.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that HR Director Jill Anderson is one of many employees interested in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it can improve the College's operations. She has researched and attended various webinars and is involved in the task force

developing AI policy for the College.

President Watson stated that Northwest College, together with the other community colleges, the University of Wyoming, and the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC), has submitted a grant proposal seeking \$4 million to provide AI training for employees.

Trustee Housel referenced the Employee Turnover reporting included in the Administrative Services and Finance Report and stated that he is pleased to see that employees who leave the College list dissatisfaction with NWC at a very low rate.

Trustee Housel noted the success of the Forensics team and his appreciation for Bob Becker's willingness to serve as the President of NCA's Community College section.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, Carey Miller stated that there was strong engagement with the social media posts about the Photography students who took images of the Greybull Airplane boneyard, which may explain the increased interactions on the College's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Trustee Housel noted a presentation of the website at a future meeting or work session could be useful.

In response to a question from Trustee Wurzel, President Watson stated that the College has been able to replace older Outdoor Recreation equipment utilizing WIP funds.

In response to a question from Trustee Kuipers regarding the Spring start initiatives, Vice President Havron stated that the College has received 60 applications for Spring thus far.

Trustee Kuipers expressed her appreciation to the Education Department for hosting the literacy workshop and stated that it not only provided an excellent learning opportunity for students but also offered a great opportunity to connect with and serve other institutions and the community.

President Watson explained that, as part of the endowed faculty positions implemented two years ago, additional funds are available for professional development and student classroom experiences. These funds make the literacy workshops possible.

**Motion carried, and the consent agenda, including the minutes of the November 10, 2025, regular meeting, was approved.**

## **DISCUSSION/ INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

### **Wyoming Postsecondary Education Options**

Lisa Smith provided highlights from the Postsecondary Education Options Program Report. She stated that the Wyoming colleges submit concurrent and dual-enrollment data to the WCCC every year, and the full report is available on their website under Post-Secondary Options, 2024-2025.

As a reminder, concurrent courses are taught by college-approved high school teachers at the high schools. Dual courses are taught by college instructors, either on campus or through distance modality.

For the 2024-25 academic year, the College had 609 students enrolled in dual and concurrent coursework, totaling 5,773 concurrent or dual credits, averaging 9.5 credits per student. NWC students completed 97% of concurrent enrolled credits with a grade of C- or higher (compared to 94% for all community

colleges), and 91% of dual enrolled credits with a grade of C- or higher (compared to 87% for all community colleges and UW).

Lisa noted that all public schools in the College's service area participated in concurrent or dual enrollment, as well as students from local alternative, virtual, homeschool, and private high schools.

Lisa stated that concurrent enrollment revenue covers tuition and fees, and matches the concurrent expenditures, which is a wash.

Dual enrollment mandatory fees and additional course fees are charged, but not tuition. The College does receive a small amount of revenue from the Big Horn County School District #3 BOCES and the Park County School District #1 BOCES.

Lisa explained that expenditures include a portion of NWC's budget, based on the percentage of concurrent and dual credits taken out of the total College enrollment. Concurrent expenditures include payment to the school districts plus 8.8% of the Student Services budget, and dual expenditures include the cost of tuition and fees plus 11.2% of the combined Student Services and Instructional Services budgets.

Trustee Ogden stated that he is pleased to see that Northwest College's dual and concurrent students are completing their courses at a higher percentage than almost every other community college. The College does a great job of getting students enrolled and helping them succeed.

#### Statewide Legislative Advocacy

President Watson included advocacy documents created by WACCT in the Board packet and explained that more information is available on the WACCT.org website. These documents are especially helpful in explaining the impact of community colleges on the state of Wyoming and its citizens.

The community colleges will be presenting to the Joint Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, and Trustees can listen if they are interested. President Watson will attend the Legislative session in February, as Presidents take turns representing the colleges and being available to Legislators for questions.

President Watson reminded Trustees that the WCCC and WACCT will hold meetings the week of February 9<sup>th</sup>, and there will be a luncheon in which the "Shaping Wyoming's Future" student awards will be presented. Abigail Jeffries, Northwest College's award winner, will be introduced to the Trustees during the February Board meeting.

#### Policy Review – 1200 Statutory Reference

Policy 1200 *Statutory Reference* was reviewed. There were no suggested changes.

#### President's Evaluation

President Laursen stated that Trustees conducted the College President's evaluation during their fall Board retreat in October. The Board's unanimous consensus is that President Watson is doing an excellent job, and they are appreciative of everything she does for the College and its students.

#### **CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM**

The Citizens' Open Forum convened at 5:00 p.m. No citizens requested to address the Board; therefore, the Citizens' Open Forum adjourned.

#### **A UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

There were no unfinished business items on the agenda.

**A NEW BUSINESS:**

**FY2025 Audit Approval**

**A motion was made by Trustee Ogden and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the FY2025 Audit as presented.**

Trustee Housel noted that the audit costs considerable money and that College personnel are providing the information and generating reports for the auditors.

