


Brandon R. Kosine, Ph.D.



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Casper College Presidential Search Committee
125 College Drive
Casper, WY 82601

Dear Members of the Presidential Search Committee:

It is with great enthusiasm and humility that I submit my application for the president position at Casper College. Currently, I serve as the interim president and have since May 2024. I believe I have the skills, attributes, and vision to lead Casper College through its next phase of growth and continue our tradition of excellence. While I cannot cover everything from the presidential profile in this cover letter, I hope I give you a solid sense of my dedication to students, the mission and vision of the College, and the Casper community.

Student Success Initiatives

At the heart of my leadership is an unwavering commitment to placing students first where ensuring their needs, aspirations, and well-being drive every decision and initiative. By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, creating an engaging and relevant learning experience, and providing a broad array of support services, we empower students to overcome challenges, thrive academically, and achieve their fullest potential. I myself am a first-generation college student, so I understand the specialized needs and support many of our students require to be successful. A unique strength I bring to this position is having significant experience in both student and academic affairs. With this combined experience, I have built both curricular and co-curricular experiences for students, and I am well-versed in the research surrounding student success from both perspectives.

While working in student affairs, I built mentoring programs such as the GEARUP Mentoring Program that was a direct result of my dissertation research. I also built leadership programs, a leadership academic minor, and facilitated numerous co-curricular activities to engage students. In my roles at Casper College, I created engaging instruction in my courses, developed co-curricular and service-learning opportunities, provided the vision to build the faculty Center for Teaching & Learning, and often simply took time to listen to students when they were having personal difficulties and would refer them to the services they need. Each student brings their own strengths and challenges, and removing barriers for all students truly gives me purpose to my work. There is no greater gift than when you see your students succeed and cross the finish line at graduation.

Community Outreach and Relationship Building

Building and maintaining relationships with college and community constituents/stakeholders and leaders is one of the most important duties of the president and one of my primary strengths. Over the past year, I made it a priority to engage with the Casper community and met individually with a variety of community leaders and elected officials. I discussed what the college has to offer and explored new partnership opportunities and ways to strengthen our relationship. I was also able to discuss the value, needs, and concerns of the college with our elected officials so they could effectively advocate for the college while in the legislative session.

Connecting the college to local business is another important duty of the president. Recently, I worked with AdvanceCasper to entice a micro nuclear reactor generator business to choose Casper for manufacturing their product. The College was heavily involved in each step of their inquiry process, and it appears we may be successful in the company choosing Casper. I will continue to seek opportunities where we can partner with businesses and industry to help train their workforce and provide experiential opportunities for our students.

Partnering with the local school district is also vitally important so students can earn college credit in high school and continue their path at the College. For six years, I served as a co-facilitator of the BOCES of Natrona County. I helped increase the number of articulated concurrent courses from 27 to 47 (74% increase) and 875 to 1282 students (46.5% increase) participating in the program. Based on this data, I worked with the board to add a new professional advisor position to improve the student experience and continue to reach more students. This year, we have streamlined processes for students and also improved their advising.

As a Wyoming native who has spent my entire career here, I understand the value of relationships and how uniquely interconnected our state is. The saying, "*Wyoming is a small town with long roads*" rings true—we are all just one or two degrees of separation from each other. Building and maintaining positive relationships is essential for driving initiatives forward. To expand my network and understanding of Wyoming, I participated in Leadership Wyoming (LW) and was in the graduating class of 2020. Not only did this help me build new state-wide relationships, but it also deepened my appreciation for our state and provided valuable insight into its unique political landscape. As an aside, an initiative born out of my participation with LW was to work with a LW classmate to enroll a small cohort of students working at the Pinedale, WY health clinic into our medical lab technology program. Clinical hours and instruction fell under the supervision of my classmate. This was a new way of delivering the program and we were able to graduate the students, who then stayed in Pinedale. This is one of the unique opportunities we have in Wyoming and Casper College to meet a state-wide goal of keeping our graduates working in the state.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Leadership in higher education requires not only the ability to guide and inspire, but also the humility to listen, learn, and engage in thoughtful dialogue. Throughout my career, I have cultivated a leadership style that values collaboration and fosters mutual respect, even when navigating differing perspectives. I believe progress is often born from constructive disagreement, and I pride myself on creating spaces where diverse ideas are heard, respected, and synthesized into workable solutions. I also believe all ideas should be put on the table to be discussed because many times parts of every idea gets used in the final decision.

Communication and visibility are core to building and maintaining relationships and trust. Telling the story of Casper College is easy as my personal values align with the vision and mission of the College and we provide tremendous value to our students, community and the state. I attend numerous campus and community engagements to be visible and support our students and employees. I also work diligently to make individual contacts with folks across campus because if employees don't feel valued, we cannot move the college forward. An example of how I communicate is we recently conducted a survey to gather opinions from the entire campus. I hosted several open forums to hear directly from students and employees and then provided the results from the survey in several public forums. My motivation to do this stemmed from wanting to connect with the campus community, provide the information and results, and also continue to build a reputation as a responsive and transparent leader.

One significant goal I have for Casper College is to win the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence award. This award measures multiple important areas of student success and compares our institution to the national averages. I am well-versed in national trends and we are implementing best practices in multiple areas that will move us toward this goal. Not only is this exciting for campus, but also ensures we are providing the best experience for our students and communicating a specific outcome and direction for our employees so they know exactly what is expected from them.

