The Cowboy Parents Council held its fall meeting on Friday, September 28, 2012, at 5:00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber (#220) of the Wyoming Union on the University of Wyoming campus. Present: Members – Julie Balzan, Robert Balzan, Kimberly Conci, Joe Gulino, Maryalice Gulino, Dan Herlihey, Vickie Herlihey, Brad Irion, Carlene Irion, Kurt Kinderwater, and John Rundel; ex officio – Sara Axelson; Staff – Kim Shannon and John Nutter; Guest – Shelley Dodd. Robert and Julie Balzan presided.

[Prior to the meeting, several Council members toured the new Bison Run Village apartments complex.]

**New Admissions Director:** Sara introduced Shelley Dodd, the new Admissions Director for UW. She served as the Interim Director and was given the job permanently, starting June 1. She has previous experience in both the Admissions and Registrar’s offices. Her goal for the year is to increase new student enrollment by 50 students. Fall enrollment of new students is 1584. Shelley has two degrees from UW. She noted that UW needs to be the right fit for students, for them to be successful here. Of the prospective students who visit UW, 85 percent ultimately enroll. UW will bring a bus load of out-of-state counselors to visit the campus on October 2. They play an important role in helping their students select a “good fit” college. She distributed her business cards and asked Council members to refer perspective students to her. She also explained that Campus Pass day is a general introductory day built around a football game. The three Discovery Days provide a more in-depth introduction to UW for prospective students and their families.

**Vice President’s Update:** Sara reported that overall enrollment for fall semester is up by 202 students over last fall. As of the 15th day of the semester, UW had 13,122 students, and expects to reach 14,000 by the end of the term when all Outreach enrollments are included. This increase has occurred even though 179 more students graduated in 2011-12 than the previous academic year. Even more significant is the data showing that UW’s fall-to-fall retention rate has increased from 73 percent to 76 percent.

Sara noted that John Nutter would be retiring in December. She has combined the duties of Shelley Dodd (as Assistant to the VP) with John’s to create one Assistant position. This action was taken as part of the staff salary savings being collected should UW need to reduce its budget. The filling of other staff positions will be delayed to achieve further savings if needed. UW has not received budget adjustment instructions from the Governor, but anticipates getting them this fall. A central staff position management system is in place for the entire university to help fairly assess the need to fill each staff vacancy. Obviously, some critical positions cannot go unfilled,
such as a mental health counselor, cafeteria worker, etc. The budget adjustments will help UW to redefine how we work and make us more efficient.

President Buchanan is retiring at the end of next summer. The Trustees will conduct a national search. Buchanan has left a great legacy. One element of that legacy is a planning, and UW has started work on University Plan IV that will cover 2014-2020. Sara would like to get input for the plan from the Council at its February meeting.

**Financial Reports**: Kim shared three financial reports—an Income & Expenses Report, a Balance Sheet, and a spreadsheet on expenditures for FY 2012 and FY 2013. She reported that the major expenses were purchasing additional t-shirts for sale at Family Weekend and the Parents’ Reception during Move-In Day.

Fundraising calls will be made this fall and the annual mailer will be distributed in November. She requested a letter and photo from the Chairs for the mailer. A list of students’ parents has been obtained from the Registrar. Follow up calls will be made in the spring. Calendars are being distributed free, with a donation requested. They were distributed at Summit and will be available during Family Weekend. The minimum donation has been $10. Joe Gulino noted that the cash on hand is a negative number. Kim explained that the purchase of t-shirts was a major factor. Dan Herlihey asked for a report on the Student Emergency Fund for the February meeting.

**Letters/calls to parents of new students**: In the past, letters of welcome were sent in late July to parents of new students; that did not occur this year. Should this be done now, or wait until next July? Vickie Herlihey said there was not much response to the welcome calls, but there was a good response to the letters. The letters were sent from the Chairs in late July—after New Student Orientation and before students started preparing for arrival on campus. It included contact information for parents. Maryalice Gulino did get a good response from calls to parents far from Laramie. No responses were received when just a message was left. Following further discussion, it was decided to send the letter now, when having a student in college is real. It was suggested that contact information be varied by region. Parents should be encouraged to participate in the Homecoming Parade.

**Family Weekend**: A total of 437 individuals have registered. The staff was worried about scheduling the weekend when no football game would occur on campus. Kim sought to gain Laramie community involvement through tours, workshops, discounts, etc. With no game, hotel rooms are available; restaurants are open; and Laramie can focus on parents. Also having the weekend 5-6 weeks after the start of school is a good time for parents to re-visit their students. A survey will be taken at the President’s Brunch to gage family reactions. Dan asked what percentage of families in attendance have a freshman student. Kim will compute this from collected registration data. A variety of events have been scheduled to appeal to differing interests.

**Fun Run/Walk**: Two tables will be needed. Registration is open to Family Weekend participants and non-participants. John Rundel and Kirk Kinderwater volunteered to assist.

