



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Dr. Joe Schaffer

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 20, 2022

TO: LCCC Board of Trustees

CC: President's Cabinet

FROM: Dr. Joe Schaffer, President

RE: FY22 Self-Evaluation and Proposed FY23 Goals

The average tenure of a community college president in a single position is approximately four years. For the institutions that comprise the Mountain States Association of Community Colleges (MSACC), last year the average was slightly higher at just under five years. I share this to state how fortunate I feel to have had your trust and employment as the President of Laramie County Community College (LCCC) for more than ten years. Hopefully this also demonstrates my commitment to our mission, our students, this campus, and the broader communities we serve here in Southeast Wyoming.

While preparing for this self-evaluation, I took the opportunity to review the ten previous evaluations I have completed for the members of the Board of Trustees. In doing this, I have come to three conclusions:

1. We have accomplished so many incredible things over the past decade. From physical transformation, to increasing rates of student success, new programs, Guided Pathways, innovative services, becoming a local and national leader, and so much more;
2. There is still so much opportunity yet before us, which means everyone involved with LCCC will have the opportunity to engage in meaningful and rewarding work for years to come; and
3. I continue to appreciate being made aware of the shortcomings I have as a leader, and while I try to improve in these areas, I am far from the perfect community college president and I need to continue to work to address where I struggle as a CEO.

Given this discovery, similar to past self-evaluations and in alignment with our performance management process, within this memorandum I will provide a succinct, yet comprehensive, self-assessment of how I believe I have performed over the past year. This assessment will focus on three primary performance domains:

1. Function-Based Performance – how I have fulfilled the primary functions of my position and the expectations for a chief executive.

2. Behavior-Based Performance – how I have behaved in carrying out my work, especially as it aligns with the College’s mission, vision, and values.
3. Objective-Based Performance – how I have satisfied the goals we set for me in FY22.

I will conclude this memorandum with my proposed goals for FY23.

Each year, I facilitate a 360-degree review of every member of the executive team (President’s Cabinet) as well as for my own performance. This feedback helps me understand how our productivity, abilities, and behaviors are perceived as we carry out our work. This year I asked numerous individuals to anonymously participate in my 360-feedback survey, including all of the Trustees. I only invite those individuals to provide feedback if they have had some significant interaction with me over the past year. I feel this allows them to provide an honest assessment on my performance. This year, 28 individuals responded (64% response rate with $n = 44$). In an effort for authenticity and openness (two of our core values) I will provide the survey’s results, including the open-ended comments, appended to this memorandum for your information and consideration.

I am pleased to say that the feedback from most individuals overwhelmingly suggests that I am meeting expectations, and in many cases exceeding them. My feedback averages only one “below expectations” ratings across all of the questions. For that I am incredibly humbled and appreciative. While I don’t want to lose sight of that positive affirmation of my performance, I also recognize that I am far from perfect. Knowing that I have areas to improve upon motivates and compels me.

Thus, my natural inclination is to focus more on what we need to improve, and often times at the expense of the opportunity to celebrate what is working well. This is a habit I need to change, although for this document I believe it is most useful to focus on the areas where I believe I have not met someone’s expectations or where I can improve. I will try to address these things in the following.

Have I fulfilled the Functional Performance expectations of the position of President?

To me, fulfilling the functional requirements of any position is the lowest level of expected and appropriate performance. You hired me to do some basic things first and foremost. These include implementing your Board Policies through effective Administrative Procedure, assuring the College’s operations remain effective and running smoothly, maintaining a strong financial environment and stable fiscal resources, creating a relevant and effective academic environment, representing the institution to external constituents, serving students effectively, and conducting other basic operational activities as necessary to keep the doors open to the students and the community being served.

In these regards, I believe I continue to be a competent chief executive officer and that the institution continues to operate as you would expect, if not better than you might expect from your President. I do trust that you would inform and coach me otherwise, and hope that you feel empowered and comfortable in your role as Trustees to do so. Overall though, LCCC’s financial position is strong, enrollment is increasing, student outcomes are improving, and we have stable operations even in a relatively unstable time.

Have I fulfilled the Behavioral Performance expectations of the position of President?

