

Northland Pioneer College Community Outreach, Painted Desert Campus

October 16, 2017

Northland Pioneer College, Painted Desert Campus in Holbrook hosted the Campus's 8th annual community outreach meeting on October 16, 2017 at the Tiponi Community Center.

Attendees: Dr. Jeanne Swarthout – NPC President, Mark Vest – NPC Vice President of Student and Learning Services, Charles Haussman – Holbrook High School Asst. Principle, PJ Way – NPC Chief Information Officer, Kathleen Smith – City of Holbrook, Jason Foutz – NPC Chief Operations Officer, Dr. Robbie Koerperich – Holbrook School District Superintendent, Diana Bitsui – Holbrook HeadStart Center Director, Jill Sartain – NPC Asst. to the Campus Manger at the Painted Desert Campus, Kathy McPherson – NPC Campus Manager at the Painted Desert Campus, Michelle Marquardt – Navajo County Recorder's Office, Cynthia Tafoya – Holbrook Chamber of Commerce.

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome

President Swarthout welcomed everyone to the Painted Desert Campus Community Outreach and asked everyone to introduce themselves. After thanking everyone for coming, President Swarthout stated that NPC puts together a community outreach once a year, and that last year they sent the deans and directors instead of the administrators. The purpose of this was to see if any topics related to the deans and directors' area of expertise would come up. This is something that NPC is going to continue to try every other year. This year it is the administrators turn and something they enjoy doing. NPC is in their strategic planning phase, which is almost always the case, because the college is always revolving. Right now NPC is working on strategic planning for 18/19 and in doing so, something the college finds really important is coming to the communities NPC serves and having a conversation; hearing what NPC needs to do differently, better, more of, or less of is very helpful.

II. Economy

President Swarthout started the conversation with a brief discussion on the challenges organizations in Navajo county will face that are heavily dependent on property tax. She stated that regardless of when APS closes Cholla, everyone needs to start planning.

Kathleen Smith stated that she recently went to a conference where there was representatives from Yavapai, Coconino, and Navajo county, and a big topic of conversation was the economy and what is going to save our communities. She stated that tourism is always going to be one of the key factors of our industry and that they were looking at what they can do for that. Ms. Smith said she knows in Holbrook we talk a lot of about customer service and bringing new industry, which is good, but there needs to be a workforce to supply them once they get here. Not just a workforce but qualified workers, and she knows NPC has done a really good job on a lot of their programs to supply that workforce.

III. Programs of Study

Throughout the meeting there was a lot of questions and/or recommendations from community members about the possibility of bringing new programs to NPC.

i. Hospitality

Ms. Smith mentioned that at her conference there was speaker who talked a great deal about the hospitality industry and getting people to see it not just as a beginning job, but as a long term career. There is room for growth in that industry and when thinking about what degrees NPC can offer that would allow students to stay in Holbrook, Ms. Smith stated that hospitality could be an option.

ii. Culinary Arts

Dr. Robbie Koerperich said that culinary arts has been a topic of conversation with a lot of the Holbrook High School students. He is not sure what it would take to start up a culinary arts program, maybe it could be done in conjunction with hospitality, but there would definitely be some interest from HHS students. President Swarthout stated that culinary arts would be a tough one to implement because the expenses of the program. There was a point when the Winslow prison was thinking about doing culinary arts but they backed out because of the cost. If there is some way to make it feasible, maybe with a partnership, where there are multiple contributors to keep the cost reasonable for everyone, it would be something to think about. Mr. Charlie Haussman asked if culinary arts becomes an export program. Mr. Haussman said although students are interested in food, they are not training to work the grill at Denny's, so how many viable employers are there in this region where they can flourish with those skill sets. President Swarthout stated that there are not very many, but there are programs NPC has now, where we clearly export, such as cosmetology and welding. Mr. Mark Vest said that if NPC ran programs only for local hiring, we would have a nursing program, power plant, and business. President Swarthout stated that she would rather students have a good job somewhere else, then no job at all.

