

**Wyoming Community College Commission
Agency Annual Report - FY 2020**

Agency Information:

Executive Director:

Dr. Sandra Caldwell

Contact Person:

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Statutory References:

W.S. 21-18-101 *et seq.*

Basic Information:

Number of Employees:

13 authorized full-time employees

Clients Served:

Wyoming citizens and visitors, as well as individuals residing outside the state interested in pursuing educational goals via distance education delivery systems and programs.

Agency to Which You're Group Reports:

The Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) is an independent state agency governed by commission members.

Number of Members:

The WCCC consists of seven members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Meeting Frequency:

Commission meetings are held in various locations throughout the state at least quarterly.

Budget Information/Expenditures for FY20:

The WCCC has a 2020-2021 Biennial Budget of \$267,910,534 which consists of \$257,415,201 in state funds, \$1,873,758 in federal funds, and \$8,621,575 in other funds.

Expenditures for fiscal-year 2020 included state funds of \$126,380,276 federal funds of \$915,795 and other funds of \$1,013,250 for a total of \$128,309,321.

Primary Functions:

Advocate Community College Education: Ensure the Governor, Legislature, University of Wyoming, Department of Education, Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees, the Educational Attainment Executive Council, and ENDOW are abreast of community college initiatives.

Distribute State Aid Funding to Community Colleges and WPTV: To ensure the seven community colleges have the financial resources necessary to provide outstanding educational opportunities, the WCCC develops and maintains the funding allocation model (obtaining approval from the Commission via administrative rule), and distributes the funding provided by the State of Wyoming to the seven colleges and Wyoming Public Television (WPTV).

Provide State Reimbursement for College Employee Health Insurance Premiums, Increased Retirement Contributions and Library Expenses: The WCCC reimburses the colleges for approved expenses related to eligible employee fringe benefits, and for educational resource expenses approved by the college system's library committee.

Provide and Maintain the Colleges' System-wide Administrative Computing System: The WCCC configures, maintains and updates through innovative software programs, the colleges' shared computing system to ensure a common data structure, and to support development of reports for the colleges, Commission, Governor and Legislature. System maintenance and new software program costs are negotiated by WCCC staff through the RFP and contracting processes.

Consider and Approve College Program Proposals: Through a collaborative effort between the college academic officers and WCCC staff, proposals for new or changing programs are developed, and then presented to the Commission for consideration and approval.

Administer Student Loan and Grant Programs: The WCCC manages the Wyoming Investment in Nursing Program, the Wyoming Adjunct Professor Loan Repayment Program and the Overseas Combat Veterans Tuition Assistance Program.

Administer Adult Education and High School Equivalency Programs: The WCCC manages and monitors these two programs in accordance with applicable federal and state rules, regulations and policies. Adult Education Program grant awards are distributed using a performance-based funding allocation model.

Determine Community College Building Needs: In accordance with Wyoming Statute § 21-18-225, the Commission identifies college building needs, and develops a prioritized list of these capital construction projects for further consideration by other policy-makers, including the State Building Commission, the Governor and the Legislature.

Performance Highlights / Major Accomplishments of FY 2020:

- Wyoming's Community Colleges and the Commission quickly pivoted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and serve their students and communities. The WCCC was tasked by the Education Taskforce and CIG to assist the colleges in developing a Guidance Protocol document outlining the process for the colleges to use phased re-entry and re-opening plans. The colleges moved the vast majority of spring and summer classes to fully online. Additionally, they moved many fall classes to an online modality. Due to recent Higher Learning Commission notifications regarding a Notice of Change of Operations, switching modalities held the colleges harmless in their Level of Instruction in relation to the allocation model.

Initial COVID-19 cost projections to the community colleges and the WCCC are in excess of \$56 million. The CARES Act provided \$50 million through three primary sources of funding to the colleges to offset COVID-19 related expenses. WCCC submitted three separate categories of CARES State Funds Requests: Community Colleges (15 requests), Educational Attainment (2 requests), and Community College Commission (4 requests). Additionally the 12 Community College Commission requests were listed in priority order (immediate costs through anticipated costs or uncertain eligibility with each college having distinct amounts within each request).

