University of Wyoming Engagement Task Force
FOCUS GROUP REPORT
March 2018

MICHAEL CHEEK
ANNE EVEN
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# Executive Summary
The University of Wyoming (UW) has directly commissioned the gathering of information through focus groups that will help the UW Office of Engagement and Outreach meet the goals of the new UW Strategic Plan - *Breaking Through 2017-2022*. In particular, the task force is seeking to identify hallmarks and highlights of UW’s engagement and outreach in various communities throughout the state. The information gathered in this project will assist the task force in developing and implementing a plan for strengthening UW’s mission as a land grant university. It will also aid in the development of a plan to collaborate with all constituents and partners to enhance the wellbeing of the state’s communities through engagement and outreach programs.

In order to gather ideas and input, UW has worked with Central Wyoming College, a neutral party, to facilitate focus groups around the state. The questions and discussion topics were developed by the UW Engagement Task Force. Focus groups, lasting 90 minutes, were held in Fort Washakie, Casper, Ethete, Powell, Rock Springs, Riverton, Afton, Sheridan, Gillette, Laramie, Cheyenne, and Torrington from mid-January to early-March. Individuals were invited to attend the focus groups. The UW Engagement Task Force had a target of 6-8 attendees per focus group. Although some groups were smaller than this target, it should be noted that all information gathered is of value, and when combined with all participants as a whole, themes do emerge.

The following section indicates the major themes found in the 12 focus groups. It should be noted that qualitative research should not be projected to the population at large. Results should be used for insight and direction only. For specific comments, please refer to the site summaries and transcripts.

**Major Findings**

- There is a strong affinity and affection for UW throughout the state that transcends generations and geography. In short, people love UW and are extremely proud of the only university in the state. They want their children to attend UW and are saddened when those children choose to attend other institutions.
- Wyoming residents are extremely proud of, and fiercely loyal to their communities. Without hesitation, they will recite a list of reasons why anyone would want to live, raise a family, retire or start a business in their community.
- Many UW programs and partnerships are recognized and acknowledged to have significant and positive impacts on communities including TRIO, Gear Up, Saturday University, WWAMI, and the INBRE research grants.
There is a wide spectrum of awareness regarding the presence of UW professionals in the communities surveyed, as well as the awareness of their roles or various affiliations with UW. This was certainly related to the makeup of each focus group but in some cases it was stated that UW professionals did not necessarily identify themselves as employees of the university.

When a UW employee serves in the same position for many years (Amy McClure, Bill Gern for example), that person becomes the face of UW and their successor is not always recognized or acknowledged as the local UW professional without additional outreach.

The extent to which UW is perceived to be present and listening in a community is directly related to the distance of their community from Laramie.

The extent to which UW is perceived to be engaged and in partnership with these communities, including Laramie, has waxed and waned over the years depending on UW leadership.

Recent outreach efforts from UW and President Nichols have not gone unnoticed by these communities and is greatly appreciated.

UW is clearly engaged on some level with all of these communities, but there is a wide spectrum of awareness regarding the level of presence or engagement. Although UW definitely has a presence in several of these communities, many or most residents are simply not aware of that presence.

Distance education is not a viable alternative for many prospective students in the communities represented in this report. Many of these individuals are non-traditional students who struggle with technology. In addition, there is intense competition in the realm of distance education and UW is not perceived as a strong competitor.

There is a strong desire for the physical presence of UW in communities that are distant from Laramie.

The more distant communities are closer to universities in surrounding states that are aggressively recruiting the local students. Black Hills State University, Chadron State, Montana State, BYU Idaho and Utah State are more actively and effectively recruiting Wyoming students than UW. Even with the incentives provided by the Hathaway Scholarship, students are choosing neighboring universities over UW.

Economic diversity and economic sustainability is seen as both the greatest opportunity and the greatest challenge for every community represented in this report. In addition to building on and modernizing existing industries, many communities identified one form or another of the following grand opportunities:

- Information technology is either a grand opportunity or a significant challenge for every community represented in this report. While some communities are challenged with
broadband connectivity, others have the infrastructure and preparedness to develop data centers or other technology related businesses.

➢ Travel and tourism is an opportunity for every community represented in this report. The communities outside of northwest Wyoming have unique landscapes and the potential for unique tourism and ecotourism opportunities.

➢ Agriculture in the form of more specialized and local food production is an opportunity for many Wyoming communities.

❖ Transportation is a challenge throughout the state. Reliable air service is not consistently available and there are few viable public transportation systems. Long distances and challenging driving conditions sometimes require seven to eight hours of travel time to reach Laramie.

❖ Retention of youth is a significant challenge for every community represented in this report. When youth leave these communities to go out of state they often do not return, and if they do want to return there is a lack of employment opportunities and affordable housing.

❖ A lack of resources for emerging entrepreneurs, the inability to connect the available resources with entrepreneurs, l, and lack of succession from existing businesses to potential successors are barriers to economic diversity and sustainability.

❖ There is a lack of opportunity to earn a UW degree or advanced degree for students who are site bound. This is especially true for students wanting to earn teaching degrees, or degrees in social services (counseling).

❖ Every community represented in this report faces significant challenges that UW may or may not have a role in addressing including transportation, underemployment, gender wage gaps, poverty, homelessness, lack of affordable housing, food insecurity, access to mental healthcare, substance abuse, addiction, and high rates of suicide. These are the most significant barriers to growth and development in many of these communities.

❖ The Wind River Indian Reservation communities have fundamentally different needs than all other Wyoming communities and perhaps the greatest potential for UW to make an immediate impact. Some of these needs offer significant potential for the economic development that could improve the quality of live in these communities. For specific challenges and opportunities, please refer to Fort Washakie and Ethete site summaries.

❖ Continue statewide outreach and dialogue, especially in communities that are more distant and perceived as isolated from UW.

❖ Maintain and expand existing partnership programs that match UW students with internship/research and service opportunities.
❖ Develop strategies, provide resources, and market these services to help communities attract businesses/entrepreneurs.
❖ Communities want UW students to do student teaching and medical rotations in their community. The feeling is that if they can get these students to their community, they can show them it is a great place to call home.
❖ Develop research partnerships with communities in need of research to help them address their challenges and opportunities. They are either reaching out to institutions other than UW or simply do not have the resources to conduct this research.
❖ Ensure better alignment between the needs of industry/workforce and UW programs/degrees/certificates. UW graduates are sometimes perceived as educationally prepared, but technically unprepared for the careers they will enter.

Demographic Summary
A total of 59 participants were involved in the focus groups around the state. The following figures illustrate industry representation by location, focus group representation by industry, participant degree background, and representation by focus group site. Of the 59 participants, 34 are UW alum.

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Tribal Agency or Organization</th>
<th>Education (K-12)</th>
<th>Education (Post Secondary)</th>
<th>State/Local Government</th>
<th>Federal Government</th>
<th>Private Industry</th>
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Figure 1. Focus group participant representation by location.

![Participant Representation by Industry](image1)

Figure 2. Focus group participant representation by industry.

![Participant's Degree Background](image2)

Figure 3. Focus group participant’s degree background.
Figure 4. Focus group participants by location.
Purpose and Procedures

The University of Wyoming Engagement Task Force Focus Groups Project was initiated with the specific purposes of:

- Identifying hallmarks and highlights of UW’s engagement and outreach in the selected communities.
- Collecting information that will help the UW Office of Engagement and outreach meet the goals of the new UW Strategic Plan - *Breaking Through 2017-2022*.

In particular, the task force is working to develop a plan:

- For strengthening UW’s mission as a land grant university.
- To collaborate with constituents and partners to enhance the wellbeing of the state’s communities through outreach programs.

Preparation for the focus groups began in the fall of 2017. The UW Engagement Task Force sent letters of invitation to a variety of constituencies in each region briefly describing the project and inviting community members to participate. The 90-minute sessions were held in the following Wyoming communities; Ft. Washakie, Ethete, Casper, Powell, Rock Springs, Riverton, Afton, Sheridan, Gillette, Laramie, Cheyenne and Torrington in January and February of 2018. Sessions were facilitated by Michael Cheek and Anne Even, CWC Workforce Trainers/Facilitators. The dialogue was recorded and transcribed for use in preparing the site summary reports. The sessions began with an introduction from the facilitator summarizing the focus group project followed by brief introductions from participants.

Participants were presented with the purpose statements cited above and the following definition of engagement as the framework for the focus group discussion:

*The collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.*

Six questions created by the Engagement Task Force were presented (see appendix). These questions were designed to promote discussion amongst the group with prompting for specific details from the facilitator where appropriate. The facilitator also encouraged the participants to add thoughts or comments...
at any time during the discussion. The facilitator’s contact information was provided to all participants who were encouraged to submit written comments/additional input after the focus group session as well. To encourage candid responses, participants were not asked to identify themselves when commenting and names that appeared in the transcripts were redacted.
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Community Engagement Focus Group Questions

1. Are you aware of UW partnerships/join projects within your community?
   Yes or No
   If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

2. Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community?
   Yes or No
   If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

3. What is your perception of UW as a partner?
   ■ When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
   ■ To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

4. Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
   ■ Who is working on capitalizing on them?
   ■ What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
   ■ What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
   ■ What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

5. Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
   ■ Who is working on them?
   ■ What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
   Other potential challenges:
   ■ Youth?
   ■ Educational opportunities?
   ■ Access to health care?
   ■ Support for entrepreneurs?
   ■ Natural resource issues?
   ■ Aging population?
   ■ Connectivity? (Relationships/Networks)
   ■ Amenities? (Broadband/Community Spaces)
6. How do you think UW can help?
Site Summary: Fort Washakie (Eastern Shoshone Tribe)

January 18, 2018
Frank B. Wise Business Plaza
Fort Washakie, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitators:
Anne Even
Michael Cheek

4 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The Centsible Nutrition and Growing Resilience programs were the most visible partnerships in the community for these participants.
❖ One participant was not aware that Centsible Nutrition involved UW.
❖ Both of these programs were viewed unanimously as effective programs making positive contributions to the community and striving for a highly desired outcome; healthier food choices for reservation residents.
❖ All participants felt that it was widely understood in the community that UW was involved in these programs.
❖ Distance education/online classes was cited as a UW offering, but not a partnership.

Specific Responses:
❖ “The Growing Resilience Project, a gardening project. We partner with UW through a grant and do data collection with a group growing gardens within families.”
❖ “I actually didn't get to start my garden last summer just due to the length of the funding and how everything went. I was excited, I'm excited for this summer to actually start a garden, to grow on my own.”

Question 2:
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ Teffany Fegler and Hattie Penny, both of UW’s Educational Opportunity Centers were quickly identified as UW Professionals.
Participants stated that both Teffany and Hattie were very responsive, very helpful and meeting a specific need for the reservation community.

It was clear that participants had been accustomed to Amy McClure as the UW professional in the community and did not necessarily identify her successor (Amy Schmidt) as the current UW professional even though they had been in contact with her.

Specific Responses:

- “….when they involve themselves with the high school students to get them prepared for college. They contact us quite a bit and then we help them and do the College and Career Fair too during October.”
- “Amy McClure when she was with the staff, she's retired, but she used to always bring by those booklets. I don't know if they replaced {her}, I haven't seen anybody come by since she retired.”

Question 3:
What is your perception of UW as a partner?

- When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
- To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Major Points of Discussion:

- There was a continuum of responses to this question with some respondents expressing a perception of a strong partnership with UW and others feeling there was little partnership.
- One respondent cited UW’s ability to obtain grants and initiate grant funded projects as an example of partnership. Some of these projects were thought to be mutually beneficial.
- The respondents representing higher education thought that UW was attempting to make higher education more accessible to reservation residents and did perceive UW as present and listening to their needs.
- The respondent representing high school equivalency did not feel that UW was involved on any level.
- The group agreed that the new Native American Educational Research and Cultural Center in Laramie was a good example of UW listening and responding to a need.

Specific Responses:

- “On a personal level, UW for me is the whole reason why I'm sitting here in this chair to begin with. If it wasn't for the outreach program and being able to provide that service, that education through distance education, I definitely wouldn't be sitting here right now.”
- “I think so as far as us being a Shoshone higher ed program, I think it's more of a deep level on their part in wanting to know what they need to do to help our people out and get education and to further education.”
- “I guess they're really working on as far as a partnership or UW being able to be more accessible through the reservation for people that can't make it to UW to go to school.”
- “Basically my perception as a partner, I don't think I'm really a partner even though I work at the Learning Center and we're a computer lab for the community.”
“Then they opened the Native American Center down there. The students feel more comfortable coming from here to there.”

**Question 4:**
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
- Who is working on capitalizing on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
- What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
- What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- There are numerous opportunities for education and economic development on the Wind River Indian Reservation with desired outcomes that could significantly affect the quality of life. These include but are not limited to increasing local food production, promoting awareness of and encouraging healthy food choices, developing tourism assets, developing natural resources and promoting Native American art.
- Most of these opportunities are not being capitalized on consistently.
- Numerous quality of life assets were also identified; clean air and water, mountain and scenic vistas, Native American culture and regional history.
- There is no centralized effort to drive economic development on the reservation.

**Specific Responses:**
- “I would like to see opportunities for our artists, like the beaders, the craftspeople. We have tourists that drive by every summer and what we're in need of is not necessarily a flea market but just some structures.”
- “It's too bad we couldn't use our wild meat and have jerky to sell. That would be nice and provide jobs.”
- “I think that's the hugest one, just from what we struggle with as a program is getting people to look at other alternatives of eating other than what we're eating now.”
- “Clean water, fresh air, no traffic.”
- “It would be kind of cool to have a youth guiding here for them to show people outside of our reservation what we have here. The youth, bring them in and let the reservation youth teach the outside youth about what's around here. The plants, the vegetation, the mountains.”

**Question 5:**
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- Limited food choices and lack of local food production has a significant impact on the health of the Tribal community.
Unemployment is very high on the reservation and there are limited opportunities for work outside of the casinos. People either have to leave the reservation or try to piece together what limited employment exists on the reservation.

Transportation is a major barrier to employment, access to better food choices, access to healthcare.

Nobody is consistently working on addressing these challenges. Tribal members often look to the Tribal Councils for leadership but the councils are limited in what they can do in terms of economic development.

Specific responses:

- “I think part of the Growing Resilience is to get people to start growing their own fruits and vegetables. Not only just grow it for themselves but in farmer's markets, being able to share what you've grown with other community members.”
- “I think one of the biggest one that is a huge challenge in this community and most native communities across the country is the lack of work.”
- “Tribal members not having the opportunity to get certification or training or education because it all stems to transportation. Economic opportunity, if you can't get to Laramie to take a UW course or go to CWC then you're probably not going to get there.”
- “I guess the local store over here, their prices are a little high. Then if you want to get more bang for the buck you have to go to Lander or Riverton, but again you need transportation.”

Question 6:
How can UW help?

Major Points of Discussion:

- All respondents agreed that some type of community learning center, or higher education center would very desirable.
- Respondents referred to a program that took place in the late 1980’s or early 1990’s that allowed students to earn their teaching certifications on the reservation. Many of the graduates went on to teach in the reservation schools and are now close to retirement. There is a need for a similar program and for more teachers on the reservation.
- Online classes are not a good option for many Native Americans, more live classes would be more attractive to reservation residents.

Specific Responses:

- “It’s just kind of what you talked about, if you can create an atmosphere and a community centered area where you're providing all those supports and education and outreach component to help people work to those goals all the way around.”
- “I think that's where the transportation to get to the Learning Center for the older...I know there's a couple of elderly people too that would like to participate and go back to school. But some of them have that lack of transportation or even being able to get to the Learning Center to use the computers.”
- “Like Dave said the visual experience, being included with the other students in the classroom I think would be a lot more helpful for them than just telling them you've got to take online classes.
You're kind of on your own. I think that's where the intimidation comes from, I think that's where a lot of them tend to back out from wanting to go to school.”

❖ “I think since I was helping with the social studies standards there's all these non-Indian teachers around the state that have to eventually need to start teaching to those standards. If there was a way to bring them here for a week, to the reservation, and get first hand learning experience rather than all online or going to the UW to teach about Indian history and stuff about the reservation and the tribes.”

❖ “...provide an instructor to have computer classes for the seniors. Just learning how to stay with technology because I think a lot of the older people are scared of it.”
Site Summary: Casper

January 23, 2018
Casper College University Union Building
Casper, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:
Michael Cheek

4 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The University Union building on the Casper College campus was cited as an example of partnership as well as the Master’s of Counseling and Education degree that is available in Casper through UW.
❖ There was general agreement that the respective business schools work well together to facilitate the transition of students from Casper College to UW.
❖ UW plays a significant role with Leadership Wyoming which has a strong presence in the Casper area.
❖ Projects involving the Wyoming Business Alliance and Wyoming Business Council in partnership with UW were also cited.
❖ The Wyoming Technology Business Center is an invaluable resource for new businesses and entrepreneurs.

Specific Responses:
❖ “Then I know the College of Business is also extending what used to be, I think, the 30K, which is now the 50K entrepreneurial competition. I know they're trying to get some of the community colleges involved in that throughout the state.”
❖ “I think they're trying to get students through in four years instead of five or six, at a minimum of costs, with 2+2 agreements, which I think has been a great partnership with the community colleges.”
❖ “I've seen tremendous success from our students when they go to the University of Wyoming to continue their education.”
❖ “For the incubator, they're creating businesses, that are creating jobs and exploring new technologies. In that respect, I think they've done a really good job.”

Question 2:
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The group was able to identify numerous current and past UW professionals in the Casper community although they were uncertain of their current roles or positions with UW.
❖ Several individuals were identified who actually work in Laramie but are well known in Casper because of their prominent roles in some Casper projects.
❖ There was an awareness of other UW professionals and their specific roles but nobody in the group could name them.
❖ Specific individuals identified included Anne Alexander, Scott Seville, Kent Noble, John Glassburn, Steve Russell, and Hannah Swanbom.

Specific Responses:
❖ “I already mentioned Anne Alexander. She's here fairly frequently, and usually presenting on economic topics.”
❖ “Kent Noble, I went through Leadership Wyoming with. He is, I believe, the Daniels Chair of Business Ethics at the University of Wyoming.”
❖ “Scott Seville, I think he's been interim dean for the university here in Casper, but he's a biology professor. I know he travels a lot, but he's based out of Casper.”
❖ “I know John Glassburn. He's the assistant director for the Wyoming Technology Business Center, and he actually lives in Casper.”
❖ “Wyoming Technology Business Center. Jon Benson is the CEO. He's really based out of Laramie, but he is up here quite a bit with the Technology Business Center.”
❖ “Hannah Swanbom. I work with her quite a bit in the communities I assist.”
❖ “I know one of the women that works in the Ag Extension office, and does those commercials from the ground up, UW Extension...”.

Question 3:
What is your perception of UW as a partner?
● When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
● To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The general consensus was that UW was very engaged in the early 1990’s, then there was a long gap and now the University seems to be re-engaging.
❖ Two individuals had earned their M.B.A.’s from UW in the early 1990’s and remarked that it is very different now that it was then, that there were many students then that felt like a cohort group.
❖ Wyoming Medical Center used to hire graduates of UW Programs in Casper. The number of applicants tapered off sharply around 2010.
When Wyoming Medical Center began to require Master’s degrees for management level positions, very few of them earned their degrees from UW, but from other programs such as University of Phoenix or Grand Canyon University.

The individual representing the K-12 schools stated that they have a strong relationship and partnership with UW, and that UW is very accessible and responsive to their needs. This was held up as a good example of pure partnership, co-investing and developing ideas.

Companies considering Casper as a potential location want a relationship with a University, especially international companies. The perception is that UW attempts to steer companies toward Laramie rather than meeting their potential needs in Casper.

Specific Responses:

“I think they're trying. I've seen more of it in recent years. I've also seen some initiatives. It's kind of a big bureaucracy down there. They have some great ideas that don't come about as quickly as maybe a more nimble organization could effect a change, perhaps.”

“...I'm a graduate of the business program here from when it first started. Then I got my MBA in the early '90s through this program, and it's a lot different now than what it was back then.”

