



# WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## WYOMING'S ECONOMIC ENGINE



**WACCT**  
WYOMING ASSOCIATION  
OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION PLAN

WACCT supports an employee cost of living adjustment (COLA) for the community colleges.

- **Expectations from the community colleges** - At a time when the State is expecting more from the community colleges (ENDOW, Higher Education Attainment Goal, workforce training), the pressure on our resources and employees continues to be stretched.
- **Inflation** - To put it into context, in 2018 US salary budgets increased 3.1%, and it is anticipated that this will be 3.2% again in 2019. In Wyoming, real inflation from 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2017 to 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2018 was just over 2%. Even at 2% per year, if we could afford it, we are barely keeping pace with inflation, let alone competitiveness with the market. In all, our employees have received increases for inflationary pressures equating to roughly 8.5% in the past 8 years - about one-half of the actual inflationary pressure, leaving an unmet gap of 7.8%.
- **History** - Since FY10, the state has funded adjustments for community college employees in just two years, FY10 and FY15, and these funded (approximately) only 60% of the increase, with the other 40% having to come from the community colleges. Also, the community colleges have funded on average a 4% increase over that time.
- **Budget reductions** - Colleges are still feeling the impacts of the FY17/18 budget reductions.
- **Employee contributions** - Employees are contributing more of their paychecks for increases in retirement contributions and paying for rising health insurance premiums.
- **Competition** - The colleges' ability to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce is under increased pressure, as they are unable to meet competitive compensation levels. Wage growth outside Wyoming is pulling our employees elsewhere. 2018 wage increases in the nation were 3.1%, and it is projected to be 3.2% in 2019.

## STATE-FUNDED ADULT FINANCIAL AID

WACCT supports the creation of an adult-focused scholarship/financial aid program to help meet the state's higher education attainment goals.

- UW, the Wyoming Community College Commission, ENDOW and by executive order, the State of Wyoming have formally adopted higher education attainment goals. Higher education attainment levels are directly correlated to economic productivity and will be even more so in the future.
- If Wyoming high schools graduated every senior in the state, and if Wyoming had the highest college-going rate in the nation, the numbers would still not be sufficient to reach the higher education attainment goals.
- Therefore, Wyoming must re-engage working adults already committed to living here and encourage them to earn a post-secondary credential.
- According to the Lumina Foundation, Wyoming has 87,034 working-aged adults with just a high school diploma and 56,149 with some college, but no credential. Wyoming could meet the attainment goal if the colleges could help just 40% of these individuals earn a post-secondary credential.
- It is difficult for working adults to leave the labor force to pursue higher education because of life commitments and financial obligations.
- With Hathaway scholarships focused on traditional-age students, the addition of an adult-focused scholarship program is a natural counterpart to serve all Wyomingites' pursuit of higher education.

# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

The seven Community Colleges stand together on the following requests for capital construction as recommended by the State Construction Department:

- **NWCCD Sheridan College Health Science Building Level III Construction**  
\$7,038,014 general fund, \$6,398,195 other/public funds
- **NWCCD Sheridan College Culinary Arts Renovation and Expansion**  
\$2,285,888 general fund, \$2,078,080 other/public funds
- **CWC Agriculture and Animal Science Facility**  
\$3,926,792.10 in General Fund and \$3,926,792.10 other public funds
- **A budget exception request for Northwest College that eliminates footnote one from HB194.**
  - Footnote: "As a condition of this general fund appropriation, the community college to which the funds appropriated shall expend the entire appropriation of other funds before the release of any general funds appropriated for purposes of the authorized capital construction period."
  - During the 2018 budget session, Northwest College received Level II funding for two projects. The projects included the Visual and Performing Arts Center (\$495,000 general fund and \$495,000 other funds/PR) and the Student Center (\$550,000 general fund and \$550,000 other funds/PR).
  - NWC has always held that the amounts proposed for Level II funding were too high and not in line with past Level II planning actual costs. The restriction in this footnote prevents NWC from moving forward on its projects.
  - Also, NWC has been able to lower the cost of the Level II and no longer requires the PR match to accomplish the study.
  - For years, the process has been that the colleges fund Level I plans, the State funds Level II plans, and they share the expense of Level III and construction.
- **Support for Western Wyoming Community College for Level III design and construction/repair for mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire suppression systems.**

## OTHER ISSUES TO WATCH

- Excellence in Higher Education Endowment
- Wyoming Investment in Nursing sunset extension
- The timing of major maintenance payments
- Increase in operating reserve statutory limit
- Wyoming Unified Network
- HEA 47 fiscal impact
- Campus security matching funds
- WCCC supplemental budget request



The mission of the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees is to advocate a unified vision and voice on behalf of the seven Wyoming community college boards of trustees, in collaboration with their college presidents, to promote their mutual interests in continued quality, strength, vitality, leadership development and effectiveness of its member colleges.

# WYOMING'S ECONOMIC ENGINE

Wyoming's Community Colleges provide skills training for high-demand, high-paying, high-skilled occupations and career enhancement opportunities. Their business and community relationships are one of the strongest assets in their regions and in Wyoming.

In fact, 60 % of first-time, full-time Wyoming students are enrolled in transfer or technical programs at community colleges (National Center for Education Statistics *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System* (Fall 2014) . The Community Colleges and the University of Wyoming are having great success in working together on credit transfer agreements.



## STATE AND LOCAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. (2016)

Wyoming's Community Colleges, together with their students, add \$1.1 billion to the Wyoming economy.

Every \$1 of taxpayer money spent on the Community Colleges returns \$1.40 in benefits in the form of added tax revenue and social savings to Wyoming taxpayers.

Nearly 88 % of Wyoming's 28,000 Community College credit students stay in Wyoming following graduation.

## PROVIDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

A large portion of Wyoming's workforce will need postsecondary education to meet employers' demands in the near future. Source: Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

Nearly 39 % of advertised positions in Wyoming require an education level equal to an associate's degree or higher. Source: Burning Glass Data, posted positions from (Oct 1, 2015—Sept 30, 2016)

According to the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, seven out of the 10 fastest growing occupations in Wyoming through 2024 require postsecondary education.

