

President's Council Meeting Notes – Sept. 25, 2020

- 1) **Welcome** – President Hanson welcomed all on Zoom and thanked all for their time in attending this meeting. He thanked everyone for their extra work to make this semester a success. He reviewed the Role of the Council and the Leadership Commitment as listed on the agenda. He also introduced new Council members.

- 2) **Good News** - Several departments communicated highlights, including the following:
 - Matt Thielen – We are continuing to offer transportation to students to travel to NE City on Thursday evenings. This is sponsored by Student Senate.
 - Wayne Albury – We have just received for the 2nd year in a row Champions of Character Gold Level award for the Athletics Department and we also have several individual award winners to be proud of.
 - Crystal Hutson – She and Dr. Chism have launched a new Leadership & Success Society. There are 152 students signed up for the group, which includes both online and on-campus. She also announced a new program Peruber Treats, which will deliver fast food meals to students on campus – they had 125 people submit orders this past Saturday!
 - Tim Borchers – Two new doctorates: Dr. Kristin Buscher and Dr. Sara Westerlin. CONGRATS to both!
 - Jared Koelzer – Student Senate is working on homecoming elections and CAB is working on homecoming activities. They are excited to host the homecoming royalty presentations next week.
 - Paul Hinrichs – We are welcoming a new baby in the School of Arts & Sciences. Susan Moore had her baby about one month early, but both baby and mother are home and doing well.
 - Ken Curtis – Our art gallery is open and will be hosting shows all year. Currently the show is Ken Curtis's work.
 - Cindy Cammack – Admissions is holding visits with more than one family at a time now, and they are doing some tour groups as well. Next week they will be doing virtual college fairs. Hannah is also scheduling some in-person high school visits.
 - Dwayne Chism – We have 32 applications for student teaching in the spring. He will be representing Peru on a panel for State of Nebraska Teacher of the Year.
 - Jason Hogue – The College has received a collection of African art from Dr. Natalie Hahn of Central City. The art will eventually be displayed in buildings across campus and will be the Dr. Natalie Hahn African Art Gallery. Note: Natalie Hahn was just presented the Sower Award from Humanities Nebraska.

- 3) **Accreditation, Fall Process** – Dr. Buscher reminded all that our HLC report is due late February 2022, followed by peer reviewers coming to campus March 28-29, 2022. We will be writing a report in preparation for this visit. They have established five teams to work on this project and will be hosting training sessions soon for these review teams. Please note the email you have received about the upcoming HLC Town Hall meetings.

In April, HLC will be holding their annual conference virtually. This may allow more to join than usually attend in person.

- 4) **TRiO Grant Overview** – Dr. Vicky Jones reviewed that the TRiO programs began in the 1960s to help low-income students, first-generation students, and students with disabilities through their higher education endeavors. The College was just awarded new funding for the next five years of the program. We are not able to accept every student that applies to the program, but have about 60-75 new students each year. Peggy Groff, Michelle Kaiser, and Michael Platt also help with the Trio program. They support students in many areas, including math support, career development, and preparation for meeting with their academic adviser. We are also offering one-credit experiential courses for these students, which are great opportunities.
- 5) **COVID-19 Response** – Dr. Hanson reported that the START members meet weekly to keep the campus moving forward in our pandemic response. The key things we watch are the testing positivity rate (about 2.1%) and where the cases are coming from. Masks, social distancing, ongoing testing, and aggressive quarantine/isolation all make a difference in keeping our positivity rate so low. Our campus counselors have developed a Quarantine Survival Guide to offer additional support to students in quarantine and isolation.

Dr. Hanson noted that our testing has disadvantages, with the slower result times and the uncomfortable nasal swab test. We are going to be moving to a saliva-based test with 24-hour response time. We should have the contract in place for this new testing within the next couple of weeks.

There is a challenge having the testing at the Oak Bowl, so we are looking at possibly choosing a more accessible location. Dr. Hanson asked all to participate and to encourage others to do so. Testing is not a requirement at this point, but students are strongly encouraged to participate. We hope the new saliva-based testing will increase participation.

The number of students in quarantine has been dropping, which is attributable to our commitment to testing and contact tracing. Faculty, CAB, and other campus departments are helping to keep quarantined students cared for and involved in the campus community.

6) Updates

- a. Facilities – Darrin reported that the ADA project had some setbacks but is continuing. The roofing project is nearing completion. There are plans formulating for the new criminal justice area in TJ Majors. This is a project that will be part of the new State-funded partnership between the College and the Tecumseh Correctional Facility.
- b. Community Update (Water & Levee) – Dr. Hanson reported that the City of Peru is making progress on the levee repair. The federal WRDA bill is nearing passage in the U.S. Senate and will allow the Peru levee to return to the “active list” for the Army Corps of Engineers. The City is moving forward in plans to connect with Auburn water, which will bring Peru the best water source it has ever had. There are also efforts underway to obtain funding for street repairs and housing improvements in Peru.

On an exciting note, the Long-Term Recovery Group applied for funding for a full-time Disaster Recovery Coordinator and recently Deborah Solie began work in that capacity. She brings much-needed assistance to the City in flood-recovery efforts.

- c. Racial Reconciliation – In June, a group began meeting on campus to discuss issues about race in our society and on our campus. The group is developing plans for curriculum additions and other ways we can support our students. Administrators are meeting weekly (starting this week) with students of color to discuss how we can be a more inclusive campus and be leaders in this healing process.

7) Announcements –

- The College is making a decision about our plans for December commencement, so look for that announcement soon.
- At this point, there will not be changes to the 2nd semester calendar, although this is a System-level decision.
- Jazz on the Green is planned for Thursday, Oct. 1.
- Students are working to bring an art mural to the game room in the Student Center. There will be a decision soon on which submission is chosen for the project.

8) Future meeting dates – Monthly meetings usually on the second Friday of each month, September-May. The next meeting date will be **Friday, Oct. 16, 2020**.