President Watson stated that auditors must be highly knowledgeable about all federal and GASB regulations applicable to an audit. They support and teach the College about the reporting standards and must be confident in the reporting before administering their “seal of approval,” as they carry a considerable liability.

MHP, the company utilized by the College, is comparably priced and is used by seven of the eight community colleges in Wyoming due to the quality of its work.

**Motion carried.**

**2026-27 & 2027-28  
Academic Calendars**

Vice President Erickson presented the proposed Academic Calendars for the next two years. While the College typically adopts three years at a time, local school districts have planned a two-year cycle, resulting in a data gap needed to align the calendars.

VP Erickson expressed his appreciation to Dean of Student Learning Martin Stensing for his work. A lot of planning goes into developing the calendars to ensure the required number of instructional hours is delivered and that the first and second eight-week courses have a relatively similar distribution of hours.

Beginning with the 2026-27 calendar, everything shifts forward one week to allow for calendar creep, with classes starting on August 26<sup>th</sup> (began on August 20<sup>th</sup> in 2025). Another unique issue with the 2026-27 calendar is that, because of the timing of Easter and to align with the school districts, Spring Break and Spring Recess will be combined. This resulted in the need to account for an extra day off, which is added as a winter recess on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The 2027-28 calendar allows for separate spring break and spring recess, consistent with other years.

VP Erickson stated that the proposed calendars have been reviewed by the President’s Staff, the Academic Advisory Council, Enrollment Services, and the College Council.

**A motion was made by Trustee Kost and seconded by Trustee Kuipers to approve the 2026-27 and 2027-28 Academic Calendars as presented.  
Motion carried.**

**Remotely Piloted Aircraft  
Systems (RPAS) Certificate**

President Watson stated she is excited to bring the RPAS Certificate to the Board for approval. It will be presented to the WCCC in February and, if approved, will be available to students in the fall 2026 semester.

Vice President Erickson stated that the certificate proposal is a result of the College being awarded the \$475,000 National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education grant.

The Certificate is designed to support regional workforce needs and promote collaborations with industry and economic development agencies. The College received letters of support from the superintendents of Powell, Cody, Meeteetse, and the Greybull School Districts. Choice Aviation in Cody and GT

Aeronautics in Powell also support the initiative. It is aimed at attracting a highly multidisciplinary group of students, spanning agriculture, archaeology, business, criminal justice, wildlife biology, and the physical sciences. Anyone seeking a degree in these program areas may be interested in adding the RPAS Certificate to enhance employability in their fields by gaining additional knowledge.

VP Erickson explained that the first course in the program is an introductory course that will provide the history and the physics of aerodynamics and will begin exploring aviation regulations for RPAS. Operation, programming, and safety will be covered, along with an introduction to the various sensors and payloads of common RPAS drones.

The second course will explore the processing of RPAS data, including sensory information and imagery collection. They will learn more advanced steps such as mission planning, RPAS regulations, and aerial cinematography. There will also be a breakdown, over several weeks, of the various applications of RPAS in the physical sciences, biological sciences, engineering and construction, and business fields.

The advanced course will provide an overview of how to construct a project from start to finish, creating the overall mission. There will be a large segment on Geographical Information Systems. The course will consist of a capstone-type experience in which students will utilize the skills and knowledge gained during the nine-credit series to create a project, gather data, and present their findings.

VP Erickson expressed his appreciation to the faculty involved in creating the certificate program, especially Greg Smith, Astrid Northrup, and Eric Atkinson. They spent many hours researching best practices and searching textbooks and other materials to provide a high-quality experience for students.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, VP Erickson stated that, at this time, while a few RPAS courses are offered at other colleges in the state, this will be the first degree or certificate of this kind.

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, VP Erickson stated that it is difficult to gather data related to potential earnings in the RPAS field because the skills are supplemental to other jobs. Still, the qualifications would increase an individual's employability.

President Watson stated that the program will appeal to more than just traditional-aged students; employers and businesses may also send their employees to become certified in RPAS.

VP Erickson concluded by saying that the name of the program, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, was chosen intentionally, as it applies not only to drones but also to multi-rotor, fixed-wing, and other hybrid unmanned aircraft.

**A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Kost to approve the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Certificate as presented. Motion carried.**

Policy:

Trustee Wurzel, Chair of the Policy and Student Success Committee, stated that the Committee has met to review the proposed new policy and policy changes that come before the Board for consideration. The proposed policies have also gone through the College's shared governance process, and, in the case of the new policy, 7110 Security Cameras, have been reviewed by legal counsel.

The Committee's recommendations are as follows:

6510 – Physical Access Management and Control

The Committee has determined that the policy statement at the beginning of each policy should be a purpose statement. Therefore, the recommendation is to change the first and second sentences to read, "The purpose of this policy is to establish comprehensive and coordinated physical access control management for Northwest College. The College seeks to provide..."

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the procedures to enact a policy have been written by the departments that oversee it. For example, Safety and Security and Physical Plant collaborated to write the procedures associated with this policy, and they are housed in Administrative Services and Finance.

