The Cowboy Parents Council held its spring meeting on Saturday, February 18, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. in Flaming Gorge Room (# 002) of the Wyoming Union on the University of Wyoming campus. Present: Members – Julie Balzan, Robert Balzan, Lida Citreon, Kimberly Conci, Joe Gulino, Maryalice Gulino, Dan Herlihey, Vickie Herlihey, Patricia Horton, Stan Horton, Brad Irion, Carlene Irion, Kurt Kinderwater, John Rundel, and Mark Vaporis; ex officio – Sara Axelson; Staff – Kim Shannon and John Nutter; Guest – Mary Aguayo.

Robert and Julie Balzan presided. Those present were asked to introduce themselves.

**Vice President’s Update:** Sara noted the hiring of Kim Shannon as a major highlight in Student Affairs since the last meeting. Kim earned a BA in Art in December as a non-traditional student after many years of taking courses and raising a family while working at UW. She has worked at the Outreach School, at the UW Foundation, and in Student Affairs with Residence Life, Campus Activities, and Admissions. Kim responded that it was good to graduate before her 19-year old son graduates. She has two younger sons. This gives her a good perspective as a parent of a college student, a prospective college student, and as a student herself.

Sara announced the appointment of two new directors of units in Student Affairs. Joanna Carter is the new director of Student Financial Aid. She comes from Utah Valley University after a national search. Keith Evashevski is the new director of the University Counseling Center. He assumes his role through promotion after ten years in various positions at the Center. UW is also searching for a new director of Admissions, using a screening committee chaired by Oliver Walter, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Significant efforts are going into assistance for transfer students. New articulation agreements are being negotiated with community colleges in Colorado, Nebraska, and Kansas. Expanded scholarship offerings are also being made. A single, on-line website providing information about transferability of courses and services for transfer students has been developed and is now live. A statewide transfer student council is being created to coordinate efforts among the Wyoming colleges and the University.

A virtual orientation program on the Web has been developed by Becky Vinzant and Mary Aguayo. It will be launched February 21. It helps students prepare for transition to college by providing information and checklists, but it is not a substitute for New Student Orientation on the campus.
Enrollment is strong at nearly 14,000 students enrolled fall 2011 semester and 12,800 students enrolled so far for spring 2012, with more expected in Outreach programs as the semester progresses.

The new Bison Run Village apartments are progressing nicely and will be ready for occupancy this fall. A model building and the community center are already open for viewing. The apartments have four private bedrooms connected to a common living and dining area. This adds a new option to the mix of student housing available on the campus.

Sara closed her remarks by commenting on the Spring Break opportunities available in March. A group of student leaders will participate in an exchange to Shanghai, China, led by ASUW president Megan Degenfelder and John Nutter, and six other service opportunities are being offered, including two other international trips.

**New Student Orientation:** Mary Aguayo, Assistant Director of Admissions for Orientation and Campus Visits, thanked the Council members who helped at the Resource Fair on Saturday morning. She then outlined the plans for New Student Orientation sessions. UW is hosting three orientation sessions for transfer students this year.

Mary shared a copy of the schedule for a typical session. At the traditional summer sessions, there will be several opportunities for parents to participate. Each two-day session will begin around noon on a Monday or a Thursday. There will be a reception from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn where parents can talk with one another, with Cowboy Parent Council members, and with UW faculty and staff. The following Tuesday or Friday there will be a Resource Fair from 8:00 to 9:10 a.m. upstairs in the Wyoming Union, including a booth for Cowboy Parents. A Cowboy Parents presentation will be given each Tuesday and Friday at 10:50 a.m. in the Yellowstone Ballroom to acquaint participating parents with the organization.

The parent receptions on Monday and Thursday evenings are the best time for one-on-one interactions with parents. The cost of the receptions is covered by Student Affairs. The receptions will be held:

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A sign-up sheet was circulated by Kim, requesting dates when Council members could help with Orientation events.

**Each Student A Person Award:** With 49 nominations for 48 individuals, questions were posed about the number of awards to be presented and the timing of the presentations. John observed that originally, one award was presented each fall and each spring at a reception to honor the recipient. Over time, that evolved into one award annually presented at the Student Affairs Recognition Luncheon in the spring. Dan noted that the number of nominations had doubled in each of the last two years. Kim explained that the request for nominations was issued later this year than in the past, put on multiple list serves, and resulted in a significant increase in nominations.