**Silent Auction**: The auction needs to be set up and ready to go by 11:00 a.m. Saturday. Volunteers are invited to arrive about 9:30. The auction closes at 1:00. Two cashiers are needed. Gift certificates will be held at the central cashier’s position. Calendars will be available and t-shirts will be sold at a separate table nearby. There will be one cashbox. If necessary, a buyer can
be billed, but no credit card payments will be taken—only cash and checks. An ATM is available at the Wyoming Union. Council members agreed to donate an XL Cowboy Parents t-shirt to the lady who made the UW quilt, because she has offered to make another for the auction next year. Additional easels were requested. Dan and Vickie thanked the Balzans for soliciting additional items; they thanked John and Kim for picking up items in Laramie. Dan remarked that it is actually fun to request items from the very supportive merchants in Laramie. He asked if the signs for merchants supporting the auction could be laminated at UW. It was agreed that they would be.

President’s Brunch: Volunteers were asked to please arrive around 8:00 a.m. Robert Balzan will speak, because Kurt and Mark will not be able to attend.

Elections: Kim announced that Lida Citreon has stepped down as Chair-elect and will not be able to serve as Co-Chair for 2012-13 with Mark Vaporis. Carlene Irion moved that Kurt Kinderwater be elected by acclimation to replace Lida Citreon as Chair-Elect. The vote was unanimous in support of Carlene’s motion. Lida will remain as a Council member.

Election of New Council Members: By acclimation, Kurt Kinderwater was elected to a new term of two-years on the Council. Karen Blaker has resigned from the Council, because her daughter has decided to pursue a degree at an Oklahoma college; one year remains in Karen’s term. John recommended converting the Karen Blaker vacancy into a two-year term. This would address two issues. First, all openings at this meeting would then be two-year terms, relieving the Council from having to determine which new member would serve the unexpired term. Second, seven of the 20 terms end in 2012 while 13 end in 2013. Converting the Blaker vacancy to a two-year term would improve the split to 8 and 12. It was agreed to make the Blaker vacancy a two-year term. Council members proceeded to vote for seven new Council members using a paper ballot.

After a second vote to break a tie, Robert announced the newly elected Council members:
  Kurt Kinderwater of Colorado Springs, CO
  Riki Haukaas of Evanston, WY
  Barbara Leiseth of Pinedale, WY
  Kathi Morrison of Worland, WY
  Darrell Offé of Renton, WA
  Wanda Stevens of Douglas, WY
  Karrie Tracy of Powell, WY
  Jeff Wallace of Cheyenne, WY

Pati Piro-Bosley, Diane Robertson, Mary Kembel, Julie Stewart-Anderson, and Kari-Lynne Gratzer will be considered alternates, should any of the elected candidates decline.

Several Council members noted the need to reach out to the new members. If newly-elected Council members have a spouse who wants to join the Council, that can occur only if a vacancy exists. Otherwise, the spouse is free to attend meetings, but cannot vote.

Election of Chairs-Elect: Normally the Council would select Chairs-Elect for the current academic year at this meeting. However, since selection of new Council members did not occur at the summer meeting, the new members could not attend this meeting. Dan Herlihey offered and Julie Balzan seconded a motion to postpone selection of Chairs-Elect until the February meeting. The motion passed without opposition.
**Summit/Move-In Update**: Kim reported that the reception was well received by parents and went smoothly.

**Involvement/Response**: Sara asked what Student Affairs could do to encourage greater participation by Council members, or what could be done differently to generate more interest. One response was to tell interested parents that there are a variety of ways they can help if they can’t commit to meetings. Dan observed that there had been fewer communications between meetings than in earlier years. Having occasional conference calls was suggested. Email dialogues were also recommended. Another idea was to create a chat room, Facebook group, or WyoWeb group where ideas could be offered. Some members believed that the lower participation was simply a natural ebb and flow that organizations experience. It was suggested that meetings be scheduled for weekends so that members do not have to take vacation time to attend. Use of Skype could include more people.

Another thought was to involve more members in the leadership of the Council by having a secretary and a treasurer who would be supported in their Council work by the staff.

**Homecoming**: Carlene has submitted an application for a Council float in the Homecoming Parade. Robert and Julie will bring branding irons. The Council decided to stick with a western theme. Items needed include streamers/skirts, branding irons, ropes, wagon wheels, buffalo skull, hides, etc. Candy for distribution will be purchased at Van’s Wholesale using Council funds.

**Next meeting**: Following a discussion of dates, the Council set its next meeting for Saturday, February 23 from 1:00 – 4:00. A social hour and dinner will follow at Chili’s restaurant. The value of social time was expressed by several members.

**Thank you to Balzans**: Council members expressed their sincere appreciation to Robert and Julie Balzan for their leadership of the Council during 2011-12. Robert acknowledged the thanks, likening the Council work as being part of a family and that he views UW as just a big family.

With no future business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*John Nutter*