“...It seemed to me there was a gap. They seemed to be really engaged, and then there was this gap, and now it seems to be re-engaging, but I'm also aware of their decline in enrollment numbers.”

“I can tell you then up toward the end, I can't remember getting even a resume or an application from a UW grad the last five years that I was at Wyoming Medical Center.”

“They were going to those online, not even looking at the University of Wyoming. I don't know what the cause of that was. It obviously wasn't money, because it would have been cheaper here, but it may be classes unavailable, trying to work around family and work.”

“I feel like I'm in a pretty right relationship, partnership, with the University of Wyoming because of my role as the College Counselor for the school district. I feel like they're very responsive to whatever we need. If we wanted them here next week, they'd be here next week. They're always saying, ‘What else can we do?’.”

“It's unfortunate. They do great things and a lot of those, the foreign companies in particular, are the ones that really want a connection with a university, not a junior college.”

Question 4:
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
● Who is working on capitalizing on them?
● What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
● What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
● What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

Major Points of Discussion:

The Natrona County International Airport has been named as a free trade zone which was viewed as an opportunity to establish manufacturing businesses that can export tariff-free. The local economic development agency (CAEDA) is primarily involved in this effort.
Casper has an overbuilt and underutilized healthcare infrastructure that includes five hospitals which has potential to make Casper a destination for “medical tourism”. This opportunity is not being capitalized on due to competing interests.

Casper’s central location was seen as an opportunity. Casper is easy to get to and there are good support services available for businesses that want to locate there. The local economic development agencies are working to capitalize on this asset.

There is a considerable amount of investment capital in Casper and investors seeking opportunities, but a lack of investment opportunities. CAEDA and another organization called Breakthrough 307 are working on this issue.

The group cited numerous assets of the Casper area, including outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, the arts, restaurants, shopping and affordable housing.

Specific Responses:

“...the politics get in the way. Casper's, you have 60,000 people, we have five hospitals. It makes absolutely no economic sense here. See, everybody that's involved knows they want two things. They want ownership and supposedly the profits that come with it, and they want the managerial control.”

“We're working on it (capitalizing on our location), and we all work really, really well together. I think we were able to bring in the resources that we need to help the community grow and businesses grow.”

“We should be a hub of Wyoming for something, and I don't know what. I don't know if it's tourism. I don't know if it’s education, I don't know if it's healthcare, or maybe it's of all of those things. I don't know what that looks like, but it just seems with Casper's population, infrastructure, and location that we ought to be doing a little more than we are, and I don't know what that looks like.”

“They're looking for something new, and there's some really positive things, but there is a lot of money in this town that's looking for a place to go, because in the bank you're not making it there.”

“If you're not an outdoors type, I mean, a very vibrant art community of all kinds. We have a great symphony orchestra for the little town of Casper, Wyoming.”

Question 5:

Name the top 3 challenges in your community.

- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

Major Points of Discussion:

The need for economic diversity to lessen dependence on extractive industries is a significant challenge. Numerous entities are working to address this challenge although the efforts need to be more coordinated.

Transportation, especially air service is another significant challenge.

There are numerous privately owned businesses in need of a succession plan to match high school or college graduates seeking business opportunities.
There is a segment of the population that does not want change.
The aging population is a looming challenge. There are many assisted living facilities in Casper but not many nursing homes.
Youth are leaving the Casper area due to perceived lack of opportunity.

Specific Responses:

“Maybe one of the challenges is there could be more communication, more connectivity amongst those groups. I don't know, I'm speculating, to try to make those connections so that some of those dots can be connected.”
“I mean, the airport's a challenge. It's expensive to fly in here, it's expensive to fly out of here.”
“Come out of college with a degree in accounting, and you work with someone for two years and at the end of it, it's your practice and they're gone, it's all yours. There's incredible opportunity there.”
“The biggest complaint you'll hear in economic development, ‘Yeah, I'd love to have another mall, but I don't want more people here. Yeah, we'd love to have this, but I don't want more people here’.”
“I don't talk to a lot of students coming out of high school that have that entrepreneurial spirit, at least the ones that I see.”
“The reality is, when you talk to a lot of kids even in high school, they know what our minerals industry does. They also know that if they come out at a time when it's on the upswing, they can go straight into one of those jobs at $90,000 a year plus benefits with absolutely zero education beyond high school.”

Question 6:
How can UW help?

Major Points of Discussion:

There is a need and desire for a more physical presence from UW. Although there is a UW building on the campus of Casper College, most people don't realize that it offers almost exclusively online classes.
More outreach, to and connectivity with economic development organizations to close the loops with businesses/entrepreneurs and UW resources.
There is a lack of understanding of what students can accomplish at Casper College after graduation from high school. UW could do more outreach within the school districts to help them prepare for transition to college and ensure that they graduate in 4 years.

Specific Responses:

“If I knew who to contact when I'm working with a company or a business, because honestly, I don't know who I would contact here, who I could reach out to.”
“I'd like to see more of a physical educational presence here. I know the trend is online, I know the return on investment is there. I know it's cost-effective. The education is different with online, not better or worse, just different.”
“What I hear often, and I don't know if this is true or not, people say ‘If I go to take classes at the Casper College, they don't transfer to UW’.”
❖ “I think if the University of Wyoming wants to compete in Casper for online students, they're going to lose, for online students, because we're not bound by geography.”
❖ “Maybe there's a way to start asking that question of the students when they arrive on campus, both here and there, start to ask that question, ‘What can we do to keep you here? What can we do to diversify?’.”
Site Summary: Ethete (Northern Arapaho Tribe)

January 25, 2018
Wyoming Indian Middle School
Ethete, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitators:
Michael Cheek
Anne Even

2 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ Specific partnerships identified included the EPSCoR Project, Upward Bound and TRIO. Both participants were aware of UW’s role with these projects but believed that most reservation residents were not.
❖ Participants alluded to another initiative in its beginning stages intended to develop programs to meet the needs of the aging population on the reservation.
❖ Participants also referenced an educational program in the early 1990’s for reservation residents to earn their teaching degrees.

Specific Responses:
❖ “So I really like what they want to do. They're going to make it specific to the Arapaho community.”
❖ “UW I think at one time had a educational program for teachers, yeah. I can't remember when that was.”
❖ “We are now in the early stages of one with our community elders and aging, to make that more available to the community. But that UW program, before they really put it together, they want to pull together this community seniors who are part of that aging umbrella and then develop programs specifically to meet their needs versus just a shoot it out a template, fits all people.”

Question 2:
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

Major Points of Discussion:
Specific individuals identified; Reinette Tendore, Hattie Penny, Teffany Fegler, Babette Hernandez, Amy McClure, Amy Schmidt.

Both participants stated they doubted that most reservation residents would identify these individuals as UW employees.

Specific Responses:

“Oh, here's one. You know the professionals who ... he was consistent, he didn't work directly in our community, was Tim Rush. He was always here in the community.”

“Last year she (Reinette Tendore) ran a youth program down at UW before. It was almost like an Upward Bound program but it was for kids to go down, I don't know exactly what they did but it was a youth program.”

Question 3:

What is your perception of UW as a partner?
- When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
- To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Major Points of Discussion:

UW is often absent from the reservation communities.

There is a perception that UW will initiate a dialogue and express a desire to do something, then contract it out to a third party. However the participants did not identify a specific instance where this had happened.

Participants stated that if UW wants to have successful partnerships with the Northern Arapaho tribe that UW personnel will need to be continually present on the reservation.

Both participants agreed that the recent outreach from UW was a step in the right direction.

Specific Responses:

“And it comes back to the fact that UW would come out sporadically. Whenever it's academically/politically expedient for them to come out. But there's no sticking around.”

“A lot of people want to come out here and they want to do these types of informational gathering but they have no idea, they have no idea. They've never been out here, they have preconceived notions of what it looks like out here, and so that's an example. Is that they work from their office down there but they rarely come up here to do that work and to meet people and talk to people and start building a relationship with whatever foundation, organization, program.”

“‘What is your perception of UW as a partner?’ Well, the perception is that partnership has been nice on paper but it hasn't been reality.”

“Pennies on the dollar have come back to us. And now here we've got this foundations at UW, we should have a greater delivery of services from UW.”

“Historically, it doesn't seem like it's happened to a degree that we're comfortable with. But we're now at a time where UW sees that is a must to have a face to face relationship with this community. And that's good, yeah.”

Question 4:
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.

- Who is working on capitalizing on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
- What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
- What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

**Major Points of Discussion:**

- One participant stated the grand opportunities are current programs that have not been fully capitalized on, and that UW would need to be much more involved to make them successful.
- Both participants agreed that younger tribal members are the greatest opportunity. One participant stated that nearly 80% of the tribal population is under the age of 25 and the elders are quickly disappearing.
- Utilization of natural resources on the reservation is another opportunity. One example that was given is the vast amount of timber, including beetle-killed timber that could be harvested and sold.
- Renewable energy, both wind and solar were also cited as big opportunities.
- There are no coordinated efforts to capitalize on these opportunities.

**Specific Responses:**

- “Well, if I may ... when you say name the top three grand opportunities, we have existing programs that are opportunities in and of themselves. But grand, they are not, because we don't have the capital to maximize what we could do. And if UW wants to get into one of the three top grand opportunities, UW's gonna have to help out to much greater degree with capital so that we can move forward on maximizing existing grand opportunities.”
- “I feel like our culture is a major part of our life and I think that that's what we're working on, is reteaching our kids about our culture, strengthening their identities so that they can take those roles that they would detect.”
- “But as we move along, I know that that's what we're reaching is our children. And we have to invest that time and our money into them so that they can push us into all the areas that we need to go and pushing education.”
- “So I think that when we talk about specific areas or industries that we're looking to grow, it's our kids. It's education, it's educating them so that they can take us, take my grandkids and my great grandkids, take care of them.”
- “We could be funding our own electricity for our community members. That's just bear sweat. And then when the weather turns warmer, High Plains, legally and ethically, will turn off the electricity. They won't do it during the winter because people will freeze. But in the meantime, that $800 starts building up, so come May, they may owe $3000 and tribe can only help out so much.”
- “Our areas up here have already been studied where we're in the top five areas for consistent wind flow that will move those big turbines. With the capital, we can put up enough turbines, even if we just funded the electrical needs for reservation tribal members….”
- “But you know what specific areas like wind industry, solar. If every house here just had their own solar, there's electricity, there's hot water.”
**Question 5:**
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- Health and Wellness is a significant challenge for the tribal communities. The life expectancy for Northern Arapaho men is well under age 60, just over age 60 for women.
- Access to healthcare is limited. Reservation residents have to go off the reservation to get anything beyond primary care.
- Racism directed toward Native Americans is pervasive in Wyoming.
- Previously mentioned opportunities are also the primary challenges.
- There is severe housing shortage on the reservation and an immediate need for at least 1000 homes.
- There are no coordinated efforts on the reservation to address these challenges.

**Specific Responses:**
- “Yeah, Medicaid expansion. Then that would have really helped us because how it would have helped us is our people would have been eligible for healthcare and for the ones that need to go to treatment, they feed it toward treatment.”
- “Because even our kids are really struggling to be able to...they have kid care so that helps with them but for all of us, 10,000 tribal nation, if we had over 60% of them, like 6,000 people that healthcare, they'd have that opportunities to be able to go get health.”
- “But the 80%, they see you but then they look through you or they go around you. They couldn't even talk to me. And I think a lot of it is fear based. They don't want to hear from an articulate Native woman, an articulate Native man. We put fear in them. That's called racism.”
- “I think we've addressed all of those already. We already know what the challenges are.”

**Question 6:**
How can UW help?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- UW simply needs to start building partnership on the reservation.
- UW needs to work on the tribal level and start building relationships with tribal leaders.
- These relationships need to be sustained. There is a perception that once a research project is completed or once a research paper is published there is no longer a presence.

**Specific Responses:**
- “I think that like we said at the beginning of that, UW really does need to start building partnerships. And they need to work on the tribal level and start building relationships there with our leaders”.
- “Even though, for me, it's about taking walls down. Taking them down and sit at a table and do the discussion and get to the same place and all that so they can explain things. Because I know that we have barriers, communication barriers between us and all other organizations and I think
that that probably is the biggest problem that we have in creating these relationships that we need to have.”
❖ “I think that UW can do a lot to help us, but it has to be 50/50. It can't be any of this, okay we're going to come in and do this study and then leave and that's it. And we don't get any benefits of that study.”
❖ “Our tribal councils, they're the ones that run everything on the reservation but there's a lot of different organizations that need to be on the table too. At the same time. Like our school districts and all of our different programs, whatever it is, whatever the topic is or whatever.”
Site Summary: Powell

January 30, 2018
Northwest College Orendorff Building
Powell, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:
Michael Cheek

8 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ At the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, there are two partnerships. One is a Tourism/Business Internship that was started in the summer of 2017. The student who had the internship had, by all reports, a positive experience, and he worked on a research project that was of benefit to the Center.
❖ The other partnership is with Wyoming Public Media, which is part of the University of Wyoming. The partnership supports a full time multimedia journalist who works at the Center and has a recording booth on site. She reports for Wyoming Public Radio and produces content for the Center’s web site. This partnership is just getting underway, so it’s too soon to evaluate.
❖ The INBRE Science Grant uses Northwest College (NWC) distance classrooms for web conferencing and meetings. NWC students participate in the research symposium in Laramie to showcase their research.
❖ The Foundation for the Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming partnered with UW Professors of Art and other disciplines to arrange programming around the exhibition of “The Bridge”, an international, interfaith, art exhibit curated by CARAVAN, Inc., in September of 2016.

Specific Responses:
The audio quality of this portion of the discussion did not allow for accurate transcription or reproduction of verbatim responses.

Question 2:
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

Major Points of Discussion:
Participants from Cody know there are UW professionals in the outreach center, but could not name them.

Although she no longer works for UW, Tara Kuipers’ name was mentioned repeatedly.

Gear UP and TRIO staff.

Individuals named included Rebecca Moncur, Callee Erickson, Morgen Patrick, Mary Keller, and Eric Silk.

Specific Responses:

“She (Tara) was an asset to Cody as a facilitator of strategic planning sessions for civic organizations and nonprofits, as a facilitator of community conversations to help with decision-making, and as a facilitator of business-related programs such as the multi-year Business Bootcamp that helped people evaluate their hopes and dreams and decide whether to go into business for themselves.”

“Sadly, lost Tara Kuipers’ position with Extension Office.”

Question 3:
What is your perception of UW as a partner?

- When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
- To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Major Points of Discussion:

- There is a perception that UW is largely absent from these two communities.
- Participants stated that when they think of UW’s presence over the last few years what comes to mind is the UW Foundation.
- One participant referred to the Coordinated Resource Management Program (CRM) as an example of partnership, but was not certain if the program still existed.
- The loss of Tara Kuipers position is felt acutely by the two communities, leaving a void that has yet to be filled.

Specific Responses:

“I was going to say what I feel like we're in Siberia. We're so far away from Laramie that we get lost. And now, the one person who was active in our community...that won't be replaced.”

“That leads to my thinking about the UW presence in my community as being one of fundraising rather than one of partnerships, so, for what it's worth.”

“But it (CRM) was something that was very specific and it spoke to ranchers on certainly kinds of landscapes that needed assistance. In looking at their landscapes and their livestock operations in a more holistic way. And it was a terrific program and I have no idea if it continues or not.”

“It's just, you know...with the first question we kind of struggle to find those partnerships, so, obviously it's not deep.”

“I would say not to dwell on this too much, but when we had that position (Tara Kuipers) coming out of the ag extension office, that was a really tangible way that the university contributed to the function of our community.”
“And at the same time I think there's a gap in UW having a visible presence in making this part of the state more successful.”

**Question 4:**
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
- Who is working on capitalizing on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
- What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
- What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- Economic diversity. An example of this is the ongoing expansion of the pharmaceutical manufacturer Cody Labs. Forward Cody, the local economic development organization and the City of Cody are working together to drive this effort.
- Keeping youth in the two communities and maintaining the population in northwest Wyoming.
- An elementary education program to allow students to earn their teaching degrees without leaving Park County. There is a committee called the Teacher Education Initiative working on this opportunity.
- The vast amount of the surrounding public lands for environmental tourism and ecotourism is a unique asset. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and Wyoming Outdoor Council are leading any efforts to protect and capitalize on this.
- Actionable research that could help planning for economic development and tourism; visitor surveys, visitation numbers and demographics. Park County currently relies on the University of Montana to conduct visitor surveys for tourism.
- More opportunity for Park County residents to earn advanced degrees is needed but generally requires traveling out of state or seeking other online programs.
- Numerous quality of life assets were identified; vibrant culture, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation.

**Specific Responses:**
- “We've also been facilitating the expansion of a couple of gun manufacturing companies, which once again fits into the...let's get more...less dependent on the price of oil and I think those are things that are super important....”
- “We could take students from Park County and to be more specific, Cody, and educate them from the cradle almost to the grave and they would never have to leave this area.”
- “I mean, there's the environmental tourism stuff. 50% of the hotel rooms within Wyoming are within a little 75-mile circle that has Cody and Jackson in it.”
- “The big opportunities are to match hopefully good education and things that people want to do with what's going on up here.”
- “And overwhelmingly young people in the group said, ‘I have my Bachelors I need a Masters or I want to get a Masters and UW made it so hard that I went to some online school.’ And then I think a lot of that was the lack of presence here.”
“And our relationship to our protected public land is extremely important to us. It's life or death for this community. That's why people come here because they're on the way to those protected public land places.”

“But still I think public input and public comment, is driven by knowledge and it's amazing to me how little a lot of people know of about ... the public lands that surround us.”

“The other thing that I would say is from a research perspective, and how they utilize their student resources and all that stuff. I'm aware of very little actionable research from UW that affects this part of the country.”

**Question 5:**
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- Access to educational opportunities is a challenge as well as an opportunity. There is a perception that UW programs are not accessible and often require travel outside Park County.
- Mental health and access to mental health care and suicide prevention is a significant challenge along with a shortage of healthcare professionals for treatment. Travel to Casper is required for a Park County resident to earn a counseling degree.
- Economic diversity, or lack of economic diversity. Seventy-five percent of the property tax in Park County is paid by the mineral industries leaving the area vulnerable to boom and bust cycles.
- Poverty and affordable housing. There are many people in the area living on the margins and there is a lack of affordable housing. If people who have left Park County decide they want to come back they are often unable to find housing.

**Specific Responses:**
- “A lot of universities do it more effectively than UW and we're the most dispersed state in the union except for Alaska, right? We should be really good at this because we have a need for it.”
- “Well apparently from what I heard at that meeting they're not having a physical presence it's just that some online universities are easier to get into. And not just get into from an academic standpoint but navigate the accessibility.”
- “To me a big challenge in our community is mental health and I really think we need more Master's certified people, counselors and then here this program is making it difficult. So they do go elsewhere to get online counseling degrees.”
- “But, you know, I know that a lot of people have to leave to get degrees to move up on the social ladder. Oftentimes, people are trapped here because they can't leave and we haven't done a good opportunity-making...or we maybe haven't done a good job of making those things come accessible for the people in this corner of the state.”
- “But the one thing I will say is that, especially over the last several years I think there has been a change in the number of people in their mid-twenties that have come back and tried to make it in Park County. And I think we have kind of an abysmal wash out rate for a lot of those people who come and try to make it happen here.”
Question 6:
How can UW help?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ UW simply needs to be more present in the two communities. The recent outreach is greatly appreciated and a desire was expressed for that to continue.
❖ UW could conduct research to help the communities plan and grow. There is a perception that nobody in Wyoming is doing research on tourism in the state of Wyoming.
❖ UW could provide better access to degree programs for Park County residents who are site bound.

