

**NORTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Thursday, December 10, 2020

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Terry Nelson, Chairperson  | PRESENT @ 10:08 a.m. |
| Julie Robinson             | PRESENT              |
| Jeff Scherer               | PRESENT              |
| Gene Willers               | PRESENT @ 10:31 a.m. |
| Steve Anderson, ex-officio | PRESENT              |

**STAFF**

Dr. Leah Barrett  
John Blaylock  
Paul Feilmeier  
Scott Gray  
Amanda Nipp  
Dr. Michele Gill  
Dr. Tracy Kruse  
Dr. Karen Severson  
Jim Curry  
Diane Reikofski  
Lindsay Spiegel

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS**

|                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Del Ames        | PRESENT              |
| Donovan Ellis   | PRESENT              |
| Arlan Kuehn     | PRESENT @ 10:20 a.m. |
| Dirk Petersen   | PRESENT              |
| Nicole Sedlacek | PRESENT              |
| Carol Sibbel    | PRESENT              |

**MINUTES**

1. The Governance Committee meeting was convened by Julie Robinson, member of the Governance Committee, at 10:05 a.m. via Zoom video conferencing and in Room 116B of the Maclay Building.
2. Recommended approval of the Minutes of the October 8, 2020 meeting as presented.
3. President Leah Barrett led the recognition of Mr. John Blaylock who has had a 26-year distinguished career at Northeast Community College. John is retiring effective December 31, 2020.

President Barrett recognized John's passion and commitment for Northeast, advising that his background and knowledge enabled him to serve extremely well in his current position of executive vice president. The knowledge he shared with President Barrett also aided with the presidential transition.

Since his appointment to the Executive Vice President position more than three-and-a-half years ago, John has served as a key advisor on multiple fronts, including comprehensive institutional planning, leadership with all matters of program and institutional accreditation, management of all extended campus operations, major projects, global engagement, and marketing.

**Mission**

Northeast Community College is dedicated to the success of students and the region it serves.

John previously served as vice president of educational services, dean of business, math, and technology, and was a faculty member at Northeast. He has continually demonstrated what it means to ensure our 21<sup>st</sup> Century students obtain a quality education.

President Leah Barrett thanked John for being a trusted colleague, a quiet encourager, and an incredible leader as we navigated the coronavirus pandemic. Each and every day of the past 26 years, John dedicated himself to our beloved Northeast Community College.

Board of Governors Chairperson, Steve Anderson, recited language from the Resolution to Recognize Mr. John Blaylock, dated December 10, 2020. The Board of Governors expressed their heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to John Blaylock for his unwavering dedication and contributions to the students, constituents, faculty, staff, administration, and the Board of Governors of Northeast Community College.

President Barrett articulated what a privilege it has been for her to work with such a fine, outstanding, and caring individual and wished him best of luck as he begins his next journey in life.

Mr. Blaylock extended an emotional thank you to his wife and children, the Board of Governors and President's Cabinet members and expressed his deep passion of Northeast Community College and the work it does to serve the region and its constituents.

4. In late October, the Board of Governors were provided links to view sessions from the ACCT Leadership Congress. President Barrett opened the floor for board members to make comments or reactions to the webinar sessions which included the following:
  - The Board of Governors does a good job of speaking with one voice.
  - The Board recognizes their role and the role of the president.
  - Reviewing/revision policies a few at a time was a great idea.
  - Measurable goals in the strategic plan are key.
  - Trust is also important/relying on the trust of each other.
  - Transparency.
  - Search of excellence and best business practices.

Steve Anderson initiated discussion on policy governance, stating that his thoughts on the process including the need for accountability and transparency to constituents is key as the process moves forward. Budget should be included in the transparency and accountability. He reported that as he reviewed other college's processes, reports that are provided to the Board of Governors should include monitoring information that will provide for robust conversations. Communicating values to the College community as a whole will be important as the process moves forward.

President Barrett indicated that the next step in board governance is reviewing policies, setting executive limitations, and ends policies of the board. The Governance Coach model suggested starting discussions with executive limitations related to finance and executive limitations related to people.

