

**Northland Pioneer College  
5th Annual Community Outreach  
Painted Desert Campus, Holbrook  
March 11, 2015**

Northland Pioneer College, Painted Desert Campus in Holbrook hosted the Campus's 5<sup>th</sup> annual community outreach meeting on March 11, 2015 at the Tiponi Community Center.

**Attendees**

Dr. Jeanne Swarthout – NPC President, Blaine Hatch – NPC Vice President for Administrative Services, Mark Vest – NPC Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, James Molesa – Chief Deputy for Navajo County Sheriff's Department, Otto Walters – Arizona Department of Public Safety, Dr. Robby Koerperich – Superintendent for Holbrook School District, Charles Haussman – Holbrook High School Assistant Principal and Councilman for City of Holbrook, Wendy Skevington – Holbrook Public Library Manager, Shelly Ehmann – CCO, Holbrook Community Counseling Center, Gretchen Herndon – Program Director, Holbrook Community Counseling Center, Arnold Hall – Navajo County Juvenile Probation, Peggy Sample – Office Manager, QK, Inc. Jeff Johnson – Holbrook Painted Desert Kiwanis Club, Faryn Seal – Holbrook Painted Desert Kiwanis Club, MiAnna Tyler – NPC Campus Manager at Painted Desert Campus and Kathy McPherson – NPC Assistant to the Campus Manager at Painted Desert Campus.

**I. Welcome**

MiAnna Tyler welcomed everyone to the community outreach meeting for the Painted Desert Campus in Holbrook. She stated to the group that we have now moved into the new Skill Center and that she would be happy to give anyone a tour of the new facility. She then turned the meeting over to President Swarthout who welcomed and thanked everyone for attending.

**II. Strategic Plan**

President Swarthout stated to the group that the college has a three year strategic plan – but that strategic planning is a continual process; and that the college is in the process right now of changing the timing as well as the look of the strategic plan; stating that the college needs to be sure that the strategic plan comes before the budget; because it drives the budget. She stated that the college wants to be more targeted in initiatives and goals in the strategic plan. Dr. Swarthout stated that underlying those will be operational plans for each area of the college, and to accomplish them; the college will be going from a sixteen page strategic plan to one that the public could pick up as one page and understand the basic initiatives and can always go to the operational plan to see how we are going to accomplish those; she stated that she thinks that will be more meaningful for the college as well as the public to understand where we are going and what we are doing. She stated that the College Board has expressed interest in being

more involved with strategic planning. Dr. Swarthout informed the group that the college is working on our mission statement; and stated to the group that if they get a chance to go online to the college website and look at our mission, vision, values and purposes. She stated that our current mission statement has been around since 2008; and that it had been revised quickly without incorporating the public into the process – this time around, we are asking the public and stakeholder groups outside the college to take a look and also help with the mission statement; Dr. Swarthout stated that getting the mission statement right is extremely important.

Dr. Swarthout stated that Northland Pioneer College was amongst 7 of 10 community colleges whose funding was not touched by the State; we are living with all of the past reductions; but no new ones. She stated that the State did eliminate all State aid funding to Maricopa and Pima; and 50 percent of funding to Central Arizona College. At this point, Maricopa and Pima receive no funding from the State whatsoever. She stated that the State took a radical step that has never been taken before in literally defunding two out of eight community college districts; so we are looking at what that means in the future for all of us; we are safe this year, we need to look at the future and what this defunding of community colleges might mean for the smaller rural districts who can't property tax the way Maricopa and Pima county can; so we will be watching that very carefully.

Dr. Swarthout stated the one of the biggest issues right now for community colleges and other entities and that is the expenditure limit statutes and the constitutional rules on expenditure limit; 7 out of 10 community colleges are at some risk for expenditure limit – which basically says that you can have the revenue; but you are not allowed to spend it, or you are not allowed to spend a certain percentage of it; this affects counties, K-12's, and municipalities.

Dr. Swarthout stated that the college is working to establish a legislative study committee to last a year; to look at modernizing the expenditure limit formulas and process for all entities that are affected by expenditure limit. The formula and statutory process was put in place in 1979-1980; so in 2015, we are living with something that was put in place to restrict us; we are trying to find a way to modernize it and make it functional in 2015. Dr. Swarthout stated that no one has considered what it means to defund a community college that is still a property of the State; in terms of rules, regulations, and constitution statute. She stated that there are a couple of legislators who are saying that as soon as we have our money, we will give it back to the universities, K-12's and community colleges. Dr. Swarthout stated that the money wasn't going to come back; so we need to figure out how to live with it. Jim Molesa added that now we know what it's like to be a county. Dr. Swarthout stated that the counties are being hammered by expenditure limit right now. Wendy Skevington asked Dr. Swarthout where the State expected to generate the money from; Dr. Swarthout said that the State has said they will have more money in 2018-2019; and we will get it back; however, she has no faith in that statement; so we are planning on potentially seeing some dramatic changes at the legislative level in terms of our operating state aid. Dr. Swarthout turned the meeting over to Vice President Blaine Hatch.

### **III. Budget and Facilities**

Vice President Hatch stated to the group that NPC is right in the middle of budget activities; and expenditure limit is at the top of the list; he stated that it is not a new issue for the college and that we have been aware for the last couple of years that we have a challenge; and we have

7 to 10 years to work through it; we are hoping that it doesn't take that long. Vice President Hatch stated that in general terms; NPC is doing fine financially. He informed the group that the college just issued a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the 2014 fiscal year that just ended; he stated that it was the first one that NPC had done; and that it was quite a bit of work and the college hopes it is beneficial and that it is available on NPC's website if anyone wants to look at it. Vice President Hatch stated to the group that NPC found out today that the Government Finance Officer Association awarded a certificate of excellence to NPC; and that the college is very pleased with that.

Vice President Hatch stated that although the new Skill Center here at the Painted Desert Campus is not a perfect facility; we are pleased with it, and it has consolidated all of our instructional activities here on this campus - and that has been very positive. He informed the group that this summer our construction class is going to build a house as part of their training. The house is being built on 13th Avenue here in Holbrook. Dr. Swarthout stated that the house is being designed to be an affordable, sustainable house; which will give the students construction skills, but also is using students who need to obtain their GED's. So they will be working on their GED, construction skills, OSHA regulations, and building a house all at the same time.

Vice President Vest stated to the group that one of the issues that are causing the expenditure limit problems for colleges statewide is; higher education participation rate in this country is down nationwide. There just aren't as many students going to school. He stated that financial issues drive a lot of that; and also weaker job opportunities in rural areas tend to drive that. He stated that that is true statewide and with NPC as well. He informed the group that enrollment here at NPC is down county wide; except here at the Painted Desert Campus; this is the only location where our enrollment has been pretty stable; the Skill Center has played a role in that. We were able to expand the welding program because of the larger facility - plus we added construction and mechatronics which is generating a lot of interest; especially through NAVIT. Vice President Vest stated to the group that the construction program and WIA applied for a grant. He stated that most of the successful grants we have been able to do are with partnerships. The more that we can do with partnerships; the better off we all are. There is no way we could run this project this summer and build a house without the strong participation of WIA, the City of Holbrook and everyone that is involved because we need the space, we need the students and the program - and WIA is going to be central is identifying those students. The school districts are going to try to help us with that as well.

#### **IV. Instruction**

Vice President Vest stated to the group that NPC has changed some of the ways we do business in the summer. We are going to have more general education course offerings this summer; we are also going to be offering CTE courses which haven't been offered in the past. He also spoke to the group about Kids College. He stated that it was started a few years ago - it started small, but we are trying to grow it out. Vice President Vest said that the intent of Kids College is to deal with the fact that all of the research that has been done with K-12 students; shows that if they are thinking about college indicates that by the time they are in 4th or 5th grade; they are starting to make decisions about whether or not college is something that will be in their future. He stated that we have the Children's Theatre Program that we have been running

for years at our Campus in Snowflake. He stated that we have received a grant from the Arizona Science Foundation this year to give a tuition waiver for Kids College to any 4th through 8th grader who participated in the original Science Fair. He stated that we gave out 85 tuition waivers and those students will all be able to participate in either a math or science based Kids College class at any of our campuses and a number of our centers.

Vice President Vest stated that we have money in the grant to pay interested community members and teachers who want to do something cool with kids this summer; NPC buys National Science Foundation Kits for math and science classes; that are everything from building a robot, rocketry, to paleontology in a box. He stated that Royce Kincanon who is NPC's Business Corporate Training Director and some of our faculty will be happy to work with anyone if they have any hesitancy about doing this; to help them through the process. Vice President Vest told the group that the kids that have done these classes in past summers have really enjoyed it; they enjoy saying that they are a college student. We don't know if that will translate seven years from now in that child deciding to go to college; but not being on a college campus ever translates to – I may never go there.

Dr. Swarthout stated to the group that she is trying to look out to the year 2020. She stated that at some point we know that we are going to lose the coal fired power plants; so we need to know what transition programs we need to think about when the power plants are gone – what things do we need educationally that might need to replace some of the things we do to gear up the plants right now. She stated that the college needs to have a plan so that when this happens; these are the things we can do to sustain Career and Technical Education in Navajo and Apache Counties; with or without the Power Plants.