Specific Responses:
❖ “Have a bigger and better presence within the community we'll help tell you what we need.”
❖ “So, yeah, really have a better presence in the community would help at least, with the conversation starting.”
❖ “…with that information can the department of tourism say we need to advertise in a different way to fill up the shoulder seasons a little more effectively. The data piece could be huge and it's well with the scope of what the university does.”
❖ “We also talk about affordable housing. What does that mean? What's affordable with the structure of our community and the wages that are paid, what is an affordable house in Cody, Wyoming?”
❖ “Degree programs you don't have to travel for.”
❖ “Face to face classes.”
Site Summary: Rock Springs

February 6, 2018
Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC)
Rock Springs, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitators
Michael Cheek

6 attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ In the business realm, the Wyoming Business Council and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) were cited as active and successful partnerships.
❖ Another business partnership utilizes the local chamber of commerce to pair UW students with internship opportunities at local business with the goal of providing an opening for the students find permanent employment in Wyoming after graduation.
❖ Academic partnerships included the UW Ag Extension office, 4H, the UW Outreach School housed on the WWCC campus, the Two-plus-Two Partnership and the INBRE Research Grant.
❖ The BLM partners with UW to have graduate students working on projects that directly affect the local landscapes.

Specific Responses:
❖ “The Two-plus-Two, so that they were completely aligned with the two years that they take care of you, next two years at the university, so that they student doesn't waste any credits moving through.”
❖ “So that's taking our faculty and UW faculty working together to develop specific program areas. That's real smooth articulation.”
❖ “Then, for Western, we're working with the dean of the Ag program to start a new program here where we're not going to have a full Ag program here, but they will take online courses through University of Wyoming and get some of those different level courses, and then they'll be able to reverse transfer a few hours back to Western.”
❖ “...it's called the Wyoming Landscape Coalition Initiative. It's centered here in southern Wyoming. UW is a big partner in part of that in creating landscape scale projects and initiatives and things, so specifically it'll...somebody will get a wild hair professor or student and they'll come in and partner with us on that.”
**Question 2:**
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- The group identified several UW professionals in the community including UW Coordinator Troy Archuleta, Rob Condie and Peggy Baker with the SBDC, and David Bodily with the UW School of Nursing.
- Several in the group were aware of a UW professional in the Extension office, but could not name him/her.
- Most of the group agreed that in general Rock Springs residents would not be able to identify these individuals as UW professionals.

**Specific Responses:**
- “He’s (David Bodily) helping link the RN to BSN curriculum and he actually has an office on this campus. So it’s so that our students get their associates degree in their RN and can put it straight into their BSN before they graduate from here.”
- “And then I’m drawing a blank but whoever works in the Extension and Nutrition site, her name.”

**Question 3:**
What is your perception of UW as a partner?
- When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
- To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- Two participants stated that UW was “making strides”, but could do better.
- One participant stated that aside from the Cowboy Joe Club, UW barely had a presence at all in the area.
- The group agreed that the partnership with the university doing tours to expose students to different occupations was an excellent example of true partnership, developing and co-investing with the community.
- There was general agreement that the success or failure of a particular initiative or project often depends on having the right people to take it to the next level and it is often difficult or impossible to identify those people.
- The level of engagement often depends on the progress of whatever project or initiative is begun. When the project begins engagement is high and when the project ends there is little to no engagement.

**Specific Responses:**
- “I would say, I, that it needs help. I think that they could do better at that. Specifically here. I think they’re making strides though because I think having the career services group that came here and did that presentation at the Enterprise Committee which was just a couple of months
ago, was awesome. So it seems like they are trying more but I think there could be more partnerships.”
❖ “I'm not exactly sure how many community members are that aware of their presence at all.”
❖ “You have to get to the right person and not unlike Western Wyoming Community College. Sometimes it's the faculty piece that shuts you down. We're the same way here.”
❖ “It's just that sometimes it's difficult seeing continuation of these projects or even taking them to the next level if you don't get to the right person that has that spirit of innovation or that spirit of doing something beyond the classroom. And I'm not pointing fingers at UW 'cause it's kind of universal.”
❖ “I think the paper gets written or published and/or the students graduate. I mean I think there's certain finite of timing in higher ed.”
❖ “There's a real benefit to linking our communities with the university and with the existing agencies that are in our areas. I think it's a gold mine that's yet to be explored.”

Question 4:
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
● Who is working on capitalizing on them?
● What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
● What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
● What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The major industries are always in need of research and innovation and are often going outside the state to meet that need.
❖ Economic diversity, especially businesses driven by tourism is an opportunity that is not being capitalized on. It is a different type of tourism from the typical Wyoming destinations (Jackson, Yellowstone) that requires out of the box thinking to promote.
❖ There is a primary internet corridor that runs just south of Rock Springs but the Rock Springs and Green River communities have limited access. Increased access to this corridor would create opportunities for the both communities.
❖ The BLM representative stated that there are numerous opportunities to partner with UW to highlight public land access and recreational opportunities, to utilize graduate students to conduct the necessary research. The BLM alone does not have the capacity to do this.
❖ The group cited numerous quality of life assets that make the area a desirable place for people to move and establish businesses; consistently sunny weather, no traffic, a nice place to raise a family, a highly philanthropic community that gives locally, access to vast amounts of public land, and a wide variety of community activities.

Specific Responses:
❖ “I just think there's some sort of grand R&D opportunities here that the university could have their name on and it's way beyond the scope of what Western (WWCC) has.”
❖ “Well I think that the opportunities are certainly here for eco-tourism. I mean because you've got the sand dunes, you've got Flaming Gorge, you've got all the...we're surrounded by all of these things that are fairly unique.”
“Yeah. Economic diversity, I mean even, you know we have a lot of tourism in Wyoming, we probably really need to focus or develop businesses that are tourism driven. We have it in Jackson Hole in spades but like down here, we have a lot of opportunities but nobody ever capitalizes on because we have a lot of things to see in this part of the state. But it's a different type of tourism and all of that.”

“And the fiber thing is a great example. It is just something that is just absolutely ridiculous that we're sitting here on this fiber corridor and we don't have access to it. And I know a lot of it had to do with our local cable company and political things that have led that. But that aside you know if we had it, we'd have the opportunity to provide more things to industry.”

“But if there was a concerted effort from a university standpoint to help partner and highlight those public lands and work with the public land management agency and I'm not just talking the BLM, I work for.”

“It's probably the most giving community I have ever seen in my life. It's an unbelievable amount of money that is raised on a Saturday night.”

**Question 5:**
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- There is a segment of the population that does not want change.
- The variety of extractive industries in the area makes it difficult to break the dependence on them as the primary economic driver. When one industry is down, another is up and the associated revenue makes it possible for the area to sustain the area until the next boom.
- There is a push to develop wind energy, but resistance from local governments.
- Treatment for mental health and suicide prevention is a significant challenge.
- Access to healthcare in general is a challenge. There is a lack of primary providers forcing residents to travel to Salt Lake City, Utah, for care. Patients are often flown there for treatment and the costs are significant.
- There is a significant gender wage gap in the area.
- Local economic development groups are working to address some of these challenges.

**Specific Responses:**
- “So what I was gonna say earlier and this is kind of a mindset that my husband and I have noticed. He came up with the perfect Wyoming bumper sticker. ‘Come visit. Go away.’ So a lot of people don't want things to change.”
- “So you've got trona, you've got coal, you've got oil, you've got gas. And so something always seems to be doing well within those industries so everybody kind of hangs their hat on, ‘Okay, what's the next boom coming with those extractive industries?’”
- “There's a bunch of wind companies that are out there that are trying to put these things in. The problem is, I think we're so anti-wind because we're so pro coal, don't you think?”
- “Well, it's already kind of starting to see that here. Where if you want anything specialty done, you've gotta go to Salt Lake to do it. And that's unfortunate.”
“Maybe somebody should look at how many dollars are spent in life lights out of all these communities. Because I mean, they bankrupt people for one thing.”

“But I think we're excluding a huge workforce by not compensating women the same as men. I just think that's a...in my mind that's a huge negative.”

**Question 6:**
How can UW help?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- There is a perception that at times UW tells the communities what UW is doing instead of asking the communities what UW should be doing.
- UW needs to make sure that their degree programs are producing graduates with the necessary skills to enter the workforce rather than focusing on research.

**Specific Responses:**
- “Be a collaborator in our community. Not the hot dog that takes over everything. So my example is, whenever the engineering school was getting up and running. They came in and, ‘We're the best thing in the world.’ They talked about that and UW but they didn't bring the community in.”
- “So I mean, I don't want to say all of them but I would look at those departments that are doing that. And you see professors...you guys see them too. They're focused on...there's nothing besides research. If it ain't research, it ain't nothing.”
- “If that's what you want, if you want to have UW graduates who work and live in the state of Wyoming then we should train them, in whatever field they're interested in for jobs that exist in Wyoming.”
- “And just to add to that if you go to engineering, they're building classical engineers, that's a textbook engineer. That is not individuals that actually can tell you how that processing plant works. They can tell you how to measure flows and they can do dynamics and they can do those kind of things. What you will find in the mines here is they're going to Texas A&M and hiring those engineers and they have more of a mixed engineering technology plus classical engineering together.”
Site Summary: Riverton

February 8, 2018
Central Wyoming College
Riverton, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:
Michael Cheek

4 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ A number of grant programs were cited as successful partnerships including Centsible Nutrition, Growing Resilience and the INBRE research grants.
❖ Academic partnerships included the Two-plus-Two Partnership, TRIO and GEAR UP.
❖ The CWC Intertribal Education and Cultural Center was also cited as a successful partnership with both UW and CWC providing funding.
❖ The opportunity for residents of the Wind River Indian Reservation to earn a Bachelor’s degree while living on the reservation is a successful partnership effort.
❖ UW was recognized as being a great resource for service organizations to provide programming.

Specific Responses:
❖ “We just think of our Two-plus-Two partnerships. I talk to students every day who now are able to get their degrees here and I remember just from the time I started at that stage and...to now.”
❖ “Those partnerships are invaluable for folks in Fremont County and I think especially to the reservation folks who just may not be able to relocate.”
❖ “I think that the work done with Rotary is probably more outreach but I would say it...it puts in front of the community of Rotary what the potential for partnership's are. Partnerships, they may never have dreamed about or thought to be involved in or partnerships they didn't think UW would ever want to hear from them.”
❖ “…but basically it's the education task force and it has been going on for several years at UW...chaired that process and bought the players together and it has been good in that regard.”

Question 2:
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?
Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The group was able to identify several UW Professionals including Teffany Fegler, Hattie Penny, Tina Russell, Rhonda Bowers, Amy McClure and Amy Schmidt.
❖ There was general agreement that aside from Amy Schmidt, much of the community would not identify these individuals as UW employees.
❖ One participant stated that some of these professionals do not necessarily identify themselves and their affiliation with UW but rather with the particular programs that they administer.
❖ Two participants stated they were aware of UW professionals in the community but could not name them or identify their role with UW.

Specific Responses:
❖ “There's a few people you recognize off/on and lived with. Two people I have seen at the extension down time here and gosh darn I can't think of their names.”
❖ “I think that is what Amy is to all of us is, everyone knows Amy, Amy's UW to us.”
❖ “People in the extension office they don't go around saying they’re UW, they say they’re extension.”
❖ “Then there are the staff out of the extension office at the building, the new little building at Fort Washakie.”

Question 3:
What is your perception of UW as a partner?
● When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
● To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ Participants stated that in general UW was not present and listening in the community.
❖ UW efforts to date would be accurately described as outreach as opposed to partnership.
❖ On one hand the group felt that UW professionals in the community are highly engaged but on the other hand UW in Laramie is not engaged for the most part.
❖ One participant felt that perhaps expectations of UW are unrealistic because it is the only university in the state.
❖ The representative from private industry said that he did not feel UW was particularly engaged but that he also may just not be aware of UW’s presence due to the position he holds.

Specific Responses:
❖ “Now I'm going to have a very different perspective from you guys. But, I would actually say, ‘No.’ I would say they could do a lot more and I appreciate that they are doing more.”
❖ “I think it feels like in Wyoming that I have only been here four years, that the standards and expectation for UW are higher because they are the only university, so its like, UW should be there.”
❖ ”'Is UW present listening?’ I think that the people who live here and work here like Amy and the TRIO staff and the extension office people, they are, but I am not really sure that the folks from Laramie are.”
“So, I can't really speak to, you know, where I see the University of Wyoming forming partnership, education very much, I just don't have much to offer on that.”
“I guess extension has been around so long, that I don't sit and think of it as a partnership. I mean of course it is as we sit here and actually focus on it, but in terms of just daily life it is like I take that for granted even though it provides a very valuable service.”

**Question 4:**
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
- Who is working on capitalizing on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
- What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
- What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- Economic diversity, especially tourism, is an opportunity that Riverton needs to capitalize on to lessen dependence on the fossil fuel industries. The local economic development agencies (Chamber of Commerce, Wind River Visitors Council) are working on this but there is much more work to be done.
- Participants referred to a tourism and natural resources degree program that is being developed as an important component of maximizing this opportunity.
- The identity of Riverton as the “doorstep” to the Teton and Wind River mountain ranges is an opportunity that is not being capitalized on. This would require more presence and more effort from UW.
- Recent discoveries of archaeological sites in the Wind River mountain range is a unique tourism opportunity.
- One participant remarked that Riverton was once a hub of commerce for the region and could be again but it will require cooperation and communication that does not currently exist. That is the “grandest” opportunity.
- The Wyoming Food Freedom Act was cited as an opportunity for economic diversification.
- The Wind River Indian Reservation provides yet another unique opportunity that is not being capitalized on.
- Wyoming PBS offers an opportunity for Riverton as a statewide media center.

**Specific Responses:**
- “And the desired outcome would be about diversifying the economy but I am really, really encouraged by the tourism natural resources degree that they are developing.”
- “I have scratched my head and said if you are trying to play the whole mountain thing into the identity and they are trying to get more out of state students then you better be here in force.”
- “…they are doing some incredible work with prehistoric archeology up in the mountains. I think that that can be a big tourism draw. I think from a cultural standpoint, it can be a big culture ... tourism draw.”
- “Just getting people communicating, pulling the chamber, pulling the Rotary, pulling these different entities and say, ‘What do we want this to be?’ We got to start communicating, we got to start building community again.”
“The other thing that I was thinking about, I mean, Wyoming did pass the food freedom act. This is one of the few states you can take unpasteurized milk and the person can sell it to another person.”

“But there's this thing they’re saying, if we all came together and then we kept realizing that if the reservation thrives, we thrive.”

“Okay we’re maybe not Atlanta with CNN, we are Wyoming, we have Wyoming PBS in town, so I almost feel like there's something and that's really cool.”

Question 5:
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

Major Points of Discussion:
- Substance abuse and addiction was cited as the most serious challenge facing the Riverton community. This challenge is pervasive and the primary contributor to other challenges including overall crime rates, domestic violence, child abuse, truancy and low graduation rates. Numerous agencies and organizations are working to address this challenge but there is a lack of coordination and resources.
- There is also a shortage of qualified professionals (therapists, counselors, social workers) to address the addiction issue. Many of the people who filled those positions have left the community since the energy industry downturn.
- Economic diversity is a great challenge as well as a great opportunity. The economic development entities are working on this and there is optimism surrounding the recent statewide ENDOW (Economically Needed Diversity Options for Wyoming) initiative. This diversity is a key to retaining the population, especially the youth population.
- The governance structure of the two tribes on the Wind River Indian Reservation is a significant challenge.

Specific Responses:
- “A lot of that I think is related to the addictions. I am the victim's advocate, I have a front seat to every bad thing that happens in this town, the child abuse and everything. I have been there four years and I only had only three or four serious cases of domestic violence or child abuse that were not related to addictions. And that's pretty sad.”
- “I like to think that some of that is because we've lost not just people from the oil and gas industry we lost their spouses. Those were the people who were filling those jobs.”
- “Small town Wyoming, we just got to get our ducks together in terms of either export your people or you let them stew and sour here with no opportunity…."
- “For the sake of us all, we all have to rise, all ships got to rise together. Part of this is governance issue and others might say it’s a tribal, you know what it's all of our issue because we are all in this house together.”

Question 6:
How can UW help?
Major Points of Discussion:
❖ UW could provide opportunities for students to obtain real world experience by working in the community on some of the challenges and opportunities.
❖ UW needs to make sure that its programs and degrees are aligned with what the community needs.
❖ UW Extension services should be better aligned with what individual communities need.
❖ UW could provide more services to help individuals with unique business ideas get established and grow their businesses.
❖ UW could establish a mentoring program to help youth form a vision of what their future could look like.
❖ UW could and should leverage the considerable number of UW graduates in the area to work on any of these initiatives.

Specific Responses:
❖ “I think if they have any students looking for real world experience in any of these areas you know send them in. We have projects that would put them to work in all sorts of ways.”
❖ “Really, my epiphany, I think my recommendation is how can they help, is thinking more in terms of economic development first and then the degree production second.”
❖ “It seems like their land grant infrastructure, if its redirected it can turn us around. Right now going back over a hundred years we have extension agents in every county throughout the United States. Whether we need them or not, half of the time I don't think … this sounds terrible, how to jar jelly.”
❖ “If there could be business development or something or is that duplication of effort because of the small business development person, I don't know. I think that they want to work with the small business development person and the chamber and find what is the niche for them.”
❖ “Well there's a vision, I can see myself being that guy and this is how I get there. I go to CWC and I go through the basic education here and then it's University of Wyoming and then from there I can get there, but why bother if they don't even know what that looks like? That's where I really see the University of Wyoming being the middle point in that path and helping those kids form a vision.”
❖ “If they mobilize those troops (UW Grads) it would be probably be pretty phenomenal if they had an alumni day that they mobilize everyone who was actually a graduate, it would be pretty scary.”
Site Summary: Afton

February 13, 2018
Lincoln County Office Building
Afton, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:
Michael Cheek

8 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:

❖ A partnership with the UW College of Education to provide student teaching opportunities was mentioned.
❖ Star Valley Medical Center has a partnerships with the UW physical therapy and nursing programs where students can do their clinical rotations in Afton.
❖ One participant was aware of the existence of the Summer High School Institute at UW but could not name the program.
❖ The UW Extension Office and the programming that is offered is an ongoing and successful partnership.
❖ A number of school district employees have participated in the UW Trustees Education Initiative.
❖ The WWAMI Regional Medical Education program is a partnership that is an asset to mostly rural communities like Afton.

Specific Responses:

❖ “Well I think the one that I'm always watching is to see how many educators we're able to pull from the College of Education at UW to our community for student teaching and things and so, we are having a few right now, so that would be a partnership that is currently in place.”
❖ “I'm aware, just in the community occasionally you see University of Wyoming vehicles with graduate students or what have you. They're out doing something but you really don't know what it is, you know, they're just in the community for a week or two, maybe doing field work and they kind of come in and out but not a lot of engagement that I'm aware of, as far as, what are they doing.”
❖ “It's an outreach program the university provides to high school graduating sophomores that year, they go down that summer and are with a bunch of other Wyoming kids doing science projects and that kind of thing.”
“We also have a handful of staff members that have participated in the Trustees' Initiative that's a current project that's been going on through the school district. And we also work with University of Wyoming to provide credit courses through professional development that we offer locally.”

“We have two hometown kids who went to University of Wyoming, got involved in the WWAMI program, went and got their MD. One's an orthopedic surgeon, the other one's a family practice doc, just recently came back to Star Valley and so that's a great program for local communities in Wyoming to home-grow their own doctors and providers.”

**Question 2:**
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- The group identified specific UW professionals either currently working in the community or participating in special projects.
- The group was aware of other current and past UW professionals but could not name them.

**Specific Responses:**
- “Shar Perry does an excellent job working with Hudson Hill. She's one of the faces that you see in the community.”
- “Staci Horsley currently works through the ECHO project for the University of Wyoming.”
- “Mr. Hill, I think, Hudson Hill is the guy down there in charge of that program through the university, 4-H programs and those kinds of things that he runs and sponsors, and that the university works with throughout the community.”
- “The ECHO project, yeah. It's a professional development thing that the University of Wyoming is involved in. There could be others in the community that serve on that or work with them that I may not know the names of, 'cause it's a wide variety from health to education to all kinds of residential treatment stuff….”

**Question 3:**
What is your perception of UW as a partner?
- When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
- To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- There is a perception is that UW is more present and listening than it has been in the past but this has yet to translate into fully functioning partnerships.
- The school district is engaged with universities “across the border” (Utah State University, BYU-Idaho) and would like to have increased engagement with UW.
- One participant stated that having a UW Trustee in the community has helped to increase their visibility.
- The distance between Laramie and Afton is a barrier to the level of engagement the community would like.
The medical center would like to have stronger partnerships with UW. If more UW students would do their clinical rotations in Afton they might be more inclined to move there and stay there.

