

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF LARAMIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, STATE OF WYOMING, HELD WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2020, via Zoom <https://lccc-wy.zoom.us/j/3816608853>

Board Present: Board Chairman Jess E. Ketcham, Vice Chairman Wendy Soto, Secretary Bob Salazar, Treasurer Don Erickson, Trustees Brenda Lyttle, Carol Merrell

Board Excused: Trustee Thompson, ACC Ex Officio Trustee Keadle, and Student Ex Officio Trustee Karyn Forbes

Staff Present: President Joe Schaffer, Vice Presidents Kari Brown-Herbst, Rick Johnson, and Melissa Stutz; Interim Associate Vice President Clark Harris, Associate Vice Presidents Lisa Trimble and Kim Bender and Executive Director Tammy Maas; Administrators, Faculty, and Staff Teresa Authier, Linda Herget, Victoria Steel, and Legal Counsel Tara Nethercott

Visitors: Janel Bruner (*Wingspan* Student Writer)

1. CALL TO ORDER of the October 7, 2020, Special Board Meeting of the Laramie County Community College District Board of Trustees – Board Chairman Jess Ketcham

Board Chairman Jess Ketcham called to order the October 7, 2020, Special Board Meeting of the Laramie County Community College District Board of Trustees at 4 p.m.

2. WCCC AGENDA ITEMS – President Joe Schaffer

- Tuition
 - WCCC Memo – [Tuition Memo Caldwell Hicswa October 2020](#)
 - WCCC Agenda – Tuition Discussion – TAB C (link below)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lCKKTahyoiWYZQr5nDRa8esWZFjxvb-5/view>
 - WCCC Agenda – Tuition Review – Executive Summary – TAB T (link below)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1raYVuxGlAC1LuVwbyefTI0EWtjMo0M47/view>
 - WCCC Agenda – Consideration of Tuition Rates 2021-2020 – TAB U (link below)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/12YONF52qse6i7emuHZfH_dzPEqIhduh6/view

President Schaffer stated the purpose of today's special meeting is to gather board input on a possible tuition increase and the Gillette College items that will be considered during tomorrow's formal Commission meeting.

The Board asked President Schaffer to carry forward their opinions as expressed in the following motions.

- Since 2018, the Commission has had the practice of taking up the tuition conversation in October with any approved adjustments going into effect for the next two years. The Commission will be considering the following:
 - Increase General Tuition
 - 1) The Commission has established a range for the student's share of cost of education. That range falls between 23% and 25%, which is the community colleges' percentage of the total State and local funding. Currently, that percentage is below 23%. This remains true even with the cuts in local revenue and State aid appropriations. The drop below 23% is the impetus behind the Commission's recommendation of a tuition increase. Using last year's revenues per the

Commission's policy, the resulting increase would be at a minimum of \$8/credit, equaling \$107/credit. If the reductions in local funding and cuts to State aid are taken into consideration, the increase would be \$2/credit, equaling \$101/credit. (POSTSCRIPT TO MINUTES: On October 8th the Commission voted to increase tuition by 6% from \$99/credit hour to \$105/credit hour for in-state students and to remove the tuition cap.)

- Implement an Out-Of-District Tuition

A Missouri model applies a lower rate for in-district students and a higher rate for in-state, out-of-district students. In Wyoming, by statute land owners pay four mills (LCCC-five mills) in the seven community college districts to support their locate community colleges. The Commission has modeled two recommendations:

- 1) Charge a higher tuition rate for students coming from any non-taxing district. For example, if a student from Natrona County, a taxing district, wants to attend LCCC, that student would pay the lower rate. However, if a student from Converse County, a non-taxing district, wants to attend LCCC, that student would pay the higher rate.
- 2) A true out-of-district rate is where any student who comes from outside the community college district would pay the higher rate. For example, a student who comes from Natrona County would pay the higher rate, even though they are coming from a taxing district.

- Remove the Entire Tuition Cap

LCCC has done exhaustive research about a tuition cap. The idea that resurrected during the introduction of Complete College Wyoming was a tuition cap would incentivize students to enroll in more credits, attend full-time, and complete their degree. For years, the College had a cap at 12 credit hours, which meant students paid tuition only on the first 12 credits; any credits after that were free. Two years ago, the Commission raised the cap to 15 credits. Data shows that neither the 12-hour cap nor the 15-hour cap incentivizes students to take more credits. The community college presidents agree on removing the current 15-hour cap, because it's a strategy that does not work.

President Schaffer stated he does not believe this the time for a tuition increase and that the October timing for considering a tuition increase should be moved to after the legislative session. Trustee Erickson concurred that this is not the time to impose a tuition increase. Two points opposed to a tuition increase are:

- 1) Implementation of a tuition increase for next year requires staff to build new student fee tables and doing so in March is problematic when students start registering in April. However, this can be managed.
- 2) If the community colleges do not do something to help themselves, legislators will be less likely to address tuition rates. President Schaffer's response to this is the community colleges and the Legislature should do everything possible to fund higher education before students are asked to pick up a larger share of the funding burden.

Trustee Erickson moved and Trustee Soto seconded,

MOTION: That the Board of Trustees recommends the WCCC postpone the tuition discussion or consider increasing the tuition for another year (not 2021—added for clarification).

