

**NORTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 8, 2021

STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE

Donovan Ellis, Chairperson	PRESENT
Arlan Kuehn	ABSENT
Terry Nelson	PRESENT
Nicole Sedlacek	PRESENT
Steve Anderson, ex-officio	PRESENT

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

Del Ames	ABSENT
Dirk Petersen	PRESENT
Julie Robinson	PRESENT
Jeff Scherer	PRESENT @ 12:47 p.m.
Carol Sibbel	ABSENT
Gene Willers	PRESENT

STAFF

Dr. Leah Barrett	Brad Vogt
Scott Gray	Richard Chrisman
Paul Feilmeier	John Liewer
Amanda Nipp	Nathan Simpson
Dr. Michele Gill	Terri Heggemeyer
Dr. Karen Severson	
Dr. Tracy Kruse	
Jim Curry	
Diane Reikofski	
Dr. Wade Herley	
Kris Coan	
Gigi Simonsen	
Shanelle Grudzinski	

MINUTES

1. Donovan Ellis, Chairperson of the Student Success Committee, convened the meeting at 11:42 a.m. in Suites F & G of the Lifelong Learning Center.
2. Recommended approval of the Minutes of the March 11, 2021 meeting as distributed.
3. Terri Heggemeyer, Director of Career Services, advised that the Career Services office hosted a Spring Career Fair in March. Because of the pandemic, there were concerns that employers may not participate. She reported that within two weeks, all available spaces were filled. Northeast's Job Board currently has nearly 400 jobs posted.

Ms. Heggemeyer presented the 2020 Graduate Report. Report statistics reveal that 98% of the 2020 graduates are employed or are continuing their education, 90% are employed in a field related to their program of study, and 56% are employed in our 20-county service area. Since 1973, there have been 28,302 graduates from Northeast Community College; providing a huge impact to employers, our communities, and the economy.

Steve Anderson reported that he participated in the job fair and was impressed how well it was organized in light of the pandemic. He had the opportunity to meet an employer from a collision center with offices in Omaha and Kansas City, MO. He quizzed the employer for the reason why she came from an urban area to Northeast's job fair. He learned that the company's owner is a Northeast alum who has donated to Northeast's program. She also reported to Mr. Anderson that Northeast's Auto Body Repair program is one of the premier programs in the

Mission

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

state of Nebraska. Mr. Anderson indicated that her comments validate the work that is being done at Northeast Community College.

4. Information Technology instructors, Kris Coan, Brad Vogt, Richard Chrisman, and Gigi Simonsen presented the program review of the Information Technology program.

The Information Technology program prepares individuals to perform information technology activities, providing students with a highly employable, highly sought-after set of skills. The Information Technology program offers a certificate, an Associate of Arts (AA) degree, and an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree. The AAS program is designed so students can build their own degree by choosing two of five different certificate areas. The first semester for all concentrations consists of the same five core classes. Upon successful completion of the five classes, students will receive a General Information Technology certificate. Upon successful completion of their AAS degree, students will receive their AAS degree plus a certificate in each of the two areas of concentration.

The program also offers a choice of two AA degree paths. Students may choose Computer Information Systems or Computer Science. The two AA options have been articulated to transfer to Wayne State College.

The AAS, AA, and certificate programs are offered on the Norfolk campus and the AA program on the South Sioux City extended campus. Some courses are offered in an online or virtual format. Limited courses have been offered for early-college enrollment as virtual/online or in-person at Norfolk Public High School.

According to the Nebraska Department of Labor, each area of concentration that is offered in Information Technology at Northeast Community College provides students skills to seek employment in high wage, high demand, and high skill occupations.

The National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security has designated Northeast Community College as an institution for CAE-2Y, National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense 2-Year Education. The Information Security concentration, paired with any of the four remaining concentrations, will result in recognition as a CAE-2Y degree. This designation provides additional transfer options to CAE-4Y (Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense 4-Year Education) colleges in Nebraska, specifically University of Nebraska-Omaha, and Bellevue University.

Following discussion, a consensus was reached by the members of the Student Success Committee that the Information Technology program meets a vital need in the 20-county service area and throughout Nebraska and also exceeds thresholds established by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) and, therefore, will recommend to the Board of Governors the continuation of the Information Technology program at Northeast Community College to the Nebraska CCPE.

5. President Barrett recognized Information Technology instructors Richard Chrisman and Gigi Simonsen for their years of service to the institution and congratulated them on their upcoming retirement.

