

Community College Commission

❖ *Mission and philosophy*

The Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC), the seven community colleges and public television compose the Community College System, which operates under the concept that a quality, accessible, affordable education is the right of every Wyoming resident. The system strives to deliver post-secondary education and training consistent with its statutorily defined mission. The mission and purpose of the commission is to provide coordination, advocacy, and accountability for the Community College System on behalf of the state of Wyoming.

The mission and purpose of the system is clearly defined in statute: "The mission of Wyoming's Community Colleges is to provide access to post-secondary educational opportunities by offering broad comprehensive programs in academic as well as vocational-technical subjects. Wyoming's Community Colleges are low tuition, open access institutions focusing on academic transfer programs, career and occupational programs, developmental and basic skills instruction, adult and continuing education, economic development training, public and community services programming, and student support services" (Session Laws of Wyoming, Chapter 228, Section 3(a)).

The commission believes that post-secondary education in Wyoming should be accessible and affordable, yet flexible enough to meet dynamic, changing workforce and educational requirements. The commission also believes that the Community College System should be based on a reliable and dependable source of funding, contribute to economic development and play a leadership role in promoting a system of seamless education from birth throughout one's life.

❖ *Results of outcomes*

Goal I: To assure coordinated, efficient and effective operations of the Community College System

Objective A: To manage commission programs that ensure the efficient and effective operations of the Community College System.

This *Annual Strategic Plan Report 2000* is but one mechanism through which the WCCC attempts to meet the intentions of this objective. The collaborative process whereby college administrators and the WCCC strive for system effectiveness is also enhanced by regular meetings of the commission, the executive council, the Academic Affairs Committee and the Administrative Services Committee.

Representatives from colleges' boards of trustees and community college commissioners worked collaboratively to draft a new college system governance statute, which was adopted by the 2000 Legislature. The new statute more clearly defines the functions and roles of the WCCC and local boards of trustees.

General information

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Year established and reorganized

Established 1985, reorganized 2000

Statutory references

W.S. 21-18-202

Number of authorized personnel

12

Clients served

Governor, Legislature, community colleges,
other state agencies

Budget information

Objective A	\$1,138,870
Objective B	44,428,614
Objective C	500,983
Objective D	1,600,000
Objective E	225,000
Objective F	1,385
Total	\$47,894,852

Objective B: To ensure the equitable distribution of and accountability for state aid dollars used in community college instructional and support programs.

On June 23, 1999, the commission adopted new budget request and funding allocation models. Both models rely on comparisons of each Wyoming community college with 11 comparator institutions in the nation. The comparators were selected by an outside consultant, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, and provide for the first time external benchmarks against which to evaluate the funding adequacy of the Wyoming colleges.

The budget request for the 2001-02 biennium was submitted under the new model and was fully funded by the Legislature. The funding allocation model was used to allocate state funds and balance across the system of colleges the funds raised by local mill levies. For the first time, the seven colleges are funded at levels equivalent to their comparators (based on 1996-97 data) and have achieved near equity across the system of colleges.

The American Association of Community Colleges core indicators of effectiveness are integrated into the many strategic indicators of the Annual Strategic Plan Report 2000 and provide initial benchmarks for assessing accountability in the seven community colleges. Presentation of the many objectives and their statuses are not possible within the format of this report; please refer to the publication cited above.

Objective C: To provide fiscal and program accountability for Wyoming Public Television.

WPTV has continued its strong relationship with the Wyoming Community College System, delivering a wide range of telecourses. The traditional emphasis of public television's distance delivery efforts has been on providing telecourses, and now, considerable effort has gone into development of Internet-delivered classes as well. WPTV has been working in concert with PBS in a pilot program to deliver teacher training online, particularly in science and mathematics. WPTV is one of only 16 stations nationwide providing "TeacherLine," which can be accessed in streaming video from the WPTV Web site. It is funded by a grant from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, U.S. Department of Education.

Bandwidth limitations of the Internet restrict course material largely to still images and text, and even though Web classes offer greater flexibility, the high quality video provided by telecourses remains a popular means of college education for busy adults, including mothers and others whose schedules preclude traditional campus classes. Even during this era of unprecedented growth in the Internet, student enrollment in telecourses nearly doubled from FY99 to FY00 (from 694 to 1225 students).

WPTV aired 812 hours of college credit classes from May 1999 to May 2000, comprising 12 percent of its air schedule. It broadcast another 1,948 hours of educational, non-credit programs, which represented nearly 30 percent of the air schedule. Overall, educational offerings made up 42 percent of the broadcast schedule.

In the future, digital television will fundamentally change the way telecourses and data are delivered. Digital television combines technology from TV and computers, allowing viewers to watch television on their computers and, at the same time, receive program-related data that they can view in another window. Basically, digital television enhances the educational value of programs by combining the power and speed of computers with a new video technology that provides superior pictures plus interactivity. This makes digital television a compelling educational medium for the future. But technology comes with a price. It is estimated that minimum compliance with the Federal Communications Commission mandate will cost WPTV about \$3.3 million. The Community College Commission, on behalf of WPTV, is submitting a supplementary budget request of \$1.6 million to begin the process of digital conversion. The first phase of construction involves mountaintop work that must be completed in the summer months and could not be completed prior to the FCC deadline if construction were to wait for the next biennium budget cycle.

