THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FALL 2018

EARLY STAGES: NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER COMING SOON

HER CARING DRIVES HIGH PERFORMANCE; JEANNETTE JOHNSON COUGAR BASKETBALL SCORES NATIONAL TOURNEY INVITES

> THE FACES OF EXCELLENCE: NATALIE SAENZ SHELBY BENSON





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DR. TODD HOLCOMB

WNCC: A Place for Growth

always love the energy around the college that comes with the start of fall classes each year. I try to find more time to be around campus and with the students those first few weeks to experience that enthusiasm.

I'll see students unpacking their belongings by the car-full into their residence hall rooms. I'll see friendships beginning to blossom and I'll see incoming students becoming acquainted with our campus, faculty, and staff. In those few weeks, I see people finding their home for the next 10 months.

Their bounds of optimism is contagious and inspiring. It also provides a nice reminder of how special of a role Western Nebraska Community College plays in these young—or sometimes older—people's lives. Their sense of positivity is refreshing, especially as that sense is so often lost in the outside world.

Each year, the split in our society seems to widen. We remain rooted in our issues and refuse to give an inch. We listen less and argue more, and our default continues to be tearing each other down.

Despite the lack of civility that increasingly plagues our society, I'm proud to say WNCC will always be a place where we build each other up. We will always be a place of learning, a place of acceptance, and a place of growth.

Coming together to grow together has long been part of WNCC's philosophy, and is no more apparent

than the advances happening around our campuses, such as the Scottsbluff Campus renovation and the addition of an indoor facility for the Powerline Construction & Maintenance Technology program in Alliance. You can learn more about both projects inside this issue of *WESTERN*.

Additionally, we share a Human Services program on the rise and the recent reaccreditation of our Welding Technology program as an American Welding Society Accredited Test Facility—one of just 161 in the nation!

So, as you learn more about WNCC and our Cougar family, I encourage your eagerness to grow with us.

-Dr. Todd Holcomb, President

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GET SOCIAL WITH WNCC! **f v in b** Find the online edition of the western magazine at wncc.edu

WESTERN is published by Western Nebraska Community College to encourage residents in our 12½-county region to think seriously about the difference education can make in their lives and careers, to promote business and community education, and to inform the community about WNCC's programs of study.

Publisher's Info

Editor: Kyle Cummings, Marketing Specialist

Editorial/Creative Support: Allison Judy, Public Relations & Marketing Director; Brooke Samuelson, Graphic Artist; Sarah Townsend, Digital Marketing Specialist

Photography: Sunny Freckles Photography, Kyle Cummings, Jennifer Sibal, Brooke Samuelson, Mark Rein

Campus Locations

Alliance Campus • 308.763.2000 1750 Sweetwater Avenue, Alliance, NE 69301

Scottsbluff Campus • 308.635.3606 1601 E. 27th Street, Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Sidney Campus • 308.254.5450 371 College Drive, Sidney, NE 69162

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> OUR MISSION WNCC assures learning opportunities for all — enriching lives, invigorating communities, creating futures

WESTERN is published biannually by Western Nebraska Community College, 1601 East 27th Street, Scottsbluff, NE 69631 in partnership with Propeller Communications LLC.

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Questions about Western Nebraska Community College programs and services described in this publication can be directed toll free to 800.348.4435. Comments or questions about the publication itself can be directed to the WNCC Public Relations & Marketing Office at 308.635.6081.

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Early Stages: New Performing Arts Space Coming in 2019

BY DR. TODD HOLCOMB, PRESIDENT

NCC is proud to be a hub for arts and cultural enrichment in the Nebraska Panhandle. Each year, WNCC plays host to a wide variety of choral, instrumental, and theatrical performances, including those put on by our dedicated students and faculty.

WNCC Performing Arts programs have long had a strong following, which has created a vibrant music and theater scene in our area.

Now, we are thrilled to bring the new Platte Valley Companies Performing Arts Center and Judy Chaloupka Theater to that scene. This new space will bring a state-of-the-art facility to a state-of-the-art community.

The Performing Arts Center will offer a new place for patrons to socialize outside of the theater area, while the theater itself will be equipped with a roundtable stage, comfortable seating, and top-of-the-line sound quality.