Discussion on executive limitations included the following:

- Look at a budget picture for three to five years rather than having compartmentalized discussions once a year. Planning documents for three to five years should be made available to board members.
- Information that provides oversight to the Board of Governors but allows the president to run the College.
- Levy and facility challenges. The board needs to have information on the three buildings that will be opening in the next three months and the basic costs of running the College
- The board needs to have an understanding of the percentage of the budget that goes to personnel expenses and that Northeast needs to stay at the midpoint of the other community colleges.
- Understanding of the limitations on the amount of revenue that the College can bring in.
- Administration is currently working to reduce operating expenses. Operational activities are not the role of the Board of Governors. The board needs to have information for future considerations of adding new programs, etc.
- A five-year review holds the College president accountable and also allows the board to make five-year planning decisions.
- The Board of Governors needs three and five-year planning information so that they can make decisions on building new facilities, assessing the levy, and assessing tuition and fees.
- Budget should revolve around the strategic plan.
- The Board of Governors need to determine what information they need and also what they are expecting from the president.
- Review insurance and the amount of coverages.

Steve Anderson suggested that the Board of Governors have a subgroup to work with Dr. Barrett and Scott Gray to determine reports that are of value and what is important to the board. The work of the subgroup would be related to the context of how the Carver Governance Coach led the Board of Governors through the process. Board members interested in serving on a sub-committee should contact Steve Anderson. Additional discussion or possible Zoom retreat will be held in early 2021.

5. Dr. Michele Gill has served as Interim Vice President of Educational Services since Fall 2019. President Leah Barrett reported that Dr. Gill has quietly led the division through the transition of a president and a world-wide pandemic. She has demonstrated grace, understanding, and thoughtful leadership engaging faculty in decisions related to course formats, training programs, staff re-deployment, test proctoring, faculty evaluations, and academic reviews. She has 37 years of experience in higher education leadership working her way up in different institutions in student services, athletics, and educational services. Dr. Gill is a team player and has developed strong working relationships with her colleagues, the deans, and the faculty.

A consensus was reached by the members of the Governance Committee to recommend to the Board of Governors to approve the title change of Dr. Michele Gill from Interim Vice President, Educational Services to Vice President, Educational Services.

Dr. Gill thanked President Barrett for the opportunity to work alongside of her and the Cabinet team and the Board of Governors for their confidence in her to step into this position.

6. As Associate Vice President of Development and External Affairs, Dr. Tracy Kruse has been responsible for the college's resource development, grants, alumni, and state and federal governmental relations activities as well as the management of the Lifelong Learning Center operations and event management services. Additionally, she serves as the Executive Director of the Northeast Community College Foundation and works directly with a 21-member Foundation Board.

Dr. Kruse has more than 20 years of experience in marketing, communications, and fundraising. She leads a division that has raised over \$30 million for College programs, scholarships and facilities since joining the team in 2013. The recommended title change reflects the leadership that Dr. Kruse has demonstrated working with businesses, governmental organizations, civic leaders, and Northeast Nebraska.

A consensus was reached by the members of the Governance Committee to recommend to the Board of Governors to approve the title change of Dr. Tracy Kruse from Associate Vice President, Development and External Relations to Vice President, Development and External Relations.

Dr. Tracy Kruse thanked the Board of Governors for the support that she has received over the years. She has a passion for the institution and sees a great deal of opportunity under the leadership of Dr. Leah Barrett.

7. Steve Anderson advised that he has had discussions with Arlan Kuehn and Julie Robinson and both are in agreement with him, to serve as Board of Governors officers for 2021. Mr. Anderson indicated that he will work with Diane Reikofski to establish board committee representatives for 2021.

A consensus was reached by the members of the Governance Committee to recommend to the Board of Governors to approved Board of Governors Officers for 2021 as follows:

Chairperson – Steve Anderson  
Vice Chairperson – Arlan Kuehn  
Secretary – Julie Robinson

8. Nicole Sedlacek expressed her desire to learn more about the NCCA Board of Directors in the future but indicated that she did not want to replace current representatives if they had a continued interest in serving. Terry Nelson encouraged Nicole and other interested board members to accompany Steve and Gene to upcoming meetings as time permits.

A consensus was reached by the members of the Governance Committee to recommend to the Board of Governors that Steve Anderson and Gene Willers serve as the 2021 Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA) Board of Directors representatives, with the remainder of the boards serving as alternates.

9. Steve Anderson advised that five of Nebraska’s six community colleges are members of the NCCA. Greg Adams sets the budget for the NCCA office and the dues are divided equally among the five participating Nebraska community colleges.

A consensus was reached by members of the Governance Committee to recommend to the Board of Governors to approve payment of the 2021 NCCA annual membership dues in the amount of \$62,830.45.

10. Steve Anderson advised that in the last 30 days he has had discussion with President Leah Barrett regarding her interest in involvement in the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship program.

Board members expressed their support of her involvement in the Aspen Fellowship program. Mr. Anderson will prepare her nomination for submission in February 2021.