Often, our most significant performance challenges are not grounded in our technical abilities to fulfill the functions of our position, but rather how we behave when we are carrying out the work. Functional performance looks at the “WHAT” whereas behavioral performance focuses on the “How.” Thus, behavior-based performance pertains to how others perceive I behave in carrying out my work, especially as it aligns with the College’s mission, vision, and values, and how I lead and interact with others. These elements are addressed throughout the questions in my 360-feedback report.

Again, I don't want to discount the positive feedback on my performance. In all honesty I am humbled and heartened to see how my leadership is appreciated, and more importantly, allows others to develop, perform, and achieve their own personal and professional goals. However, there are areas where I know I struggle with my behavioral characteristics and tendencies, and you can see some of that in my 360 feedback:

- Balancing action with listening. I struggle with offsetting my executive tendencies and the desire to authentically engage, and hear, the feedback from others. While I believe you hire me to set direction, lead, and execute, people at LCCC also value being included in the decision-making process. This is a fundamental component of our Shared Governance model. I need to continue and work to make sure I am seeking, and truly hearing what others say and share on important LCCC issues.
- Getting ahead of myself and of others. I realize that I am a person who likes to get things done. This unfortunately finds me at times getting out in front of others, or even giving the impression I am leading in a space where I lack the authority or ability to actually lead. In addition, my inclination to take on new things or to move on new things can add a layer of burden to members of my executive team or before the campus is ready/able to tackle new initiatives. I am trying to better recognize when this occurs.
- Maintaining faith and trust across campus. There is no doubt we have been through some challenging times. Thriving beyond them requires innovation, courage, and the willingness to take risks. Yet in a very open campus, it can be at times difficult to find the safe space where brainstorming, and honest discourse can occur. With our need to create these spaces I must also find ways to ensure that trust remains high so that these are not seen as shutting our doors or our minds, or allowing people to engage in unproductive efforts.

There are other specific comments in my feedback that give me places to reflect and improve. I will admit that some I agree with and some I do not, and some I simply don't quite understand. However, it is my commitment to you, the Board of Trustees, as well as to the campus community, that I will purposefully work to improve in these areas. They say that those behaviors, which are an integral part of our being, are sometimes the hardest to change and also the most difficult to recognize. Thus, I would ask that you let me know and hold me accountable when you see these behaviors creeping back into my performance.

Have I fulfilled the Objective (Goals) Performance expectations of the position of President?

The last area of my self-evaluation pertains to my objective-based performance. In the following, I will provide you with the outcomes of the goals we collectively established for this year. Given the challenges we still face, I am truly proud of the progress we have made, mostly because of the great work of others here at LCCC. To that end, and as I have in the past, I want to highlight those individuals and groups who have helped make the accomplishment of these goals possible.

- 1. Strategic Plan Implementation** – There is no better time than now to be launching our plans for a better future at LCCC. That future will be focused on the over-arching aspiration of ensuring equitable outcomes of good jobs and/or successful transfer for all students. With a newly minted strategic plan, assuming the Board's approval in September, a primary focus of mine will be the implementation of that plan and its various strategies and initiatives. At this juncture, I anticipate this including the Strategic Enrollment Management planning process, programming associated with our academic plans, etc.

Outcome: The LCCC 2030 Strategic Plan is well into its implementation. We have already begun hitting the ground on numerous initiatives - under each of the four goals within the plan - that have been prioritized by campus. You will be receiving an update on these and the progress on implementing the plan at your August 17th Board of Trustees Retreat. But overall, I am very pleased with the early progress, and success of the initiatives included in our 2030 strategic plan.

Key Contributors: Julie Gerstner, Dr. Kim Bender, members of the President's Cabinet, and numerous initiative leaders and project coordinators.

- 2. Recreation & Athletics Complex Renovation** – Given the opportunity presented to us with significant state funding, the path to the completion of the Recreation & Athletics Complex (RAC) is beginning to materialize. However, the current environment will still present challenges for funding, and when we get to that stage, construction of the facility.

Outcome: You are well aware of the progress and challenges associated with the RAC renovation project. While I will admit that there is still a long way to go before this project is completed, I believe that we are near a path forward with regard to the funding shortfall, and anticipate moving ahead into construction phases early this fall. I plan to bring you a proposal for closing the immediate funding gap at your September 2022 meeting, and I am also working on a plan to secure additional funding necessary to complete the project in its entirety, including the exterior renewal component.