iii. Athletic/Applied Health

According to Dr. Koerperich, another area of interest for HHS students is athletic/applied health type programs. Mr. Vest responded by sharing that NPC is piloting a shared curriculum for respiratory therapy with Cochise College this year. Mr. Vest stated it will be small, but there doesn't need to be a lot of people. He said the problem with rolling out any allied health program is that there are jobs but not tons of jobs. The general education components will be done at NPC, the actual respiratory course content over distance learning, and then their clinicals will be done locally at either Summit or IHS. Mr. Vest said that he has been speaking with the chief academic officers at other rural community colleges and while there are definitely challenges to overcome with this model, if it works NPC can look at implementing other programs in a similar way.

iv. Archeology

Mr. Haussman asked if NPC was still working to pilot archeology courses with the Petrified Forest. President Swarthout stated that the Petrified Forest is still very open to those arrangements; NPC tried a dinosaur class and for whatever reason, it just didn't get student interest. It is certainly something NPC can try again, and with the Petrified Forest getting ready to begin a transition of superintendents, now would be the time since the current superintendent is supportive of the relationship.

v. Entrepreneurship

Dr. Koerperich asked if NPC has something for students interested in entrepreneurship. He sees a lot of kids at the high school who are interested in making something new. They have a lot of creativity but they don't know how to get started. President Swarthout stated that a lot of that comes out of NPC's Small Business Development Center. PJ Way asked if what Dr. Koerperich was talking about was a business incubator where students could jump start a business. Ms. Smith stated that the city has been trying to think of ways to do business incubators with some of the old buildings around Holbrook. She stated that maybe this would be a good partnership, even if for just a summer course. President Swarthout said that business incubators are only as good as what you put into them and it would have to be done right if students were going to get out of it what they need.

vi. Railroad

With all the railways in this area, Mr. Haussman wanted to know if BNSF ever partners with community colleges. President Swarthout said that BNSF has a railroad university in Kansas; apparently it is more efficient to send their people to Kansas and house them there rather than do something here.

vii. HVAC

Later on in the meeting, Mr. Haussman mentioned that he would love an HVAC program, because he knows there is a lot of demand for HVAC techs in this area. Mr. Vest said that NPC has been approved to start an HVAC program at the prison in Winslow and if all goes well and they can get the curriculum, they would like to move it to the Skills Center.

viii. Military

Dr. Koerperich asked if there is any connection at all between the military and community colleges, because for many of the high school students that is what track they want to go down. Mr. Vest stated that something he believes that is not nearly marketed enough is the fact that anyone going into the military, will start at a higher pay grade if they go in with x amount of college credits. There was a question from a couple people about the possibility of starting up an ROTC type program at NPC or possibly through NAVIT. President Swarouth said she knows there are programs at the state universities but she will see what she can find out about a military program in community colleges.

IV. TALON/Distance Learning

Dr. Koerperich brought up the TALON program; he stated that they are so appreciative of the opportunity NPC has given Holbrook High school students through the TALON program. They are very proud to be able to give students the ability to take dual enrollment and get a years' worth of college out of the way. They would love to expand on it and see if there is the possibility to do additional dual enrollment courses during summer. They would like to partner up and help promote getting students engaged academically during summer and to fill the gaps. HHS buses from Indian Wells into town everyday so transportation wouldn't be an issue; it is just about coordinating professors and students. Mr. Vest stated that NPC already offers general education classes in all the distant learning classes during summer and Holbrook High School students can use the College Bound scholarship to take those tuition free. What NPC needs help with is persuading those students to come register. Recruitment is something NPC has been focusing more on lately, but they could certainly use the school districts help. Dr. Koerperich asked if there was a way to do those summer classes at the Holbrook High School campus. Mr. Vest and Mr. Way stated that this would be difficult because the equipment the high school has is in many ways superior to the equipment NPC is currently using in its distant learning classrooms. Right now NPC only has one classroom, the TALON room, that can link up with the equipment at the high school. Over the next three years IS is looking at replacing the hardware on campus. If a year from now IS has replaced the technology in the distant learning classrooms, then the technology at NPC and the High school would be the same branding and there would be no reason NPC couldn't connect the high school in as an additional location.

