

**WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE AREA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**INFORMAL MEETING
MINUTES**

April 17, 2024

The Western Community College Area Board of Governors held an Informal Board meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 in the Coral E. Richards Boardroom at Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff Campus, located at 1601 East 27th 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, April 9, 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	Absent
Allan D. Kreman	Present
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 will be limited to a five-minute presentation. There were no public comments.

District One Vacancy Update

Ms. Anderson reported that interviews to fill the District One vacancy will be scheduled next week.

New Board Member Onboarding Session

Review New Board Member 90-Day Onboarding Plan

Chair Anderson referenced the handout regarding the New Board Member 90-day Onboarding Plan. Board members were asked to review the document and forward comments to the Board secretary. Chair Anderson noted that additional information can be found in the New Board Member Onboarding Executive Summary.

Employee Life Cycle

President Dart explained that he would be sharing information about the specific role of the Board in the employee life cycle. Ms. Ault and Ms. Gion will share information about what we are currently seeing in the workforce as we are trying to fill positions. They will also share recruitment updates and how recruitment of employees is going here at WNCC.

Human Resources Executive Director, Kathy Ault and Assistant Director, Lisa Gion joined the meeting to provide information about the HR Department's role in the employee life cycle. Ms. Gion stated that in response to the strategic plan, time has been spent reimagining Human Resources and their role and what that looks like for the institution.

Ms. Gion reported due to the tight job market, candidates have the leverage to make specific requests. Over the last year, time has been spent finding ways to automate and ensure the College is competitive. NFP Compensation Consulting was retained by the College to complete a comprehensive compensation study. The last study was conducted in the nineties. The recently completed study results will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Gion stated in the past, the benefits package has been the institutions most important recruiting tool. Following COVID and the state of the current market, benefits packages seem to have less leverage than before. Some people care about benefits and some care very little, but most are unhappy if benefits are not available. HR will be looking at what the benefits package needs to look like in order to retain the people who may have been recruited based on those benefits and also recruit people who have placed less importance on benefits.

In response to an inquiry regarding employee retention, Ms. Gion stated it is necessary to have options because there is such diversity in what people want, so flexibility is the key. Additionally, people will not look at our positions if we cannot pay what they want to earn. Therefore, the College pay structure is being revised so it can be forward moving.

In response to an inquiry about reduction in force and why people leave, Ms. Gion responded there is not one particular area that stands out. Some people move to another location, decide to continue their education, find a better position or decide to retire.

President Dart mentioned if the Board starts seeing significant trends associated with people leaving, or if the personnel report presented at the regular meetings contains a large number of resignations, it is likely a sign that culturally, there might be problems and the Board should start asking questions.

Employee Life Cycle (cont.)

Most of the Board's interaction is with the President, but there has to be the ability for someone to say the Board needs to know this and they need to know this without the president being the one to gloss over an issue. Recent conversations with legal counsel have been regarding Human Resource's role with the Board because there needs to be policy that lays this out.

Ms. Gion explained that NeoEd is a platform allowing HR to tailor information in Colleague, which is the institution's main data system. There are four modules that go along with the platform.

Insight

Allows HR to have an online recruitment platform not only to communicate positions and gather applications, but more efficiently track and report on them. The platform also provides data about the types of employees, demographics, and what they might be missing.

Onboard

The process for hiring starts with a person being recruited, hired, and then moved forward to the onboard platform, which is onboarding them into the institution. Onboard automates many of those processes. In response to an inquiry, Ms. Gion added that HR also conducts exit interviews.

Perform and Learn

Allows HR to automate both the communication about performance and also the tracking. Ms. Gion stated that HR is working toward automating the details of daily work so they can focus on culture and feedback for employees and growing people, which in turn makes their department more impactful.