**A motion was made by Trustee Kuipers and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve proposed changes to policy 6510 – Physical Access Management Control as presented, and to include the Committee's recommended changes. Motion carried.**

7110 – Security Cameras

The Committee recommends the first sentence to read, "The purpose of this policy is to regulate, authorize, and control the use of security camera systems in public areas and the data thereby generated." It is also recommended that the last sentence in the first paragraph be stricken: "This policy formalizes the handling, viewing, retaining, disseminating, and destroying of security system records in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner, in accordance with College policies and state and federal laws."

**A motion was made by Trustee Ogden and seconded by Trustee Wurzel to approve the proposed policy 7110 – Security Cameras as presented, and to include the Committee's recommended changes. Motion carried.**

6340 Investment of Public and Non-Public Funds

The Committee recommends the fourth paragraph, second sentence read, "For purposes of this policy, non-public funds also include private donations, endowment funds, tuition and fees, and revenues from auxiliary services such as housing, dining, and bookstore sales commissions, which may be invested in accordance with the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA)."

**A motion was made by Trustee Kost and seconded by Trustee Ogden to approve the proposed changes to Policy 6340 – Investment of Public and Non-Public Funds, as presented, and to include the Committee's recommended changes.**

In response to a question from Trustee Housel, President Watson stated that the written procedures state that College funds be managed in accordance with statutory requirements.

**Motion carried.**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS  
AND COMMITTEE  
APPOINTMENTS**

Trustee Wurzel presented the nominations for officers proposed by the Nomination Committee to remain unchanged as follows:

- Trustee Laursen as President
- Trustee Kost as Vice President/Secretary
- Trustee Newsome as Treasurer.

**A motion was made by Trustee Wurzel and seconded by Trustee Kost to elect the nominees to serve a one-year term as follows: Trustee Denise Laursen as President, Trustee R.J. Kost as Vice President/Secretary, and Trustee Bob Newsome as Treasurer. Motion carried.**

Committee and Delegate appointments are as follows:

- Facilities Committee: Trustees Housel (Chair), Laursen, and Newsome
- Finance Committee: Trustees Newsome (Chair), Kost, and Kuipers
- Policy & Student Success Committee: Trustees Wurzel (Chair), Kuipers, and Ogden

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) will be as follows:

- Park County School District #1 (Powell): Trustees Wurzel and Kost
- Big Horn County School District #2 (Lovell): Trustees Housel and Kost
- Big Horn County School District #3 (Greybull): Trustees Ogden and Newsome

President Laursen and Trustee Wurzel will be delegates to the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees (WACCT) and the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC).

President Kuipers will serve as the NWC Foundation Board representative.

#### **ANNUAL SIGNING OF THE BOARD CODE OF ETHICS**

Trustees signed the Board Code of Ethics.

#### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FEEDBACK TO CITIZENS' OPEN FORUM TOPICS:**

January 12, 2026, upcoming:

- Annual IT & Cybersecurity Discussion
- Other TBD

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Faculty Jazz Holiday Concert, Dec 8, 7:00 p.m., NPA  
Wednesdays Around the World-Mexico, Dec 10, 11:30-1:30, Dining Hall  
Final Exams, Dec 10-12  
NWC Holiday Party, Dec 12, 5:30 p.m., The Commons  
Booster Club Tournament, Dec 12-13, Cabre  
WBB vs Dawson, Dec 12, 5:30 p.m., Cabre  
MBB vs Dawson, Dec 12, 7:30 p.m., Cabre  
WBB vs Miles CC, Dec 13, 2:00 p.m., Cabre  
MBB vs Miles CC, Dec 13, 4:00 p.m., Cabre  
WBB vs Central Arizona, Dec 16, 11:00 a.m., Yuma, AZ  
MBB vs Cochise College, Dec 16, 7:00 p.m., Yuma, AZ  
Wrestling vs Western Wyoming CC, Dec 17, 6:00 p.m., Rock Springs  
WBB vs Arizona Western, Dec 17, TBA, Yuma, AZ  
MBB vs Arizona Western, Dec 17, 7:00 p.m., Yuma, AZ  
WBB vs North Idaho, Dec 18, TBA, Yuma, AZ  
MBB vs Central Arizona, Dec 18, 3:00 p.m., Yuma, AZ  
WBB vs Chandler-Gilbert CC, Dec 19, 5:30 p.m., Yuma, AZ  
Winter Holiday, Dec 24-Jan 1, Campus Closed  
In-Service Campus Meeting, Jan 8, 8:30 a.m., Yellowstone Bldg.  
Wrestling NJCAA National Duals, Jan 9-10, Miami, OK  
MBB vs All-Stars, Jan 10, 6:00 p.m., Cabre  
Next meeting, January 12, 2026, 4:00 p.m., Yellowstone Bldg.  
First day of classes, January 13, NWC

**A ADJOURNMENT:**                      **The meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.**

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R.J. KOST, Vice President/Secretary

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Date