6. Michele Gill introduced Shanelle Grudzinski, Dean of Applied Technology, and Wind Energy instructors, John Liewer and Nathan Simpson, who provided the program review of the Wind Energy program.

The Wind Energy program began in the mid 2000's in response to a surge in wind energy generation, the construction of wind farms in the region, and a demand for qualified technicians to maintain the wind towers. The Wind Energy program prepares students for a high demand career in the wind energy field, ranging from development to construction, with emphasis on maintenance, service, and troubleshooting which requires a multitude of skills. The diverse range of courses prepare students to recognize familiar concepts and excel in their career progression while in the field. Students acquire knowledge and skills in safety, mechanics, electronics, electrical installation and troubleshooting, communications, as well as safe access and rescue at heights.

According to the Nebraska Energy Office, the annual wind energy production has increased nearly 700% in the last decade and is still ascending rapidly. With strong job opportunities both locally and nationally, as well as good wage and benefit packages, enrollment in the Wind Energy program remains good. Challenges with recruiting student into the program include a lack of understanding of the profession and technology. Retention of students is also a challenge as companies need employees immediately and students are often recruited to the industry prior to completing their degree.

The Wind Energy program has been housed in the Arlo Wirth Building since the 2015-2016 academic year. Faculty struggle to fully adapt the facility space to meet all of their educational training needs. Some courses are provided from other campus facilities, so consolidation of all labs into one common space could increase efficiency.

As wind technologies increase in sophistication, companies will further seek technicians that have completed a formalized training program. With greater formalized training, salaries are expected to improve, drawing individuals into the career field. Northeast graduates have reported entry level base salary of around \$44,000 to \$65,000 per year. The addition of industry recognized credentials to the curriculum, in addition to a degree, represented a draw for students as well as employers.

The Wind Energy advisory board plays a key role in the assessment of student learning by helping to establish student learning outcomes for the curriculum, assessing student learning in field experiences and internships, and guiding curriculum enhancements to incorporate the latest technologies, tooling, and techniques. The advisory board also helps to identify strengths and weaknesses in student knowledge, skills, and abilities of student interns and graduates of the program.

Julie Robinson inquired about making the Wind Energy program a diploma program. Mrs. Grudzinski and Mr. Liewer advised that the program started as a diploma program, however, the advisory committee wanted students to have more skills, so the program was changed to a two-year program per the advisory committee's request/recommendation. The dean and faculty continue to further work with the advisory committee to determine if a certificate or diploma program will provide students with enough education to meet what industry's expectations are.

During discussion, members of the Student Success Committee recognized that the program does not fully meet the CCPE requirements of 10 graduates per year and Student Credit Hour (SCH)/Faculty FTE of 275. They also recognized that the Wind Energy program is a strong and viable program with dedicated and knowledgeable faculty that is meeting the needs of employers in the 20-county service area and across the state. A recommendation will be provided to the Board of Governors to approve continuation of the Wind Energy program at Northeast Community College to the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

7. Inquiry was made in regard to the large solar farm that will be going into production in Pierce County. Shanelle Grudzinski advised that installation of solar farms involves electrical knowledge and Northeast has been integrating solar into the Electrical Construction and Control program to make it more robust. She indicated that Northeast is on par with what is currently occurring in our region and will be gearing up to expand with industry demand.
8. In an effort to adhere to current social distance requirements, understanding that not all attendees will be vaccinated by May, along with the desire for students to have multiple family members attend their graduation, Northeast Community College's 2021 commencement ceremony will be held in multiple sessions on May 21st and 22nd. Amanda Nipp requested that two board members sign up to be present during one of the six commencement sessions.
9. CARES funds were distributed to 913 Pell-eligible students on April 1st.
10. Inquiry was made if the student population in residence life would be required to have the vaccination. Ms. Nipp reported that one of the challenges with requiring the vaccination is that it is still considered an experimental vaccine. Another issue is that if we do require the vaccination, we are unsure if students would receive the vaccination prior to moving into the residence halls. On-campus housing requires certain vaccinations and a statement has been added that additional vaccinations may be required due to Covid.
11. Tenth day spring enrollment numbers are down 3.8% and down 7.2% in credit hours compared to 2020. Opportunities exist to increase the numbers during the remainder of the spring semester.

Fall registration will open on April 12th. Early enrollment predictors indicate the potential that enrollment could be similar to 2019 enrollments, which was one of Northeast's higher enrollment years.

12. With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m.