We are immensely grateful for the community support that made this project possible. A total of \$9.6 million was raised as part of the WNCC WORKS: Expanding the Possibilities comprehensive campaign, which included an initiative focused on community enrichment.

The Platte Valley Companies Performing Arts Center is scheduled to be completed by May 2019, while the entire Scottsbluff Campus renovation will be completed by July 2019. As always, if you are interested in the progress of the renovation, feel free to contact us at construction@wncc.edu or follow online at **wncc.edu/renovation**.





NEW ALLIANCE POWERLINE INDOOR FACILITY

The Powerline Construction & Maintenance Technology program has been a model of success since its inception in 2006. The program continues to attract large numbers of local students, which has been a driving force in the regional economy.

With the addition of an indoor facility for the program in October 2018, those students can now train year-round without the complications that come with working in high winds or severe cold.

The facility, which will include 50-foot ceilings and dirt flooring to accommodate powerline poles, will further solidify WNCC as the premier powerline program in the region.

New Cougars on the Block

BY KATHY AULT, HUMAN RESOURCES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

estern Nebraska Community College's family is growing! Over the last year, the College has hired nearly 40 new full-time faculty and staff members. Welcome to WNCC!



GINA ACKERMAN-COURTADE Nursing Instructor



CHRISTOPHER ARMSTRONG Instructional Tech Systems Specialist



JESSICA BRUMBAUGH Nursing Instructor



DEBRA CARPENTER-NOLTING English Instructor



KYLE CUMMINGS Marketing Specialist



NICOLE DANIELZUK HIT Instructor



DEBRA DAVIS Workforce Training Coordinator



MARK DAVIS Information Security Specialist



DONNA DINGES Head Cook



KARALEA FISHER HIMS Instructor



SUE GOMPERT Accounting Technician



DR. CHARLES GREGORY Dean of Instruction and Workforce Development



DR. MWAFAQ HAJI Medical Laboratory Technology Instructor/Program Director



BO HOLTHUS Powerline Program Assistant



AMBER JACOBY Nursing Instructor



GRAHAM JUDD Emergency Medical Services Instructor/Program Director



ALEXANDRA LUTZ Educational Services Specialist



THOMAS MILSTEAD Admissions Counselor

Her Caring Drives High Performance

BY ALETIA NORWOOD, BUSINESS FACULTY CHAIR



eannette Johnson had three goals before turning 30.

1. Have a child. "I was 28 when Lance was born," she said.

2. Buy a sports car. "Your vehicle is the persona of your soul."

3. Teach at WNCC. "I signed my contract 23 days before my 30th birthday."

Johnson, who received her Associate of Science degree from WNCC in 1977, was determined to return to the College that meant so much to her.

"I saw what this institution did for me, and it's not so much in the thank-you's and the kudos, it's how you pass it on," Johnson said.

Johnson has been passing on her appre-ciation to WNCC for more than three decades, as she enters her

31st year with the College, having taught business, personal development, and mathematics. Through the years, her philosophy has always been the same get to know the students and teach them to value themselves.

"Students have to know that you care," Johnson said. "If you don't have that climate established, no learning will take place."

During her time at WNCC, Johnson considers the opportunity to present her son, Lance, his diploma, as her proudest moment. She also finds joy in connecting with her thousands of former students, like James Benitez.

"She was a great teacher. She became a friend, as well," Benitez said. "She genuinely cares about her students, about their success. She would do anything to help them succeed."



LOREN MOENCH Associate System Administrator



PAULINE NEWMAN Accounting Services Assistant Director



ALICIA NICKODEMUS Alliance Campus Executive Secretary



VIRGINIA OJEDA Student Services Executive Secretary



DR. CAROLYN PEVEY Social Science Instructor



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ROBYNN WHITTIER English Instructor



Nursing Instructor



KELSEY YORK Educational Services Specialist

WNCC Welding Reaccreditation Sparks Student Careers

BY DR. CHARLES GREGORY, APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES CHAIR

ne of the biggest challenges aspiring welders face is gaining experience.

"Most employers in the field are going to require three to five years of experience," said WNCC Welding Instructor Russell Pontarolo. "If you're coming fresh out of school, how do you have that experience?"

Western Nebraska Community College has a solution.

