***WNC Institutional Advisory Council***

Chairman’s Report to Board of Regents – June 8, 2016

Good afternoon Mr. Chair and fellow regents. For the record, my name is Rob Hooper, Chair of the WNC IAC and the Executive Director of the Northern Nevada Development Authority.

It is my pleasure and honor to present to you today on behalf of the IAC and the institution we serve, Western Nevada College.

It is my purpose today to provide you with a brief update on the activities of the council, their position within the framework of the college and how together we are meeting the charge given to us by this board.

First let me state how honored the council is to serve the needs of this board and to be so fortunate to have in our charge WNC, which I believe is a leader in the State and the greater Megapolitan region as a well operated and progressive institution.

WNC, while operating under highly reduced budgets has this year graduated 556 students who received 598 degrees and certificates of completion. The college’s Jump Start program has developed effective relationships with the Sierra Region’s K12 districts and this year saw 27 Jump Start students receive AA diplomas and their high school diplomas. WNC is a point of pride for the communities and families throughout the 5 counties served by the college.

The IAC is very cognizant of the charge and responsibility that you have given us. It is our shared belief that community colleges are the workforce development engine of our nation, and I can assure you that this is certainly the case with WNC.

In addition to its many transfer programs, WNC offers eight distinct career programs with multiple pathways. These include:

1. Automotive (Repair and Body)
2. Medical (Nursing and Med Tech
3. Cisco Networking
4. Natural Resources (Ag and Mining)
5. Coding and Programing
6. Technology
7. Construction Management
8. Manufacturing (Machining, Welding, Manufacturing technique… and more)

This energetic offering of course work and associated certificate and degree programs are closely aligned with the expressed needs of employers throughout the service region. They create what I like to call the “WNC Career Hub”. And, as with the employers we serve, the career programs employ a “continuous improvement” approach. This includes curriculum, content and instructional deliverables.

The first charge given the IAC by this board is to accurately represent the community it serves. WNC’s IAC accomplishes this both geographically and by the sectors served. Secondly, the IAC’s composition meets the charge of forming a liaison bridge to the regions School Districts though inclusion of all District Supervisors either as full or ad hoc members. I believe it is important for you to hear who these great assets available to your needs are:

Our Council members are:

* Ms. Rachel Dahl, Executive Director Churchill Economic Development Authority
* Mr. Tim Dyhr, Vice President, Environmental/External Relations, Nevada Copper – Yerington
* Mr. Jeffrey Gordon, Plant Manager GE/Bently – Minden
* Ms. Laura Ijames, Secretary Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe
* Mr. Nick Marano, City Manager Carson City – Veteran (Former Base Commander of Camp Pendleton)
* Dr. Ricky Medina, Director Assessment/Accountability Carson City School District
* Mr. Richard Stokes, Superintendent Carson City School District
* Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Educator
* Mr. Gerd Poppinga, Sr., CEO/President Vineburg Machining Veteran
* Mr. Cary Richardson, COO Miles Construction
* Mr. Bus Scharmann, Commissioner Churchill County - Former school superintendent
* Mr. Hoyt Skabelund, CEO Banner Churchill Hospital
* Dr. Robert Slaby, Superintendent Storey County School District
* …and myself as the current chair of the IAC

In addition our ad hoc members round out the great team by bringing in the other three superintendents from Douglas, Lyon and Churchill counties as well as the Presidents of the associated students and the Academic Faculty Senate.

Clearly, President Burton has put together a highly representative council that with the slots allotted best reflect the communities served.

But; how are we utilizing this great talent?

First the council is directly answering its charge by the BOR by collecting insights and knowledge from their respective locations and industries and bringing them to the discussions at our quarterly meeting and through one on one discussions with me as chair between meetings.

As the council grows in coordinated abilities I believe this pipeline between community, college and this board will prove to be the most valuable asset to all stakeholders. A tool that has not been available prior to this point, and one that has been greatly needed.

I believe it is important to state that this board must see the IAC as one of its most important tools by which to serve the students and communities of the service region. It is critical that the board sees the relationship with the councils as a two way street of communication. One by which not only is information brought from the community to the council and then to the board but in just the reverse flow, the board, through the channel of communication provided with the IAC chairs, delivers information and requests to the council and out to the communities. It is… a two way line. I believe the success of the councils, will in part, rely on the recognition of this priority and the enacting of programs and communications to fulfill it.

The WNC IAC takes its charge very seriously. As articulated in Chapter 17 of the System of Higher Education Procedures and Guidelines Manual, these charges can be reduced to:

* Developing relationships on behalf of the Community College System
* Sharing Community Perspectives with the college and the BOR
* Advancing institutional missions and objectives
* Building partnerships with employers, local governments and support organizations
* Providing input, advice and perspective to President Burton and to the BOR.