Key Contributors: Nobody is leading this effort more than Vice President Rick Johnson – he deserves our recognition. Others include Lisa Trimble and LCCC Foundation Board and staff, Dr. Cindy Henning and the Athletics and Exercise Science faculty and staff, Bill Zink, Tim Macnamara, Arlene Lester, Vince Gibson, Melissa Stutz, and other members of the project team.

- 3. Manufacturing Workforce Initiative** – Of all academic program initiatives LCCC can work on now, one that will have the most significant to the campus and the community will be the establishment of the Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Center (AMMC). There are many positive elements in momentum, including a place on the 6th Penny ballot for November, as well as anticipated federal grant funds, but it is far from a guarantee and it will take purposeful attention and effort to succeed here.

Outcome: Our manufacturing initiative continues to gain momentum and I am excited to see this come to fruition. We have secured necessary funding, have initial staffing in place, and are nearing the start of the renovation and remodeling of the space that will house the AMMC, its programming, and its equipment. While the full implementation of this project will still be developing over the course of the fall and into next spring, I am pleased to know that the resources are in hand, the plan is in place, and I anticipate a successful launch of our first programming next year.

Key Contributors: Dean Maryellen Tast has been the biggest champion of this cause. Exceptional grant writing and EDA relations have come from Jen McCartney. In addition, Dr. Kari Brown-Herbst, Dr. Jill Koslosky, Rick Johnson, Bill Zink, consultant George Newman. Special recognition to the County Commissioners who supported this project (Commissioners Malm, Thompson, Lovett, and Holmes).

- 4. President's Advisory Council** – The economic future of Laramie County and the broader region holds promise, but it also lacks clarity on how business and industry will develop and grow. One thing is certain though, talent and workforce availability will be critical to business success. These things require an even deeper, and more purposeful connection at the executive level between LCCC and business and industry. To facilitate this connection, I would like to establish a President's Advisory Council to create that linkage and ensure our programming and services are aligned tightly to the workforce needs, and job opportunities, of our primary industries.

Outcome: I have made less progress on this goal than I would have liked this year. To date, I have drafted the President's Advisory Council (PAC) organizing documents and have solicited initial thoughts and interest for membership. I plan to carry this goal into next year and pick up the work with earnest.

My hope is to have the PAC formed and first meeting sometime in the late fall of 2022.

- 5. Albany County Campus Future** – Uncertainty seems to be a theme across many of my proposed goals for FY22. That is also true for what the future of our Albany County Campus (ACC) will be. While we have had some successes in partnership with Laramie High School (e.g., growth in automotive, launching of culinary arts, etc.), and a few new online programs being launched (e.g. Craft Brewing), the trends for enrollment, the uncertainty of the specific needs the ACC should be addressing in Laramie, and the reduction in funding for LCCC, have all necessitated a deeper examination of the branch campus. Significant decisions must be made about the future of the ACC, and these need to occur next year.

Outcome: Many individuals at LCCC, including the Board of Trustees, have spent considerable time this year in examining, evaluating, and discussing the future of the Albany County Campus (ACC). This past Fall alone I met with every employee of the ACC individually, had numerous meetings with the ACC Advisory Council, met with the Laramie-Chamber Business Alliance, and also in a joint work session with the Laramie City Council and Albany County Commission. Although community conversations still continue, and I would like to push for some “skin in the game” from Laramie and Albany County, I do believe we have found an organizational structure and focus that will help the ACC sustain its core mission into the future, while also finding a balanced budget. Thus far I have been very pleased with the ACC Leadership team and early efforts to focus the campus’ programming and services.

Key Contributors: Tammy Maas and Lucas Yosten from HR helped substantially with the reorganization process. Others include Damien Kortum, Talisha Mottinger, Dr. Kelly Humphrey, Janine Bangarter, Dr. Kari Brown-Herbst, Dr. Melissa Stutz, Rick Johnson, former Ex-Officio Trustee Butch Keadle, ACC Advisory Council Chairman Gary Negich, and many of the ACC faculty and staff.

- 6. Community Engagement of President’s Cabinet** – Although I will work on the other behavioral areas I identified previously in this document, one thing I can do objectively is to help create greater opportunities for the executive members of LCCC to get connected to the community. Their engagement will not only be rewarding for their own growth and development, it will also benefit LCCC by having more eyes, ears, and voices bringing the external needs and context back to the College to help ensure our programs and services respond accordingly.