Council members commented that it is good to recognize more people. Kim noted that all nominees will be sent a letter telling them they were nominated. A copy will go to their supervisor. Lida suggested that all nominees be included in a news release, to give them wider recognition. Kim said the recipient has traditionally been honored at the luncheon and given a
plaque. Others agreed that all nominees should be recognized, because all of them have influenced students.

Robert offered the options of selecting recipients by semester, by college, or by a percentage of the number of nominations. It was recognized that a formula would be helpful for consistency. *Dan Herlihey offered and Joe Gulino seconded a motion to keep the energy and focus on the prestige of the award by offering it once per year and increasing the number of awards. The motion carried without opposition.* Ten percent of the pool was offered as a formula. It was decided that the percentage should be a percentage of the nominees, not nominations, as sometimes a nominee has multiple nominations. It was suggested that the percentage be set yearly; this was judged to be inconsistent; that rules need to be set prior to nomination solicitation.

Mark asked about criteria for selection. It was noted that the criteria is broadly defined as someone “who demonstrates a unique effort to personalize the student experience at the University of Wyoming.” It also recognizes “a member of the faculty or staff who distinguishes him or herself through leadership in creating a warm and caring attitude” at UW. Maryalice said she looks at the person’s job title and attempts to determine what is expected of the person and what s/he has done above and beyond expectations. It was generally acknowledged that selections are influenced by the quality and content of the nomination and are subjective.

Vickie suggested providing a laminated sign to each nominee that could be placed on his/her door for recognition. Lida suggested pulling comments from good nominations and publicizing them without attribution or naming of the nominee—as a means of promoting the award and Cowboy Parents. Carlene suggested recognizing the award recipients a second time at Family Weekend, since the luncheon is for UW staff, and Family Weekend is for a different audience—parents and students.

*Pat Horton offered and Dan Herlihey seconded a motion to set the number of awards at five percent (5%) of the number of nominees in a given year. The motion passed without opposition.* More time to review the nominations was requested in the future. Dan wondered if any of the nominees had been nominated in past years. John replied that none of the nominees was nominated for the 2011 award. It was noted that at least one nominator nominated multiple nominees. This was not viewed as a significant problem.

Robert then asked Council members to place the names of their top three nominees on a ballot. Kim and John tallied the ballots and reported that 18 nominees received votes. Eight of the nominees were listed by more than one Council member. The Council agreed to discuss the eight who received multiple votes. Following further discussion, Kurt recommended that Council members vote for their top two (5% of the pool of nominees for 2012) nominees and that the two nominees with the highest vote tallies be the award recipients. The Council members agreed. Ballots were cast. The tellers announced that Lucy Carter and Elizabeth Flaherty received the highest number of votes.

**Recruitment of Council Members:** John reported that nine terms are ending at the Family Weekend of 2012. A suggestion from a prior meeting was to review the interest cards filled out by parents at resource fairs and orientation sessions to identify those expressing an interest. Those people should be contacted about nominating themselves for Council membership. A separate email invitation should be sent to these individuals. The election of new members will
take place at the June meeting of the Council. Additional names/cards can be collected at orientation sessions if enough nominations are not received before then.

Brad and Carlene Irion asked that 2011-12, the year they served as Past-Chairs, be counted as the first year of a two-year term. Thus their term will end after 2012-13. Dan and Vickie Herlihey will serve one more year, making 2011-12 and 2012-13 their current term. Kurt Kinderwater agreed to stand for re-election for a new term in 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Financial Reports: Kim and John presented the financial reports. Council members requested that certain items be split out so that revenue and expenses associated with each project can be identified. It was clarified that the reports were for a fiscal year and that the current fiscal year is not yet complete. The fiscal year for Cowboy Parents is July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next year—as it is for UW.

Student Emergency Fund: Kim reported that she and John met recently with Joanna Carter, the new financial aid director. Joanna will be training her staff about the availability of the fund. She will also remind Student Affairs directors of its availability in an effort to serve more students. Vickie observed that many donors like to give to Cowboy Parents and want to know what the money will go for. The Student Emergency Fund is well liked by donors, especially the fact that recipients are encouraged to repay the funds they receive.

John outlined the early history of the fund. It was created by the Council in the mid-1990s with a $5,000 donation. It was designed to provide funding to students who found themselves with an emergency need not of their own causing. He gave examples of buying a flight to get home upon the death of a parent, paying for the removal of four wisdom teeth, paying for baseline medical testing prior to a needed medical procedure, and replacing lost textbooks during finals week. In all cases, the funds are provided as a gift, but with the stipulation that the recipient acknowledge the gift in a thank you note to the Council chair, and that the recipient repay the funds as soon as s/he is able, to allow the funding to be offered to another student in crisis. Requests are submitted to and decided by the Director of Student Financial Aid. Council members expressed their support for continuation of the program and encouraged its judicious use.