WNCC recently earned a three-year reaccreditation to remain one of just 161 Accredited Testing Facilities (ATF) in the nation recognized by the American Welding Society (AWS). Because of that, students at WNCC can earn AWS certificates while still in college.

"I like to tell students that these welding certificates help get their foot in the door," Pontarolo said. "It gives them something extra the other guy may not have."

Those certificates have paid dividends for WNCC's Welding Technology students. Oftentimes, Pontarolo said, students receive full-time job offers months before graduation.

Yet WNCC's ATF is not just for WNCC students. It also allows community welders to re-certify or earn new certificates, which supports local businesses and welders.

"Testing facilities are becoming a bigger and bigger deal all the time," Pontarolo said.

For more information on WNCC's Welding Technology program or the AWS Testing Facility, contact Pontarolo at **pontaror@wncc.edu**.

"That's a huge part of being a successful welding program. Our program is designed so students will have an opportunity to come out of class with a welding certificate."

> -Russell Pontarolo, WNCC Welding Instructor

Brandon Walczyk, 2018 Welding Technology Student "Everyone was so welcoming. You walk in and people know you by name. Everywhere you go, there is always someone willing to help." —Natalie Saenz

FACES of EXCEL

FROM PIPEDREAM TO REALITY, SAENZ READY FOR UNL

BY NINA GRANT, VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT SERVICES

Two years ago, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln felt like a pipedream to Natalie Saenz.

"In high school, I didn't think I could make it to UNL," she said. "I felt like I wasn't good enough."

Nevertheless, Natalie knew college always had to be in the plan. As a child, Natalie watched her mom, Maria, earn a master's degree in psychology while adjusting to a new country, learning English, and raising kids.

"If my mom can get a master's degree without knowing the language, why can't I?" Natalie said.

So, Natalie enrolled at Western Nebraska Community College.

VERSIT

utraska.

"Everyone was so welcoming," Natalie said. "You walk in and people know you by name. Everywhere you go, there is always someone willing to help."

Natalie quickly immersed herself around campus, earning a job as a tutor for Spanish and writing. She sang in the choir and show choir, and was a member of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) and Student Government.

Through WNCC, Natalie found the confidence in herself, as she made the leap to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this fall to study journalism. "I'm very grateful for everyone at WNCC because they've really helped me grow," she said.

FACES OF EXCELLENCE: FACULTY TRUST INSPIRES BENSON TO ENTER MEDICAL FIELD

BY MARCENE ELWELL, SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM DIRECTOR



"I realized if they trust and believe in me, then I should believe in myself." —Shelby Benson



helby Benson has always had a knack for science. "I really like to know how things work," she said.

But oftentimes, professions within the science field can be overwhelming, such as her current job as a telemetry technician, monitoring heart rhythms on cardiac patients.

"It was really scary at first, but taking that job was one of the best decisions I've made," said Benson, a native of Curtis, Nebraska. "That's opened a lot of doors for me."

One of those opened doors includes WNCC's Surgical Technology program. After working with

cardiac patients in the ICU at Regional West Medical Center, Benson decided she wanted to pursue a career in surgical technology with aspirations of joining a cardiac or trauma unit.

Now, not only has Benson developed the skills needed to land her dream job, she has also gained valuable leadership experience on campus, including serving as president of WNCC's PTK Chapter. That involvement, and the trust from WNCC faculty, has provided Benson the confidence that she can thrive in the medical industry.

"I realized if they trust and believe in me, then I should believe in myself," Benson said. "They give me confidence to know what I want to do."

Meet Jennifer Reisig WNCC Foundation Executive Director

BY JUDY CHALOUPKA, WNCC FOUNDATION BOARD PRESIDENT ennifer Reisig has developed a real appreciation of the Nebraska Panhandle.

"For a community our size to have all the things we have is really special," she said. "We don't have all the problems of the big city, but we do have many of the advantages. There are plenty of exciting things here and a lot of reasons to stay in the area."

Now, Reisig sees herself in a position to make a sincere impact in the community. Reisig was named the Western Nebraska Community College Foundation executive director in March 2018.

"It's exciting to be a part of something that's not just a job, but a part in building the community that makes all of us better collectively," she said.

