

Presidents' Reports

Chadron State College September 2019

The summer at Chadron State College has been a busy one. CSC students experienced high-impact learning opportunities and faculty and alumni earned distinctions in their field. Also this summer, Chadron State College announced revised mission and vision statements, as well as institutional values, to assist with strategic planning and enhancing collaborations with students and community members.

Mission: "Chadron State College delivers experiences that foster knowledgeable and engaged leaders and citizens to enrich the High Plains region and beyond."

Vision: "Chadron State College aspires to continue as a learner-centered institution. We are committed to students through our focus on continuous improvement and excellence in teaching, applied scholarship, and service."

Values: Accessible and affordable education, Collaboration, Diversity and inclusion in people and thought, Impactful experiences and outcomes, Innovation, Integrity, and Student Engagement and learning.

Truly, it is an exciting time at Chadron State College. From the new construction occurring at the track and field complex, to students using a simpler and more intuitive application form for admission to CSC, to the Math Science renovation and addition being approved by the State Legislature are just a few examples of what is valued by this institution, its Board, and the State of Nebraska. In my mind, there is no better place to be.

Some other summer highlights include:

- Women's track team qualifies for All-Academic team award

The Chadron State College women's track and field team tied for 28th in NCAA Division II with a 3.46 cumulative team grade point average at the end of the spring semester, qualifying the Eagles for the USTFCCCA All-Academic Team award. CSC tied with the University of Colorado-Cororado Springs for the highest average in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference.

- Undergraduate conducts primary research

A trip to the University of Indiana's Lilly Library in May gave Rachel Mitchell of Riverton, Wyoming, an opportunity to view and touch some of the historic pieces of literature that have shaped the culture of the English-speaking world. The trip to the library was part of an independent study course about women traveling. The Lilly Library collection includes more than 450,000 rare books, more than eight million manuscripts, and 150,000 sheets of music. Mitchell was able to hold the first bound edition of Shakespeare's complete works, a 2000 BCE cuneiform tablet written in Babylonian, and the first copies of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. Mitchell said she will use results of her research for a conference of the North American Victorian Studies Association in October, where she hopes to present her work.

- PBL Nationals

Four Chadron State College students placed in the top 10 at the Phi Beta Lambda National Leadership Conference in San Antonio in June. Cody Cooper of Gothenburg, Nebraska, placed fifth in Business Communication. Dawson Brunswick of McCook, Nebraska, and Aubree Noble of Chadron placed fifth as a team in Network Design. Brunswick, Noble, and Bailee Steiner of Morrill, Nebraska, placed ninth as a team in Strategic Analysis and Decision Making. Brunswick was

recognized during the opening session of the conference as the state of Nebraska's Who's Who recipient.

- CSC alumna is Wyoming Teacher of the Year

Wyoming's 2019 Teacher of the Year Valerie Bruce credits earning the award, in large part, to knowledge she gained while earning a master's degree in Education Administration from Chadron State College in 2017. Bruce teaches first grade at Rozet Elementary, a rural school near Gillette. Bruce said her experience at CSC was phenomenal. She found the course offerings excellent and gleaned a tremendous amount of meaning from the readings, projects, assignments, and discussions. She described the faculty as excellent, engaging, empowering, and supporting her. She said communication, problem solving, and critical thinking skills refined during her graduate program have assisted her career in a variety of ways.

- Waugh, Miller named to interim posts

Two tenured professors at Chadron State College began serving in interim administrative roles in August. Business Professor Dr. Wendy Waugh is the Interim Dean of the School of Business, Math and Science, and Graduate Program. English and Humanities Professor Dr. Lee Miller is the Interim Associate Vice President of Teaching and Learning.

- Faculty stay busy in summer

English Assistant Professor Dr. Mary Clai Jones represented Chadron State College May 30-31 at a British Association of Victorian Studies conference in Italy. She presented a paper about the late English essayist Vernon Lee's environmental activism. Vernon Lee was the pseudonym of Violet Paget, who died in 1935. The conference, "Vernon Lee 2019: An Anniversary Conference" was at Lee's former residence, Villa Il Palmerino, in Florence.

Chadron State College Psychological Sciences Professor Dr. Mary Jo Carnot has become part of a research team studying the beneficial health effects of eating primarily plant-based foods that are high in nutrient density. In the last four years, Carnot has been listed as co-author on nine articles by the Northern Arizona University-based PRANDIAL Lab that have appeared in various peer-reviewed scientific publications, including the Journal of Food and Nutrition and the International Journal of Food Science, Nutrition and Dietetics.

Former CSC Family and Consumer Science instructor Jay Sutcliffe directs the PRANDIAL Lab. Carnot said her work with the group's research, which she does on her own time mostly in summer, includes statistical analysis, and some aspects of experimental design.

Peru State College September 2019

In March, the community of Peru was warned that flooding along the Missouri River was imminent. The City of Peru declared an emergency Thursday evening, March 14, as flooding along the Missouri river was forecasted to reach record levels. The City also advised the community that sandbags would be necessary to protect key components of the City's water supply.



