

**WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**INFORMAL MEETING  
MINUTES**

**February 21, 2024**

The Western Community College Area Board of Governors held an Informal Board meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 in the Coral E. Richards Boardroom at Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff Campus, located at 1601 East 27<sup>th</sup> Street, in the City of Scottsbluff, in the County of Scotts Bluff, in the State of Nebraska, as per the publicized notice in the Star-Herald on Tuesday, February 13, 2024.

A current agenda was available in the Board Secretary's office on the Scottsbluff Campus at the time of the publicized notice.

**AREA BOARD**

Karen S. Anderson, Chairperson .....	Present
Margaret R. Crouse .....	Present
Misty L. Curtis .....	Present
Linda A. Guzman-Gonzales .....	Present
F. Lynne Klemke .....	Present
Allan D. Kreman .....	Absent
William M. Packard .....	Absent
Coral E. Richards .....	Present
R. J. Savely, Jr .....	Present
Marjorie A. Schmidt .....	Present
John P. Stinner, Vice Chairperson .....	Absent

**Quorum**

Chair Anderson declared a quorum was present for the transaction of business.

**Board Chairperson Comments**

A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available on the table at the back of the room.

The Board reserves the right to enter into closed session if deemed necessary for any item on the agenda per Section 84-1410 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes.

**Community Comments**

Chair Anderson asked for comments from the community. Pursuant to Board Policy BP-106, Chair Anderson reminded community members who wish to make comments that each speaker will be limited to a five-minute presentation. There were no public comments.

**Higher Learning Commission Four-Year Assurance Argument Update**

Ms. Kimberly Reichert, Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Director, explained that her task is to create the narrative for the institution's assurance argument and ensure proper documentation is provided and submitted. The assurance argument is a reflection of the hard work staff and faculty put into the education of our students. That is what accreditation is all about, the pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning.

**Higher Learning Commission Four-Year Assurance Argument Update (cont.)**

Ms. Reichert explained that HLC accredited institutions complete periodic reviews on a 10-year cycle to ensure criteria is met for accreditation. HLC has two options for maintaining accreditation, the *standard pathway* or the *open pathway*. WNCC is on the Higher Learning Commission Open Pathway. The 2024 Assurance Argument is basically a check-in. The narrative is designed to be an update of the 2020 argument. The College experienced numerous changes over the last two years so the recent argument was basically a rewrite. The process was completed virtually with no site visits or interviews, so the review was based on strength of narrative and evidence. It will be 30-45 days before the report is received from the HLC Peer Review team.

**Features of the Open Pathway**

- 1) Year four review is an affirmation of accreditation, a virtual review of the assurance argument and evidence provided without a site visit.
- 2) Required quality initiative – an improvement project designed to meet current needs and aspirations of the college.

The report from the site visit stated:

*WNCC has a dedicated board of governors and faculty and staff who are committed to the communities the college serves and are cognizant of challenges facing the institution in the short and long-term. Strategic planning is underway to address concerns with enrollment and finances. The college is well-positioned to move into the future.*

**Open Pathway 10-Year Cycle**

Year 10	2020	Comprehensive Evaluation (site visit)
Years 1-3	2021-2023	Preparation for Four-Year Assurance Review
Year 3	2023	Multi-Location Site Visit
Year 4	2024	Assurance Review
Years 5-7	2025-2027	Quality Initiative Proposal
Years 7-9	2027-2029	Quality Initiative Report
Year 8	2028	Multi-Location Site Visit
Years 8-9	2028-2029	Preparation for Comprehensive Evaluation
Year 10	2030	Comprehensive Evaluation (site visit)

**Areas of Focus from the 2020 Review**

As a result of the comprehensive review in 2020, WNCC was required to submit two embedded reports describing progress in the following areas:

- 1) Assessment and Program Review – how data is used for program improvement
- 2) Retention, Persistence, and Completion – how is the college meeting its completion and retention goals

**“Breadcrumbs” (other areas to monitor) Provided by the Site Reviewers:**

- 1) Financial Resources
- 2) Shared Governance
- 3) Facilities Plan communication
- 4) Relationship between taskforces, committees, and councils

## **Moving Toward 2030**

HLC Steering Committee's Key Focus Areas for 2030

- 1) Integrated planning
  - develop systems tying strategic, budget (annual and long-range), academic, enrollment management, facilities, and technology planning and human resource allocations together through the effective use of data
- 2) Use of assessment data to improve student learning and service excellence
  - championing a true culture of assessment
  - identifying an assessment tool for service units
- 3) Transparency of key performance indicators and clear, meaningful targets for WNCC
- 4) Implementation of guided pathways
- 5) Outcomes-based education for workforce development
- 6) Development of curricular and co-curricular opportunities for civic engagement

## **New Board Member Onboarding Session**

Due to lack of time, there was no new Board member onboarding discussion.

## **Board member Comments**

Board members thanked Ms. Reichert for her report and for her work with the preparation and submission of the HLC Assurance Argument.

**Next Regular Meeting:** Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Coral E. Richards Boardroom, Scottsbluff Campus, 1601 East 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Scottsbluff, NE.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:49 a.m.

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Karen S. Anderson, Chairperson

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Susan L. Verbeck, Secretary