Cale McCormick: Cale is a freshman student at UW from Luellen, Nebraska, who, as a pedestrian, was severely injured by a driver under the influence at the corner of 15th St. and Grand Ave. in Laramie in early February. It was proposed that the Cowboy Parents express their support for Cale and his family at this challenging time through a donation from the Council. After discussion, it was suggested to give a “UW gift basket” as being more “personal” than cash, and include a generic gift card. This situation appears different from a request to the Student Emergency Fund. It was therefore recommended by John that the donation come from the Cowboy Parents discretionary fund held at the UW Foundation. Council members suggested including a UW blanket, and other usable items along with a card expressing the Council’s support as fellow parents.

Mark Vaporis offered and Stan Horton seconded a motion to provide gifts and a gift card with a value totaling up to $250 to Cale McCormick and his family on behalf of the Cowboy Parents Council. The motion carried unanimously. The Balzans and Herlihey’s will work with John to purchase appropriate items from the University Bookstore and obtain a generic gift card and greeting card. Kurt will deliver the “basket” to Cale’s family at Swedish Hospital in Denver on his way home to Colorado Springs. John Rundel will contact the family in Luellen, Nebraska, to express the Council’s concern and support.
Calendars: The Council discussed whether to again print academic year calendars and if so, whether to sell them or give them away. Should they be used strictly as a marketing tool, or as a fundraiser? In 2011-12 calendars were sold for $5.00 each, but several hundred leftover calendars were given away in spring semester. Council members like the calendar and believe it is a good project. It was decided to prepare and print the calendars again for 2012-13, but to only accept donations, not sell them. Lida volunteered to work with Kim on other potential fundraising ideas.

Silent Auction: Dan and Vickie are seeking coordinators to work with them on the auction so that the new coordinators could take over the project the following year. Soliciting items is particularly time-consuming, as initial and follow up contacts are needed. They suggest that contacts start soon after the summer meeting. Jubilee Days seemed to be a good time to find shop managers available in Laramie. Lida offered to help train members in the art of soliciting. Dan would like to divide the follow up responsibilities among several people. The signs acknowledging participation by merchants appear to be well received. Maryalice volunteered to help.

Future Meetings and Discussions: Council members expressed interest in visiting new UW facilities in connection with future meetings. Kim will bring new directors to meetings for introductions. Some members expressed interest in another trip to the Information Technology Center. Saturday mornings are a good meeting time, allowing travel Friday night or early Saturday. Council members like having time to socialize with one another. The February reception last year at Altitude Chophouse was appreciated; it is a good time for parents and students to meet together. Kim will investigate possible discounts for UW activities occurring around meeting dates. A social get together could occur this year at the June meeting. Maryalice suggested that a work party could also occur to address tasks such as reviewing the interest cards.

Following discussion, it was decided to hold the summer meeting of the Council on Friday, June 15. This would connect with a parent orientation reception at the Hilton on Thursday evening, June 14, a resource fair on Friday morning, June 15, and allow for a meeting in the afternoon. It might also allow time for a facility tour.

Involving More Parents: Council members talked about connecting to parents through Facebook. Kim would like to have more administrators, as regular monitoring is time consuming. Lida is willing to help with monitoring and administration.

Other suggestions were to host UW facilities tours for parents and families on football weekends. Another idea was to identify more events for families to visit the campus. Hosting family events in larger communities was suggested. Hosting a family day at Half Acre or issuing a free one-day voucher to families for Half Acre was proposed. Putting profiles of Council members in the Wyoming Family e-newsletter was suggested. Having Council members serve as UW resources in out-of-state locations—“a parent to contact in your area”—was proposed.

Connecting Council members with Admissions representatives was recommended. Giving recruiters the names of Council members, so they can be contacted to help when recruiters are visiting their towns was a popular suggestion. The welcome letters sent by the Council chairs to parents of incoming students was applauded and should be continued.
Endowment Expansion: Brad Irion offered and John Rundel seconded a motion to move $5,000 from the Cowboy Parents Discretionary Fund to the Cowboy Parents Endowment. Noting that the account has funding available and the Council’s continuing support for the endowment to be a long-term source of operational support, several members liked the idea. The motion carried without opposition.

With no future business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Nutter