- The Commission reviewed and approved the substantive change process for implementation and offering of no more than two Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree programs at Central Wyoming College, Laramie Community College, Northwest College, Northern Wyoming Community College District, and

Western Wyoming College. Subsequently, The Commission approved BAS program requests at CWC, LCCC, NWC, and WWWC. Later, the Higher Learning Commission granted final approval for CWC and LCCC programs for which both enrolled their first cohort of student's fall 2020.

- The Wyoming Works program was established through the 2019 Legislative session (SEA 78). Soon after the Commission began accepting applications from the colleges to identify programs as eligible for Wyoming Works student grants. There are currently 320 programs offered across the seven colleges, and 234 students have received Wyoming Works grants in the amount of \$529,353. Additionally, \$2 million of programmatic grants were provided to the colleges to develop new programs or expand existing programs. These programmatic funds supported a Meat Processing program offered across three colleges (EWC, CWC and NWCCD), a CDL program offered across another three colleges (EWC, NWC and LCCC), a Production Technology program at LCCC, and an expansion of CC's Welding Program. An additional \$1.5 million in student grant funding and \$1 million in programmatic grant funding was approved during the 2020 Budget Session. These additional funds will allow additional expansion of workforce-related programs at all seven colleges.
- Draft emergency and regular rules were approved and promulgated to support the introduction and offering of the Wyoming Works program and providing the process by which Wyoming's Community Colleges can award the Bachelor of Applied Sciences degree program.
- Early in the year Governor Gordon suspended the ENDOW Executive Council. The Educational Attainment Executive Council (EAEC) picked up the next steps in articulating and adopting a statewide plan for Educational Attainment. The council conducted eight focus groups statewide with an emphasis on draft goals, metrics and targets. Their effort resulted in the presentation and adoption of the Wyoming Higher Education 5- and 10- year Strategic plan. The plan is inclusive of the following areas:
 - Alignment of Workforce, Workplace, and Post-Secondary Programs
 - Access and Infrastructure for Recruitment, Retention, and Completion
 - Funding and Affordability
 - College-Going Culture across K-12, Adults, and Business/Industry
- The Commission was tasked with formation of a Community College Sustainable Funding Workgroup as an outcome of the Legislature's December Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC). This new committee has been tasked with outlining 3-4 potential proposals for recommendations of sustainable funding options for the community colleges that result in a net funding addition to allow for increases in costs due to inflationary pressures. At the time of writing this report, the committee has met 3 times and is focusing on providing the requested proposals.
- The Student Transfer Success workgroup selected AcademyOne software to serve as an online transfer solution. The STS team also completed an MOU governing the use of personally identifiable data in the advising process. Related to transfer success, the Common Course Numbering System has undergone significant clean up with approximately 80% of the courses reconciled, a three-fold increase in a single year.
- The WCCC staff has been reorganized with stronger connections made across working areas such as academic programs, technology, contracting, and fiscal operations. New staff were hired with a stronger emphasis on policy, data integration, academic and student success, educational attainment, inter-agency collaboration, public information, and WCCC priorities.
- The Commission has undertaken the sunset of the former statewide community college system strategic plan and development of a new plan aligned with the Educational Attainment Council. While yet to be adopted the new strategic plan includes four primary goals.
 - Educational Attainment – Facilitate postsecondary educational attainment to the betterment of all Wyoming citizens
 - Affordability – Facilitate community college system sustainability, funding, and affordability while keeping higher education as nearly free as possible

- Program Alignment – Facilitate alignment of post-secondary programs with UW, workplace, and workforce providing a seamless pathway for Wyoming citizens to the future endeavors and to the benefit of the state.
 - Economic Development – Facilitate initiatives leading to the diversification and growth of Wyoming’s economy.
- The Commission established the following priorities for FY21, many of which continue from FY20 and are previously noted.
 - Educational Attainment and ENDOW statewide collaboration including further implementation of Wyoming Works and BAS programs
 - Student Transfer Success Process (Common Transcript/Transfer Process and SLEDS implementation)
 - Statewide College System Strategic Plan
 - Community College Sustainable Funding and Higher Education Governance
 - Collaboration to support community college education in light of the “new normal” post-COVID-19 environment
 - Relationship building with Governor, legislators, trustees, colleges, presidents and other stakeholders
 - Explore additional opportunities for grant funding

Wyoming Community College Commission Organizational Chart