Community members, Peru State students, faculty and staff filled sandbags during the day on Friday as the Missouri River continued to rise. More than 120 students and a total of 160 volunteers contributed to the effort. Sandbags were used to protect the water treatment plant, a lift station and a well in Peru. Floodwaters would have contaminated the water supply.

Darrin Reeves, mayor of Peru, said that more than 8000 sandbags were filled. He also expressed his appreciation for everyone that came out to help with sandbag efforts.

From a news report by B103 out of Nebraska City, "There weren't many evacuations, but one man, Jeffrey Bestwick, was forced out of his home on the Peru bottoms. Water seeped into his home, and he was worried about his furniture. The Peru State football team caught wind - and helped out."

"They were helping the city fill sandbags,' Bestwick said, 'and I asked them if they'd volunteer a little time to help me move some personal things and they all volunteered. I think it's really good for the community to come together like they have today.'"

Unfortunately, on Saturday, the levy north of Peru broke and floodwaters rushed into the Peru bottoms. These floodwaters overwhelmed sandbags at the water treatment plant, the lift station and the well located there. There was no loss of life, but homes were lost and the water supply for the City of Peru was seriously compromised.

Working closely with the City, Peru State College began working with students to relocate off campus and out of town. The City initially believed it would only have the municipal water currently available in the tower available for use and every person off the water system would extend the use and life of that water for those that could not relocate.

I am proud to report that our students accepted the determination to close campus and move out of town with grace. They took friends and neighbors with them, students visited friends, relatives and even faculty homes. Yes, our faculty and staff opened their homes to students. We also had an outpouring of support from surrounding communities willing to house and support our students – an offer we ultimately did not take, but a gracious and heartfelt offer nonetheless.

Alumni and other friends of the College also began to offer to help. I cannot count how many calls Elaine or I received asking about our students, faculty and staff. Every call was an offer of help – I know many similar offers were made to other members of the College's faculty and staff. I can only say thank you for the cases of bottled water. Thank you for the resources you brought to the community of Peru – by the pallet, by the truck load, and even through Amazon.com. Thank you for every one that asked what else the College or the town needed. I would particularly note the kind donations by the Student Senates from Wayne and Chadron.



The Peru State Women's Basketball Team after helping unload relief supplies and \$2100 for the community the Beatrice Public Schools Superintendent, Jason Alexander.

The College was able to cancel classes for only two days thanks to the tireless work of the City of Peru, Nemaha County Emergency Management and the Board of Public Works in Auburn. Together a new plan was made to supply water to Peru. Water would be transported by truck from Auburn's supply and pumped into Peru's water tower several times each day. As many as 100,000 gallons of water could be transported that way each day.

Unfortunately, though the trucks were sterile milk trucks and the water was clean tap water, the

act of moving it from water supply to truck to pump to water tower created multiple possible contamination points. In these situations, it is mandatory for the City of Peru to issue a boil order. Consequently, our students could use municipal water to wash clothes, take showers, etc. but they would need to drink bottled water. The College and the community of Peru benefited greatly from bottled water donated by friends and alumni of the College. Nemaha County Emergency Management also organized other sources of potable water for community members.

Trucking water into town, while a solution to our daily needs, was expected to be expensive. Peru State's students, faculty and staff committed to conserving water and were able to curtail their average daily use by more than half. Some of that savings came from changes made by Facility Services, but student efforts to embrace water conservation were clear and notable. Water conservation efforts continued through the remainder of the school year and the boil order was in place through the beginning of August.

The City of Peru has rented and placed a portable water treatment plant to replace the facility ruined by flood waters. That portable plant is now providing water to campus and the Peru community – just in time for returning students to enjoy! Before the flooding began, the City had sought out a water study to influence the future of the community and campus' water supply. This study is now complete and is shaping the City's next steps to develop a stable, long-term water supply solution.

During all of this, the College's top priority remained success of our students. For this reason, we decided early on that it was in the best interest of most students to return to class as soon as possible and complete the semester as planned. We were – and continue to be – committed to working with students, faculty and staff who were displaced, facing disrupted commutes or other issues related to the flooding. As we move into a new year, the flood, and the barrier it has created between Nebraska and neighboring states, does not appear to have limited our enrollment. Affected students faced difficult decisions, but (particularly with the help of the NSCS Disaster Relief Tuition Waiver Program) most students have been able to return or choose Peru State without reservation.

To conclude, we continue to be appreciative of the work done by so many in our community, region and state to assist the College and our community in returning to normalcy. The College is also grateful to its many supporters – friends, alumni, employees and students – that have done so much to help those affected by the flood.

Wayne State College September 2019

The start of the fall 2019 semester was more than the usual launch of classes and campus activities. Wayne State came out of the gate with a convocation ceremony to formally kick off the new academic year for freshmen and their families, renewed and kicked off new academic partnerships and pathways, opened improved facilities, and provided new athletics opportunities for our students.

