

BOARD RETREAT MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF LARAMIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, STATE OF WYOMING, HELD FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2014, PETERSEN BOARD ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, LARAMIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Board Present: Chairwoman Carol Merrell, Secretary Brenda Lyttle, Treasurer Ed Mosher, and Trustees Bill Dubois, Don Erickson, Christine Lummis and Butch Keadle (ACC Ex Officio Member)

Board Excused: Vice Chairman Kevin Kilty

**1. CALL TO ORDER** of the July 18, 2014, Board Retreat of the Laramie County Community College District Board of Trustees – Board Chairwoman Carol Merrell

Board Chairwoman Carol Merrell called to order the July 18, 2014, Board Retreat of the Laramie County Community College District Board of Trustees at 8:10 a.m.

**2. CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY** – President Schaffer

President Schaffer began with an explanation of how and when the Campus Climate Survey was delivered last fall. It was given to satisfy a few key performance measures, namely employee satisfaction and campus climate. Based on the results of the survey, a general theme of “communication” was determined to be an area of weakness for the college. At the Board Retreat in January, the Board requested that Dr. Schaffer follow up with a plan to address the communication issue. Phyllis Lundy was contacted to visit our college to host various focus groups addressing three specific questions. The first question was to define what effective communication entails. Next she requested specific examples of times that communication did not work well. Finally, she asked for specific recommendations to improve communication on campus.

There was immediate concern going into the focus groups that the results needed to go to the Board and not the President, as employees were fearful about Dr. Schaffer receiving the results. Roughly 20% of LCCC employees participated in the focus groups, as participation was voluntary. Dr. Schaffer was hopeful to receive some actionable information from the results, and has spent time reading through the results to determine where to go next. Cabinet members also spent some time going through it at their retreat last week, and are looking for ways to implement specific standards of communication as we move forward. At this time Dr. Schaffer is looking for feedback from the Board as to specific comments, questions, and ideas that can be gleaned from the process and results.

Trustee Erickson commented that there seems to be a breakdown in the information flow once it leaves President’s Cabinet and is disseminated into various areas on campus. He inquired about a way for all employee groups to define interpersonal communication and develop a plan to create better communication across campus. Dr. Schaffer agreed that the filtering seems to happen with mid-level management, since some groups meet frequently, while other groups do not meet at all. There also seems to be two separate struggles. First, the clarity of the communication needs to be strengthened. Instead of just sharing what has already happened, Dr. Schaffer would like there to be an explanation of the process and justification of decisions that are made. Second, individuals must work on the way they communicate with each other. Dr. Schaffer described plans to develop the evaluation process to include interpersonal skills and to have interpersonal communication skills built into learning goals and professional development plans. HR is working on ideas to have new employee communication trainings, as well as both individual and campus-wide communication skills trainings.

Dr. Schaffer discussed the importance of consistency in communication, as well as clarity of expectations for individuals. He addressed the need for frequent staff meetings, as well as keeping track of meeting notes/minutes in one central location. EaglesEye has been determined as the location for all groups to post their minutes, so that meeting information will be easily accessible for everyone. Dr. Schaffer is also planning

to create more video updates, and to attend meetings across campus as frequently as possible. With regards to campus trainings, Trustee Erickson inquired about expectations for attendance. At this time attendance is voluntary. Currently the only mandatory events for all staff are the Fall and Spring Kickoffs. Trustee Erickson expressed the concern that voluntary trainings could defeat the goal of getting all individuals to communicate at the same level. If our expectation is for a certain style of communication to occur, but individuals choose not (or are not allowed) to attend voluntary meetings, then communication will continue to struggle. Trustee Mosher agreed that some training should be mandatory, so that employees recognize the significance. He gave an example of how various divisions continue to view advising differently, and therefore communicate differently to their employees. He feels that meetings/communications about these important topics should be mandatory. He also extended that idea to include follow-up meetings to verify that communication is being handled appropriately.

Dr. Schaffer noted that there are going to be more mandatory trainings coming up this year. The Title IX trainings will be mandatory, as well as the training that HR is going to be giving on the Policies and Procedures. With the changes to degrees and certificates, faculty and deans will have to be involved in all of that training as well. Chairwoman Merrell suggested including additional trainings with mandatory ones, so that all staff are getting the information. Dr. Schaffer explained that is what he is attempting to do with the in-services. At this time the focus is to really hone in on the tools and communications that are being used. Dr. Schaffer feels that we are on the right path, but still have a ways to go. With the new policies and procedures in place it will be easier to follow appropriate steps to make sure things are happening the way they need to. Trustee Erickson stated that when he first became a Trustee, the system was in complete overhaul. He is happy with the way the college has been reorganized, but wants to make sure that we monitor our progress to make sure things are turning out the way we envisioned. Trustee Lummis made the point that there are certain communication behaviors that will not change. She described her own experiences with employees, and noted that diverse personalities and egos will always be a factor.