Private revenues increased by more than \$35,000 in 1999, and it is anticipated that FY00 figures will significantly top that; however, independent auditors who are compiling statistics for FY00, have not yet completed their final reports. WPTV has hired an experienced fund-raising professional; thus, direct mail and corporate fundraising should be enhanced in the near future.

Objective D: To provide resources to the colleges for emergency repairs and preventative maintenance for individual college facilities based on a system priority plan.

For the 1999-00 biennium appropriations, plus a supplemental appropriation for health premium coverage and reversions, the commission's programs were funded from state general funds as follows:

Administration	\$2,277,740
State Aid to Colleges	88,567,278
Contingency Reserve (Coal Bonus)	3,200,000
Wyoming Public Television	1,001,967
LEAP	155,340

The administration budget supports commission operations as well as administrative computing for the seven colleges. Contracts, leases, service agreements and personnel in support of administrative computing for the college system require approximately \$1,200,000 per biennium. The colleges successfully migrated from Release 13 to Release 16 of the Datatel Colleague administrative computing system. The commission provided additional funding support for three colleges using the Envision reporting tool, for additional memory for on-campus computers and for new line printers at each of the colleges.

Remaining funds in the administration budget support meetings of the commission and personnel engaged in other functions: executive, academic and student services, fiscal, policy and research, and administrative services officers, as well as clerical

support. Generally, there is one person supporting each of the functions of the agency outside of administrative computing. In addition to daily operations, there is a focus in the agency on professional development for all staff. Appropriate support for a coordinating body requires that staff be highly aware of national and regional trends in higher education.

Primary goals of the commission achieved in the biennium were adoption of the new budget and funding allocation models and the passage of new legislation clarifying the statutes relative to the commission's role as a coordinating body.

The State Aid to Colleges program provides support to the colleges and, in the 1999-00 biennium, amounted to \$88,985,178, with supplemental funding for health insurance premiums.

Of the funding provided, the commission had requested \$1.3 million to bring college salaries to 90 percent of market, and that amount was included in the appropriation. The commission distributed the \$1.3 million to the colleges that had demonstrated the need, and five colleges objected and filed a lawsuit. The result is pending review by the Wyoming Supreme Court and the court has "escrowed" the disputed funds so that they are available for distribution in the new biennium.

The remaining funds have been allocated to the colleges, or are scheduled for allocation according to the "old" formula for distribution.

The Contingency Reserve Account is utilized for funding provided by Coal Lease

Bonus funds. Revenues received in FY00 amounted to \$1.6 million, or a total of \$3.2 million for the biennium.

The commission approved allocation of \$3.2 million for emergency repair and preventative maintenance for the biennium, and the total was expended as a result of the new allocation model. In past biennia, over-funded projects frequently resulted in the reversion of funds that could have been used for other pressing projects. Detailed expenditures are not yet available, and two colleges have not yet submitted their reports.

The Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) program was not funded by the 2000 Legislature. For the 1999-2000 biennium however, \$155,340 was provided to 275 students attending the community colleges and the University of Wyoming.

The program for Wyoming Public Television was funded with \$1,001,967 of state general funds. Outcome measures for WPTV are displayed under Wyoming Public Television Goals and Objectives.

The Job Skills Training Center program was phased out.

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) program was transferred to the commission from the Department of Education effective Dec. 15, 1999. The program is primarily funded from federal sources, and the commission utilized operating funds to support a portion of the salary costs for two staff. The program directs the activities of 10 grant-funded centers around the

state. For the 1999-2000 biennium, \$538,051 was granted to ABE centers.

Adult Basic Education, along with other Workforce Investment Act partners, submitted a unified state plan that has been accepted by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education.

The program also oversees the General Education Development Testing Services Program under the guidance of the American Council on Education. There are 28 testing sites in Wyoming that tested more than 1,300 individuals during the 1999-00 calendar year. Of those, more than 91 percent passed the complete battery of five tests.

Objective E: To provide equitable distribution and accountability for Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) funds.

The 10-year history of LEAP (formerly named State Student Incentive Grant) demonstrates that total aid funds available to community college students decreased by 27 percent over the period. For the past three years, 100 percent of available funds were awarded to students. LEAP was not funded by the 2000 Legislature making Wyoming one of only three states in the country without a state-sponsored, need-based financial aid program.

The percentage of community college system students aided through LEAP each year was 1.3 percent in FY00, 1.8 percent in FY99, 2 percent in FY98, 1.7 percent in FY97 and 2.4 percent in FY96.

Objective F: To provide liaison, monitoring and accountability for Job Skills Training Centers under the memorandum of agreement with the Department of Family Services.

The Job Skills Training Center program was phased out.

Community College Commission organization chart

