



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
Dr. Joe Schaffer

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 4, 2021

TO: LCCC Board of Trustees

CC: President's Cabinet

FROM: Dr. Joe Schaffer, President

RE: FY21 Presidential Goals: Mid-Year Progress Update

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We have entered into the second half of our fiscal/academic year 2020/2021. Per Board of Trustees policy on CEO Evaluation and Accountability (Policy 1.3.2), I am providing you with a mid-year progress update towards completion of the goals we have collectively established for me this year. Below is a brief, yet hopefully clear summary of the progress we have made to date in each of these areas.

- 1. A Safe and Successful Return to "Normal"** - Nothing will be more pressing as we start this coming fiscal year than to chart a path forward for LCCC to return to some semblance of normalcy in the Fall of 2020, and through the end of the academic year. The context around COVID-19 remains uncertain and ever-changing, but I am confident that we can find a path forward to have students and employees back on campus in the fall semester, even if it looks different than what it has in the past.

**Progress Update:** It seems like ages ago when we established this goal and were contemplating what our academic year would look like under the global pandemic caused by COVID-19. Yet, half-way through the academic year as I reflect on this goal, I cannot help but feel incredibly proud of the work that LCCC has done to launch the year and meet our three primary objectives: (1) keep people safe, (2) deliver a quality education/service, and (3) ensure the sustainability of LCCC.

Over the course of the fall, we had a cumulative total of 184 lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 associated with LCCC people and places. In nearly all situations, we were able to quickly identify and isolate these cases as a result of our proactive and comprehensive screening/testing protocols. As a result, we have nearly zero instances of virus spread associated with the educational activities of the College. This is with numerous in-person, on-campus classes, and activities still occurring. Overall, our protocols worked and we kept people safe; however, we recognized some challenges.

For example, the impact on large-group quarantines as a result of students contracting COVID

and bringing it to campus, did impact the student educational experience and added considerable burden to the faculty workload. This was mostly associated with residence hall populations and specifically athletic teams. And yet, our athletic team GPA's for the semester were some of the highest we have seen. But we learned and are adapting to better ways to isolate infected or exposed individuals, while also keeping others continuing in their studies and out of quarantine.

In addition, we have also witnessed significant term-to-term enrollment challenges as a result of the pandemic. Most of these are clearly associated with the stress and complexity this environment has placed on our students, but we are also learning how to improve our instructional modalities to better engage, and retain our students. There is considerable work to do here yet, especially as we plan for summer semester and next fall.

Overall though, you should be proud of this college and the people who have stepped up to adapt, adjust, and preserve in the delivery of LCCC's programs and services under some of the most trying circumstance we have ever faced.

*Key Contributors: President's Cabinet, Jesse Blair, James Miller, Diana Wilson, Melissa Dishman, Julie Gerstner, Chad Marley, Victoria Steel, Bill Zink and the entire Return 2 Business Team.*

2. **Navigating State Budget Challenges** – It is no secret that Wyoming is facing significant revenue challenges. These are both a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic, but also that continued pressure on the cornerstones of the state's economy: Coal, Natural Gas, and Oil. We have already been directed to plan for reductions in state funding, ranging from 10 to 30 percent. Even at the lowest ends, this level of budget cut will severely impact LCCC, our people and our offerings. Proactively tackling this challenge will ensure we command the trajectory of our future, but it will be difficult.

**Progress Update:** As if navigating a global pandemic isn't enough, this fall LCCC had to face some of the most significant budget challenges in our 51-year history as a community college. Over the course of the fall semester, we worked diligently, objectively, and inclusively to advance what equates to \$4 million in budget reductions for our next fiscal year for your approval, which you gave unanimously at your December meeting.

While it is hard to find anything worth celebrating in this type of endeavor, I want to say that I believe LCCC has proven itself capable of tackling the most difficult challenges with financial issues. In my nine years here at the College, we have had two large, significant budget reduction efforts, and another few smaller-scale ones. Although there is pain, loss, and service impact that stem from each of these, I believe we approached them in a way that actually has made the institution stronger and more resilient. Our commitment to using evidence, a focus on our primary stakeholders – the students, and a deep caring for the people impacted, all have resulted in not only the achievement of our budget-reduction targets, but also a more deeply committed organization.