Dr. Swarthout asked the group what we are going now; or what do we need to do better and what does the group see for the future. Jeff Johnson state that he thinks NPC needs to do more courses to prepare students for employment. Superintendent Koerperich stated that he is curious as to what the mindset of kids coming out of high school is. He stated that we offer CTE programs and some of the kids right out of high school can go straight to a very good job; so he wonders if the value of a Jr. College Degree or an Associate's Degree is cherished anymore. He stated that an AA degree doesn't seem to get you too far in terms of employment; or does NPC see most of their students going on to higher education at the University level? Dr. Swarthout stated that actually what we have seen right now is a significant shift of students going into Career and Technical Education over the General Education transfer; which is where are biggest enrollment decrease is right now; our increase and our steadiness is in Career and Technical Education and that is driven by the economy.

Dr. Swarthout stated that all of the surveys nationwide as well as in Arizona indicate that there is a good payback for an Associate's Degree. Having an Associate's Degree can earn you \$15,000 - \$20,000 more a year than you would get out of High School; so she believes that an Associate's Degree is appreciated.

Charlie Haussman stated to the group that the High School is in the process of compiling data for NAVIT to see where our students are and he stated that there are a lot in the Cosmetology field. Vice President Vest stated that the NPC Cosmetology Faculty is using Facebook to track

their students and there are 91 percent of their students who are working full-time or part-time in the Cosmetology field.

Vice President Vest stated that changes in the Pell funding have really crippled the number of our students to continue going to school; he stated that the group that relied on some other entity – usually a Government entity of some kind; has disappeared because of the Pell funding changes. Vice President Vest stated that the college was going to stop publishing the class schedule and instead we are going to publish a magazine twice a year called Career Focus that tries to give people a reason why they should go back to school. He stated that one thing we did with the company that develops Career Focus was they sat down and started looking at where we had enrollment clusters and where we didn't. The older the area of the county – the less enrollment we had. It makes it tough for us to focus on areas. Dr. Swarthout stated that it forces us to be incredibly strategic in our thinking; one size never works in this county; we are too diverse there are so many issues that need to be taken into account; you have to be much targeted.

Superintendent Koerperich stated that one of the things they hear all the time is STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. How is NPC addressing STEM? Vice President Vest stated that if kids aren't interested in STEM careers by the time they get into High School – they aren't going to be interested in STEM with careers. They wouldn't have the Science and Math preparation to do it even if they wanted to. Vice President Vest informed the group that Betsy Wilson, who is our contract grant writer; is working with a couple of our Science Faculty to develop a grant proposal that we want to pilot at a couple of school districts; we are going to have all of these National Science Foundation kits that we are buying for the Kids College in the summer that have the potential of sitting on a shelf collecting dust. We think that is a real waste of tax payer dollars; so what we would like to do with those is to provide them to the school districts to either use on their own or provide them with a kit and a local expert that could come in and give a teacher a break for 2-3 hours during the day and run a hands-on project for a middle school or Jr. High class in whatever area the school district would like. And that involves us putting together a list of those folks. We are going to apply STEM broadly to include things like Power Plant Operations.

Wendy Skevington asked if the college was abandoning traditional educational focus to the state with the vocational education. Dr. Swarthout stated that she doesn't see that happening – you can't eliminate either one. Right now, because of student demand there is probably more interest in on the Career and Technical side, simply because we are trying to respond to demand; she stated that she doesn't see the more traditional academic path going away.

## **V. General Discussion**

Charlie Haussman stated that he is very excited about what NPC has done; he said that he thinks the support for NAVIT is great. Dr. Swarthout stated that we built the Skill Center for one more program. Wendy Skevington asked if NPC was attracting students from outside of our counties. Dr. Swarthout said that we have very little enrollment outside of our counties. Jim Molesa stated that in the Law Enforcement Academy that is going on right now; there are currently four students who are from outside Navajo and Apache counties. Dr. Swarthout

stated that that number was going to increase.

