LEGISLATIVE TALKING POINTS

WACCT
WYOMING ASSOCIATION
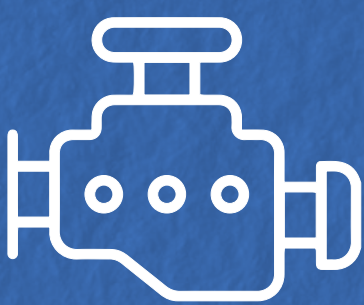OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

Wyoming's Community Colleges are the Economic Engines of our State

The majority of community college students are part time, employed, older, and "place-bound." They have car payments, a job, a family, and they cannot leave for college.

In FY 2022-2023, Wyoming Community Colleges served

23,918 credit students

**19,179** non-credit students

Local communities need replication of programming.

⊘ Local communities need replication of programming. The fundamental design of community college for-credit programs is based on local advisory committees around which we design and place students.

The "hubs" of Wyoming communities.

⊘ Community Colleges are "hubs" of our Wyoming communities, providing high school equivalency, English as a second language, and other community courses. They are also hubs for dual and concurrent enrollment for high school students, saving families thousands of dollars.

The primary challenge facing Wyoming's Community Colleges is sustainable funding. The current breakdown is as follows:

- 18.29%
- 55%
- 26.38%

● State Aid   ● Local Funding   ● Tuition
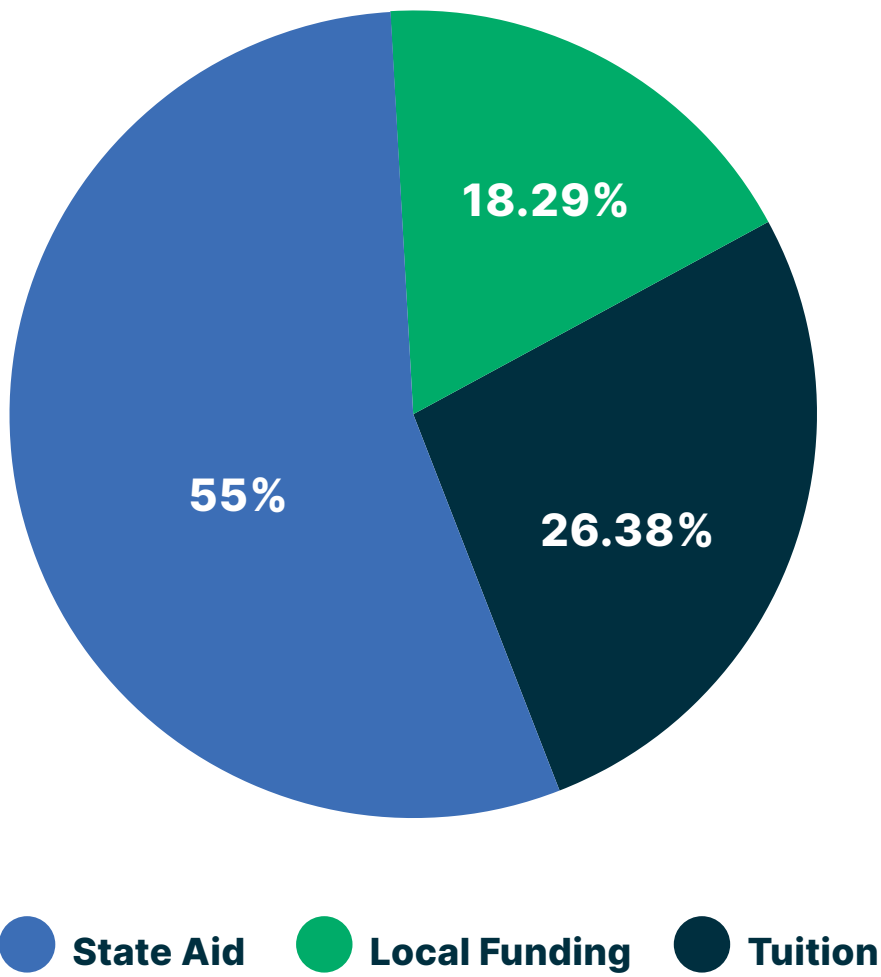
The Community Colleges are part of the solution to keep the pulse of the state beating – training workforce, a competitive workforce, increasing educational attainment, and creating education opportunities for thousands of people statewide.