Outcome: Where opportunity has presented itself, I have been trying to find ways to get the President’s Cabinet engaged in our community and the broader community college community. My intent here is to help foster relationships while also demonstrating LCCC as a leader and supporter. To date, we have placed Cabinet members on major community initiatives, engaged them with key business and social organizations, secured them seats on boards of directors, and presented opportunities where they are leading and helping others with initiatives because of the expertise they have developed here at LCCC.

Key Contributors: Lisa Trimble, Dr. Melissa Stutz, Dr. Kari Brown-Herbst, Rick Johnson, and Tammy Maas.

Proposed FY23 Goals

Upon reflection and typing this memorandum, it is clear to me that the past year has been a challenging one, but also a successful one. Now we look to the future. Thus, I would like to conclude this self-evaluation with my suggestions for the goals I might pursue in the coming year. My suggestions are just that, suggestions. I hope the Board will join me in a conversation to refine, add, or redirect my proposed goals, so that we are of the same mind for the priorities set for FY23.

- 1. President’s Advisory Council** – The economic future of Laramie County will be increasingly dependent on our ability to develop, recruit, and retain talent. LCCC will be one of the primary players in making

this happen. This requires an even deeper, and more purposeful connection between LCCC and business and industry. To facilitate this connection, I will continue my work in establishing a President's Advisory Council to create that linkage and ensure our programming and services are aligned tightly to the workforce needs, and job opportunities, of our primary industries.

- 2. Campus Renewal Planning and Implementation** – I would like to focus on two elements under this goal. The first is to work with the Board of Trustees to establish a Capital Renewal Plan. This plan would create a more formal place to communicate major maintenance activities, prioritize the order of exterior building renewals and neighborhood entry nodes, as well as other major campus renewals and or replacements associated with the campus master plan. The second component of this goal is to secure legislative funding for the first phase of the exterior building renewal and prepare them for implementation. This phase would include renewal of the CCI, Training Center, Administration, and Fine Arts Buildings, along with new entry nodes for each.
- 3. Fill Openings in the Executive Team and Rebuild the President's Cabinet** – This year I will need to make two successful hires for members of the College's executive team, the President's Cabinet. This includes hiring and onboarding a new Vice President of Human Resources and a new Vice President of Performance and Planning. In addition, I have recently moved the reporting of the Chief Information Officer (formerly Chief Technology Officer) to the President and making this position a member of the President's Cabinet. I will work for a smooth transition to allow senior members to help me shape the newer team and its newest members.
- 4. Support the Wyoming Innovation Partnership** – LCCC has been fortunate to be involved with and benefit from Governor Gordon's Wyoming Innovation Partnership. I want to continue and support his office, as well as our colleague community colleges and UW in continuing to advance Phase I efforts and ensure a successful launch of Phase II efforts. LCCC will be primarily focused on the entrepreneurship and workforce development components of the WIP initiative.
- 5. Represent LCCC and Wyoming Nationally** – Although this may be something already set in motion, I have the opportunity to play a significant role in representing the College on the national level with my chairmanship of the AACC Board of Directors and other places I am or anticipate being engaged. This will take me away from campus a bit more than I would like, and it will come with a resource requirement, but I hope that I can not only contribute more but also bring more back to LCCC as a result of my involvement in these organizations and efforts.
- 6. Continue the Implementation of the Strategic Plan** – This year I will continue shepherding and supporting the successful implementation of LCCC's 2030 Strategic Plan. Much of our time and attention will be devoted to Strategic Enrollment Management, marketing and awareness, programmatic innovation and new program launch, as well as employee engagement, empowerment, and a campus climate that continues to foster the strong culture we have at LCCC.

I look forward to your feedback on my performance this past year and my proposed goals for next. While I say this every year, it is with heartfelt sentiments that I say again how much of an honor and a privilege it is to lead LCCC and to work with such a fine group of trustees, executive leaders, faculty, staff, and students. Thank you for providing me this opportunity. I will continue to give my utmost effort towards the progress and ultimate achievement of our mission, our strategic plan, and the goals set for me in the coming year.