From the school district viewpoint, distance is a barrier when it comes to evaluating student teachers. There are people in the district that could be trained by UW to perform these functions.

There is a perception that UW does not put the same effort into recruitment as other universities and that students in the area would be drawn to UW if they only had the opportunity to visit the campus and see the full spectrum of what UW can offer.

Specific Responses:

“...We've had some conversations with them, but in specific terms, in terms of student teaching and working with the College of Ed to get student teachers and educators into our district or into this area of the state is a huge desire of ours and so we'd like to see that partnership grow.”

“Right now we're engaged with other universities across the border and I think we would love to see increased engagement with the University of Wyoming for credits.”

“I was just going to say it has improved since Mr. Baldwin has moved to this area. I've noticed for a long time. I've been very proud being a Wyomingite but I thought like they (UW) didn't recognize that we were here in this part of the state.”

“And so we always feel like we're maybe we have a loose relationship with University of Wyoming but not really strong ties, and really that's geographic and time of travel and all that, makes it difficult to do that, but we certainly, from speaking from the standpoint of the medical center, we'd love to have stronger ties with the nursing program and the therapy program and the College of Pharmacy and all of those things.”

“We'd love to have people come here and do their clinical rotations and see what Star Valley's like and maybe they want to stay and work for us, so we think we could develop that further.”

“In a true partnership, I think we can provide what they are trying to offer by sending us those people and so, we're more than willing to reach out and work in a true collaboration with them to provide the sort of training they're expecting their people to get.”

“...anything we can do to get more of a recognition, perception of the University of Wyoming in our community, the better, because we do compete in this community very heavily with BYU-Idaho and Utah State University. Those two institutions really recruit heavily and are attended pretty well from our community, and University of Wyoming’s probably number three on the list of graduating seniors that attend.”

Question 4:
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.

- Who is working on capitalizing on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
- What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
- What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

Major Points of Discussion:
There is a need for a post-secondary training facility in the region focused on Career-Technical Education and vocational training. Area residents either travel out of state or to the Rock Springs/Green River area to obtain this type of education or training.

The economy of Afton is strongly tied to Jackson. An estimated 1,500 Afton residents commute to Jackson every day. If there were more service industries jobs in the area there would be an opportunity to be less dependent on the Jackson economy.

There is an opportunity to capture some of increased recreation and tourism activity that is currently centered around and focused on the Jackson area. Afton is currently more of a weekend destination and the opportunity is to make it more of a primary destination.

Economic diversity in the form of technology driven industries is another possible opportunity. There is ample infrastructure and a desirable climate for this type of industry.

The group identified numerous quality of life assets in the area; opportunities for outdoor recreation, high quality local school districts, a tightly-knit community with strong relationships and community facilities. It is a great place to retire and a great place to raise a family.

Specific Responses

“There is a group of people who are trying to and figuring out a way to invest in a post-secondary training facility in this side of the state, particularly focused on probably CTE and vocational sort of things, but they are very interested in making that happen.”

“And it's an hour and 10 minute commute, so people choose to drive up the canyon for an hour and 10 minutes...Actually, Teton County sends several buses down here every day to deliver employees to the employers up there....”

“On any given weekend, in Alpine and in Afton there are 40 or more private aircraft that land, spend the weekend. Sunday afternoon, they get back in their plane and they go home. And so, how do we capitalize on that? You know, I don't know as I have any answers for that but that's the type of economy that our community is headed for.”

“Mike, as you mentioned, gigabit community...At times there's been talk of data centers. It's our cold climate we can think, think for that, along with the infrastructure to support that.”

“I mean our facilities, our nature here is phenomenal but the only thing better in my opinion is the relationships. This community cares, we care for each other, we care about the kids.”

Question 5:
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.

- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

Major Points of Discussion:

- Transportation to Jackson and surrounding states (Idaho, Utah) is a growing challenge. More and more area residents are traveling to Salt Lake City or to Idaho Falls.
- There is inadequate infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population. More water and sewer systems throughout the valley will be needed as the communities grow.
- There is a lack of employment opportunities locally unless people are willing to travel.
There is a lack of affordable housing, especially for people working in the schools or healthcare system. The short term rental market (Airbnb, VRBO) has taken many long term rental properties off the market.

Mental health issues, especially for young people is a serious challenge. There are high rates of suicide and substance abuse. Attitudes toward use of alcohol are changing but the problem is still there.

Various organizations and individuals are working to address these challenges but there is a lack of coordinated efforts.

Specific Responses:

“There's a lot of travel that happens out of Star Valley and I don't know if the air travel is a true solution to that, but it appears and there's more than I would have guessed sitting in the Salt Lake Airport every Saturday trying to get somewhere.”

“The days of everybody having a septic tank and drilling a water well, that's gonna become more and more difficult and more of a challenge as the communities grow. And so, having infrastructure up and down the length of the valley is going to become more important, sewer systems, sewer treatment, water systems, those kinds of things.”

“...if you're a professional, it's very difficult to have much...Unless you're flying out of here somewhere, if you're not working for the school or the hospital, professionally it's difficult.”

“I'd also say like affordable housing given this, it's tough going, how hard of a challenge it is for families who the salaries just don't meet what the housing prices are.”

“I think it's not unique to Star Valley, but I would say that the mental health of our youth is definitely something that we're challenged with every day, every day, and then there's not really a solution on the horizon there. I know that the people working in that field are doing everything they possibly can but we have to continue to do more. We can't stop.”

Question 6:
How can UW help?

Major Points of Discussion:

UW could play a role in establishing a post-secondary education and training facility in the region. There is already momentum behind this concept but not a clear idea of the final outcome.

UW should increase recruitment efforts to capture some of the students who are currently being aggressively recruited by universities in Idaho and Utah.

UW should work with the K-12 schools to establish a stronger partnership around computer science and technology instruction and curriculum.

Strengthen the relationship between the local healthcare providers and the UW School of Nursing. School of Pharmacy and the WWAMI program.

Continue the listening and outreach efforts that have increased lately and make sure the smaller, more remote communities are at the table.

Specific Responses:

“One, I'm sitting on property that's been donated for the purpose of education and I would love to see some sort of a secondary something there. Property's been donated, has to be used for
education. And it will be at some point. It will either be a partnership with private entities so that we are training people to work at Simplot, or those sorts of things. Or, it will be an education thing where we partner with different universities. Or, it will be...It will be something, we just don't know what that looks like so...It's not a question of will it happen, it's just a question of what it will look like.”

❖ “Last May we held a education fair at the high school and Idaho got a really great bunch of kids, because nobody from Wyoming colleges showed up.”

❖ “Computer science kids generally go on to receive a four-year degree, and I think it would behoove the University of Wyoming and, as a district, we would love to have them at the table to see what this looks like.”

❖ “We probably struggle more than larger urban areas because it's just harder to recruit people to come to smaller communities. So, how can University of Wyoming help the local hospital here in Star Valley and that would be strengthening the relationships with the College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy, the WWAMI program….”

❖ “I would say just continue listening. It's really nice that, I mean, obviously this year a lot more efforts have been made to reach out to the smaller communities and hear from us and make sure that we are on committees.”
Site Summary: Sheridan

February 20, 2018
Northern Wyoming Community College District (NWCCD)
Sheridan, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:
Michael Cheek

4 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The Saturday University speaker series and the UW Center for Global Studies speaker series were cited as successful partnerships
❖ The UW Extension Office was recognized as a partnership although this group was not aware of any current programs or initiatives.
❖ There is a UW distance education student who works at the NWCCD Writing Center.
❖ The presence of the Cowboy Joe Club and the annual Michael Phillips Memorial golf tournament are considered ongoing and successful partnerships.

Specific Responses:
❖ “That was the one I would mention is the extension office, yeah. But in saying that I was thinking it might be taking a guess, if how active it continues to be. I've lost touch with it a little bit.”
❖ “I have a student that works with us in the writing center on our campus who is a current UW, full time UW student. So she's a distance only student in social science program and I think that's one of a few programs that it's possible to remain site bound, and complete that program.”
❖ “I can say there's definitely some fundraising that's taken place in the community that I think demonstrates partnership and support for University of Wyoming.”

Question 2:
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ A number of UW roles were identified but participants could not name the individuals that currently fill these roles.
❖ The group did identify individuals who had formerly filled some of these roles.
The only current UW professional the group could positively identify was Wendy Neeson, Whitney Endowed Nursing Chair for NWCCD.

**Specific Responses:**
- “Yeah, I don't know if there's someone in the role. Like serving as a recruiter, or admissions counselor for UW here in Sheridan.”
- “We definitely, there's a UW presence, but I don't interact a lot with the group of faculty and staff that are here.”

**Question 3:**
What is your perception of UW as a partner?

- When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
- To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- UW athletics is the most visible form of community engagement in the Sheridan area.
- President Nichols recent outreach efforts were viewed very positively and seen as an important step toward true engagement and partnership.
- The UW Literacy Center was cited as a partnership that is desirable but has not been successful.
- NWCCD faculty stated that UW is generally accessible, but that it varies by department and there is room for improvement. NWCCD students are very different and have different needs than UW students.

**Specific Responses:**
- “You're asking about community engagement. To me, the first thing I think of when I think of UW in Sheridan is the athletics.”
- “She's (President Nichols) embraced that and was very vocal about saying we needed to partner with community colleges. That felt different to me. I've been here long enough to feel that shift.”
- “I think UW would be an ideal partner. I don't think that's (Literacy Center) currently taking shape in any way.”
- “I think it depends, it's department by department. There's some departments that have worked very closely together for years and other departments, there's been lots of change. I think there's room for improvement there.”

**Question 4:**
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.

- Who is working on capitalizing on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
- What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
- What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
Early childhood education to increase kindergarten readiness increase graduation rates. There are numerous partnerships throughout the community working to educate child care providers but these efforts are not coordinated.

Economic diversity and sustainability to prevent the boom and bust cycle. The oil and gas industries are still very much part of the local economy and will continue to be but there are efforts to attract different types of businesses, to boost tourism and recreation.

One participant stated that simply promoting or expanding the assets that Sheridan already has is an opportunity that is not being capitalized on.

Sheridan is a very philanthropic community. There are around 50 charitable foundations located in Sheridan.

Sheridan has numerous assets that make it a desirable place to live and work; abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation, a great place to raise kids and a nice retirement community, better weather and less wind, a vibrant community for the arts and access to high quality health care.

Specific Responses:

“Early childhood education, the college is partnered with the school district and the need to add this early childhood liaison to kind of hopefully move all these disparate parties in one direction. I'm seeing great things happen there and I think that's an opportunity.”

“I think there is a lot of attention being paid to oil and gas, to coal, to agriculture, to tourism and recreation. I think those all really have potential for growth, or could look differently five years from now than they do currently.”

“I think there again, are a lot of opportunities that we haven't quite put all of the pieces together, but there...Sheridan is becoming seen, much more as an outdoor community and recreation town.”

“You know, partnership may not necessarily look like bringing more to our community. It might look like helping to grow what we have or promote what we have, or, to extend what we have.”

Question 5:
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.

- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

Major Points of Discussion:

Poverty, homelessness and income inequality are major challenges in the Sheridan community, as well as a lack of affordable housing and rental housing.

Diversity and inclusion is a significant challenge. Sheridan is 20 miles away from the Crow Indian Reservation.

Retention of youth. One participant referred to Sheridan as a “dumbbell” community with a large youth population, a large older/elderly population but much smaller numbers of the populations in between.

Access to mental health care is a significant problem.
There is a lack of resources for entrepreneurs in the region, especially access to investment capital. Numerous entities are working on economic development but the efforts are not coordinated.

Specific Responses:

- “Challenges, I think is we have poverty issues here, too. It's not often seen. It's more invisible in our community, but I'm sure from a county hospital perspective.”
- “I think we have a unique opportunity. It's a huge challenge, but I think because of the existence of border community, we can start with very direct conversations that can then teach our community about sort of all the issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity.”
- “I don't think we're any different than the rest of the state but we have a hard time keeping our kids here. None of my kids will come back.”
- “…what we really need to talk about is mental health rooms and providing care for patients that have these issues. It costs our community a lot of money. It costs us a lot of money to take care of those people because we're not prepared to do that.”
- “We have a lot of economic development. It's kind of like maybe three or four different organizations that are not really co-mingled. That seems to be kind of an issue. Because there's so many different people working on different things but we're all working on the same thing.”
- “When I meant funding, there's lot of access to grants but if you're an entrepreneur looking for capital, that's different. I wouldn't know if I had someone come to me and say...I wouldn't know where to send them.”

Question 6:
How can UW help?

Major Points of Discussion:

- Incentivize more medical providers to practice in Sheridan, particularly mental health care providers.
- Provide guidance and leadership on addressing issues of diversity and inclusion with the Native American population including sharing faculty or visiting faculty. There are no Native American faculty at NWCCD.
- Provide more opportunities for students to earn their degrees without leaving Sheridan. This is especially true in the area of childhood education.
- Provide more support for entrepreneurs and include entrepreneurial studies in more program areas.
- More outreach to raise awareness of UW professionals and resources that are available.

Specific Responses:

- “I think if there's any way to incentivize those, to encourage more physicians to look at mental health care as an opportunity and to incentivize them coming home or staying home. If that's a possibility.”
- “Any guidance that that Native American Center can provide or the faculty or even the students. We have good mentoring happening with our Native American students on this campus but it
would be great to have students from the university come here and help us learn how to do this better. It sounds like they’re making strides at Laramie. That would be really helpful.”
❖ “I think we need more online programming in education. That need is being met by institutions outside of our state right now. For students who are seeking teaching certification, if they want a University of Wyoming degree right now they have to leave. That’s not an option for many of them.”
❖ “I also think there are people in our community that are working really hard with those entrepreneurs. I think about the travel and tourism folks. I think the university...I know one of the professors in entrepreneurial studies. We could use that kind of partnership.”
❖ “Well, maybe we just need to know who's here. Because that's sort of what's reflected in our opening comments. Because, I don't know what resources are here. Is there someone here that's recruiting or doing admissions for students? I don't know.”
Site Summary: Gillette

February 21, 2018
Northern Wyoming Community College District (NWCCD)
Gillette, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:
Michael Cheek

5 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The Saturday University speaker series is an ongoing and positive partnership. The community has put effort into enhancing this partnership including scheduling the events on a weeknight and in a different location to successfully increase attendance.
❖ There is a partnership between the UW School of Energy Resources and the Advanced Carbon Products Innovation Center to develop and market alternate uses of coal.
❖ UW is part of a higher education task force working with NWCCD to develop higher level degree and certificate programs to meet the needs of local businesses.
❖ There is a partnership with the UW College of Engineering to bring more technical education to the area.
❖ Cloud Peak Energy and UW have a partnership that includes a “Cloud Peak Energy Day” at UW where prospective students can visit a variety of classes to explore various educational opportunities.
❖ There is “a lot of partnership” between the Campbell County Public Library and the college library that includes sharing of databases.

Specific Responses:
❖ “We're partnering with School of Energy Resources on that (advanced carbon products). They're a very important partner on that. They're providing a lot of guidance and help on that, so that's one.”
❖ “Going forward, we're establishing subcommittees to work on each of the areas that were identified as needs in the community, and so UW's a very important partner in that.”
❖ “I'm aware of my own company's partnership with University of Wyoming, Cloud Peak Energy, we have a partnership with them regarding scholarships and then we've done some things with them surrounding carbon capture technology, so we continue with that.”
“Well, from the library perspective, we do teach classes and the libraries communicate with each other, so I have a really good relationship with Diana Adler, who's the college librarian here.”

“We've been able to do a number of things with UW. Now, nobody in the community knows this; it's all pretty quiet. I think UW’s fairly well engaged, primarily because of Cloud Peak and their willingness to partner with them.”

**Question 2:**
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- UW academic coordinator Dawn Kiesel, Susan Jerke and Linda Calhoun with the Small Business Development Center and Kassi Trujillo-Sullivan with Manufacturing Works were identified as UW Professionals.
- The group was aware of the existence of the UW Extension Office but could not name any staff members.
- There is a perception that the community at large would not identify any of these individuals as UW professionals.

**Specific Responses:**
- “The only person I know is Dawn and even though I work here at the college, I never see her, ever. I just know her name is Dawn.”
- “Then the SBDC staff, Susan Jerke and Linda Calhoun, and they're very active in the community. They're the front-goers of businesses that want to get started.”
- “I even think the Extension folks. I think they associate those folks with the county more so than the university.”

**Question 3:**
What is your perception of UW as a partner?
- When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
- To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- The level of partnership and engagement has been increasing beginning with President McGinity and more so under President Nichols.
- Manufacturing Works is a valuable resource but the effectiveness is somewhat limited since one individual (Kassi) covers the entire region.
- Cloud Peak Energy has a strong partnership with UW but would like to see more collaboration in developing a degree program for mining engineering.
- There was general agreement that UW needs more of a recruiting presence in the region, especially for adults pursuing an advanced degree. UW needs to make distance education more accessible and user-friendly.
Specific Responses:
❖ “I think prior to Dr. McGinity, it was a tough relationship all across the state. Dr. McGinity turned that around and Dr. Nichols is continuing that.”
❖ “One of the issues is they’ve got one person in this whole region, so I'm sure that keeps Kassi very busy as well. I think they're as engaged as they can be.”
❖ “From the coal industry's perspective, we've struggled a little bit over the last several years. With our partnership with UW, personally with Cloud Peak. We have reached out to them multiple times for a mining engineering program.”
❖ “Yeah, I see those partnerships throughout the community. If you're looking at recruitment for students, I don't see that.”
❖ “Just not think that we're so driven towards technology, like, ‘Oh, you can go online and find out.’ Well, I don't think so. Not when it comes to enrolling in a higher educational program, because then we're just staring at the UW website trying to find out, ‘So how do I get into the master's program? What do I do?”

Question 4:
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
 ● Who is working on capitalizing on them?
 ● What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
 ● What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
 ● What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ Partnerships with industry to develop new technologies, production techniques and alternative markets to develop alternate uses for coal.
❖ Higher education partnerships with the K-12 system and NWCCD. There is an opportunity for UW to provide more technical training and traditional four year degrees that currently require students to travel out of state.
❖ Light manufacturing could be developed. Gillette has ample infrastructure, access to interstate highways and reliable air service.
❖ Gillette has many amenities and assets that make it a desirable place to live; high quality school systems, cultural activities, outdoor recreation, youth programs, walking trails, high quality infrastructure and roadways, access to high quality health care, a desirable location geographically and a very welcoming community.

Specific Responses:
❖ “We need to develop alternative markets and some of those alternative markets are advanced carbon products. Carbon, asphalt is a huge one. Coal makes a great asphalt, but nobody's developed that coal refinery to do that.”
❖ “Yeah, we would like to be able to have more associate degrees offered and some four-year degrees being offered right here. We want similar to what's happening to Casper's campus.”
❖ “One of the things that came out of our marketing study was the new certificates, but not just a certificate in this area but stackable certificates. You earned this, which leads to this certificate
which leads to this certificate, and if it's done right, then you could come out with an associate's degree and if you stack up enough of them, you could get a bachelor's or a higher level degree.”
❖ “More people here are not from Wyoming than from Wyoming. Yes, it's a very diverse community. It makes it a very welcoming community.”

**Question 5:**
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
❖ Economic development and economic diversity. Gillette has relied extensively on the coal industry for decades. The work to develop the industries of the future must be started today in order for them to be viable in 10 to 15 years.
❖ Youth leaving the community. There are not enough employment opportunities for youth who want to stay or who want to come back.
❖ Students that want to earn certain types of degrees have to leave the community. UW is not recruiting these students as aggressively as other schools and not providing the opportunity for them to earn those degrees without leaving the community.