11. A link to State Fair Community College’s virtual session regarding strategic planning was provided to board members in the last few month. Northeast Community College is using that same process to collect data for our new strategic plan. President Barrett reported that she is working closely with Michele Gill, Amanda Nipp, Michela Keeler-Strom, and Lindsay Spiegel as Northeast moves forward with its new strategic plan.

Components of the institutional strategic plan include:

- Clear roadmap of institution-specific initiatives designed to enhance goal attainment;
- Affirmation of the institutional mission statement and values;
- Defined future state vision for the institution;
- Clear goals and objectives;
- Institution-wide adoption of the institutional strategic plans;
- Implementation plan with key performance indicators and measures;
- Plans for cascading the institutional plan to departmental plans;
- Annual review of the institutional strategic plan.

The strategic plan project was initiated through stakeholder engagement and data collection by the National Center for Inquiry & Improvement, administration of the campus climate survey by the National Initiative for Leadership & Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE), and presidential forums with students, faculty, staff, and administration.

Next steps that will occur in January and February 2021 include an in-dept review of the campus climate survey, feedback on emerging strategic priorities, vision, and values, introduction of the new budget process, continuation of the Educational Services Re-vision, continuation of the Guided Pathways Quality Initiative (QI) and evolution to the strategic plan.

SharePoint will be the system utilized to share information internally. The Strategic Plan will also be housed in SharePoint to allow access to anyone of the College community to review documents and raw data.

In January, an outline of the strategic plan will be provided, and board members will have an opportunity for first reaction. During the January In-Service, the same information will be cascaded presented to faculty and staff and feedback will be sought.

Del Ames suggested that the board committee structure be reviewed to assure that they align with the work that President Barrett is trying to do.

President Barrett advised that the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan was the introductory work to guided pathways and a precursor of work that needed to be done for the new strategic plan. The difference between Vision 2020 and the new strategic plan is that Vision 2020 had a large list of projects that needed to be completed. The new strategic plan will allow for engagement and work to be done at the departmental levels which will create sustainability to help students achieve their goals.

12. Discussion was held regarding post-pandemic Nebraska and how Northeast Community Colleges fits in to that environment. President Barrett asked for thoughts and input as board members have engaged with the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce virtual sessions, as industry professional, and as local leaders. The following observations were provided:

- Urban and rural are going different directions. Rural Nebraska will eventually catch up because we are a biproduct. Rural areas will just get there slower.
- With success of intersession....will that become our new normal?
- Northeast's 20-counties has lowest unemployment. Report shows growth in transportation and material moving. Nicole Sedlacek will share this report.
- Our 20-county area shows a gap between entry-level positions and advanced level positions. Northeast needs to help train individuals to meet the needs of the region. We need to grow our own and keep them in Nebraska.
- Educational institutions need to be nimble and quick to meet the needs of prospective companies or companies that are adding a new line or service.
- Feels there will be an explosion of growth activity. Where can businesses go that is safe for them to go? Reduce risk of having a plant of 500 employees and maybe having five plants of 100.
- Need a four-lane road from Omaha to attract talent and provide the ability to get goods delivered. Currently do not have a good road system.
- Growing Together.
- Relationship with WSC.
- Push our rural brand and safety aspects. Intelligent individuals in the 20-county area that can excel anywhere in the world. Educate/train them but keep them in the area.
- Take advantage of the fact that Northeast has figured out how to do remote learning.
- Get technology to individuals who can't afford it. Are there ways for us to push our government so people have an opportunity for technology?
- UNL president sees value of community colleges in preparing the workforce.
- Identify what we know and try to not do things that we don't know. Example – nine months ago, getting people to sit in a car to get a vaccine, people thought you were crazy. Now it's normal.
- As Northeast moves forward on how we deliver our courses, many things can't be done because it requires hands-on opportunities. Students prefer in-person classes.
- Former resistance to deliver services.

- Assist students with being able to afford going to college? Let them get six weeks of employment during intersession so that they can go back to college in January. This helps workforce development.
- How we deliver, focus on what we do.
- Post Covid-need to embrace some of the changes we made.
- Colleges are no longer geographically bound as a result of online learning. Opens up opportunities for Northeast...but also for other colleges. Need to take into consideration as it opens doors and create a more competitive environment.
- From healthcare point of view, how do we meet the needs from a patient perspective?
- How we present inclusion is hugely important. If we want to be inclusive, whether poor, different color, race, or creed...students need to know that we are going to help them.
- Learning is occurring among faculty as we have had to provide more diverse online learning format; this will supplement opportunities for the future. Some classes will move forward with a more synchronous format. We have learned that we can be flexible and nimble.
- Northeast is engaged with building broadband across the region.

13. With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.