As the executive director, Reisig has worked closely to bridge the community to the College. She's developed relationships with local companies to form industry partnerships, which better both WNCC students and the surrounding area businesses.

Reisig and her family reside in Scottsbluff. She can be reached by emailing **reisigj1@wncc.edu**.

"I really love being here," Reisig said. "I love being part of this community, part of WNCC, and I want to be here for a long time."

2018-2019 Performing Arts Season Calendar

FALL PERFORMANCES

Theatre | *True West* October 19-21 | John N. Harms Center, Scottsbluff Campus

Instrumental Music | *Fall Ball* October 27 | Gering Civic Center

Vocal Music | *Vocal Music Showcase* November 2 | Midwest Theater

All Performing Arts Programs | Very Valley Christmas December 1 | Free | Scottsbluff High School Auditorium

SPRING PERFORMANCES

Theatre | *Fuddy Meers* March 1-3 | John N. Harms Center, Scottsbluff Campus

Vocal Music | *Gala* March 29-30 | Gering Civic Center

Instrumental Music | *Spring Band Concert* April 28 | Free | Midwest Theater

Instrumental & Vocal Music I Honors Recital May 4 | Free | First Presbyterian Church, Scottsbluff

Instrumental Music | *Jump, Jive & Swing* May 5 | Gering Civic Center

For more information or to purchase tickets, please call the WNCC Foundation office at **308.630.6550.**

Cougars on the National Stage

BY RYAN BURGNER, ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

The Cougar trophy case got a bit more crowded this past spring.

Both the Western Nebraska Community College men's and women's basketball teams earned a spot in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division I National Basketball Championships this past season. It was the first time both programs competed in the national tournament in the same year since 2003.

The WNCC men won the Region IX Championship for the 12th time in program history and first time in more than a decade. The Cougars, who earned as the No. 15 seed in the national tournament, defeated No. 18 Holmes Community College in the opening round before falling to second-seeded Northwest Florida State.

Meanwhile, the WNCC women, under second-year head coach Chad Gibney compiled a 29-4 regular season record, which helped the Cougars to the national tournament through an at-large bid. It was the women's fifth appearance at nationals in the last six years.







"Every game that I stepped on the court at Cougar Palace was memorable for me. I was playing in front of the home crowd and that was my home." —Trent Harris

STERN NEBRASK

Like Father, Like Son

Trent Harris Follows Dad's Footsteps With Cougars

BY RYAN BURGNER, ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

Trent Harris learned plenty about basketball from his dad, Anthony, over the years.

He learned how to dribble and shoot, and how to manage late-game situations.

Above all, though, Trent learned that basketball was only part of his dad's WNCC career.

"He told me how he made some of his best friends when he got to junior college," Trent said. "Once I got to WNCC I realized there really are a lot of really great people that you're going to be friends with for the rest of your life."

Like dad, Trent also made life-long friendships during his time as a Cougar. Still, he will have plenty to reminisce about from his time on the court, too, including last season's Region IX championship.

Trent was a big reason for that success, averaging 13.3 points per game, and a team-high 2.5 steals per game. Those numbers also helped Trent earn a spot on the University of Northern Colorado basketball roster this season.

"I've always wanted play Division I ever since I was younger so it's a big accomplishment for me, and I get to live out my dream," he said.



"Living in a small community can be a big benefit. It allows us to be more innovative and community minded."

—Jessica Davies

Exercising the Power of Community

BY JENNIFER SIBAL, ALUMNI RELATIONS DIRECTOR

fter moving several times growing up because of her father's railroad career, Jessica Davies found herself in Hemingford, Nebraska as a freshman in high school.

She didn't know at the time, however, that this charming, small community would provide a foundation for lifelong opportunity and connections. Following high school, Davies continued her journey at Western Nebraska Community College, which led her to meet now-retired instructor, Dr. Guy Wylie. "He really made me feel like I was in the right place and continued to provide help and support throughout my time on the Scottsbluff and Alliance campuses," Davies said.

After completing her associate degree, Davies returned to Hemingford to join Panhandle Public Health District, and is currently pursuing a master's degree. With PPHD, she has made an important impact throughout the region, including developing the Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council, which encourages employers to create and sustain a culture of lifestyle wellness. Davies has also taken her passion for community wellness to her own doorstep, helping form The Body Shop, a not-for-profit 24/7 fitness center in Hemingford, where she regularly attends and teaches classes. More than 900 classes were offered at The Body Shop last year.