**Specific Responses:**
❖ “We're working hard to diversify our community, but it is a ten to 15 to 20-year battle. I won't see it completed but I want to get a good start so whoever takes my place is on the path.”
❖ “If anybody wants to become a professional librarian, you have to get your master's degree and you have to go outside Wyoming to do that.”
❖ “You talked about Wyoming losing a lot of students to the surrounding states. Here, primarily, it's education. They are all going to Black Hills State.”
❖ “I know my daughter graduated from high school two years ago and she got letters from Black Hills State, from Montana colleges, from all sorts of places and I don't remember anything coming from UW.”

**Question 6:**
How can UW help?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
❖ Continue the increased levels of outreach and engagement with industry partnerships.
❖ Continue the efforts of the higher education task force to bring relevant technical training and the associated degree and certificate programs.
❖ UW needs to be more active and aggressive recruiting students in the area.

**Specific Responses:**
❖ “On an economic development level, UW is excellent and they're very supportive. They're always willing to help out, they're always willing to meet. When we've had businesses come into our community, they've been very supportive and brought staff up for those visits when they needed
them. At that level, they've been great to work with. Since Dr. McGinity came in and transitioned to Dr. Nichols, it has improved significantly. Prior administrations didn't seem to care much about the community.”

❖ “I think the recruiting of students and athletes to UW could be improved. I don't work with anybody in the area, but on an economic development level, UW is excellent and they're very supportive. They're always willing to help out, they're always willing to meet.”

❖ “Working at a college, I know that you need to make it easy. If you want to attract students, you need to make that experience easy for them, otherwise you're not going to attract students.”
Site Summary: Laramie

February 27, 2018
Laramie County Community College (LCCC)
Laramie, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:
Michael Cheek

6 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The City of Laramie and Wyoming Technology Business Center have a partnership to find permanent locations for companies that are incubating in the UW system.
❖ There is a joint transportation task force that is chaired by city officials and UW personnel.
❖ The Laramie Mural Project is a partnership with the UW Art Museum and the Laramie Main Street Alliance.
❖ The Laramie Soup Kitchen identified three partnerships with UW, providing service learning for students to volunteer in the soup kitchen, completing a rebranding and marketing project, and an ongoing partnership with the UW School of Business.
❖ Interfaith-Good Samaritan identified the Service, Leadership & Community Engagement (SLCE) program as a successful and mutually beneficial partnership.
❖ The Big Event student service day was cited as a symbol of effective community engagement.
❖ The Cirrus Sky Technology Business Park is another example of partnership between the City of Laramie and the UW School of Business.
❖ The UW School of Business is working with Chambers of Commerce in various communities to pair students with potential internship opportunities.
❖ This group believed that most members of the public are not aware of UW’s involvement in most of the partnerships cited above.

Specific Responses:
❖ “I would say that relationship is more reactive than proactive, and we're working with the folks at the WTBC to see how we can forge a stronger partnership with them, and serve their clients better, in a more holistic fashion than responding to an after-the-fact need.”
❖ “So we have a series of murals, that have been painted by community artists, throughout our downtown, that are spilling out into the community. And we've been recognized for this project, at the national level.”
“But that provides a good portion of our volunteers to run the soup kitchen. And then the other thing is that we actually partner with individual classes. And we've done so, about three to five times over the last two years.”

“So I consider it a true partnership with the social work department. Because the student benefits from the placement in our organization, and then we benefit by having an intern help us out with various projects.”

“Opportunities for students to work together as teams, to help businesses in the state. Laramie is one of the first ones to be able to do that. Then we advertise, or the university advertises through our business lines, for those positions. So that's a cool program.”

“I think that problem extends beyond UW. I think we could do a lot better job in writing about our successes, and celebrating our partnerships, for sure. So I think, at least for the city’s part, we own a little bit of that lack of knowledge at the public level, and it's certainly something the city is motivated to improve.”

Question 2:
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?

Major Points of Discussion:
- President Nichols and her husband, Tim Nichols, were recognized for numerous outreach efforts throughout the community.
- Chris Boswell and Mark Collins were recognized for their service on local nonprofit boards.
- Rob Godby and Bill Gern were also specifically named, although it was acknowledged that Bill Gern has recently retired, but that the individual who replaced him is not known in the community.
- Others in the group were aware of the involvement of UW professionals in other areas of the community but could not name them.

Specific Responses:
- “Tim Nichols also went out of his way to connect with us. As soon as he came in, he brought his class in, and he volunteered. Unlike most professors who are like, ‘Here. You're required to go volunteer a certain number of hours at the soup kitchen.’ Tim was at the soup kitchen, every time one of his students was volunteering.”
- “Chris Boswell from the president's office, is on my board as a UW liaison. And I can tell you that both he and our previous liaison, Mark Collins, were more than just figureheads. They were very actively engaged in what we were doing.”
- “He's the new Bill Gern, is what everybody calls him. The new Bill Gern.”
- “She's involved with a lot of things. She's on the board of reproductive health. She said there were two. She didn't give any names. Two professionals from the university on reproductive health, also.”
“But at our inaugural meeting, I think it was very evident that UW is very supportive of this project, and very keyed in. A trustee is on this committee, so that's a very contemporary example.”

**Question 3:**
What is your perception of UW as a partner?
- When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
- To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

**Major Points of Discussion:**
- The level of partnership and engagement has varied over the years depending on who sits in the president’s office.
- The extent to which individuals or organizations feel engaged depends on personal relationships. If certain UW personnel leave or change roles within UW, those organizations or individuals outside UW often do not know how to reconnect.
- UW Faculty and Deans are not visibly engaged in the community.
- There could be and should be a stronger relationship between the City of Laramie and UW. UW does not pay sales or property taxes and the City of Laramie is one of the poorest municipalities in the state.
- A joint effort between UW and the City of Laramie to reconstruct 15th street was cited as an example of mutually beneficial partnership.
- One participant acknowledged that UW has experienced some very difficult and traumatic times over the past 4-5 years. The UW community is still recovering and perhaps not as focused on the community at large as a result of that.

**Specific Responses:**
- “Again, I would say it's hot and cold. When Phil Dubois was here, it was high. It became less after that. And now that Laurie's in it's high again, engaged, caring. I mean really caring about the community. So she asked all the right questions, and she gets the people together to make things happen.”
- “So every time we're able to form a new partnership or relationship, it's that longevity is preserved with the university relationship. But if I were to lose all those. I don't know how I would reconnect.”
- “I actually have reached out to business and marketing. And honestly, if I don't connect with the right person, I may not even hear back.”
- “I don't see an awful lot of faculty doing much of anything in our town, or deans.”
- “We were at a dinner with her, the other day, and we're talking about the city government. And president Nichols said, ‘Why don't you do something about that?’ And it's like that was the first time I've ever heard anybody from the university actually care about the city. You know, what could we do? So I thought that was really good.”
- “This idea that us coming to the table and strategizing with the community on economic development issues, is the least that we could do. Because we don't contribute to the taxes. And
I’d never heard anybody from the university connect that, understand that, understand that UW doesn't pay into sales or property tax.”

❖ “What I think I'm trying to express here, is that the community is grieving the losses, the faculty and staff losses as well. I don't know how that weaves your way into the report, but I think that's worth noting, that we care about these people.”

**Question 4:**
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.

- Who is working on capitalizing on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
- What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
- What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

**Major Points of Discussion:**

❖ Although there are other entities at the forefront of the effort, several members of this group felt that there was a role for UW in reopening the WyoTech campus in Laramie. Other participants stated they did not see a role for UW in this effort.

❖ Retaining UW graduates and providing employment opportunities and business opportunities for graduates who want to stay in Laramie is important.

❖ There is opportunity for UW to encourage growth in the technology sector in Laramie. This would require more emphasis on entrepreneurship in UW’s programming.

❖ There is opportunity to attract and grow advanced manufacturing businesses.

❖ Laramie offers all the amenities of a university town including numerous cultural assets, UW Athletics, a vibrant downtown with a unique variety of locally owned businesses and restaurants, local artists and musicians, as well as easy access to the mountains and outdoor recreation.

**Specific Responses:**

❖ “I think it's a great opportunity for Laramie to keep that (WyoTech) going, for our community to get that going. And I think it would be an opportunity for UW as a partner.”

❖ “WyoTech exports most of its students. In other words, they graduate and they leave. A large percentage. As does UW. We joke that, in Laramie we educate Colorado's workforce. And our economic development mantra in Laramie is to halt the brain drain.”

❖ “We want these graduates to take root in our community, to start businesses, to start families, to accept jobs. And I believe that UW leadership would agree. And with that, we need to have jobs that tailor to the talent coming out of UW, but then also focus on entrepreneurial initiatives, so that people are starting their own businesses here.”

❖ “That's something that's been growing accidentally, but I think there's a lot of benefit, and I think that we are actually recruiting manufacturing, at the economic development level.”

❖ “I think that the university has promoted entrepreneurialism on campus, which I think is beneficial. They have 50K now. I think is a good program, but they need to continue to focus on that leadership. Because we can talk about bringing businesses here all day long, but at the end of the day, the best businesses are the ones that are started here, by the people that live here.”

❖ “The university needs to build the culture that we want you to go out and start a business.”
Question 5:
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
- Who is working on them?
- What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

Major Points of Discussion:
- Poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, and lack of affordable housing are pervasive issues throughout Albany County. There are literally thousands of people living on the margins. Transportation is a contributing factor to these issues.
- Underemployment and high cost of living are significant contributing factors to poverty. There is a lack of jobs that pay well enough to meet the high cost of living in Laramie (second only to Jackson in the state of Wyoming according to this group). This problem has been exacerbated by recent job losses at UW, and even some UW employees do not earn a living wage and have to rely on the service organizations to make ends meet.
- There is a lack of land suitable for development which is a contributing factor to the high cost of housing.
- The City of Laramie is not able to maintain the current infrastructure, much less able to build any new infrastructure so those costs have to be absorbed by the developer and ultimately passed on to homebuyers.

Specific Responses:
- “There's people that are living on social security and $800 a month. Which there's a good population of people trying to live on $700 or $800 a month. Think about it. Just think about trying to live on $700 a month. And there's a pretty good core of people now associated with that.”
- “And I think to go right along with the jobs. I mean we've got to create some wealth in the community by creating jobs that pay better. That is a challenge for us. It always has been. It's getting better. But losing the jobs at the university will hurt.”
- “You could talk all you want about supply and demand. There's something intrinsically wrong with having Laramie, with the lowest per capita income while having the second highest cost of living.”
- “We don't have a lot of developable space. We're sort of landlocked by very many issues, and the cost of development is difficult when it's always on the developer.”
- “The municipality is not in a position to fix the infrastructure. So all of the development, when there's development. Then there's a lot of pressure to have the developers fix the infrastructure. So that increases the cost because they have to pass it on.”

Question 6:
How can UW help?

Major Points of Discussion:
- UW should continue to stand alongside the City of Laramie at the state legislature to provide adequate funding. There is a perception that the legislature attempts to pit one of them against the other.
❖ UW could conduct research to help the local non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) that are trying to address the issues of food insecurity and homelessness by helping to identify root causes and possible solutions for these pervasive problems.
❖ UW could strengthen their partnership with NGO’s to help improve delivery of services and to not duplicate their efforts. For example, the local soup kitchen is not allowed to advertise their services on the UW campus.
❖ UW could help to provide transportation services in Laramie. It was suggested that UW could expand the “Safe Ride” program to help Laramie residents meet basic needs.
❖ UW should take a more active role in recruiting businesses to Laramie and have more participation in the Laramie Chamber Business Alliance.

Specific Responses:
❖ “So it's like at the legislative level, it feels like they're asking for our snake to eat its own tail. And so I don't know how to fix that, but I do think that if we really came, we've forged a stronger partnership. And we were more strategic. Then we could not have the legislature by accident or by design, pit us against each other, when competing for funding.”
❖ “Laramie's only as good as the university is, and the university's only as good as Laramie is.”
❖ “So there's 6,600 people in Albany county that don't have access to nutritious food. Okay. And certainly we have that data, but universities do research. They could help us by researching issues like this. Social issues such as food disparities, or even access to health care. We could use some research. We could use some science behind it. What are some of the solutions? Help us identify specifically what the problems are. Why do we have 6,600 people that don't have access to nutritious food? So that's one way the university could help.”
❖ “What's interesting is, right now I have very limited access to the University of Wyoming. So if I want to put out a notice that says, ‘Hey. If you're hungry, you can come to the soup kitchen.’ It's nearly impossible because of the restrictions on outside agencies working with the university. So if the university wants to maintain relationships with the greater community, they have to allow the access back within the university.”
❖ “Maybe there's an opportunity for Safe Ride to extend beyond bar hopping hours and drunks, to people having immediate needs. It's a model that exists. Can we expand it? I personally wouldn't want to be driving drunks around, but I might want to be driving somebody to a job interview, or to the pharmacy, or to buy groceries. That that might be, because that model already exists, and the cars are parked during the daytime.”
❖ “I really think that the university needs to be helped more in recruiting businesses to town. Educating people in our economic development group about how to do this, and try to get jobs into town.”
❖ “I think that having more active participation in LCBA, in the business alliance, would be helpful. We used to have Bill Gern to show up to our meetings. We haven't had anybody show up to the meetings for a while.”
Site Summary: Cheyenne

Laramie County Community College (LCCC)  
Cheyenne, WY  
February 28, 2018  
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:  
Michael Cheek

3 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:  
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No  
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:

❖ This group could not identify any specific UW partnerships or projects in the Cheyenne area aside from UW as a resource for the local service organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis) for their programming, and recruitment efforts with the local high schools.

❖ All participants were aware of the existence of a UW Extension office in Cheyenne as well as the TRIO program but could not identify any specific programs or projects.

❖ Several years ago UW athletes would participate in local sports camps offered by the YMCA but that partnership evidently no longer exists.

❖ This group was mostly aware of UW’s presence through the Cowboy Joe Club and fundraising events in support of UW athletics.

Specific Responses:

❖ “I'd like to say yes but I can't think of anything current. I know that at the YMCA years ago, probably 10 years ago had a group of athletes doing some summer camps for us, uni sports, summer camps for us, but I don't think we've had that connection more recently.”

❖ “For me that was the only emphasis. Graduate and get the Hathaway scholarship and go to UW. It's all about getting them kids to UW. That's the focus.”

❖ “I feel the same way, I just don't have a contact with them. They have to be here somewhere. I haven't found them...I'm very new to Rotary, so we had some UW folks speak at Rotary, and there might be a community collaboration there between the science stuff and some grants here.”

❖ “TRIO's worked with my office. More of a just getting to know each other type of thing than a project.”

Question 2:  
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No  
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?
Major Points of Discussion:
❖ This group could not identify any UW professionals in Cheyenne. They were aware that certain individuals in the service organizations were somehow connected to UW but could not name them or identify their role with the University.
❖ These participants agreed that UW was most visible in the community through athletics and fundraising events in support of athletics.

Specific Responses:
❖ ‘We have some folks, again in Rotary, who work, I don't know their exact title, but they work through an extension.”
❖ “I'm certainly familiar with the Cowboy Joe club, that sports thing where lots of folks who...Quarterback Club or something like that. There's lots of UW Athletics promotion here and fundraising events and that kind of thing on the side of sports.”

Question 3:
What is your perception of UW as a partner?
● When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
● To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The group was aware of some recent outreach efforts by Jean Garrison and President Nichols through the local service organizations but unaware of the purpose or content of that outreach.
❖ Aside from the existence of the extension office, the only UW outreach efforts specifically identified were public events such as concerts, theatre performances or speakers.

Specific Responses:
❖ “One thing I can think of them being involved in is just the extension office itself. Nothing else really comes to mind of a project within the community.”
❖ “On the other side of the coin I've gone to some concerts there so the arts side of it through a ticket that I got through a friend. I know they're partners and stuff, I guess I just don't run in the right crowds to know what those partnerships are.

Question 4:
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
● Who is working on capitalizing on them?
● What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
● What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
● What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ There is an opportunity for workforce development in the trades like auto and diesel technology, plumbing, electrical, carpentry and construction. There is a shortage of qualified candidates to fill
these jobs in Cheyenne. Although there are programs at LCCC and there is momentum to reopen the WYOTech school, this void is not being filled.

❖ Workforce development in the tech industries is another opportunity. The ARRAY School in Cheyenne and local economic development organizations are working to fill this void but there is a gap between the needs of businesses and a trained workforce. DWS has made training funds available to help close this gap.

❖ The expansion of the information technology industry in general is an opportunity due to the climate and location of Cheyenne.

❖ There is opportunity for energy development, both in traditional oil and gas exploration and production but also for advanced carbon products, although they acknowledged that these industries are vulnerable to boom and bust cycles.

❖ Cheyenne is an attractive place for people to retire and an opportunity for Cheyenne to expand due to the access to high quality healthcare. At present there is an adequate trained workforce.

❖ Cheyenne has all the amenities of any large city, a civic center, public pools, high quality schools, relatively low crime rate, easy access to the mountains, greenways, access to healthcare, a VA medical center, the annual Frontier Days celebration and the state university just 40 miles away. In addition, the Cheyenne area has a stable economy relative to the rest of the state.

Specific Responses:

❖ “I think one of the issues that Cheyenne has is a trained workforce. Part of it is the number of available employees but another part is are they trained and really just more specifically in things like plumbing, trades, that kind of thing, and I think that LCCC is trying to fill that void.”

❖ “We're hearing that they're having a tough time filling web developer jobs, things like that, that computer science aspect. We've got a very small business school in town that's doing that but it's fairly expensive and they're non accredited so the kids can't get scholarships or grants.”

❖ “And also just with the ENDOW initiative bringing in technology companies and data centers and all that, leading those skilled processes.”

❖ “…It seems like there's more of these retirement communities, assisted living, senior communities popping up so I can imagine it brings more people here and that's a good thing.”

❖ “Well, on the other side of that instead of being all boom and bust and whatnot, I know they're working with clean coal technology, because we have coal and prices go up and down with that too, I realize that, but making that cleaner, those technologies, and I think that would be a UW thing, because that would be like engineering I think.”

Question 5:
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.

● Who is working on them?
● What have been, or are the desired outcomes?

Major Points of Discussion:

❖ Economic diversity to lessen the dependence on federal, state and local government agencies for employment.

❖ There is a lack of entrepreneurial spirit in the area even though there are ample resources for local entrepreneurs (SBA, SBDC).
Some members of the community do not view the opportunity to expand retirement communities and assisted living facilities positively.

The proximity of Cheyenne to the Front Range of Colorado is a challenge this group regarded as having variety of both positive and negative impacts.

Specific Responses:

“If you include schools and the hospitals. It's (government employment) got to be 70% or more, and that stabilizes the economy but it also makes it a very unique group of folks that live here that rely on the government.”

“Well, we're just like the rest of Wyoming keeping our youth. We lose them. Especially as close as we are to the front range, we lose them down South.”

“Cheyenne does have a lot of retirees. People do complain about that. I don't know why. I see the other end of it and I think it's great, they like being here and they make the city their stand. My attitude is we shouldn't fight that, we should embrace it, but I'm sort of an outlier in that.”

“It's hard to compete when people can drive 45 miles south and go to a wider variety of places. It's a blessing and a curse. So we can shop a little more easily than other people can so that's good for us but it's hard for the hospital because the people that can afford to pay their bills might end up going South and then they're stuck with the folks that need assistance paying their bills so it's a hard way for the hospital.”

Question 6:
How can UW help?

Major Points of Discussion:

Ensure that programs/degrees/certificates are aligned with the needs of industry in order to provide a trained workforce for existing and emerging industries.

Keep apprised of what communities outside of Laramie and Cheyenne are doing and develop programs/degrees/certificates to meet the dynamic needs of those communities.

Develop a more holistic approach to teaching entrepreneurship to provide entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to operate a business including accounting, marketing and strategy.

Specific Responses:

“As much money as we put into a four year education, it better turn into a job on the other end and a career at that. So as much as it's nice to have people study history, we need people who are going to come out of whatever, a two year or four year education ready to jump into the workforce and provide necessary services in some fashion.”

“And perhaps UW already does this, but kind of keeping a pulse on what Gillette needs or what Casper needs or Torrington, whatever, to see what those communities need for employers and employees and training.”