Leadership & Academic Innovation

My personal leadership style aligns with the authentic and servant leadership models. I have a strong set of principles that navigate both my personal and professional life, and this directs how I approach both decisions and people. I genuinely enjoy the folks with whom I work and I build and maintain relationships that guide meaningful change and inspire a vision for the college rooted in listening, collaboration, trust, and innovation. The job of leadership is to create an environment where employees feel valued, heard, and where they can see themselves and their ideas in the organization. Through this collaborative process, when employees feel a sense of belonging in the organization and valued by their leaders, this leads to higher employee satisfaction and retention. Recent examples of how I have tried to accomplish this were to reinstate the Leadership Casper College program, creating custom t-shirts made solely for employees that we gave out at the fall semester welcome back event, and we have involved multiple layers of leadership in the strategic goal setting for the next academic year along with

relevant training. All of these demonstrate investment in our employees and have been met with positive feedback.

The relationship between Casper College and UW is unique where students can start their educational journey in Casper and then stay to complete their bachelor's or graduate degree. We have built successful collaborations such as sharing faculty to teach courses in each other's programs, sharing instructional space, providing programming and support services such as counseling for UW-C students, and in turn, UW-C providing graduate interns to work in our Wellness Center. Cultivating this relationship is vital, and I will continue to be a good partner and improve opportunities and services for students. That said, Casper College will continue to evaluate the potential for applied baccalaureate degrees and pursue educational opportunities that would best be delivered through the College and from an applied approach.

The alignment of my value as a lifelong learner and the vision of the college is exciting as a leader. I was fortunate during my tenure as the academic VP to have adult and community education and workforce services move to my division. This move allowed me to hire new staff and work with them to re-envision these areas. Significant improvements were made to a multitude of programs such as Key Camp the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) which not only improved attendance, but the overall programming. An example is the OLLI program saw an increase of 53% in memberships, 47% increase in number of classes, 50% decrease in number of classes cancelled, and 141% increase in the number of instructors between the FY21 and FY24 years. Overseeing the non-credit programming is a joy because it allows me to meet the individuals in Casper who have passion projects and connect them with our staff to offer programs through community education.

Wyoming has a boom-bust economy and like any public entity, the college feels the effects of each. Through consistent efforts to create efficiencies in staffing and course offerings, seeking new ways to enhance enrollment by providing a highly engaged educational experience, and sound financial management, I believe we weather these economic storms to provide the quality education the Casper community has come to expect. One example of an efficiency we created in academic affairs was decreasing the number of department chairs from 33 to 16. This saved approximately \$250,000/year and also provided an opportunity to regularly meet and provide training and updates. This model is still intact and caused no disruption for students.

Minimum & Desired Qualifications

I hold a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counselor Education & Supervision from the University of Wyoming (UW) with dual emphases in clinical mental health and student affairs counseling and a doctoral minor in statistics. While I started at the College in 2012 as a psychology instructor, I spent the last six years as the Vice President of Academic Affairs. In this role I worked hard to build relationships with faculty, improve instruction and assessment, create efficiencies, and enhance the education experience for students. To do this, I worked with folks in my division to create a shared vision and let them help create the process to get to the end goal. I am a firm believer in shared governance, and I have worked with the College Council this

year to codify this in our policies and procedures. Again, my vision is for employees to have a voice in college decisions as to promote buy-in and a sense-of-belonging at the College.

Budgeting and planning are crucial to move a college forward. In the entirety of my career, I have created and managed responsible budgets and have always come in under budget. I am a firm believer in zero-based budgeting so employees and managers are more intentional in forecasting upcoming costs and budgeting for them. This creates a way for everyone to understand how final numbers are determined, especially if the folks who develop the budget end up not being the ones who are managing it. I am also versed in campus strategic and master planning. Over the past year, we have moved forward with implementing the new master plan, and I can say with great confidence we have completely changed the way we develop, interact with, and report on the campus strategic plan. Moving the strategic and master plans forward along with cultivating relationships with and reporting out to the community will improve our efforts in resource development for the future.

While I do not have significant direct experience in resource development, I have met with all our local foundations and leaders to be ready for any grants or potential collaborations or donations of which they may be interested in partnering. One success this year was reengaging with a local foundation on a student project that resulted in a \$10,000 donation to provide the initial seed money for the initiative. I have also begun working with our grants office employees to reimagine the role of the office and set realistic targets to increase the level of external funding we receive for projects and initiatives.

What I have discussed here is merely a snapshot of the work we have completed and the ideas I have for the College. I have worked diligently over the past year as the interim president to reengage Casper College with the local community and strengthen the relationships we have with local leaders and community members. I have also worked to move the college forward by organizing our work and focusing on our new strategic plan. I am ready to continue leading the college in a forward, positive direction. I am deeply rooted in Casper, and I have a solid understanding of our area and our needs. I truly believe in the mission of Casper College and see how we contribute to the solution of many current challenges and how we can help move Casper and Natrona County forward. To continue leading the College into its next phase of success would be my honor and privilege.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my continued service to the future of Casper College.

Sincerely,



Brandon R. Kosine