Finally, Chairwoman Merrell shared a conversation that she had with Marti Cizek. According to Marti, at times when companies/colleges give multiple surveys to their employees, the employees begin to feel overwhelmed and that they do not matter. She recommended that the college wait a few years before offering another survey. Trustee Mosher questioned how many participants there were in this survey. Dr. Schaffer explained that the process was self-selection, and that they only participated if they wanted to. There was definitely more participation in the Campus Climate Survey, as that one was pushed heavily to get a majority of respondents. He also mentioned that there are some surveys that we have to do regularly, but ad hoc surveys could wait. In lieu of surveys, Dr. Schaffer recommended asking specific questions at division meetings, as well as the roundtable discussions that the Board hosted last year. For example the Board could ask students who their advisor is, and how orientation went. Dr. Schaffer plans to do the same when he meets with various employee groups. In this way information could still be gathered, but on a more personal level.

### **3. PRESIDENT SCHAFFER'S 2015 GOALS – President Schaffer**

Dr. Schaffer presented his 2015 Personal Goals to the Board for approval. Trustee Lyttle commented that eight goals is a lot to take on, and she is troubled that he would not be able to achieve them all. She questioned if maybe he should choose five to focus on. Dr. Schaffer responded that many of his goals are already moving forward on autopilot, and would only require a small portion of his time. He could potentially choose three to remove from the list, but those items would still happen and would still require his time and energy. Dr. Schaffer also mentioned that he would like to be able to cross these off by the end of the year, but in reality these goals will continue on into the future. He feels that he will be able to show significant progress in each area, but will not be able to remove them from the docket entirely.

Trustee Mosher questioned how to measure/assess the progress made in each area. Trustee Erickson reminded the Board that Dr. Schaffer had addressed his previous goals in a June 18 memo which he felt was adequate. Dr. Schaffer remarked that a summative evaluation would be difficult. He requested some time to develop a method for presenting his progress to the Board. Chairwoman Merrell questioned how often Dr. Schaffer should report his progress. After a short discussion it was decided that Dr. Schaffer would report progress on his goals in six months, with a final report next year.

Next, the Trustees looked at each goal individually. Goal One states that Dr. Schaffer hopes to improve internal communication and messaging. After the previous discussion, the Board agreed that this goal is appropriate. Goal Two states that Dr. Schaffer plans to assist Human Resources in improving their functions and responsiveness. At this point there needs to be an understanding that HR is doing a lot of the work that needs to be handled by managers. Many times HR is blamed for things that were actually the responsibility of managers/supervisors. Dr. Schaffer recognizes that there is work to do within Human Resources, so they are working to fix the system. There will need to be continuity between the new processes and procedures, and while each member of the team has their own specialty, they are working to generalize their knowledge so that more than one person can assist individuals that come into their office. Trustee Mosher questioned why the organizational chart from the directory wasn't included in last year's directory. Dr. Schaffer responded that it will return this year.

Trustee Keadle commended Dr. Schaffer for his involvement in each area of the college, but also pointed out that he cannot allow himself to become too entrenched in other areas, or he will not be able to do his job adequately. Trustees Mosher and Erickson made the comments that maybe an Associate President or Special Projects type of position might become necessary. At one time the college did have a Public Affairs/Associate President position. Dr. Schaffer agreed that might be a conversation to have down the road. At this point he would like to see each area on campus begin to function well, with management handling their roles appropriately. At that time they could determine if an individual to assist in maintenance would be appropriate.

Goal Three describes Dr. Schaffer's plan to assist in the reinvention of the college's program offerings to be designed for student success. The college has never formally defined what each degree is, and what its purpose should be. Gen Ed will look at every program to make sure they are in compliance, as well as give a general purposeful overview of each program. Once we have that overview, we will be able to see what things are not working and what changes need to occur. The college will be developing meta-majors, as it has been shown that when a student commits to a specific program they are more likely to succeed. An AS or an AA do not have value without the final degree. If students are going to declare a major they will need to have a formal articulation agreement. For the students that are not sure exactly what they want to do, they can choose a meta-major, which will place them broadly in a program. Meta-majors look at common coursework across various disciplines, but do not declare a specific program for coursework. However, because they are in the general area of interest, their coursework will be mapped out to start them on the right path. This will be a huge shift from where we were in the past, and Dr. Schaffer will need to be a big part of that. Dr. Fierro and the deans will do a lot of the heavy work, but Dr. Schaffer will step in to make sure everything is clearly mapped out and that significant progress is being made.

Trustee Erickson requested a clearer definition as to what a meta-major actually is. Dr. Schaffer defined "meta" as a broad field, so a meta-major would look at a broad perspective of elements that could be grouped together. For example if a student isn't sure of their specific goal, but knows they are interested in a certain field, they could follow the meta-major which would place them in a broad system that would give them the foundation for whichever degree they ultimately choose. When students are undeclared they perform at significantly lower rates. Within Gen Ed, there are 15 credits that apply to every degree. Thus students that have no idea where they want to go can at least have one full semester that allows them to take relevant credits while experiencing what the college has to offer. At the end of the first semester students should at least be

able to choose a program. At that point they will be able to take courses that still apply to a general degree, but are also slightly more focused. Even if they change their minds they will still be getting required credits. That, paired with the advising system that is now in place, will assist them as they decide specifically where they are going with their education.