If this is what the Wyoming Legislature expects from the Community Colleges, a corresponding commitment to fund those expectations would be appropriate.

⊘ Since the colleges serve all 23 counties, any future sustainable funding for the Wyoming Community College System should include a state-wide revenue component.

⊘ The Legislature should empower the Community Colleges with more tools in the local funding "toolbox." This would empower the state to drive more contributions from community college economies, which are inherently local.

⊘ A funding formula for the future should incentivize the colleges to meet the needs and wants of the state (i.e., incentives for colleges to work together to reduce programmatic costs, financial reward for programming consortiums, delivery of distance education, development of non-credit, industry specific programs and apprenticeships).

Return on Investment

The Center for Business and Economic Analysis (CBEA) at the University of Wyoming conducted a study to calculate the ROI of the WIP initiative, assessing the economic impact of Phase I and Phase II expenditures.

The Wyoming Innovation Partnership

$5M Request

WACCT supports the supplemental $5M request from the Governor's Office to support the final implementation of the WIP. Please visit wip.wyo.gov/about/reports to see the Phase II ROI.

The value-added ROI for a five-year horizon was estimated at 690%, signifying that the contribution to Wyoming's gross state product over this period was **more than seven times the budget allocated** to the WIP programs. Additionally, the study estimated tax revenues for the state, including sub-county, county, and state levels, would amount to approximately $38.6 million over five years. **This substantial economic return far exceeds the potential return** from investing the WIP funds in a "rainy-day" money savings account earning 5% annually.

While the analysis underscores the effectiveness of the WIP initiative in furthering economic development and resiliency in Wyoming, it also acknowledges the limitations and complexities inherent in such evaluations, including the challenge of quantifying qualitative benefits and the myriad potential alternative uses of the funds. Overall, **the study affirms the substantial economic returns from the WIP** while highlighting the need for continued evaluation and consideration of various funding strategies through this initiative to further maximize public benefit.

$38.6M projected total tax revenue

$348M projected value added

NOW HIRING

6,653 projected jobs created

690% projected return on investment

Wyoming Community Colleges are a Strong Investment for Students and Society

Thanks to community colleges, higher education is more accessible than ever. Compared with public four-year institutions, where tuition and fees cost almost three times as much on average, community colleges offer significant savings for students.

Wyoming's Community College System was

Ranked #4

in the nation according to a 2024 report from WalletHub.

Wyoming's Community Colleges are unique:

- Locally governed with duly elected trustees
- Nimbly meet local needs and maintain the character of their community
- Serve their communities through non-credit programming, workforce development, and other important non-academic community needs – they are **comprehensive**

- Wyoming's Community College System is unique in that our community colleges are not as urban as others across the country. Indeed, all 23 counties benefit from the services of the eight community colleges and the service territories are very rural. In Wyoming, the colleges serve as the cultural and community hubs of their communities.
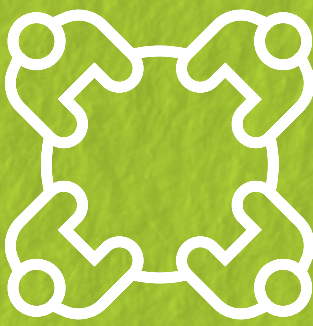
Student Success & Partnerships

Here are some examples of student success and industry partnerships:

- 2+2 transfer agreements with UW
- UW, five of the Community Colleges and many K-12 districts share the same Learning Management System, Canvas
- A statewide transfer system portal is currently being developed
- Statewide website (WYCLASS) lists all online classes currently available across the state
- Shared professional development conferences help find efficiencies for training staff
- The Wyoming Innovation Partnership

- Councils of leaders from all of the Wyoming Community College institutions that work on joint governance projects
- UW and the eight colleges have a common course numbering system
- Statewide projects and initiatives such as the Attainment Council and WCCC statewide strategic plan, among others
- Next Gen Sector Partnerships
- Colleges that offer the Applied Baccalaureate
- Reverse transfer