“I don't know if that would be a way to help entrepreneurs get started because that's what a lot of us struggle with. We love what we do and we open our business because we love what we do, but then 90% of what you do when you start is not doing what you love to do, you're doing the business side of things, and that's where people get all tripped up.”
Site Summary: Torrington

March 1, 2018
Eastern Wyoming College
Torrington, WY
6:00 - 7:30 PM

CWC Facilitator:
Michael Cheek

3 Attendees: (names redacted)

Question 1:
Are you aware of UW partnerships/joint projects within your community? Yes or No
If yes, please walk through a specific example and describe the experience.

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ Business partnerships cited include the Sustainable Agricultural Research Education Center (SAREC) and UW’s support of the local farmer’s market where new products can be test marketed.
❖ Academic partnerships cited were the Two-plus-Two program, a reverse transfer initiative, Complete College Wyoming, Complete College America, and the ReNEW program in the school of nursing.
❖ UW has also worked with EWC on their strategic enrollment management to maximize recruitment and retention of students.
❖ The Cowboy Joe Club is very active in Torrington.

Specific Responses:
❖ “I think it's really ratcheted up in the last two years, really since Dr. Nichols. Rather than absentee landowner, they're willing to come to campus. They're willing to articulate, willing to meet, be a presence here versus before.”
❖ “They've also worked with us in terms of the new initiative with their strategic enrollment management and looking at how we can partner together in terms of enrollment and recruiting students and retaining students. So I think that's, from our side of the fence, extremely powerful.”
❖ “So, again, I have the entrepreneurs. They can go work with the UW Extension for the farmer's market. They can work with UW SAREC for research and development maybe. They have been working with EWC for maybe professional development, workforce training.”

Question 2:
Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community? Yes or No
If yes, can you name them or their role with UW?
Major Points of Discussion:
❖ It was clear that this group was well aware of UW professionals serving in the community although the group was unsure if the community at large has the same level of awareness.
❖ UW professionals identified were John Tanaka, Kelly Greenwald, Carrie Eberle, Steve Paisley, Brett Hess, Caleb Carter, Brian Lee, Richard Ward, and Megan Brittingham.

Specific Responses:
❖ “Yep. We love all of them. They're awesome”.

Question 3:
What is your perception of UW as a partner?
● When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you?
● To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ This group stated that the level of engagement and partnership had improved dramatically in the past three years.
❖ The perception in this group is that UW’s engagement is far beyond simple outreach and very close to community engagement as defined by the Carnegie Foundation.
❖ One participant stated that he felt UW was doing a good job but still has a lot of work to do, especially investing in more traditional delivery methods as opposed to online classes.

Specific Responses:
❖ “I think it's really ratcheted up in the last two years, really since Dr. Nichols. Rather than absentee landowner, they're willing to come to campus. They're willing to articulate, willing to meet, be a presence here versus before.”
❖ “I would say right now I'd give them an A+. Before it was an F. It's drastically changed.”
❖ “And I would say that I think UW is doing a good job, but I think it still has quite a ways to go. For one, I think, it's part of deconstructing the model of education, meaning that you can't just keep sending everyone to Laramie to be able to grow.”
❖ “And I'll also say Dr. Nichols has been very engaged with us as an organization. I think she's been here at least three times. Most recently, she attended our outreach event, which was our Sagebrush and Roses. Her and her husband attended along with trustee Marsh, and I think just the feedback in the community is that she's the only UW President that would have ever have done something like that, and it just spoke volumes to the community, her involvement in that.”

Question 4:
Name the top 3 grand opportunities in your community.
● Who is working on capitalizing on them?
● What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
● What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow?
● What are the quality of life assets you have in your community?
Major Points of Discussion:
❖ Torrington is the top agricultural producer in the state. The Agricultural Technology Education Center (ATEC) that is being built in Torrington is a huge opportunity for traditional education, agriculture and ag-tech and workforce development.
❖ Tourism is an opportunity that has traditionally been ignored but has tremendous potential for growth. There are a number of parks and historic sites within a short drive from Torrington. The economic development agencies are working on this and there are plans to build a hotel in an attempt to capture some of that traffic that currently passes through.
❖ Torrington is in need of a level 2-3 assisted living facility. There are currently plans to build a 30 bed unit. The city of Torrington and the Goshen County Joint Powers Board are working on this.
❖ Torrington is well positioned to expand in the area of logistics and transportation. It has warmer weather and better driving conditions than the rest of the state and is located at the intersection of two major US highways (85 and 26). It is also one of the primary entry points into Wyoming from Nebraska.
❖ Building stronger relationships between the high schools, EWC and UW is an opportunity. The area currently loses a lot of students to Chadron State in Nebraska.
❖ Torrington has many assets that make it a desirable place to live, raise a family and to start a business. The region enjoys more temperate weather than the rest of the state.

Specific Responses:
❖ “And I think there's tremendous amount of partnership opportunities with multiple entities, but especially University of Wyoming.”
❖ “The tourism economy is number two in the state. It's not even a blip on our radar, and so we're trying to make it become an industry for us, and we have lack of lodging.”
❖ “And so we want to capitalize on those visitors not be a pass through, so you're gonna see a lot of push on tourism, and it all starts with just even getting some more hotels and more beds so we can put in for conferences and host different types of events.”
❖ “And not only that, the driving conditions in this part of the state are a lot more favorable. So if there's something manufactured here, it'd be a lot easier to get it out to go east or south than honestly, even Cheyenne.”
❖ “I just see it as a great way for pathways from students potentially to come out of high school, go here, and UW could be something they could attend for a degree.”
❖ “One of the things that UW has an opportunity here is to really see us driving technology and innovation. And part of that technology and innovation comes in, this precision agriculture.”
❖ “I think our Western culture history, we have a very vibrant main street in Torrington with nice niche shopping, we're definitely not big box, everything is very niche. I think we have very wholesome values. It's very family driven and centered.”

Question 5:
Name the top 3 challenges in your community.
● Who is working on them?
● What have been, or are the desired outcomes?
Major Points of Discussion:
❖ Access to high speed internet. This currently being addressed within the ENDOW initiative.
❖ Retention of youth was cited as a challenge. This challenge is closely related to the lack of economic diversity.
❖ More support for local entrepreneurs is needed.
❖ There is a need for a recreation center and more recreational opportunities for the local population. There is no local agency that coordinates recreation.
❖ The proximity to larger cities, (Cheyenne, Scottsbluff, NE) is a challenge, especially Scottsbluff. It is a 30 minute drive to Scottsbluff so many residents will travel there for shopping or other amenities.

Specific Responses:
❖ “I've been back and forth from the legislature working on a (broadband) bill that's in there with ENDOW right now that could provide some relief for us.”
❖ “Well, and I think economic opportunities and diverse economy, so our best and brightest don't come back. And I shouldn't say not all, but we lose a lot of those students that there's not a lot of opportunities for them to move back. And I think that fits into what are our opportunities, but it's a challenge.”
❖ “How can we work together with UW to really help our entrepreneurs? And in collaboration with EWC? I mean, I think that's something that's needed. I think it's a program we could push really hard.”
❖ “And we don't have anyone in the county that coordinates it. No county coordination of rec or recreational activities.”

Question 6:
How can UW help?

Major Points of Discussion:
❖ The group agreed that UW simply needs to continue its level of engagement and continue to be active and present in the community.
❖ UW needs to sustain its level of engagement regardless of who occupies the leadership positions.
❖ One participant stated that UW could help close the gap in their fundraising for the new ag-tech center.
❖ It was suggested that a truly collaborative partnership would include UW having a joint strategic plan with EWC (and the other community colleges).

Specific Responses:
❖ “I think they just need to be an active presence in the community, with the college, the high schools, just in general with the economic development.”
❖ “It needs to be a sustainable effort regardless of who sits in leadership seats at UW.”
❖ “I think there's an opportunity to raise money together in this shared vision of higher education.”
❖ “And I guess what I see, which would make a lot of sense, is we're thinking about alignment, that I think we need to have a joint strategic plan. Instead of just kind of developing our own, but
really, really a deep meaningful relationship where we create some common targets and common goals.”
Facilitator Biography

Michael Cheek

Michael Cheek is a Workforce Trainer for Central Wyoming College. Prior to joining the college, Michael gained 20 years experience in outdoor education and administration with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). His experience includes more than 200 weeks in the field leading wilderness expeditions and teaching outdoor skills and leadership. Michael is a certified trainer and facilitator for Development Dimensions International®, providing more than 50 competency-based training courses for leaders, workforce, and customer service providers. He is also an MBTI® Certified Practitioner, and a licensed facilitator of Franklin Covey’s Leading at the Speed of Trust® programs. He designs and delivers custom trainings in the areas of Management, Communication, Team Building, and Leadership. Michael holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from the University of Kansas.
Facilitator Biography
Anne Even

Anne Even has been a Workforce Trainer at Central Wyoming College Lander since 2010. She attended Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in recreation/fitness and exercise with minors in business and leisure services. She then went on to serve as the activities director for a recreation center and worked at Chamber of Commerce's in two states providing membership and marketing services in addition to directing a community-based program. Prior to joining the college, she provided business development services on the Wind River Indian Reservation, coordinating a variety of workshops, conferences and trainings in addition to one-on-one business counseling. Anne is a certified trainer and facilitator for Development Dimensions International®, providing more than 50 competency-based training courses for leaders, workforce and customer service providers. Anne is also a certified practitioner of the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) Step I and Step II Instruments. She also directed and coordinated a multi-year grant from the Department of Labor to serve young adults who were involved in the juvenile justice system. Currently, she serves as the program manager for the Noyce/WITS program, a grant from the University of Wyoming through the National Science Foundation, to provide summer internships to college students to expose them to STEM concepts and elementary education. She also recruits students for scholarships to help them become elementary teachers with a STEM background.
Interviewer: Let's move on into the first couple of questions here, the first ones are pretty straight forward. Are you aware of UW partnerships or joint projects within your community? So think about other projects, educational initiatives, things going on here. Are you aware of anything being offered by the University of Wyoming?

Speaker 7: Online classes.

Interviewer: Online classes, okay.

Speaker 3: With us we partnership with UW with Growing Resilience Project that's offered.

Interviewer: What was the project?

Speaker 3: The Growing Resilience Project, a gardening project. We partner with UW through a grant and do data collection with a group growing gardens within families.

Interviewer: Okay, how long has that been going on?

Speaker 3: Well I think a pilot project started with the program four years ago, maybe five years ago. The last couple of years they picked it up again and started with another group for another five year plan. It started about two years ago.

Interviewer: Is the desired outcome there just to encourage people to grow and produce more of their own food?

Speaker 3: Provide them up and teach them how to start a garden and grow a garden, and experience what a garden is. Whether or not it is successful or not at least bring forth the opportunity to try to do a garden and the outcomes, and if it makes a difference health wise or not. There's two focus groups, the control group and the group that has a garden. The control group has to be patient enough and be part of the project for two years before they actually get a garden so it's a lengthy process. They can speak to you a little bit about it because they're part of the project, those two ladies.

There's frustrations, there's good points, there's lots of things that come out of it.

Interviewer: Do you have anything to add about that?

Speaker 4: I think more on the lines, me when I got into it I jumped right into having a garden. I was pregnant at the time, but just as far as being able to get the equipment and the gardening seeds or the plants in general, it took a longer process than I expected. I actually didn't get to start my garden last summer just due to the length of the funding and how everything went. I was excited, I'm excited for this summer to actually start a garden, to grow on my own.

Speaker 5: I actually get to start this summer with a garden, I was a control group for two years so we just did the data collection.

Interviewer: So in your work as education coordinators for the tribe, do you have partnerships with the university? Do you have relationships with the university?
Speaker 6: Yeah at the moment I think as far as we know we do. I mean Harmony is more on the lines doing that since she is the director, but we do get to participate in some of the meetings like this. Or being able to go to CWC and at least get some information about what's going to be happening in a year, couple years, months. It just depends on what we're able to participate in.

Interviewer: Okay. Caroline?

Speaker 7: The program at the end of the hallway, I don't know if they're called Cooperative Extension or-

Speaker 3: Sensible Nutrition.

Speaker 7: Is that what is Sensible Nutrition? Yeah they have a program and they're learning about the native plants, it will be tomorrow in fact.

Speaker 3: Oh the [inaudible 00:08:56] project?

Speaker 7: Yeah.

Speaker 3: That's another one that the UW is kind of involved with. I don't know if they're involved or if it's more-

Speaker 7: Yeah, they're involved.

Speaker 3: Are the students in UW involved ...

Interviewer: Do you think other members of the community identify those partnerships as being with the University of Wyoming? Is that understood in the community?

Speaker 3: Maybe not the Shoshone Free Reclamation because that's fairly new, so I don't think they put their stamp on that yet.

Speaker 7: They're at the meetings and I think this spring they're trying to have the students be able to go up into Yellowstone Park and pick Camus bulbs and I think the UW would be the easiest route to get into Yellowstone Park.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you have any other examples of partnerships with the University of Wyoming or joint projects?

Speaker 3: From what I understand and this is just early talks, there might be some involvement with the hot springs down here. Those are just talks right now.

Interviewer: What would that look like?

Speaker 3: The hot springs down here is a spring down there that's been used at one point in time but it's no longer safe to use it. I don't know what the extent is of it, those are just talks.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 3: I know UW might be involved with some of that maybe.

Interviewer: What would their role be in that, do you think?
Speaker 3: I couldn't tell you because like I said it's just early talks.

Interviewer: Alright. Any other thoughts on this topic before I move on to the next one?

**Question #2**

Okay, this is somewhat similar question here but are you aware of University of Wyoming professionals who serve in your community? Can you name them or their role with the university?

Speaker 6: Teffany Fegler.

Interviewer: With Trio?

Speaker 6: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 6: And Hattie Penny, she's with the FAFSA with the community and helping them get registered and have a better understanding of what they're getting into as far as the Pell Grants and what's available to them.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you have a lot of contact with them?

Speaker 6: Yeah, especially when they involve themselves with the high school students to get them prepared for college. They contact us quite a bit and then we help them and do the College and Career Fair too during October.

Interviewer: Okay. Any other professionals from the university that serve the community that you know of?

Speaker 7: Amy McClure when she was with the staff, she's retired, but she used to always bring by those booklets.

Interviewer: Right.

Speaker 7: I don't know if they replaced anybody, I haven't seen anybody come by since she retired.

Interviewer: Okay, alright we'll move on. The next one is I think it's a little bit more up and in and give you a chance to think a little bit more and offer more input.

Speaker 4: Give us some hints too.

Interviewer: We don't want to skew the responses.

**Question #3**

Interviewer 2: Our next topic here, you can kind of look at these questions individually but they do flow together a little bit too. First of all, what is your perception of UW as a partner? When you think of UW do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level? Co-investing and developing partnerships with you? Lastly, to what level do you perceive UW to be present in listening? Kind of depending on your opinion you can formulate your response in any of those ways.
If you want to take a few moments to think about it you can, or if you're ready to share your response you can go ahead and go.

Speaker 3: I think for me as a program and UW as a partner it's an opportunity for grants and an opportunity to bring people in to work with us on grants. And to provide some types of supports for the community in whatever aspect we're looking for, whether that's wellness, health. That's kind of been my relationship with UW as a partner.

Interviewer 2: Okay. How do you feel like that level is right now? Is it surface level or do you feel you have a pretty strong relationship and involvement with them?

Speaker 3: I personally have a pretty strong relationship with those that I work with at UW. I think the grade with the people that I work with it, it goes to a little deeper level. It's not interpersonal, it's personal, we get to know each other and spend some time revisiting questions that I have. They're always there to help support, not just for their grant or what we're working on but any other way they can find ways to be supportive for that, for me in my position.

Interviewer 2: Do they ever come to you with opportunities.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Interviewer 2: Okay. Anything else you want to add to that?

Speaker 3: On a personal level, UW for me is the whole reason why I'm sitting here in this chair to begin with. If it wasn't for the outreach program and being able to provide that service, that education through distance education, I definitely wouldn't be sitting here right now.

Interviewer 2: That's great! Do you want to elaborate on that a little bit more so we can hear that?

Speaker 3: A little bit more?

Interviewer 2: Yeah.

Speaker 3: Well working with Amy and the outreach program and being able to attend classes, when I did it, it was a little different than it is now.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 3: The classes were almost that traditional classroom setting but it was made over the phone whereas now the technology has greatly enhanced that educational opportunity. I don't know what it would be like now ... even though I didn't go to the campus and go to the school I still feel connected to UW in some way, some form.

Interviewer 2: Great, thank you. Who would like to go next?

Speaker 7: Basically my perception as a partner, I don't think I'm really a partner even though I work at the Learning Center and we're a computer lab for the community. I had one student, their student, who came in and got all his paperwork and was checking on everything and just trying to get into the U. It was through that student that I heard the name, but as far as personal I attended back in early 2000 so it's been awhile. Like I said even though I students might be taking an online class, I don't really have to interact with them, just make the computers accessible.
Interviewer 2: Okay. I think there's some questions coming up to where you might have some opportunity to expand on what those opportunities could be. We'll look for some ideas in a bit, great, thank you. Anything else you want to add? Would either of you like to go next?

Speaker 6: I guess as far as what we've noticed, or what I've noticed is that most of the meetings or when we do get to talk to ... what's her name, I forgot her name, the president? Ms. Nichols I guess. I guess they're really working on as far as a partnership or UW being able to be more accessible through the reservation for people that can't make it to UW to go to school. For CWC to be able to make those classes available for UW and dual classes to where they're not just taking classes at CWC but they're also being accessible for classes at UW.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 6: And making it easier for us to know or be able to fund the students on the reservations to take both classes at the same time.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 6: I guess that's one way I perceive it.

Interviewer 2: Okay, is that relationship still kind of developing or in the works?

Speaker 6: Yeah I guess so, as far as where I stand in my position I think it's at the top level with where I'm at.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 6: I'm pretty sure with our director it's a little more deep as far as what she has to do in her position. I think it's going to be a good partnership as far as what's accessible on the reservation for our people.

Interviewer 2: Great, thank you. Does anyone else want to contribute to that question?

Interviewer: Can we go back to that for just a second. Caroline and your response, would you say you don't perceive UW to be engaged on a deep level here?

Speaker 7: That's correct I don't perceive that, but I deal with high school equivalency. These ladies are in the higher education program so they're more college students. I get a few that are just on their own coming in and utilizing the computers and the internet.

Interviewer 2: But you are a feeder program and a pipeline for future students too.

Interviewer: So then they're really not present in listening in your case?

Speaker 7: I don't think so.

Interviewer: To what level do you perceive that, do you think they're present and listening to your needs?

Speaker 6: Yeah, I think so as far as us being a Shoshone higher ed program, I think it's more of a deep level on their part in wanting to know what they need to do to help our people out and get education and to further education. Not just to CWC but to our own Wyoming University.

Speaker 2: Then they opened the Native American Center down there. The students feel more comfortable coming from here to there.
Interviewer 2: And that's at the University of Wyoming center?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

**Question #4**

Interviewer 2: Great. Any other thoughts on this one? The next one we want to talk about is opportunity. You can take a few moments to think about this topic but can you name the top three grant opportunities in your community? These don't have to be UW related, it can be very broad. Who is working on capitalizing on those opportunities? What have been and what are the desired outcomes? This is their opportunity to figure out what's going on in the communities, what are the big opportunities in each area across the state. So you each get a chance to pick your top three, if you just have one that's okay too.

Speaker 4: Could that be just our own community programs also?

Interviewer 2: Sure.

Speaker 4: I guess the diabetes program.

Interviewer 2: Okay, so the diabetes program. Who is currently involved in that type of project?

Speaker 4: I think it kind of intertwines with Tribal Health I think, doesn't it Dave?

Speaker 3: Yeah we have a diabetes program, but we have no money. UW can throw some money.

Interviewer 2: What do you think are some of the outcomes of that program or what is it trying to achieve? Why did you pick that as your big priority or your big opportunity?

Speaker 4: As far as our community health and that relates to the Growing Resilience as far as being able to grow our own healthy food, so that we have more of a percentage in our younger people and not getting diabetes.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 4: I think that's a pretty good program as far as going to the community more.

