

WEEKLY UPDATE



July 20, 2020

Happy Monday!

We are conducting two brief surveys on mask policies at Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC). One simply asks for opinions on mandating an institutional mask requirement. The other, which was sent only to faculty members, asks more specifically about classrooms. The links were shared by Patrick Fortney on Friday afternoon and within two hours, we had over 100 responses. Thank you for participating and, if you would like, you still have a few more days to voice your perspective. Stay tuned for the results!

Earlier this summer, Amy Wisniewski transitioned from her role as Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment back to the classroom, taking her funding with her. With tightening finances, we opted not to hire for this position, knowing the Assessment Committee itself could provide continuity. Now we have lost our Institutional Research Analyst, Andy Pittman. We have asked Nino Kalatozi to prioritize her work so that our mandatory compliance reports continue to be completed. With this, we know our Institutional Effectiveness Department will be stretched. At the same time, it is critical that we stay on the pathway to becoming a more data-informed institution. Discussions regarding this challenge are ongoing.

Billy Engel recently accepted an offer to become our interim Head Men's Basketball Coach, effective immediately. He will lead our Cougar team into and through the upcoming season, giving us time to properly conduct a national search in 2021. Billy is also the last of four assistant coaches who were previously assigned secondary roles within housing. To replace their efforts and mitigate risk, we hope to hire a full-time Residence Life Area Specialist to live onsite in the halls with our students. We are racing against the clock, as many students will be moving into our residence halls over the next four weeks.

We recently learned of my appointment to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Commission on Small and Rural Colleges. This national advisory committee keeps AACC abreast of critical issues and also provides an opportunity for me to network with colleagues from across the country.

We will be celebrating the success of our recent nursing graduates with a much-anticipated pinning ceremony this Thursday. We have worked closely with the Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD) to plan and execute this ceremony, which is steeped in tradition. Congratulations to our nursing faculty and their former students!

As always, if you have questions, concerns, or insights to share, please let me know.

Hope you have a great week!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carmen M. Simone'.

Carmen M. Simone, Ph.D.
President