DISCUSSION: Trustee Soto stated she is concerned about raising tuition in the current economic climate. Board Chairman Ketcham inquired and Vice President Johnson responded the College has not received an indication about how the local tax revenue is trending. President Schaffer stated an increase in Laramie County's local assessment may result in less State dollars after the recapture/redistribution process, citing

Sweetwater County's dip in local revenues. He added the College's one mill dollars are not affected by the recapture/redistribution. One of the WACCT's strategies is to implore the Governor and the Legislature to implement a strategy for general future revenues, knowing there will be a time lag between the implementation of legislation, programs, and revenue collections and to utilize the Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account (LSRA) to avoid any further reductions to community colleges.

Trustee Erickson clarified his motion does not include the removal the tuition cap and that he will make another motion regarding the tuition cap.

Trustee Salazar noted a tuition increase does not address the need for a change in the long-term funding model; i.e., a system review of the overall revenue picture. He also noted the community colleges' obligation to provide higher education to its students.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously. (Trustee Thompson was absent.)

Trustee Erickson moved and Trustee Soto seconded,

MOTION: That the Board of Trustees recommends to the Commission removing the cap on the tuition scale.

DISCUSSION: None

MOTION CARRIED unanimously. (Trustee Thompson absent)

Trustee Erickson stated he struggles with an increase in the cost of tuition for an out-of-district student, adding he believes such an increase would have a negative impact on what the community colleges may propose for additional funding sources. President Schaffer concurred, saying that philosophically from the LCCC perspective, the College provides substantial services to non-taxing counties, including but not limited to Albany County. He would prefer support from the non-taxing counties be implemented equitably at the State level for the services they receive from community colleges. He stated that, as with a tuition increase, every funding possibility should be explored before placing a burden on out-of-district students, emphasizing both increases may alienate the student populations the College wishes to engage.

Trustee Erickson moved and Trustee Soto seconded,

MOTION: That the Board of Trustees recommends to the Commission that they do not entertain a higher cost of tuition for out-of-district students residing within the state.

DISCUSSION: Trustee Lyttle stated she is willing to vote "yes" on the motion but does not want the discussion to stop about a statewide assessment. Trustee Erickson stated he has another motion that will address Trustee Lyttle's point. Trustee Soto reiterated the timing for raising tuition is bad and doing so may alienate out-of-district students from attending LCCC.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously. (no Trustee Thompson)

Trustee Erickson stated the time is long-passed for providing a statewide mechanism that will bring funds from the 16 non-taxing service areas.

Trustee Erickson moved and Trustee Lyttle seconded,

MOTION: That the Board of Trustees recommends the Commission “support” a statewide one mill that would be specific for funding the community colleges in the state of Wyoming.

DISCUSSION: Trustee Soto asked if the motion should be for the 16 non-taxing counties or all 23 counties. Trustee Erickson believed the motion would be perceived more equitable by the Legislature if the taxation was for all 23 counties and suggested discussion should take place. Hearing Board Chairman Ketcham’s concern about including all 23 counties at this point, Trustee Erickson agreed the motion should reference only the 16 non-taxing counties. President Schaffer believed that the Commission will resolve that there needs to be a way to address those counties not providing support. The specific mechanism for doing this will need to be determined through the legislative process.

Board Chairman Ketcham offered the following amendment:

AMENDMENT TO ORIGINAL MOTION: That the Board of Trustees recommends the Commission “support” an assessment of a one mill levy for the 16 counties outside of the community college districts.

Trustee Erickson accepted the amendment to the motion, but Trustee Lyttle thought the motion should be less specific. Trustee Erickson stated the intent of the motion is to tax the 16 non-taxing counties, not all 23 counties. Hearing this and following further discussion about the motion’s clarification, including the other counties would not have trustees on the existing boards, Trustee Lyttle agreed to move forward with the amended motion.

President Schaffer noted assessing one mill on the 16 counties would generate about \$12 million. If Gillette College were to become its own district, the amount would be closer to \$8 million. The current reduction imposed by the State is \$28 million. However, the funding amount in real dollars received from the State for the community colleges has been reduced by approximately \$58 million. Putting this into perspective, President Schaffer stated the one mill may be not enough but doubted the Legislature could be convinced to assess more than one mill.

Trustee Soto offered an amendment to the amended motion that “of a one mill levy” be removed from the language. Trustee Erickson seconded Trustee Soto’s amendment and Trustee Lyttle concurred.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Trustees recommends the Commission “support” an assessment for the 16 counties outside of the community college districts.

DISCUSSION: Trustee Salazar stated the language is vague and could be open to interpretation. Trustee Soto suggested the language provides opportunities for many kinds of assessments, and Board Chairman Ketcham agreed. Trustee Salazar stated he is understanding the motion is just to get the discussion on the table. Board Chairman Ketcham and Trustee Erickson said “yes.”

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDED MOTION CARRIED unanimously. (Trustee Thompson was absent.)

- Gillette College

President Schaffer stated he anticipates WCCC Executive Director Caldwell will have a report and that any deliberations and action will take place during their next meeting. He will provide a report on the Commission’s deliberations and actions on Gillette College during the Board’s October 28th meeting. Trustee Soto said knowing this, she would suggest a conversation be held later. Trustee Lyttle and Trustee Erickson agreed.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT** (Public comment may be made on anything not on the agenda. Comments will be limited to five minutes.) – Board Chairman Jess Ketcham

Board Chairman Jess Ketcham called for public input and heard no requests.

4. **ADJOURNMENT** of the October 7, 2020, Special Board Meeting of the Laramie County Community College District Board of Trustees – Board Chairman Jess Ketcham

Trustee Soto moved and Trustee Erickson seconded,

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

Board Chairman Jess Ketcham adjourned the October 7, 2020, Special Board Meeting of the Laramie County Community College District Board of Trustees at 4:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vicki Boreing
Board Recording Secretary