Interviewer 2: Great. Do you have another one you want to talk about now? Does anyone else have one they want to mention?

Speaker 7: My brain's dead, I was at the Social Studies standards review all morning. Grant opportunities like something that exists?

Interviewer 2: Or it doesn't have to.

Speaker 7: Oh so-

Interviewer 2: You can dream big here.

Speaker 7: Oh, dream, okay.
Interviewer: Yes, anything. Is there an opportunity that's not being capitalized on? Like you mentioned the hot springs, is that an opportunity for a tourist attraction, an educational setting?

Interviewer 2: Or wellness?

Speaker 3: The tourist attraction would be a bonus but the main goal I would think if there's a project that's gonna ... and not looking at success, I'm looking at something for the community that was once used as a wellness component, healing. Making it more of an opportunity for the community to have something that's there for their health and things.

Interviewer 2: Is there any certain group working on that project currently? Do you want to identify any?

Speaker 3: From what I understand there's a focus group that's been developed and kind of reopened the possibility of starting that back up again.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 3: I think at one time, and I think Tribal Health was involved with this at one time. Harmony was a former director so I think she was involved with that.

Interviewer 2: Great and you kind of mentioned those desired outcomes earlier, what that could help achieve.

Speaker 3: There's so many benefits that could come from a project like that, establishing, utilizing waters like that. I wouldn't want to see as a tourist thing, it needs to be kept more of a community and how it started I think.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 7: I would like to see opportunities for our artists, like the beaders, the craftspeople. We have tourists that drive by every summer and what we're in need of is not necessarily a flea market but just some structures in a semicircle, I'm going real inexpensive here, like firecracker stands all lined up. It provides the shade, it provides protection from the wind and where artists can put their bead work in a parking lot where the tourists can pull in and buy right from the local people. It would benefit people for supplemental income. That's my dream.

Interviewer 2: Great! Do you know if anyone is working on that currently?

Speaker 7: I think Pat Bergy and the Wyoming Women's Business Center, but there's nobody working on finding some land that would be available. Somebody donated a shed but it's clear down by Cheyenne and Laramie and we'd have to transport it.

Interviewer 2: So opportunities there too.

Speaker 7: I think the artists are here, it's just a matter of organizing them and making a place available so it's just show up and maybe the tourists will come.

Interviewer 2: Great, thanks for your idea. Anyone else have a-

Interviewer: We don't have to limit it to three.

Speaker 3: If you're talking about diabetes and some of the other stuff like the art, my ultimate goal with the program would be to see that community health type of center that's established here on the
reservation. They call it rec centers but something that's more open to the community to use, that's more user friendly for the community for our overall wellness. Stuff like Native American art, things like that can be built around something like that.

Interviewer: So a community center?

Speaker 3: Yeah a community center.

Speaker 7: I think adding on to what his idea is, it would be nice to have people take hikes in the area just to see the reservation and the land.

Interviewer 2: Local people taking hikes in your own area?

Speaker 7: Yeah.

Speaker 3: So if you take it a step further and take that community center and not only provide a community center that's for that type of area and it's centered, but you could take your UW extension and kind of tie it in. You can provide an educational component that's centered right in it.

Interviewer: So they could provide programming as well as recreational opportunities?

Speaker 7: Yeah.

Interviewer: We're going to have them take a hike up into the range or to the hot springs.

Speaker 3: Create an outreach center that kind of ties into all that because one you're getting into the art, community, and cultural component; UW is kind of tied into that outreach and education and you get into traditional foods, it all ties in. Instead of everybody doing everything individually like we're kind of doing it, tie it all in as one and build a whole structural system around it.

Interviewer: That could even have appeal outside of the reservation community too, I would think. The opportunity for non-natives to come here and learn about native culture and native places.

Speaker 3: You tie in your science and social studies with an outreach education component, you've got your geological over the area like that.

Speaker 4: Just like a lot of people these days are interested in tanning their own hides and then selling them for people to use for bead work.

Speaker 3: Food processing is another huge thing that could save people a lot of money, during hunting season.

Interviewer: Right, so a place where people could bring their game and have it processed. There's no place currently here that does that?

Speaker 3: Nothing that you're talking about like that.

Speaker 7: Just your own kitchen.

Speaker 3: You're talking about each thing, each program individually is what that is broken down. We've got a place that everybody uses the hall for everything, they use it for everything basically and it's not equipped for those types of activities. That's what it's used for and it's ... we could have something that's a lot nicer and a lot more structured with UW's support. That's the route you want to go.
Interviewer 2: Does anyone else have an opportunity that they've been thinking of that they'd like to share?

Okay, we'll move on. What specific areas or industries are you looking to grow? What are the quality of life assets that you have in your community? This kind of expands on what we've been talking about here, we've addressed it a little bit but does anyone have anything they want to add?

Speaker 7: Tourism.

Interviewer 2: Tourism, okay.

Interviewer: Tourism and Native American art, creating a real marketplace for that?

Speaker 7: Yeah.

Interviewer 2: Do you think you could address some of the quality of life topics?

Interviewer: Maybe think about that one a little bit more. What do you have here that's unique that separates this community from other Wyoming communities?

Speaker 2: Mountains.

Interviewer: Okay, mountains.

Speaker 2: Water.

Speaker 6: Clean water.

Speaker 2: Clean water, fresh air, no traffic.

Interviewer: The obvious one is your culture. What else?

Speaker 4: This is one that I know we get a lot of people coming in when we have our horse races, not like an industry but that's more of a community based event that gets put on. Just as far as the equine part of it with the horses and the kids during the summertime, not just certain weekends when they bring horses up. Getting the youth more involved with our animals as far as horses. That's one idea, it's not just an animal that you ride but more of an animal that you connect with emotionally that understands you and you understand yourself. I guess I kind of had an experience with it and that's one way of getting a lot of our kids outside instead of being on technology.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's totally unique because livestock is a way of life here. Anything else? An asset here that could be capitalized on? A lot of artistic talent you mentioned.

Speaker 7: Its too bad we couldn't use our wild meat and have jerky to sell. That would be nice and provide jobs.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 7: I think our fish and game says you're not supposed to sell it or something.

Speaker 5: Yeah, isn't it up in Montana ... I can't remember what tribe but I think they do the buffaloes for the schools, for the kids to eat. I think that'd be at least something we could think of in our community and doing something like that.
Speaker 6: I think there's also a tribe in South Dakota that sells a jerky type of product but also has cranberries and things in it too. They sell not just to their people but across the United States too. I can't remember the name of the company but there might be some opportunities to-

Speaker 7: Yeah healthy foods like granola bars or something.

Speaker 6: Using foods from the area.

Speaker 3: I think that's the hugest one, just from what we struggle with as a program is getting people to look at other alternatives of eating other than what we're eating now. That's the hardest thing to change, not to change but to get that information out. What we're eating now is very unhealthy, not just for the adults but the children are really being affected by how we're eating.

Interviewer 2: Just to kind of elaborate on that do you know what's causing that or what's at the source of that?

Speaker 2: Food stamps.

Interviewer 2: What's at the front pushing those types of choices?

Speaker 7: The parent's choices, the convenience.

Speaker 3: The convenience is the biggest one, everybody is busy, everyone is tired. Fast food is probably the number one go to thing for everybody. Really pop is another one, the high sugar intakes is probably the biggest factors when you talk about diabetes and that's the biggest thing we struggle with.

Interviewer 2: How do you think it is in the school system? Do you feel like the food choices within the school system are good or bad or could be improved on?

Speaker 3: I think they've gotten better but it goes beyond what they're eating in the school.

Interviewer 2: Right.

Speaker 7: The school food is it good? I don't have any kids.

Speaker 4: I don't know my kid doesn't like the school food. He just told me recently that he wants to start packing his own lunch, if he wants to do that we have to support his decision on what he wants. I have more of that control of wanting it to be healthier than him going to school and not eating at all.

Speaker 4: Then coming home and wanting to overindulge in junk food or not eating dinner.

Interviewer 2: Right. Anything else?

**Question #5**

Can we name the top three challenges in your community? We've talked about opportunities in which we can capitalize on but now let's switch the topic to the challenges.

Speaker 2: Food choices, the local grocery store doesn't have a lot of offerings.

Interviewer 2: So food choices at the local grocery store. Is anyone working to address that or it sounds like you have some of these other programs trying to push healthy food choices?
Speaker 3: I think one of the biggest one that is a huge challenge in this community and most native communities across the country is the lack of work. Lack of employment, lack of job opportunities, it all stems into money is not everything but it stems into your eating choices, your health. If you just buy what's cheaper than what costs a little bit more for your health then you're going to buy what's cheaper if that's the money you have. People not having work, I don't even know what the unemployment rate is on the reservation. Do you know what the unemployment rate is on the reservation? I'm sure it's a high percentage.

Speaker 7: Transportation, you've got to have a car to work in Lander or Riverton.

Speaker 3: That's what we deal with in the program, transportation is a huge problem.

Interviewer: Can we go back to the lack of economic opportunity. What organizations or individuals are working on that challenge right now?

Speaker 3: I'm sure everybody looks at the council for that.

Interviewer: Okay, the council.

Speaker 7: I'm not aware of any jobs that they have. I know the casino wasn't built to provide travel jobs.

Speaker 3: You know who's working on that, I don't know to be honest with you. Individual programs that try to give the opportunities they can for people to work.

Interviewer: Can you give us examples of those?

Speaker 3: For me personally, I spent the last three months looking at funding and trying to find ways to put people to work on my part. Not just people to work, but tribal members. That's even a difficult situation. I think some of the tribal members want to work but often what tends to happen is somebody has the educational level or has certification and a tribal member may not have that so it takes away some opportunities for tribal members. Tribal members not having the opportunity to get certification or training or education because it all stems to transportation. Economic opportunity, if you can't get to Laramie to take a UW course or go to CWC then you're probably not going to get there.

Speaker 7: And the bus is early just to catch that transit.

Speaker 3: So again having that extension in the community would be one step of helping people get training and helping people get education.

Interviewer: So you're saying the business council is working on it but not effectively.

Speaker 3: I didn't say that.

Interviewer: Sorry.

Speaker 7: They're just trying to maintain the current programs.

Speaker 6: Or people might turn to them to be the person to work on it.
Speaker 7: We had a grant program ... what was it, Clint Wagon was in that program? To me the job was to go out and look for grants. I wasn't aware if they ever got any because I didn't see anything really new start up. I think it was a planning ... they did away with it.

Speaker 3: I think the council is looking at opportunities to find some economic development or something that would help find jobs.

Speaker 7: The land behind Walmart.

Interviewer: What about the land behind Walmart?

Speaker 7: There's a plan that they hope to do something with that. The tribe purchased the land. I didn't make the meeting, did any of you guys make the meeting?

Speaker 3: Who solely is in charge of that, I couldn't tell you.

Interviewer: Okay, for these three challenges here what would the desired outcome be? Saying you need more local food choices, what would that look like? Just more stuff in the supermarket? More competing markets or independent producers bringing food in? Organic farms on the reservation?

Speaker 3: I think part of the Growing Resilience is to get people to start growing their own fruits and vegetables. Not only just grow it for themselves but in farmer's markets, being able to share what you've grown with other community members. I know they have some farmer's markets but they're a slow process picking up, but I think there's opportunity there to be able to provide stuff like that for the community. I think the more people are getting involved with growing you might see that grow just a little bit more.

Speaker 7: I guess the local store over here, their prices are a little high. Then if you want to get more bang for the buck you have to go to Lander or Riverton, but again you need transportation.

Interviewer: Right. On the last one what would an effective transportation system that would meet the needs of this community look like?

Speaker 3: If we'd figured that out we'd be covered.

Speaker 7: A bus running hourly.

Interviewer: Hourly buses, okay, to Lander and to Riverton?

Speaker 7: Yeah. Right now I think you get the morning bus to Riverton for college students with the early class, then they get there at 10 or 11.

Interviewer: What time does the early bus leave?

Speaker 7: About 6:15, so if they have an eight o'clock class that's the only bus they can catch.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 3: The struggles I have on transportation are more distance transportation. You have clients in the community that need to get to appointments that are not here, Casper, Rock Springs, even out of state that need to get to Salt Lake or Denver. That's kind of my biggest thing on transportation.
Interviewer 2: How do you handle that now?

Speaker 3: I don't handle it right now. I've tried to figure out a way to start handling it, but I haven't had the staff to do. Now that I'm working on building that staff I'm trying to get something going but it's still not going to meet the needs that the community has.

Interviewer 2: Okay. Not to switch topics but has there been exploration in health like telehealth or trying to provide those services here in the community so we don't have to worry about transportation?

Speaker 3: That's something we're working on. We're just not set up yet.

Interviewer 2: But that's definitely something that might help the local people?

Speaker 7: I think the clinic brings in specialists every now and then but I'm not sure.

Interviewer 2: Okay, so access for healthcare. Anything else or are we ready to go to the next one?

Speaker 3: Let's move it.

Interviewer 2: Let's move it, is that what you said?

Speaker 3: I've got a basketball game to get to.

Interviewer 2: So this is just a laundry list of potential topics that could be challenges that could be capitalized on, we've addressed some of them. Does this spark any other thoughts that anyone would like to share?

Speaker 3: I've got one with youth and I think it's a great opportunity with our program since it is in the health field aspect and working in the community. Our focus right now is trying to find ways to help those elders in need in the community. I think for us it's a great opportunity in working with higher ed too as well. It's a great opportunity for youth if they want to go into the field of nursing or in the field of CNA work or any kind of those health care fields to be able to provide an opportunity some way somehow; maybe provide an internship coming through tribal health and eventually providing some support to help them meet their educational needs if that's the way they want to go.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 3: Maybe more with IHS or working with UW or CWC. CWC has a great nursing program, if there's a way that we can collaborate and build a relationship to provide something like that for the youth that are interested in those fields of study. I think that's a great opportunity for us.

Interviewer 2: Maybe some internships and job shadowing? Maybe even a camp around the healthcare fields?

Interviewer: These were specific topics that the taskforce came up with that they were interested in finding out what kind of challenges communities are encountering in these areas.

Speaker 2: The Boys and Girls Club provides activities for the younger children.

Interviewer 2: Okay.

Speaker 2: Then it seems like the teens, they're the ones that don't have a lot of stuff for them to do other than basketball.
Speaker 6: They have the [inaudible 00:49:47] for the summer youth to work and kind of get experience of what kind of job opportunities are out there and what they want to get into. That way when they do hit the high school or college years, when they do decide to go into a major then they know what they want to do.

Speaker 5: What is that one conservation camp?

Speaker 6: Yeah that too.

Speaker 5: They pay 15 to 18, they pay them and take them to Yellowstone and camp out.

Speaker 6: I think South Dakota does too, I can't remember what that ones called. I think they actually give the high school kids college credits, I think 14 college credits or so on whatever ... I'm not too sure what opportunities they have but we usually get a lot of applications or flyers for teens if they want to participate.

Speaker 5: I think they actually get to work there at Mount Rushmore.

Speaker 6: Yeah, I think that's what it is and they get paid for it. I think that would be cool to have some around here too because there's a lot of kids that like to be in the mountains or like to fish. It would be kind of cool to have a youth guiding here for them to show people outside of our reservation what we have here. The youth, bring them in and let the reservation youth teach the outside youth about what's around here. The plants, the vegetation, the mountains.

Speaker 7: Connectivity is that internet connectivity or what is that?

Interviewer: I asked the same question. They are actually referring to relationships. Are the key constituencies connected? Do they talk to each other? Do they have working relationships? Or are people working in silo?

Speaker 7: silos.

Speaker 3: Everybody's programs are working their own things. I think there's opportunities to start working together, I think we've had some talks on that.

Speaker 7: There used to be directors meetings, but they haven't had one in a long time, at least programs go to say what they were doing. What's amenities?

Interviewer: That'd be more like things a community meeting space or the connectivity the broadband. Does the community have the amenities it needs to make these things happen?

Speaker 6: Yeah I think so.

Speaker 7: There's really not much complaints.

Interviewer 2: Transportation could fall under that.

Interviewer: Yeah transportation could be there too.

Speaker 7: Yeah.

Interviewer 2: Local food choices could fall under that too.
Interviewer: Also, I've provided my contact information so if you're on your way home and you're like I should have mentioned that, you can contact me and add whatever you thought of.

Speaker 3: When you start putting this together and there's only four of us here that means whatever happens we get a stipend. We get a small percentage of what pops up?

**Question #6**

Interviewer: This is the most open ended question here but it's really just brainstorm and come up with a wishlist. How do you think University of Wyoming can help the community both capitalize on the opportunities that you have and address the challenges that you have? Think about in terms of ... what they're looking at is their long term big picture goal is partnership with communities, where there is an equal stake for both sides. Whatever is created, is created by the university and the community.

Speaker 3: It's just kind of what you talked about, if you can create an atmosphere and a community centered area where you're providing all those supports and education and outreach component to help people work to those goals all the way around. That would be the ultimate approach I would think. I don't know what you guys think.

Speaker 7: I think since I was helping with the social studies standards there's all these non-Indian teachers around the state that have to eventually need to start teaching to those standards. If there was a way to bring them here for a week, to the reservation, and get first hand learning experience rather than all online or going to the UW to teach about Indian history and stuff about the reservation and the tribes. I think UW can have classes at the Learning Center, I don't know how many classes they have here? I think one or two, at this building. One or two computers but the Learning Center has nine in the lab but provide an instructor to have computer classes for the seniors. Just learning how to stay with technology because I think a lot of the older people are scared of it.

Interviewer: Any thoughts on how university could help ... think of your challenges and your opportunities. When you look at this list, how could university help with the local food choices? You mentioned the sensible nutrition program, is there a next step or a logical building block on that?

Speaker 7: I think they're getting involved with some grant, Montana has but its about your food choices and making healthier choices. Again, it's having the money to purchase, that goes back to the jobs.

Interviewer: In terms of the lack of economic opportunity, do you see a role for the university there?

Speaker 7: If they had some programs. I would really have to think about the kinds of programs our people would take. I think if they were here in the community they might attend. Like Frank said that one program with the bachelor's program, they had a couple of classes and people got their degrees. It was because the classes were right here in Fort Washakie.

Speaker 5: Would any UW instructors as far as professors or ones that are not really in training that would be able to come in? Like Caroline said and be able to teach UW classes that students are taking from CWC online and kind of do a ... I guess kind of over the screen from the university to here for students that are taking classes? Instead of them being completely online because to me I'm intimidated with online classes. That's just one of the things I won't do and I'm pretty sure there's other students around here on the reservation that want to take classes from UW but they need that interaction with the teacher.

Interviewer: Sure.

Speaker 5: Would there be anything like that from UW?
Interviewer: There could be because this process is to figure out what those needs are and how university can help meet them.

Speaker 7: About 30 years ago they had the teachers program where they trained the teachers and they're all working in the schools now, probably for 20 years now. It's getting time again.

Interviewer: Can you talk to me more about that? What was it?

Speaker 7: It was some kind of program that UW provided to the local people here to go into a teaching degree. It was successful. Georgia Bata was one of them. Some of the teachers at Wyoming Indian and they're all getting to retirement age after putting in some many years so it's time to do that again.

Interviewer: That was in the 80s you said?

Speaker 7: Yeah probably about 80s.

Speaker 3: I guess what she was talking about with the Skype type method of learning but more of that visual spatial type learning for native people. Most native people aren't going to take classes whether you're on intercom or online just because the way we learn, we're more visual on the ways we learn.

Interviewer: Right. The barriers in online learning is the technology or just the lack of human interaction?

Speaker 7: Different learning styles.

Speaker 5: Making them feel included into being part of the university. I guess when I took classes in Lander because I couldn't make it to Riverton, I had to do the TV, the Skype thing. It still make me feel like I was still interacting with the class in Riverton. I think that would be something as far as the students that are taking the classes from UW still make them feel like they're part of the university and part of the class with the professor. Like Dave said the visual experience, being included with the other students in the classroom I think would be a lot more helpful for them than just telling them you've got to take online classes. You're kind of on your own. I think that's where the intimidation comes from, I think that's where a lot of them tend to back out from wanting to go to school.