V. Educators

The education profession became the next topic of conversation. The main focus being, how do we fill our teaching positions? President Swarthout spoke about how at a recent superintendents meeting, they talked about the major frustration for potential teachers has been getting into an internship program. She said Prescott will work with students up here but it cost a fortune, and ASU doesn't cost as much but requires a person to be in the valley periodically, which is almost a nonstarter up here. President Swarthout has asked Maria Hesse, basically the transfer provost, to get key education people up here to talk about what we can do about the internships that won't require the travel. That meeting is looking to take place in November and they are looking for superintendents to join the conversation. Dr. Koerperich asked if NPC could join the internship programs with other colleges. President Swarthout stated that NAU claims to have an education program in this area but it is a cohort model based out of Show Low and the cohort model does not work in our communities. We need to move to a non-cohort program that is all distance delivery. Dr. Koerperich asked if it is the same for postbac. President Swarthout stated that we need both a pathway to become a teacher by degree and a postbac program in this county. Dr. Koerperich then asked if there was a NAVIT program or something similar that can start a student on that pathway. Mr. Haussman stated that there was an attempt by NAVIT with Rickey Jackson and Matt Weber a couple years ago to start up a teacher's aid program and it was a complete bust. They could not get kids interested.

Dr. Koerperich then brought up Arizona Teaching Fellows and asked if NPC would be willing to partner in some way with an organization like that, which gets teachers in the classroom as quickly as possible. AZ Teaching Fellows bring in someone with a Bachelor's degree and trains them for one month with Teach like a Champion and it cost around five thousand dollars. Dr. Koerperich noted that he knows about four or five teachers that went through that program and they are some of their best teachers. They know what they are doing in the classroom because they have a good model and they use that model. President Swarthout stated that NPC would not be averse to those kinds of partnerships; NPC's concern is that the schools get what they want and need. Dr. Koerperich said that the problem right now is that when there is a vacancy, instead of being able to put someone in that has a month of training, they are having to stick long term substitutes in the class that have nothing. Holbrook Unified School District currently has about 10 positions open which is causing them to have to increase class sizes and give out stipends. HUSD even goes to other states to recruit but as of late they have not had much luck, so they are looking for alternative ways to put quality people in the classroom, and according to Dr. Koerperich, they honestly haven't found much of a gap between hiring someone with a full four-year teaching degree and someone with life experience and a good internship. Mr. Haussman concurred to that sentiment by stating that he once took a four-day training that trumps everything he ever got in any of his teacher ed. programs in college. President Swarthout reiterated that NPC would be open to these alternative programs and that she would be interested in sitting down with more superintendents to discuss such ideas.

Ms. Smith then asked what challenges NPC and Holbrook schools faces once they get people who are willing and interested to move to Holbrook, and the response from

multiple people was housing. It is not only finding a house or apartment that people want to live in but one that is affordable. On the topic of housing, President Swarthout announced that the house NPC's construction class built sold and it just so happens that it was sold to a Holbrook teacher. Dr. Koerperich asked if the construction program had the capacity to build more houses or possibly fix up old houses. Mr. Vest stated that the problem with building from the ground up was that it took longer to build the house than the length of the program, so students didn't get to see the finished product and didn't get to work on every aspect of building a house, which is why the construction program has switched to tiny houses. As far as the fixer uppers, there was mention of liability issues and just the complexity of remodels.

VI. Concluding Thoughts

President Swarthout stated that if you look at the education achievement levels in Navajo County compared to the rest of Arizona and even nationally, Navajo County has really low attainment rates, except in associate degrees. In associate degrees, Navajo County outranks the state on the percentage of the population who has an associate degree. Mr. Haussman asked if NPC has a large adult population pursuing degrees. Mr. Vest stated that there are a lot of people that return or will take the same interest class over and over but in terms of pursuing degrees, very few. Ever since the economic downturn, NPC's adult population has shrunk.

College and Career Prep, formally called TLC, has changed in its delivery. President Swarthout stated that it's really upped its game. They are working in very fast track pieces and experimenting with targeted ways to teach developmental learning. For example the house that the construction class built was done through an IBEST model, primarily by second chance young adults who were pursuing their GEDs while at the same time getting construction skills.

Dr. Koerperich stated that NPC is a lifeline for Holbrook and if it wasn't here, it would be a much tougher environment for the kids and the community. He loves the relationship between the school districts and NPC and really sees them as partners. He thanked President Swarthout for her leadership and commitment to working together and hopes that the partnership continues with the next NPC president. President Swarthout concurred and thanked them and NAVIT for being good partners. Everyone was thanked for coming and the meeting was concluded.

Minutes prepared by:

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