Goal Four focuses on the “Building Forward” Facilities Plan. The Flex Tech and Student/University Center will both begin construction this year. However, work on the rest of the plan must continue as well. ACC will still be looking at their needs, as there are serious space issues over there. With WyoTech for sale, and a budding interest in technical programs, Dr. Malm is exploring various options. Trustee Erickson inquired about the Fine and Performing Arts building, and asked if a task force has been established. Dr. Schaffer responded that a few internal folks have been identified, but need to progress from there. At this time there is interest in holding off to determine if Arts Cheyenne will receive their grant to do a cultural inventory. If that happens the inventory should begin in August. Trustee Mosher recommended that the Board also review the Master Plan during the fall of 2015.

*--At this point in the meeting Dr. Schaffer stepped out for a few moments. During that time Trustee Mosher expressed a concern about New Trustee Orientation. He feels that it is important to orient Trustees to their responsibilities and would also like them to have some professional development. Trustee Erickson voiced a need for a formalized education budget for trustees that would allow for this. The idea was expressed that webinars would be helpful and could be purchased as well.*

Goal Five takes the Strategic Plan to the next level. Dr. Schaffer is working on a model for the college with teams and established timelines. This will mesh with our continuous improvement system. Goal Six is to make substantial progress on the assessment of student learning. Dr. Schaffer stated that it is extremely difficult in education to measure human behavior. Taking this process and making it institution-wide will also be a challenge. Assessment is something that instructors do naturally, but it is bound to the individual on how it is accomplished. We must build a system that explains what to expect from each class, and then follow through to make sure those things are happening. Our faculty have not been trained to assess. It will take time, but eventually will permeate the campus. The Center for Teaching and Learning will have a big piece of this process. Goal Seven will implement methods for Program Review. This process will be headed up by Dr. Bender. The entire framework for program review is assessment. By the end of this year every program will have an assessment plan. Finally, Goal Eight seeks to continue to improve and add needed policies and procedures. Dr. Schaffer mentioned that this one will be ongoing.

Trustee Dubois moved and Trustee Erickson seconded,

**MOTION:** That the Board of Trustees approves President Schaffer’s 2015 Goals as written.

**MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

Trustee Mosher added clarification that as we proceed, Dr. Schaffer will determine how to assess progress within each goal. He will present a progress report in six months.

#### **4. STUDENT ENROLLMENT TRENDS – President Schaffer**

Dr. Schaffer explained that enrollment at colleges in Wyoming are on a downward trend. He presented a graph which overlays recessionary periods with college enrollment statistics. Wyoming lags the nation slightly when it comes to recession, so our statistics are always slightly behind the trend. Typically after every recession there is an increase in enrollment followed by a decrease. Dr. Schaffer studied some information about this and found that a rise in unemployment rates leads to a rise in college students. Understandably then, a drop in

unemployment leads to a decrease in college enrollment. Based on all of these factors it is not surprising that we are currently experiencing this enrollment dip.

Dr. Schaffer then presented the Board with a graph from WICHE that shows current and predicted numbers of high school graduates. According to the graph, Wyoming expects to buck the trend and will see a rise in the number of high school graduates. So currently we are experiencing a reduced number of high school graduates as well as a decrease in unemployment. The future shows that we can expect greater numbers of high school graduates that will be attending community colleges. Currently two-thirds of Wyoming enrollments in Higher Education are at community colleges. So, while we are experiencing a lull at this time, Dr. Schaffer predicted that we can soon expect to see a period of increase across the state. Based on historical evidence, Dr. Schaffer expects one more year of lower numbers before we see the rise. He stated that we need to be prepared in advance for the rise to happen, so that we are ready for the greater numbers of students. Trustee Mosher requested a future meeting regarding enrollment management. Dr. Schaffer also wanted the Board to be aware that he has just written a letter to all students that attended school last semester and were in good standing, but did not reapply this year. The purpose of the letter was to inform them of different options for financial assistance and to encourage them to continue with their educational goals. Chairwoman Merrell requested a copy of the letter, and Dr. Schaffer agreed to share it after the meeting via email.

**5. EASTERN LARAMIE COUNTY AND WARREN AIR FORCE BASE REPORTS** – President Schaffer

Dr. Schaffer recommended that these reports be presented during a board dinner due to lack of time.

**6. NEXT MEETINGS – August and September Meeting Schedule**

The Board will meet as follows in August and September:

- Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting
- September 3<sup>rd</sup> – No Board Meeting (President Schaffer and Board Chairwoman Carol Merrell will be out of town.)
- Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> – Board Meeting

Roundtables with faculty, staff, and students will be held again in the fall but in a different format.

**7. ADJOURNMENT** of the July 18, 2014, Board Retreat of the Laramie County Community College District Board of Trustees – Board Chairwoman Carol Merrell

Board Chairwoman Carol Merrell adjourned the July 18, 2014, Board Retreat of the Laramie County Community College District Board of Trustees at 11:58 a.m.

**8. VISIT WITH INTERESTED TRUSTEE CANDIDATES** – *No candidates were present.*

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Thompson  
Board Recording Secretary