

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Community College Sustainable Funding Workgroup, Dr. Caldwell

SESSION TYPE:

- Approval Action
- Authorization Action
- Information Item
- Other: [describe]
Workshop

APPLIES TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

- Yes (select below):
 - Educated Citizenry
 - Diversified Economy
 - Workforce Development
 - Efficient and Effective Systems
 - Accountability and Improvement
- No [describe purpose]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Wyoming Legislature Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) requested after their December 2019 meeting and during a follow-up January 2020 meeting that the Commission create a workgroup to study and make no more than four recommendations regarding alternative sustainable funding sources for the colleges. A charge was subsequently issued and workgroup membership confirmed in February of 2020.

The Commission engaged the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers Organization (SHEEO) for their expertise in conducting the workgroup. Representatives from both organizations provided extensive baseline context on postsecondary education funding and governance structures using profiles from other states. The workgroup was subsequently divided into four subcommittees with specific roles including:

- Foundational Efforts – To identify past activity and research leading to potential sustainable outcomes.
- Common Language and Messaging – To clarify common funding themes and messaging across Wyoming’s Community College System.
- State Needs – To confirm the state needs as reflected in state statute, the Wyoming Constitution, and the current educational and fiscal climate within the state.
- Funding Strategies – To study current, past, and potential future funding strategies, determine their potential impacts to the colleges and the State.

After extensive research and discussion, the subcommittees reconvened in August and October 2020 to present their findings to the workgroup as comprehensive draft initial recommendations. The information was combined as a final Workgroup report with sustainable funding recommendations, which was approved by the Workgroup December 2, 2020, in advance of upcoming the December 2020 Commission and JAC meetings. The final report and sustainable funding recommendations will be presented to the JAC during the Commissions supplemental budget hearing with the JAC in mid-December.

PRIOR RELATED COMMISSION DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS:

Most Commissioners have attended the five Workgroups scheduled throughout 2020. The Commission has received regular updates from the Workgroup during 2020 meetings.

WHY THIS ITEM IS BEFORE THE COMMISSION:

Requested of the Commission by the JAC.

ACTION REQUIRED AT THIS COMMISSION MEETING:

Approval of the final Sustainable Funding Workgroup report, findings and recommendation.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDED MOTION:

I move to approve the Sustainable Funding Workgroup report, findings, and recommendations for presentation to the Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC).