



Northland Pioneer College
6th Annual Community Outreach
Painted Desert Campus, Holbrook
October 19, 2015

Northland Pioneer College, Painted Desert Campus in Holbrook hosted the Campus's 6th annual community outreach meeting on October 19, 2015 at the Tiponi Community Center.

Attendees

Dr. Jeanne Swarthout – NPC President, Mark Vest – NPC Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, Nathan Christensen – Navajo County Sheriff's Department, Otto Walters – Arizona Department of Public Safety, Charles Haussman – Holbrook High School Assistant Principal, Gretchen Herndon – Program Director, Holbrook Community Counseling Center, Laura Sanchez – Navajo County Recorder, Deanne Romo – Clerk of the Court for Navajo County, Cammy Darris – Navajo County Assessor, Sarah Herve – Petrified Forest National Park, Cherise Merrick – Bread of Life Mission and Kathy McPherson – NPC Assistant to the Campus Manager at Painted Desert Campus.

I. Welcome

Dr. Swarthout welcomed everyone to the community outreach meeting for the Painted Desert Campus in Holbrook. Dr. Swarthout asked that we go around the table and make introductions.

II. Strategic Plan

President Swarthout stated to the group that the college meets once a year with the communities in which NPC is located to get input for the college's strategic plan. Dr. Swarthout stated that there are increasingly serious threats to the community colleges throughout the state regarding funding issues; last year Maricopa and Pima community colleges were defunded; there are a number of community colleges in line this year to be state defunded for areas where property tax values are high; as opposed to here in Navajo County. Dr. Swarthout stated that it is a significant threat to rural colleges. Cammy Darris asked Dr. Swarthout how much of the college's funding is from state tax. Dr. Swarthout stated that if we include equalization; it is probably about 20-25 percent right now and equalization is the significant funding we get from the state. Dr. Swarthout stated that we are also dealing with expenditure limitation; under expenditure limitation, the college can have money – but is not allowed to spend it. The campus here in Holbrook is the only campus that has had new construction in the past ten years; and that is the Skill Center.

Dr. Swarthout asked what NPC needs to be doing. Cammy Darris stated that she would like to see GIS (Geographic Information Systems) training. She stated that people are moving away from CAD (Computer Aided Drafting). Vice President Vest stated that the issue with that is, getting someone to instruct it and where we would put it. Cammy Darris asked about transportation. Vice President Vest stated that part of the college's strategic plan that has been adopted for this upcoming year is to put together a study group that would include people within the college as well as outside the college who have expertise on transportation options for our students. Dr. Swarthout stated that transportation is a big issue with our reservation communities, there was a student from the Hopi reservation hitchhiking in to Holbrook to take welding classes; the college provided a student housing scholarship for him and a friend so they could both locate in Holbrook for the rest of their program.

Vice President Vest stated that NPC started a scholarship about 5 years ago called a Housing Relocation Scholarship – he stated that still not enough students know about it. The intent is for students living out of the area of where there classes are located; to apply for the scholarship. Vice President Vest stated that money for the scholarship is available. The requirements are that the student has to be a full-time student; and has to show documentation of having relocated to go to school.

Sarah Herve stated to the group that they have Park Service housing on 8th Avenue in Holbrook. She stated that the Petrified Forest partners with DPD to rent the 13 units; which she said are hardly ever all occupied. They are 2 and 3 bedroom units with 2 bathrooms. She stated that perhaps NPC could partner with the Petrified Forest to provide safe, clean housing for students – the issue will need to be discussed with Brad Traver the Superintendent at the Petrified Forest National Park. Dr. Swarthout stated that NPC is interested in any partnerships.

Nathan Christensen stated that the Sheriff's Department has a connection with NPC with the Law Enforcement Academy; and that they really enjoy that. Otto Walters stated that NPC has made a lot of really nice improvements – with the addition of the defensive tactic and the gym; he stated that the shooting range is almost done. Otto Walters stated that he teaches at the academy and that he really enjoys it. Vice President Vest stated that the academy over the last 2 years has filled so many vacancies; that we are going to have to wait until there are more law enforcement job vacancies to run the academy again. Otto Walters stated that the building is not sitting vacant; as law enforcement agencies county wide are utilizing the facility. He stated that DPS is looking at utilizing the building for new hires in the Northeastern part of the state because it is so expensive to send them down to Phoenix. Vice President Vest stated to the group that the Law Enforcement Agencies provide all of the instruction for the Law Enforcement Program.

Charlie Haussman stated that he thinks NPC needs to send someone to the High School to talk to the students about the benefits of NPC; he stated that a lot of the high school students think they need to go to the big cities to get a good education – when they really don't have to as he believes NPC has a lot to offer. He would like to see a consistent counseling staff person from NPC to go to the High School and really wow the students to the economic value that NPC is.

Vice President Vest stated that at the October 20th board meeting; he would be asking the board to accept the Title 3 grant; 10 area school districts including Holbrook agreed to partner with NPC to build a distance education classroom at the high schools and teach NPC classes; NPC just found out that they received the grant.

III. General Discussion

Cammie Darris asked how much of NPC's student population is actually looking for a degree or just trying to improve their skill sets. Vice President Vest stated that NPC more than any other community college in the state are Career and Technical Education folks; in terms of where our enrollments are. He stated that most of Holbrook's high school NAVIT students are focused on getting a certificate or a certification; that shows they can weld – so they can get a job. Vice President Vest stated that NPC lost more students between the ages of 30-50 who were not pursuing a degree because a lot of local businesses quit paying for their employees; because of the recession, the students couldn't afford to pay for college on their own.

Charlie Haussman asked if anyone had talked about starting an HVAC program in this region. Vice President Vest stated that HVAC is a program with a concentrated set of classes; it could potentially grasp onto the Construction – and we have the space.

Dr. Swarthout stated that she would like to have a 2-year program in Archeology with the Petrified Forest. Sarah Herve stated that she has thought that NPC and Petrified Forest could be doing more together. She said that the Petrified Forest started a program in 2011 which is a core program for Native youth – they recruit Native American high school juniors and seniors to come and participate in learning about Park Service Careers and that it has been very successful. She thinks it would be good if the students could get college credit for it. They want the students to see that they can have a fulfilling career in a National Park and not have to go very far away from their homeland. She said that in Arizona alone there are a lot of possibilities in employing these young people in Parks. She stated that there is another program in the National Park Service called Pathways – which allows them to hire students while they are pursuing a degree and particular students end up in what the Park Service calls long term Pathways; she stated that the Park Service has 120 days to convert them to permanent employment after they complete their degree. She would like to see Petrified Forest create a couple of intern positions specifically for NPC students who are looking to explore Archeology, Geology, Paleontology, Visitor Services, or Law Enforcement. She stated that she knows that NPC offers Geology classes; but she has never seen the classes come out to the Petrified Forest; she would love for the NPC students to take a field trip out there – she stated that the Park Service would take them on an awesome behind the scenes hike to some of the most spectacular geology in the world.

Gretchen Herndon stated that they struggle all the time to get employees – even entry-level positions. She said that students who are studying Psychology should apply with Community Counseling Center. Dr. Swarthout stated that NPC has a high number of Psychology majors. Gretchen Herndon asked if they do any internship. Vice President Vest told her to contact John Spadaccini – who is the Career Services Manager for NPC; he stated that she could work with John on getting some of the things they are looking for as long as she doesn't mind applicants being at the beginning stages; she stated that she prefers them to start out at the beginning stages; she believes that gives them that experience.

Dr. Swarthout adjourned the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. She stated that if anyone thought of anything they wanted to add to the discussion to please email her.

Kathy McPherson
Note taker