2025 Legislative Session

The eight Community Colleges surveyed the resources related to safety and security over the summer of 2024. Given current statutes, here are the gaps the Colleges identified for safety and security needs:

Safety & Security

WACCT maintains the position that the Colleges should retain local control with regard to removing gun free zones. If there is a movement to remove gun free zones, WACCT urges policy makers to consider exceptions for the following areas: child care centers, labs, dormitories, personnel hearings, and athletic events.
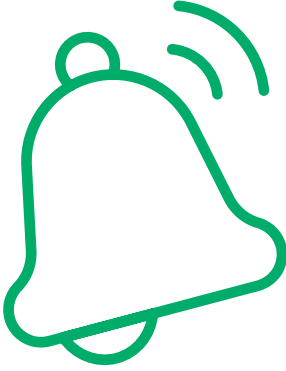
Very few of our doors have electronic locks. Very little of the internal spaces are covered by cameras.

More security cameras and an additional vehicle.
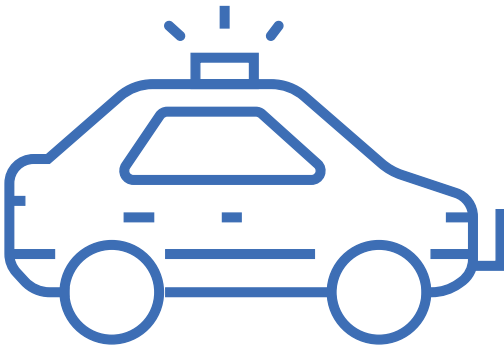
Security cameras, security personnel, panic buttons, automatic door locking systems, external notification system.

50% of campus facilities need cameras. 90% of campus doors do not have electronic access that would allow auto-lock capability.

24-hour security coverage, which would require two more FT employees. Additionally, a half-time officer for handling all the technology (cameras, doors, alerts, etc.).

Cameras and panic buttons need significant improvement to maximize usefulness. Two-way radio system needs improvement to communicate directly with law enforcement and other emergency responders.

Significant investment is needed to add **electronic door locking** to the entire campus. Currently we use it on some buildings and generally only for exterior doors, none for interior doors. This is a major gap in campus safety across most colleges. Current door systems also need to be able to lock from the inside, without a key, in the case of emergency.
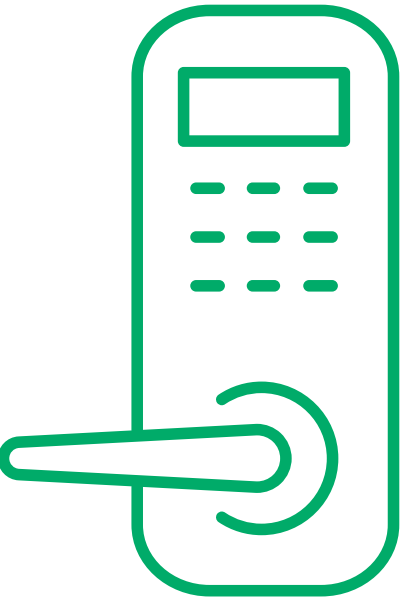
We are severely lacking in the areas of surveillance and access control. The vast majority of the Colleges are still accessed through traditional keys, which does not allow us to remotely secure any college facilities or monitor the access to any building. This creates a security concern in that our ability to monitor physical access to the buildings is nonexistent, and in instances where emergencies arise, we are not able to remotely secure campus locations and account for individuals that have accessed them.

It is necessary for us to be able to control all of the college facilities through a unified access control system. With the lack of surveillance cameras on the campus, we do not currently have the ability to monitor tense, uncertain, or rapidly evolving situations in real time. We also lack the ability to use these systems for investigation for law violations, or as a deterrent, which greatly increases the liability on the college. We must complete the installation of a complete surveillance system that provides the ability to watch in real time and review footage from our hallways, parking areas, residence common areas, and administrative buildings.