

Community College Commission

❖ *Mission and philosophy*

The Wyoming Community College Commission, the seven community colleges and public television comprise 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.

Status of objective: The Annual Strategic Plan Report 1999 includes the results of common system-wide student and employer survey questionnaires. In addition, the commission has completed studies of statewide concurrent enrollment policies and practices, college system staffing, citizen access to community college education (with college enrollment projection models) and comparative costs of community college education. Annual enrollment reports, studies of developmental education and studies of out-of-district sites have also been completed. In progress are studies of student retention/attrition, transfer student hours-to-degree at the University of Wyoming, student financial aid and college system tuition and fees.

General information

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Year reorganized

1985

Statutory references

W.S. 21-18-202

Number of authorized personnel

11

Clients served

Governor, Legislature, Community Colleges,
other state agencies.

Budget information

Objective A	\$1,138,870	0.02
Objective B	44,428,614	0.93
Objective C	500,983	0.01
Objective D	1,600,000	0.03
Objective E	225,000	0.00
Objective F	1,385	0.00
Total	\$47,894,852	1.00

This first year of reporting on the plan's strategic indicators will provide benchmarks against which future reports may be compared.

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

Status of objective: On June 23, 1999, the commission adopted new budget request and funding allocation models. Both models rely on comparisons of each Wyoming community college to 12 comparator institutions in the nation. The comparators were selected by an outside consultant from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and provided for the first time external benchmarks against which to evaluate the funding adequacy of Wyoming colleges.

The selection criteria for the comparators were size of institution by FTE enrollment, part-time/full-time mix of students, mix of program offerings and locale population.

The new budget request model assures distinct roles for the commission and the college boards of trustees, with commission goals focused on parity with the comparator institutions and equity among the colleges of the Wyoming system. Line item issues, such as salary levels, are the responsibility of college boards and are to be addressed from the colleges' block grants.

The funding allocation model distributes "new" dollars from state or local revenues to the colleges in two ways. Fifty percent of new dollars are allocated to each college proportionately, based on each college's share of the total state appropriation and local appropriation budget. Fifty percent of new funding is utilized to address inequities within the system. The college with the lowest percentage relationship to its peers receives funding until it achieves the level of the next lowest college, then both colleges are funded until they reach the level of the third lowest college, and so on.

A college is allowed to achieve 105 percent of its comparators before its proportional share of funding is assigned to equity funding. If "new" funding is negative in the system total, all colleges share proportionately in funding cuts.

The new models supercede a funding distribution formula that recognized enrollment and square footage as drivers, but that had no standards against which to judge allocations. The new models are intended to protect the state and local investments in the higher education infrastructure and to eliminate competition for enrollment in an era of declining enrollments.

The American Association of Community Colleges' core indicators of effectiveness are integrated into the many strategic indicators of this report and provide initial benchmarks for assessing accountability in the seven community colleges.

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

Status of Objective: During 16 years of service to the state, Wyoming Public Television (WPTV) has seen a steady increase in viewership. In the last 10 years, there has been a 350 percent increase in the number of households tuning into WPTV — from 8,000 households in 1989 to 28,000 in 1999. Private funding of WPTV has increased 1,000 percent over the last 10 years (from \$23,721 in 1988 to \$234,934 in 1998). Through shared use of facilities, WPTV and Central Wyoming College have significantly increased distance-learning capabilities in central and northwest Wyoming. A complete summary of WPTV objectives A through E are reported on pages 8-12 of the WCCC Annual Strategic Plan Report 1999.

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

Status of objective: 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	88,985,128
■ Contingency reserve (coal bonus)	3,200,000
	(\$1,600,000 received to date)
■ State student incentive grant	450,000
■ Wyoming Public Television	1,001,967
■ Job Skills Center	(\$1,500,000 "other" funds)

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 require approximately \$1,200,000 per biennium. In this biennium, the colleges are converting from Release 13 to Release 16 of the Datatel Colleague system. It is a massive upgrade, requiring a great deal of training for college personnel. The commission had requested exception budget support for the training and, while approved, the amount was off-set by a reduction in the commission budget. Negotiations with Datatel and shared support from the colleges allowed the system to move forward with a limited training schedule. The colleges shared in the cost of training (\$41,500) by providing \$35,438 while the commission provided \$6,062 (1/8 of the cost). Datatel also charged for its expenses, and those expenses were paid by the commission for the total training cost of \$55,269.

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 admin-

istrative 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.

The State Aid program provides support to the colleges, and in the 1999-00 biennium it amounted to \$88,985,128 (with supplemental funding for health insurance premiums). That amount is 92 percent of the \$96,741,049 standard and exception budget request made for the biennium. The colleges thus began the biennium short of their goals of adding \$6,415,536 to achieve 100 percent of market for staff salaries, \$2,000,000 for equipment and \$1,747,260 for program investment.

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. 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 FY99 amounted to \$1.6 million.

The commission approved \$1,533,358 in emergency repair and preventative maintenance projects in FY99.

For FY00, under the commission's adopted funding allocation model, coal lease bonus funds will be distributed as an adjunct to the model. With revisions from FY99 projects, \$165,548 has been distributed in FY00. It is anticipated that an additional \$1.6 million will be received in FY00 and allocated under the new policy.

The State Student Incentive Grant program has been re-titled the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) program for FY00. See Objective F below.

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, pages 8-12 Annual Strategic Plan Report 1999.

Objective E: To provide equitable distribution and accountability for State Student Incentive Grant (SSIG) funds.

Status of objective: The SSIG program was renamed Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) for FY99. Diminishing federal support for the program in recent years has resulted in fewer Wyoming students receiving grants.

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

Status of Objective: The Job Skills Training Center program was developed with assistance of commission staff through negotiations with the Department of Family Services for two job skills centers (one of which has been closed). Little activity due to diminishing numbers of welfare clients has resulted in the remaining center being scheduled for phase-out. The commission continues to seek common solutions with the Department of Family Services to provide long-term workplace skills for welfare recipients.

❖ *Strategic plan changes*

The commission plans to streamline its strategic plan. Changes are under discussion.

Community College Commission organization chart