"This truly is a community facility," she said. "The community pulls together to fill needs from teaching classes to washing towels."

Cougar alumna Jessica Davies is truly exercising the power of community.

	W	
	HOMECOMING ON THE RANGE	
October 13	Voc Air Fly-In 7:00 a.m. Sidney Campus	
October 23	PTK Lip Sync Battle 7:00 p.m. John N. Harms Center Truth Tour 10 a.m 2 p.m. Scottsbluff Campus	
October 24	Kick off BBQ 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Sidney Campus	
October 25	Community BINGO Alliance Senior Center Business After Hours 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. John N. Harms Center Casino Night 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. Pioneer Hall	
October 26	Cougar Athletics Tailgate 5:00 p.m. Cougar Palace Alumni & Friends Banquet 5:30 p.m. Scottsbluff Campus* WNCC Cougar Volleyball Tournament Cougar Palace	
October 27	Instrumental Music's Fall Ball 6:15 p.m. Gering Civic Center	
	*To RSVP contact alumni@wncc.edu or call 308.630.6571. To view a full schedule visit wncc.edu/celebrate.	

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 6 Oktoberfest Parade, Sidney
- 8–9 FALL BREAK NO CLASSES
- 11 PAWzitively Pink ™ Night, Cougar Palace
- 23–27 Homecoming Week 2018: Homecoming On the Range

NOVEMBER

- 15 Great American Smokeout: Don't Kill the Cat, Scottsbluff
- 16 Fall Feast, Sidney
- 21–23 THANKSGIVING BREAK NO CLASSES
- 26-30 Student Government Food Drive

DECEMBER

24-31 WINTER BREAK - COLLEGE CLOSED

JANUARY

- 14 Spring Classes Begin
- 14 Week of Welcome
- 21 Community Service Project, Scottsbluff

FEBRUARY

19 PTK Induction Ceremony, Sidney

MARCH

- Alcohol Awareness Week, Scottsbluff
- 10 Alternative Spring Break Week, Scottsbluff
- 11–15 SPRING BREAK NO CLASSES
- 14 Southern Panhandle Sophomore Career Conference, Sidney
- 26 PTK Induction Ceremony, Scottsbluff









COUGAR ATHLETICS—FOR NEWS, SCHEDULES, AND MORE—WNCCATHLETICS.COM

Human Services Program Revamped to Meet Regional Demands

BY DR. HALLIE FEIL, DEAN OF INSTRUCTION

In a way, human services can be a tough industry to define.

"It's a pretty broad field; there are endless opportunities," said Carrie Howton, Western Nebraska Community College human services instructor.

In its simplest terms, though, Howton considers human services to be people helping people.

"Anyone that wants to help people and work with people, that's human services," Howton said. Nebraska, and particularly rural Nebraska, have an increasing void to fill in the human services industry, which includes everything from caseworkers to elderly care professionals to counselors. "As with everything in behavioral health, they forecast that need will increase," Howton said. "A lot of the professionals are aging out and retiring."

In order to address that need, WNCC has completely revamped its Human Services program, adding classes that help students directly enter the workforce upon graduation. Howton expects students in the program to spend much of the time interacting with professionals in the field around the area.

Specifically, WNCC began offering new classes this fall designed for students to earn licensure as drug and alcohol counselors within one year.

For more information on the WNCC Human Services program, contact Howton at howtonc1@wncc.edu.



How Your Degree from WNCC Can Help Others

BECOME A LICENSED DRUG AND ALCOHOL COUNSELOR FOR FREE!



NCC has partnered with the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska (BHECN) to support area students interested in becoming licensed drug and alcohol counselors. BHECN is offering a grant, which will cover the costs of a free laptop and the eight core classes required to become a licensed drug and alcohol counselor at WNCC.

For more information on the grant, please contact WNCC Human Services Instructor Carrie Howton at howtonc1@wncc.edu.



WHAT COLOR IS YOUR FUTURE?

Our programs meet career pathways standards adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education in conjunction with the National Career Clusters Framework. The color coding is designed to help you navigate your way to greater success in college and a future career.

AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The seed that turns into food fuels your interest in creating a sustainable ecosystem that provides for future generations.

BUSINESS, MARKETING, AND MANAGEMENT

Your dream is to create the next big app, have a team of producers make it better, and watch it being used by millions throughout the world.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

DECREE

You understand the world is just a click away. You desire for it to be closer, faster.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

PROGRAM

PROGRAM	DEGREE
 Agriculture Science (Pre) 	AS
 Agriculture Welder 	С
 Applied Agriculture Technology 	C, D
 Auto Body Technology 	AOS, C, D
 Automotive Technology 	C, D, AAS
Aviation Maintenance	AOS, C
Biology/Ecology	AS
 Biomedical Research (Pre) 	AS
Business Administration	AA, AS
- Accounting Option	
- Business Administration Option	
- Management Information Systems Option	
 Business Technology 	AAS, C, D
- Executive Assistant Option	
- General Business Option	
- Information Technology Support Option	
- Medical Office Management Option	
- Staff Accountant Option	
• Chemistry	AS
Chiropractic Medicine (Pre)	AS
Coding Technician	D
• Computer Sciences (Pre)	AS
 Criminal Justice Studies 	AA, AAS
• Dental Hygiene (Pre)	AS
• Dentistry (Pre)	AS
• Dietetics	AS
Education	AA, AAS
- Early Childhood	
- Elementary	
- Music	
- Secondary	
• Engineering (Pre)	AS
• Food Science (Pre)	AS
• Foreign Language (Spanish)	AA
• Forestry/Wildlife Management (Pre)	AS
• General Studies	AA, AS
- Language and Arts	
- Math and Science	
- Social Sciences	

HEALTH SCIENCES

The ability of the body to repair itself, and science to repair what the body can't, attracts you to this field. Your satisfaction in this area comes from helping others with their health.

HUMAN SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

You are active everyday and you love working with others. You are fascinated at the way the human body and mind can grow and absorb information like a sponge. Better yet, you want to pass this fascination on to others.

SKILLED AND TECHNICAL SCIENCES

You're the creator. Raw materials and a challenge present you with an opportunity to construct the things people use everyday.

	Health Information Technology	AAS
S	 Health/Physical Education/ 	
2	Coaching & Sports Administration	AS
	 Human Service 	AA, AAS
)	 Human Services Drug & Alcohol Counseling 	С
S	 Information Technology 	AA
5	 Information Technology - 	
	CyberSecurity Option	AA
S	Mathematics	AS
S	 Medical Laboratory Technician 	AAS
	 Medical Technology (Pre) 	AS
	• Medicine (Pre)	AS
	• Nursing	AS, D
)	- Associate Degree	
	- Practical	
	- Pre-Professional	
	• Paramedicine	С
	• Pharmacy (Pre)	AS
	• Physical Therapy (Pre)	AS
S	• Physics	AS
S	Powerline Construction &	
)	Maintenance Technology	AOS, C, D
S	• Psychology	AA
S	 Radiologic Technology (Pre) 	AS
S	Rangeland Management	AS
S	 Social Work 	AA
	 Surgical Technology 	AAS
S	• Theatre Arts	AA
	• Veterinary/Comparative Medicine (Pre)	AS
	• Vocal Performance	AA
	 Welding Technology 	C, D, AAS

AS	DEGREES	
AS	AA Associate of Arts	AOS Associate of
	AAS Associate of Applied Science	Occupational Studies
	AS Associate of Science	D Diploma
	AD-N Associate Degree Nursing	C Certificate

Western Nebraska Community College 1601 East 27th Street Scottsbluff, NE 69361



SPRING 2019 REGISTRATION OPENS NOVEMBER 1. APPLY TODAY!



SPRING 2019 CLASSES BEGIN JANUARY 14

- January 11: Last day for new students to enroll
- January 13: Last day for returning students to enroll

ENROLLMENT STEPS

- 1) Apply online at wncc.edu
- 2) Meet with a financial aid associate
- 3) Attend a New Student Orientation*
- 4) Begin classes!

For more information or questions, contact:

Admissions Office admissions@wncc.edu 308.635.6010

WNCC assures learning opportunities for all — enriching lives, invigorating communities, creating futures