I truly appreciate the Board's leadership, willingness to ask the difficult questions, and trust in the institution's ability to make the best decisions in the worst situations. For me, probably the most rewarding is to know that many of our sister community colleges and even others outside of Wyoming have reached out to LCCC to learn and adapt the processes we use in these situations. When you are seen as the "best practice" you have to feel good about not only what

we accomplished, but also the way in which we got there.

***Key Contributors:** President's Cabinet, Lucas Yosten, Jenn Hooke, Jayne Myrick, Faculty and Staff Senates led by Teresa Authier and Linda Herget, and the parents of the Children's Discovery Center for their advocacy.*

3. **Finalize Capital Construction** – As we push near a decade of physical transformation at LCCC, I hope to bring the majority of our capital construction projects to a close. This would include the successful completion and opening of the new Residence Hall, as well as moving our Recreation and Athletics Complex (RAC) from dream, to funding, final design, and construction. Smaller efforts, such as our continued rehabilitation of existing building facades will also be a focus, pending release of state major maintenance funding.

**Progress Update:** I am proud to announce to you that we are nearing the final stages of what is nothing short of a true transformation of LCCC's physical environment. As with everything this fall, nothing seems to come easy, and that included the completion of our two major capital construction projects – the new residence hall and the Fine Arts building renovation and expansion. The COVID-19 pandemic had impacts on both of these projects, but especially on the construction and a delayed opening of the new residence hall. We have also seen impacts to timelines as a result of supply chain issues on both projects, as well as impacts to the labor force and trades given the pandemic.

We have received the Certificate of Occupancy in the new residence hall and our first students moved in for the spring semester. There are still many "punch list" items and even some aspects of the project that won't be completed until we get to the more favorable weather in the spring. But for all intents and purposes, we are up and running. One issue that is yet to be resolved is the loan repayment terms with the state Office of Public Lands and Investments, who administers the Community College Dormitory loan program. With the impact of the pandemic and delayed opening, we do not have the number of students in the hall to generate the revenue needed to fulfill the first loan payment. We are working closely with the appropriate people at the state and our elected officials and have multiple options in the works to ensure we are able to get back onto the right schedule and repayment timeline. I have complete confidence we'll resolve this one without issue.

The Fine Arts building remodel is complete, and the Surbrugg-Prentice Auditorium (SPA) is nearing completion. We have had a few issues with this project, but have been able to work through all of them satisfactorily thus far. A current error in the proscenium opening was discovered and will result in a substantial delay of the completion of the project (likely pushing it until late spring). Fortunately, the current COVID-19 environment has removed most pressure and interest in holding events in this facility until later this spring or early summer. LCCC will not be responsible for paying for this correction, and overall the project will come in on budget.

The final project, the remodel of the Recreation and Athletics Complex (RAC) is in an uncertain status. The request is still active in the Legislature, and there is discussion around community college CapCon in the works. However, I am uncertain whether this will actually move forward this year, and because the project is highly dependent on the state funding component, we are in a holding pattern until we know how they will act.

I'll recognize the primary contributors to this goal below, but I want to make a special note of

appreciation and credit to Vice President Rick Johnson. Rick has done nothing short of working miracles in advancing these projects, keeping them moving, working through challenges, and ensuring they come in on budget. In short, most all of the credit for achievement of this goal should be attributed to Rick's attention, professionalism, and tenacity in managing these projects. He certainly has my gratitude.

*Key Contributors:* Rick Johnson, Bill Zink, Tim Macnamara, Melissa Stutz, James Miller, Diana Wilson, Damien Kortum, Lisa Trimble, and the Fine Arts Faculty.

4. **Strategic and Campus Master Planning** – This fall, even amidst the challenges we face with a global pandemic, we will celebrate the completion of our current LCCC strategic plan, as well as plan to launch our next one. In addition, per statute and rule, we are required to conduct and produce an updated campus master plan. Having both of these, as well as our strategic academic programming plan, launch of Guided Pathways, and conducting strategic enrollment management planning, all occur in concert would be complex, but also advantageous. This goal will be to have a completed strategic and campus master plan by the end of the academic year.