The convocation ceremony, which is in its second year since being revived after a more than 60-year hiatus, followed a morning marked by new students moving into their residence halls with the help of student crews who quickly carried belongings from drop-off points to freshmen's rooms. This year's convocation featured brief remarks from me, Vice President of Academic Affairs Steven Elliott, Student Senate President Jorge Adame, and Dean Jacobs, a well-known world traveler, explorer, and educator and 1986 graduate of Wayne State. The ceremony was followed by a picnic for freshmen and their families, with the meal served by WSC employees.

The new academic year also brings a reinvigorated partnership to Northeast Nebraska students. I was excited to sign a memorandum of agreement with leaders of Northeast Community College on Aug. 7 that lays out clearly articulated programs of study for students on 28 academic pathways. This renewed partnership provides students with a well-defined path to a four-year degree along with plenty of opportunities for our respective institutions to collaborate on advising, visit days, and retention, along with providing access to in-state tuition for any students who might be transferring to Wayne State from out of state.

Our newest partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) and Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) will move toward implementation this fall. This collaboration will create seamless education pathways for WSC students to continue their education with CASNR to complete degrees in Animal Systems, Plant Systems, Applied Science, and other related agriculture programs to prepare the next generation of professionals, problem-solvers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders in resilient food, energy, water, and societal systems.

The agricultural program partnership aims to create life-long learning opportunities that align with career advancement opportunities. The new partnership will provide assistance to prospective transfer students with their academic planning and strongly encourage WSC students to work with an academic advisor at WSC and an academic advisor at CASNR. CASNR and WSC will collaborate on mutually beneficial recruitment, advising, and retention efforts.

In addition to our new menu of academic options, our new and returning students have several new options for dining on campus this year. Our recently remodeled upper cafeteria serves up tasty breakfast, lunch, and dinner with continuous dining available in the cafeteria between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Concepts include 500 Degrees, Flame, Homestyle, Nook, Fresh 52, Carved & Crafted, Rooted, G8, and Flavor Station.

The Cat's Corner Lower Food Court, which was completely renovated this summer, features concept dining with Erbert and Gerbert's Sandwich Shop, Build Pizza by Design, Smoked BBQ, and The Market. We also added an Einstein Bros. Bagels restaurant to our library this summer, which serves up gourmet bagels, delicious breakfast and lunch sandwiches, and Caribou Coffee hot and cold beverages.

Improvements to Kanter Student Center included more than our food service areas. The atrium was overhauled with new tile, wall coverings and graphics, paint, and eight large banners that feature students from our academic programs. These improvements will figure prominently in the

experience of the thousands of students who visit the college each year for admissions events, high school academic contests, and cultural offerings.

The College added two new women's varsity sports this summer with the creation of beach volleyball (formerly known as sand) and the reinstatement of our women's golf team. Wayne State will compete in the NCAA's National Collegiate Division for beach volleyball and in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC) in golf. Wayne State is a member of the NSIC and will now offer 15 varsity sports (six male and nine female) in the 2019-20 season.

The addition of beach volleyball will add approximately 15 female student athlete opportunities to the Wildcat athletic program. The Wildcat beach volleyball team will consist primarily of the same student-athletes that compete in fall indoor volleyball.

Beach volleyball is one of the fastest growing sports in NCAA history and was taken off of the emerging NCAA sports list in 2015 and became an NCAA Championship sport. Wayne State will compete as an independent member of National Collegiate Beach Volleyball and joins the University of Nebraska as the only other school in the state of Nebraska to have a beach volleyball program. WSC becomes the 18th program in NCAA Division II to have beach volleyball.

The reinstatement of the women's golf program will bring the sport back for the 2020-21 school year. We hired a coach this summer who will spend the 2019-20 school year recruiting student-athletes to begin competition again during the next school year. The women's golf program at Wayne State College was suspended at the end of the 2012-13 school year.

In addition to traditional sports, Wayne State College is exploring esports — competitive online gaming — as a new club activity. Esports on campus includes a team of students competing against another student team on gaming platforms. It has steadily grown in interest among college students who want to continue their passion for competitive gaming.

There are 500 esports club programs across the country, and 90 varsity teams complete with a coach. Whether it's at the varsity or club level, most campuses that formalize esports have an arena: a computer lab with powerful PCs and gaming consoles for team members to practice as well as compete against other teams. Within Wayne State's NCAA Division II conference, some other colleges have already added esports to their lineup of competitive sports at the club and varsity levels. Wayne State's club program would give on-campus students who are already into gaming a more formalized outlet for their interest, as well as bring in more students who are passionate about gaming. We plan to coordinate resources to build the arena and announce the formal program this academic year, and by 2020-21, officially launch the club sport complete with its own facility.

We are confident that our warm welcome of our new freshman class and families, our energetic approach to new and existing partnerships, the college's addition of new dining options, and the introduction of new athletic opportunities will positively affect our retention and recruitment strategies. These initiatives reflect the innovative work being done across our campus to ensure Wayne State meets our mission of student success, learning excellence, and regional service.