Superintendent Koerperich stated to the group that education as a whole, being a business so to speak, is the largest employer in Navajo County. He stated that there are nearly 3,000 employees who work in public school systems; having those people highly trained can only be to the development of Navajo County. He stated that if you look at the scope of who employs from Blue Ridge to Kayenta in Navajo County; public schools are an economic boost to our counties. He stated that a common discussion is JTED; which is Joint Technological Education – which is our NAVIT is on the chopping block for next year. The state is not prioritizing education as an important aspect of Arizona; he asked if that would affect NPC. Dr. Swarthout stated that it would affect everybody. It will affect the county because we won't be positioned to train and educate Career and Technical education students interested in those kinds of jobs. She stated that you cannot have economic development in a state that is defunding all areas of education. Vice President Vest stated that the legislators focus on the JTED programs as a High School program. Adult students taking classes right now in the Skill Center would not have any of those classes because the programs wouldn't exist and the Skill Center wouldn't exist without the JTED Department; because JTED provides part of the student base, the adults students provide the other part of the enrollment base; neither one is sufficient to run any of the programs in that building – together, we can run all the programs in that building; but alone we can't run any of them. Dr. Swarthout stated that in Navajo County, K-12, NAVIT and the college stand together – we stand together at the legislature, and the Governor's Office; we try to defend each other's backs, because in Navajo County; we cannot be successful if all three pieces are not working together.

Jeff Johnson stated that he is proud to have NPC here. He says he thinks it is a great facility and we offer a variety of programs, he stated that he is also happy to hear that NPC has a great relationship with the K-12 schools. Superintendent Koerporich stated that just saying we have NPC in our communities speaks volumes; if you take NPC out of the equation, Holbrook depreciates a lot. Sustaining what we have should be a priority for the entire community and the entire county – so whatever we can do to help with that; it is a lifeline we have to have. Dr. Swarthout asked the group how much concern has it generated in Holbrook that we are in a rather lengthy dialogue that we are having with the town of Snowflake. Wendy Skevington stated that there are a lot of concerns. She stated that there were concerns about moving the Administrative Offices to Snowflake initially; however, as the conversation continues to play out, there are a considerable number of students leaving High School from Snowflake who aren't even considering attending NPC; and that is worrisome because she knows NPC does a lot of marketing; where are the channels not reaching your audience? And Snowflake is a problem spot right at the moment, where are the other problem spots around the county, will Holbrook be a problem spot in 2-3 years? Dr. Swarthout stated that the proposal to move most of the Administrative Offices to Snowflake was because they have to do something with the space there. She stated that the most concerning long-term item, is does NPC have something in mind for the other campuses, and she understands the concerns.

Vice President Hatch stated that NPC has been fairly vocal that this is not the solution, there is more to do in trying to address expenditure limitation. Dr. Swarthout stated that NPC is currently doing other things to get the expenditure limit down; such as the voluntary employee

separation package. That is to provide an opportunity or an incentive for employees that have been here fifteen years or longer to choose to leave. That is an effort to see if we can bring down some of our personnel costs. There is not one solution to this; there are going to have to be many. Given that we have invested very heavily in the Holbrook Campus, Dr. Swarthout stated that she feels confident in saying that she doesn't feel that the Painted Desert Campus is in jeopardy. She stated that the Board will decide if the Administrators will move to the Snowflake Campus. The Board has asked NPC to do a space-use study; and take it to the Board in August. Decisions related to the Snowflake Campus will be more clearly forthcoming, but she doesn't know what they will be right now.

Wendy Skevington asked Vice President Hatch what is your surplus funds if we have a limitation and we want to remove the limitations because there are things there to benefit the communities, the college and the students are they at risk from the state? Vice President Hatch stated that we are pretty solid that these are Navajo County taxpayer dollars or tuition dollars, and NPC does account for them. We do retain most excess funds in two locations; 1) Navajo County Treasures Office; that is where all of our property tax money flows in through, and we are very happy with that, and 2) the local government vestment at the State level. We are not at risk for that because we are identifying them as local revenues as opposed to State revenues.

Dr. Swarthout added that we asked the Board to pass some policies to additionally try to protect our funds; the Board was asked to pass a policy; which they did, that requires the college to always have at least six months of excess operating funds on hand in case something happens; so there is that money that has to be here, and then we asked the Board to also pass an additional policy to put a certain amount every year into a protected capital improvement fund – a building fund, so that was all moves NPC took when the State was sweeping anyone's cash they could get their hands on to additionally try to protect those funds from the State. When the 10 community college districts took a combined forty eight percent hit in one day; we all started looking around and said ok – some of us were quicker and better than others; we have some colleges that are at much greater risk right now with all of us; but NPC took some early, very strong steps to protect funds. Dr. Swarthout stated to the group that when anyone asks what they can do to help with the expenditure limit; people need to stay tuned with what the legislature is doing; and use the ALIS system to speak for or against bills at any time. Private Citizens need to feel free and comfortable in taking bill positions, the ALIS system gives you the ability to speak; speak out on any bill that matters to you or offends you highly.

Dr. Swarthout adjourned the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Kathy McPherson  
Note taker