Evaluation

Ms. Gion shared the employee evaluation tool currently in place is fairly simple, but is not specific to the position. Going forward, HR will likely move towards looking at the job descriptions because that is what a performance evaluation addresses, are employees performing accordingly. This tool will allow regular feedback as opposed to waiting until the end of the year. If there are issues or training needs, they can be identified sooner, rather than later.

Faculty evaluation is separate from professional and support staff evaluation. Faculty are evaluated every three years. Probationary faculty are evaluated every semester.

Title IX

Ms. Ault explained Title IX deals with sexual misconduct and is called sexual harassment, which includes sexual assault, date violence, domestic violence and stalking. Title IX also deals with equality in sports. Ms. Ault explained the process involved with a Title IX investigation. One complaint or one investigation requires ten people ready to move forward to address the issue.

Employee Life Cycle (cont.)

Reduction in Force Policy

President Dart explained the College is following state statute in regard to reduction in force. Even though there are specific reasons for a reduction in force, institutional finances are often the leading factor. It can also involve elimination of existing programs that no longer have sufficient enrollment. Two policies have been drafted that address reduction in force. BP-430 deals with faculty and BP-431 deals with staff.

Accompanying procedures outline the process for reduction in force and involuntary separation. Both policies will be presented as first reads at the Regular Board meeting. In response to an inquiry, President Dart confirmed a reduction in force is on the table due to the current financial situation. The College is not where it needs to be financially, so there will be cuts this year and there could be personnel cuts as part of that. Hopefully, this year it can be handled through natural attrition. Regarding faculty and what is stated in statute, we are past the window where notification would have to be made of non-renewal due to reduction in force, so it is not on the table this year. Enrollment data will be utilized for programs and trends and if a program will be successful in the future. This year, the College should be able to carry on through natural attrition and cuts that are being made.

Remote Work

Ms. Ault reported the HR Advisory Council has been working on a remote work policy and procedure. The Council had concerns about safety, workers comp, equipment, how to monitor remote work, etc., so a few weeks ago, the topic was discussed at a President's Executive Planning Team meeting. In the past, President Dart implemented a remote work policy so he provided useful information. During discussion, it was determined remote work should be beneficial not only to the employee and the institution, but how is that determined and how are people held accountable. The advisory council will continue work on the policy and hope to have a draft for presentation to constituents by the end of the summer semester.

President Dart mentioned Ms. Gion shared this new generation of applicants go somewhere else if there is not at least some flexibility and remote work. This flexibility is important because when the institution has an opening, we have gone from having dozens of applicants to just a handful, and only a few who are qualified. When talking about remote work being mutually beneficial, it might indicate a number of reasons it is beneficial to the institution. President Dart stated he does not anticipate the institution will have significant numbers of remote employees, but he does see flexibility within positions that can have a remote component.

Policies and Procedures

President Dart stated part of the Board's role is approving policies and ensuring policies are current and meet statutory requirements as well as the needs of the institution. Procedures usually accompany policies and go through the shared governance process with final approval by the president. Hiring a college president is also the Board's role along with continuous evaluation of the president, which is addressed in a policy.

Faculty Negotiated Agreement

The Board assigns two observers who attend meetings during the faculty negotiated agreement process. The Board also approves the final agreement which is the basis for compensation increases for staff and administration. In addition to compensation increases, the Board approves the College audit and budget.

Board Employee

As previously mentioned, the Board hires a president and authorizes them to approve employee appointments, resignations, or dismissals. The Board approves the President's Personnel Report presented each month at the Regular Board meeting. The Board hires only one employee, which is the president, who oversees the day-to-day functions of the college.

Board member Comments

Board members were reminded that the student awards ceremony is scheduled April 30, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. and graduation is scheduled May 11, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Chair Anderson encouraged Board member representation at both events.

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 1:00 p.m., Coral E. Richards Boardroom, Scottsbluff Campus, 1601 East 27th Street, Scottsbluff, NE.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 12:02 p.m.

Karen S. Anderson, Chairperson

Susan L. Verbeck, Secretary