**Progress Update:** It is a blessing to be afforded the opportunity again to think about the future. Between budget reductions and managing in the pandemic, there has been little time for anything beyond reaction, retrenchment, and putting out the proverbial fires. This spring though we are back on track and planning for the future.

Per the Board of Trustee's feedback, we will be doing an abbreviated update to our Campus Master Plan, with a focus on updating the Facilities Condition Indices (FCI) and simple progress updates to the overall master plan. This work has not formally begun, but will pick up in earnest in the coming months.

Strategic planning is ramping up nicely. We are following the general process and timelines as presented in your January Board Retreat. I anticipate this process will take approximately nine months to complete, with my plan to have a draft ready for your Board Retreat in August, and then approval in September of 2021. The steering team that will work closely with me on the entire process has been developed, and the initial launch meeting scheduled. From there we will forge ahead with the process. More to come as I plan to keep the Board apprised of the progress at your monthly meetings.

*Key Contributors:* Dallas Bacon for her organizational skills, the rest TBD.

5. **Implementation of New Program Planning** – My hope is to complete the strategic programming plan by late summer of 2020. This plan should guide some purposeful efforts to launch new programs that will be essential to the College's, as well as our communities' economic futures. Part of this will be a year-long effort with our Albany County Campus as we help focus its purpose and future, and part will be to help drive Laramie County's economic development, diversification, and recovery.

**Progress Update:** I am afraid to say that I have again not made the progress on the finalization and implementation of the Academic Master Plan as I hoped. It simply has not risen to the level of priority that our return 2 business planning amidst COVID-19 or the state budget reductions have commanded. We have made progress in reviewing and finalizing the new program recommendations based on our data analysis. And, as you saw at your Board Retreat, we have

progressed with the general framework and focus for the plan.

To that end, as the plan comes together, it will focus on a few broad, general themes that we will expect all programming at LCCC to address. These include the big concepts of:

- A. Applied Learning  
Incorporating work-based applied learning (Internships, apprenticeships, etc.) and project- or problem-based learning activities (undergrad research, production, co-curricular, etc.) – Synthesis and Application.
- B. Transfer Innovation  
Improving the rate at which students successfully transfer to 4-year institutions, and their success after.
- C. Credit for Prior Learning  
Engaging more adults through the opportunity to earn credits, accelerate progress, from recognition of prior experience/learning.
- D. Value-Added & Skills-Based Credentials  
Repackaging or pairing existing curricula to add values to other areas or to align with interdisciplinary, skills-based learning.

The plan will also focus the institution on programming in areas where we will build capacity where little or none exists to offer programs and curricula that respond to significant need, demand, and/or opportunity for economic and social growth within the region. Capacity building activities will focus on areas where LCCC can fill a niche and become a premier provider of programs, services, and activities related to these areas. The primary capacity building priority area for LCCC will include Manufacturing and Production.

In addition, the plan will focus on program expansion in key areas. LCCC has already established itself as a provider of excellent programming in areas of current, and future need for our service area and Wyoming. Yet, many of these areas are also ripe for the growth and advancement of offerings. Therefore, expansion will occur in areas the College already has substantial offerings and expertise, but where we recognize there is substantially more we can do to better serve our stakeholders and communities. The three primary expansion areas will be Entrepreneurship-Business, Healthcare/Health Sciences, and Information Technology/Computational Science.

My goal remains to complete this plan and see it move towards implementation in this fiscal year. That said, I anticipate the completion of this plan and the development of the next LCCC Strategic Plan will create opportunities for integration of the two, and may require some adjustments in timeline and processes to allow for each to influence the other.

Key Contributors: Maryellen Tast, Clark Harris, Kari Brown-Herbst, Bryan Wilson, Starla Mason, Jill Koslosky.

For as challenging as the first part of this fiscal/academic year has been, it has also been productive and rewarding. I anticipate the rest of this year will continue this trend. I am reminded every day how fortunate I am to have meaningful, life-sustaining work, and to have that with so many other passionate, like-minded individuals around me. This includes and especially is you, the Board of Trustees. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of LCCC.