There are many details within these charges as laid out in the manual, but I believe they all fit into one of these categories. However, there is one highly important focus that may or should be implicit to these charges, but not specifically mentioned. One I believe should be further articulated and certainly should be an ever present factor in all discussions, advice and activities; the wellbeing of our students. What is best for them is our primary driver.

This fact was driven home like a jack hammer for me as I set on the stage at our recent commencement services. When I watched each of those smiling faces shake hands and receive their diplomas and certificates, it truly brought it all together for me. This is why we all do what we do. More than business assets, they are our children and our children’s children. They are our coworkers and even some, our elders. It’s all about them. Let us not ever forget that most important fact.

The tasks at hand and the serious charge the IAC’s have, require great focus and determination. I am happy to report that WNC’s IAC is up to the charge and is moving forward with alacrity.

Recently, under the great leadership of Director Woodbeck, a meeting of the four IAC chairs took place to discuss, compare and share our top objectives. This is, by the way, another great benefit of the IAC program. Governor Sandoval’s vision of “One State” is actively being realized through the highly collaborative IAC system… At this meeting, I was personally excited to hear about the work being done at all our colleges and see the commonality of approach to state wide issues and the ability to adapt to the local needs of each college.

To give you the best abbreviated version of our current work, I will share with you our Top 5 Objectives, they are:

1. **Recruitment of qualified students to career programs to support workforce development.**

This is truly our number one objective. The WNC programs in all areas are dependent on an increasing involvement and inclusion of a broader and greater number of students. If we are to meet our workforce and transfer goals it is imperative that we are successful in building a more robust pipeline of qualified students. The types of activities now being worked on by the council are:

* System wide communication directly to students and parents of available programs. This takes on a high priority issue; Many K12 students have not made the decision to even pursue a career. It is discussed by our manufacturing community that 20% of all students will be successful at something, 20% will probably not be, the remaining 60%, that is who shows up at the doors of our employers later on in life. It is to this group we must communicate. This is an essential duty for their benefit. We must motivate and inform them about how important the pursuing of a career is to them and their future family. Let’s not push them to choose a path before they choose to even pursue any. This is a critical issue that is yet resolved… In addition:
* Orientation with school counselors to let them know about the many career options available to their students.
* Career field trips for students
* Job shadowing opportunities
* Career presentations in the classrooms
* Outreach to the rapidly growing Latino population through involved partners.
* Career Events
1. **Being primary advocate to local and state governments for Community College issues.**
* Developing a talking points and position document to be discussed and voted on at the council meeting which will enable members to publicly express these positions. …. I would humbly suggest to the board that you consider creating a similar list to provide the councils for their inclusion in our advocacy work. Thus enabling a “same page” approach to our state wide advocacy work. I believe this will become very important as we go into the next legislative session.
1. **Supporting Economic Development within the region**.
* This is a broad statement. We have come to a more focused definition and thereby created areas for program development, these are:
* (a.) measuring and understanding current workforce demand as a link between education and industry,
* (b.) providing a clear articulation of current programs to prospective employers considering the region for expansion or relocation and
* (c.) through the creation of strategically targeted talent capacity building to further diversify our regional economy.
1. **Addressing specific rural challenges for service area (e.g. Nursing, Teachers)**
2. **Grow and standardize jump start programs with K-12 systems.**

This list of objectives reminds me of when I reported to my major professor my senior research project while attending university. It was a very aggressive proposal that involved the tracking down, recording and contrasting two different breeding populations of woodpeckers to observe possible speciation through anomalies in their sonograms. I was very excited and presented with great enthusiasm. I will never forget what Dr. Mayhew said in response… great idea, but what will you do next after the thirty years it will take to do that one. After hiking the Sierra’s for several months trying to locate one of these rare birds… I got the message.

The objectives of the WNC IAC are big ones too. They will take a great deal of work and time to successfully implement all the potential programs and maintain our charge to President Burton and to this board.

However, none of us are alone on this quest. The IAC is comprised of great talent, the college has a highly motivated staff led by a great President and this board is clearly connected and engaged. The work we do is essential, and its cause is noble. I suggest to you that we will, together, be successful.

So on behalf of the WNC IAC, President Burton and his staff and the communities we collectively serve, may I say thank you. Thank you for your leadership and for the establishment of the IACs which I believe are the best tool in the box for our future workforce liaison needs.

Now…. May I answer any questions?