Interviewer 2: Do people have access to the technology within their own home to take those classes at home or is that a barrier?

Speaker 5: I think that's where the transportation to get to the Learning Center for the older ... I know there's a couple of elderly people too that would like to participate and go back to school. But some of them have that lack of transportation or even being able to get to the Learning Center to use the computers. That's where the technology comes into place with being updated on the computers and wanting to know what they need to do.

Speaker 7: I don't think the internet is great in the residential.

Speaker 5: We have a lot of dead spots around here.

Interviewer: Any other, just think back about your challenges and opportunities can you think of any? Maybe go back to that list of challenges and think of ways the university could help here.

Speaker 7: Natural resource classes would be nicer, actually going out in the summertime.

Interviewer: Natural resource classes meaning?
Speaker 7: Learning about what's out there, geology or archeology. I know CWC had some classes but some people want to take junior or senior level classes.

Interviewer: I think also part of what they're asking here is are their natural resources here that could be used? Is there timber, oil, gas, or other natural resources that aren't being utilized or could be capitalized on?

Speaker 7: I'm sure there is. That one stuff for kitty litter, what is that? Does anybody know? We have that here. They make kitty litter out of it, pretty absorbent. Taro had some nice counters they said they got on the reservation. Whatever countertops are made out of, really nice countertops.

Interviewer: Is that an economic opportunity, locally sourced materials like countertops, building materials from the reservation?

Speaker 7: Yeah probably timber.

Interviewer: Okay, well that's all the questions we have now. The rest of this process is that we will continue to conduct these focus groups, there's another ten locations, this is the first one. We'll do a session in [inaudible 01:05:06] and another one in Riverton but also some of the other community college locations so really cover the whole state. Our final report to the taskforce is due on April first and that report will be available to the public so if you're interested in seeing how this process continues that report is public information. As well as the next steps the task force will undertake to move toward achieving their desired level of community engagement.

Does anybody have any questions? Again, thank you so much for taking the time to come out this evening and share your thoughts. I know the taskforce is really eager to hear this input and to get started on this project. Thanks again and travel safely home.
**Transcript: Casper**

**Question #1**

**Interviewer:** Okay, the first one is just, are you aware of UW partnerships and joint projects within your community? If you could, cite examples and the experience.

**Speaker 1:** Well, we're sitting in one of them, I think. This is the joint partnership between the university and Casper College, Union building here. The other one that I'm very aware of is the Masters of Counseling and Education that is available in Casper through the university.

**Interviewer:** Is that completely online?

**Speaker 1:** No, it's professors actually coming to Casper for that.

**Speaker 2:** I'm aware of partnerships with Casper College as well. In particular, the business schools work really well together. I'm on their advisory board, they're on my advisory board, so we try to help that transition of students from Casper College to UW. They do have an online program for business students, but nothing's taught here, which I think that's probably a little bit of a gap that we'd like to address. Then I know the University of Wyoming does a lot with Leadership Wyoming, which I know I went through with Don, and they have a pretty good presence here in Casper as well.

**Interviewer:** Okay. I thought Bill Schilling had RSVP'd for this. I don't know if he'll make it or not.

**Speaker 3:** Yeah, I can just echo what John and Scott said. Maybe the only I can add to it is I'm involved in a lot of things where various UW people are involved. I can give you an example. Next week, the Wyoming Business Alliance is doing a Central Wyoming Economic Presentation here, and Anne Alexander, UW, will here to present, so there's a lot of those one-off things that are going on, but the things that they've already mentioned.

**Interviewer:** Who initiates those things?

**Speaker 3:** I think it's whoever the sponsoring organization is. The one next week's the Wyoming Business Alliance, so I'm sure they got hold of Anne directly at the university. Then that organization's done a lot over the last few years. They had that 23 project, where they went to all 23 counties, and I know UW personnel was involved in that. Of course, like you mentioned, Scott, the Leadership Wyoming. That's all tied in together with the Business Alliance and Leadership Wyoming, the Business Council and all of that. I think it's the sponsoring organizations that really reach out to UW and get their people to come to it. That's my experience.

**Speaker 4:** I know they partner with the local economic development group and the Business Council to manage the local incubator here, the Wyoming Technology Business Center. A lot of involvement there, a lot of people who've come through programs or graduated are involved with that, so it's a really nice partnership.

**Interviewer:** What would be the specific accomplishments or outcomes of those partnerships that are benefiting Casper?

**Speaker 4:** For the incubator, they're creating businesses, that are creating jobs and exploring new technologies. In that respect, I think they've done a really good job.
Interviewer: So there have been a number of startups coming out of that?

Speaker 4: Yeah, and the building's almost completely full at this point with businesses that are getting counseling. They're able to be connected with different groups like SBDC or Manufacturing-Works, as an example, regarding, I don't know, their special needs. They can stay there as long as they need to. Some have come in and moved out very quickly. Others have been there a little bit longer, but it's a really good place for people to focus on their technologies and their businesses, and not have to worry about office space and that sort of thing. They get all the supporting services they need.

Speaker 3: What was the question, again? Sorry.

Interviewer: Just specific outcomes or achievements resulting from these partnerships.

Speaker 1: I've seen different speakers that they've co-sponsored to bring in. They have, I can't remember his name. Works for National Geographic, and he comes in on a rotating basis to speak.

Interviewer: Mark Jenkins?

Speaker 1: Yes, thank you. Yes.

Speaker 2: I've seen tremendous success from our students when they go to the University of Wyoming to continue their education. I've been to some of their awards banquets, particularly in the College of Business, and see a lot of Casper College students do well and win a lot of awards. I see that, and then the other thing that I see is articulation agreements with community colleges as well as the university. Those help those students transfer well.

I think they're trying to get students through in four years instead of five or six, at a minimum of costs, with 2+2 agreements, which I think has been a great partnership with the community colleges. Then I know the College of Business is also extending what used to be, I think, the 30K, which is now the 50K entrepreneurial competition. I know they're trying to get some of the community colleges involved in that throughout the state, rather than just at the University of Wyoming, so I think they're reaching out to try to foster the entrepreneurial spirit there as well.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts, additional thoughts on partnerships or joint projects in the community? That's a good list, there, you came up with.

Speaker 2: I'd like to see more of, rather than the online presence for continuing education, more of maybe some face-to-face stuff. We've got this building. I'd like to see it utilized with classes to give some of the ... I think there's a disconnect between, "Oh, I can continue at University of Wyoming and Casper." Sort of. You can get an online degree, but we don't need this building for that.

I know budget is difficult, and probably try to staff, but we send a lot of students to [Shadrin 00:06:48], to other online programs around the state, simply because, well, if they're going to do it online they don't have to do Wyoming, whereas I think if they had something here that they could come to. I mean, a lot of the students are Casper-bound. They have kids, families and jobs. I'd love to see more projects like that throughout the state, with partnerships.

Question #2

Interviewer: Okay. We'll come back to that when we talk about opportunities later. All right, next question is, are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community, and can you name them and identify their role at the university?
Speaker 3: I already mentioned Anne Alexander. She's here fairly frequently, and usually presenting on economic topics.

Interviewer: She's from Laramie?

Speaker 3: Yeah, she's from Laramie, and don't ask me what her title is now, because it changed. She was doing international studies, but she's an economist, so she's a [crosstalk 00:07:47]

Speaker 1: Provost of something now.

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:07:50] something now. I can't keep track of it. That's one that pops into my head, but I work a lot with Anne anyway on most days.

Speaker 2: Kent Noble, I went through Leadership Wyoming with. He is, I believe, the Daniels Chair of Business Ethics at the University of Wyoming. He comes and actually teaches in some of my ethics courses. He comes up usually once a year, once a semester, as well as, not so much this year, but the previous dean in the College of Business used to come up and visit. We'd share notes and he'd sit through some of our classes. Those folks are all from Laramie.

Speaker 1: Scott Seville.

Interviewer: Scott Seville?

Speaker 1: Yeah. He's the biology-

Interviewer: Okay, and what's his role?

Speaker 1: I think he's been interim dean for the university here in Casper, but he's a biology professor. I know he travels a lot, but he's based out of Casper.

Interviewer: His role now is as a professor?

Speaker 1: Yeah, well, it's one of them anyway.

Speaker 4: I know John Glassburn. He's the assistant director for the Wyoming Technology Business Center, and he actually lives in Casper.

Interviewer: What was the name of that then?

Speaker 4: John Glassburn.

Interviewer: What organization?

Speaker 4: Wyoming Technology Business Center. Jon Benson is the CEO. He's really based out of Laramie, but he is up here quite a bit with the Technology Business Center.

Speaker 2: Steve Russell, from the University of Wyoming as well, sends professors up here to instruct, and I coordinate that with him quite a bit. I don't know what his role is. He's something in the College of Business there.

Interviewer: He's also in Laramie?
Speaker 2: He is in Laramie, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Any other people here in Casper?

Speaker 3: Bunch of alumni that I know.

Speaker 4: Oh yes. [inaudible 00:10:44] Yeah, okay. Hannah Swanbom. I work with her quite a bit in the communities I assist.

Speaker 4: She is based here in Casper.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 1: If I had my email I'd be able to tell you the name of the woman who I worked with who was with 4-H. We partnered last year to do a signing for the kids that were going to go to UW.

Interviewer: The Extension Office, do you think people identify that as being UW?

Speaker 4: I don't know if they do or not. I'm in economic development, and I know they're very involved with the communities. Hannah's done a lot of meetings and she's very involved. Everyone knows her, but I don't know what people's immediate thoughts are, if they connect her with UW right away or not.

Speaker 1: I know I could probably, again, I'm terrible at names unless I have a list in front of me and can prep, but I know one of the women that works in the Ag Extension office, and does those commercials from the ground up, UW Extension.

Speaker 3: Can't remember her name though.

Speaker 1: Yeah, I know. She lives right across the street from the college. Dang it. No, [inaudible 00:13:00], too late in the day for that.

Speaker 1: You're pulling that out of my bag of tricks.

Question #3

Interviewer: These next questions are a little bit more open-ended, and this one in three parts. What is your perception of University of Wyoming as a partner, and when you think of the university, do you perceive it to be engaged with the community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships with you, and to what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Speaker 2: I think they're trying. I've seen more of it in recent years. I've also seen some initiatives. It's kind of a big bureaucracy down there. They have some great ideas that don't come about as quickly as maybe a more nimble organization could effect a change, perhaps.

Interviewer: As far as the engagement with this community, are they soliciting input?

Speaker 3: I think now they are.

Speaker 2: Right.

Interviewer: Now as in ...
Speaker 3: Well, I'm on the board of the Casper Chamber of Commerce, and I represented them at one of the initial meetings on this project here to get the Casper input, but the room was full of a lot of people from Laramie and all over. That's the first time I can remember anything like that happening in a long time. It was interesting because we talked a lot about the history, and I've got a long history, because I'm a graduate of the business program here from when it first started. Then I got my MBA in the early '90s through this program, and it's a lot different now than what it was back then. We got to reminiscing about that.

Maggi Murdock was there. She was the dean when I got my MBA, and she was on my MBA course, and talked about how much different it is now. It seemed to me there was a gap. They seemed to be really engaged, and then there was this gap, and now it seems to be re-engaging, but I'm also aware of their decline in enrollment numbers. I wonder if that may be driving it, and the question is whether they should keep that program with the massive investment they'd have to put into it up here. That's just my observation.

Interviewer: What was different about when you were in the program?

Speaker 3: Well, there were a lot of us. This is just personal experience, and I don't hire people anymore, thank God. I mean, tell that to management. When my previous employer that I was with for 24 years, which I retired from there four years ago, early on, especially when I went back and got my MBA, we hired a lot of grads out of the UW program at Casper. At that time it was called UW/CC. I can tell you then up toward the end, I can't remember getting even a resume or an application from a UW grad the last five years that I was at Wyoming Medical Center.

I don't know where they went. Maybe they weren't turning them out, I'm not sure, but that was a really dramatic change. As an employer, people hiring people, I noticed that.

Interviewer: You have no idea why that happened?

Speaker 3: I don't know if those students were going to work here, whether they had other jobs. I don't know what it was, and it was really odd. I can't tell you the last time I hired a UW grad. Back in the '90s I hired a lot that came out of here. That may be economics too, because there were several downturns. It used to be that before the online schools and stuff, it seemed to me that people were working in the oil field, making pretty good money, and all of sudden they're out of a job.

Then a lot of them won't work in the cold anymore. "I'll go get a business degree and become an accountant, whatnot," go to work for me at the hospital. I just didn't see that anymore. Kim, maybe your exposure was that way.

Speaker 4: No, but I was working on my MBA in the '90s, and I remember the class in that building up there on [crosstalk 00:17:55].

Speaker 4: You went in and sat down, looked at the TV, and that ... Yeah.

Speaker 3: The other thing that I noticed, Michael, was we instituted a policy at Wyoming Medical Center, I don't know how many years before I left. The policy was that anybody who was in management at a director level or higher, so that would be directors, vice-presidents, assistant vice-presidents, that type of thing, were required to have a Master's degree. A lot of them didn't because they started out as maybe nurses or technicians or whatnot, and moved through the ranks, and we had very, very few people enroll in a Master's program at the University of Wyoming here. They were all going to Phoenix, plus the Grand Canyon.

Speaker 1: Grand Canyon University.
Speaker 3: Walden, more of those online things, even though they were offered here, and it didn't make a lot of sense to me, because I thought they were paying a lot in tuition when they could get in-state tuition here for a lot cheaper. There was something missing there too, there was a disconnect, but I had a number of people. Scott used to be in one of the departments I had, in the finance department, before he came to work up here, and I had a number of people that were getting their MBAs because they were in management.

They were going to those online, not even looking at the University of Wyoming. I don't know what the cause of that was. It obviously wasn't money, because it would have been cheaper here, but it may be classes unavailable, trying to work around family and work. I don't know what it was, but it was glaringly apparent that we were not getting UW students, either going here or hiring, because they weren't even applying. That's just from my perspective, where the partnership gap is.

Interviewer: Right. You felt like that was there in the early '90s?

Speaker 3: No, I think it was a pretty tight-knit thing, then it faded away. Kim, you probably know. We were treated as the redheaded stepchild sometimes. Then the Casper Colleges, I remember I had a graduate finance class in the electronics lab, because it was the only classroom they had available. We were sitting on these big benches with all this electronic equipment, trying to learn graduate finance, but that's the way it was. Yeah, we made do, and now they have this beautiful, gorgeous [inaudible 00:20:22].

Interviewer: Those are some of the first distance ed. programs you remember?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: I feel like I'm in a pretty right relationship, partnership, with the University of Wyoming because of my role as the College Counselor for the school district. I feel like they're very responsive to whatever we need. If we wanted them here next week, they'd be here next week. They're always saying, "What else can we do? How else can we engage?" This signing idea last year was, I think, because of [Nikkel's 00:21:08] idea, great idea.

You hear about the kids who get sports scholarships who have signed things like that. They get a hat and little piece of paper. That's what they said they wanted to do for all the kids that were coming to UW. It was a neat idea and we'll follow up and do a little better this year, because it was rushed last year. I think they're very responsive and engaged.

Interviewer: Accessible?

Speaker 1: Yeah, accessible. There's another woman that comes up from the engineering department itself and likes to speak with the kids. I think that in my world of high school, they're very, very engaged.

Interviewer: It seems like that's pretty close to the definition of partnership that they're looking for.

Speaker 1: Yeah, yeah, I would say so, yeah. Co-invested, yeah, developing ideas. How can we make things better? How can we [crosstalk 00:22:09]

Interviewer: Present and listening?

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Great. Any other perceptions of university as a partner?
Speaker 4: One of the things I’ve experienced and probably haven’t been in the last four or five years because I haven't had the situation come up, but when some companies come in and they're exploring Casper and potential locations for putting a facility here, especially if they're foreign, they want a connection to UW. When they get here and they start asking, we've never had anyone from UW come up and talk to them or be part of the tour.

Casper College is incredible. They come in and they'll give tours, they can talk about programs and training and how they can partner with a company, but UW, the company is always being directed back to Laramie. We can do this in Laramie, we have this department in Laramie, which is nice, but a lot of these companies, they come in, they're used to being in communities that have universities, especially research universities.

They come here and they find out we have one, and it's a two and a half hour drive. They don't see the ability to have that partnership. That's been an issue several times, probably not in the last five years, because we haven't had any companies like that come looking again, but that's how it was.

Interviewer: Do you think the university is aware of that gap?

Speaker 4: I don't know. I have no idea.

Interviewer: Okay, well hopefully that's what we'll accomplish with these focus groups.

Speaker 1: They will be now.

Speaker 4: It's unfortunate. They do great things and a lot of those, the foreign companies in particular, are the ones that really want a connection with a university, not a junior college. People are very impressed with Casper College [inaudible 00:24:11] but when they're coming in from Germany and they're in robotics and that kind of thing, they want UW, and I think we've missed that somehow.

Interviewer: Okay, any other partnership gaps? ... Okay, once again, if a light bulb comes on after you leave here, you have my contact information. This report is not due until April 1st, so we're doing these focus groups all through February, and we're going to have to pull a report together. Right, the next one then is opportunities.

Question #4

Name the three grand opportunities in your community, who's working on capitalizing on them, and what have been or are the desired outcomes? You can name as many as you want. We can narrow it down to three later. I know the first group we did this with, they came up with four or five and we narrowed it down to three.

Speaker 3: From my perspective, coming from the business world and not education background, one that pops into mind almost immediately as a great opportunity is Natrona County International Airport is named as a free trade zone, which is a great opportunity to put manufacturing businesses here that can export out of there tariff-free. I know that CAEDA, that's Casper Economic Development, is looking at that. So is Glen Januska, he's the manager, the director.

Interviewer: Can you say that name again?

Speaker 3: Glen Januska, J-A-N-U-S-K-A. That's a great opportunity for Casper and the surrounding county, as far as, I mean, the university could really assist in partnering that with the incubator and some of the other things that you have. That's one that pops to mind here. I think another great opportunity here is
maybe because I come from health care, but we have a huge health care infrastructure here that I think is probably overbuilt for the population, but as a result under-utilized.

It could be Casper, if we could figure out how to do it, could be a destination for medical tourism. That will take a lot of work. There's a lot of politics up here in that because you've got a lot of competing interests. That's another great opportunity that the university could possibly take a lead on. It would be a lot of work, but that's two that pop into my mind.

Interviewer: Is anybody working on that now?

Speaker 3: No, because the politics get in the way. Casper's, you have 60,000 people, we have five hospitals. It makes absolutely no economic sense here. See, everybody that's involved knows they want two things. They want ownership and supposedly the profits that come with it, and they want the managerial control. That's not going to work. You can't have five groups of people fighting over that. It's going to take somebody to get those people to the table and get them talking.

Unfortunately, before that happens, we may see some of these places go out of business, because there's just not enough people to take care of to warrant having five hospitals here [inaudible 00:27:52] that two of them are specialty hospitals.

Interviewer: I had no idea there were five hospitals here.

Speaker 3: Yeah, there's Wyoming Medical Center, which is county, [inaudible 00:28:02] there's Mountain View Regional, which is a surgical hospital, or Summit, which is a surgical hospital, and the other psych hospital, and rehab. From my perspective that's two I can think of off the top of my head, from the business perspective.

Interviewer: Other opportunities?

Speaker 4: I think our location, being centrally located, it really puts us in an ideal location. People can get to us easily, and a lot of businesses that locate here, they're good support services for a lot of major industries that go on elsewhere in the state. There's a lot of opportunities to start small business and grow.

Interviewer: Anybody besides the economic development entities working on that?

Speaker 4: Yeah, I would say the incubator with UW is working on that. [crosstalk 00:29:08] SBDC, Manufacturing-Works. I would say any of those, SBA, all those groups, USDA, Rural development is another one. There's a lot of rural government. We're working on it, and we all work really, really well together. I think we were able to bring in the resources that we need to help the community grow and businesses grow.

Interviewer: Other opportunities?

Speaker 2: I don't know, location springs to mind. We should be a hub of Wyoming for something, and I don't know what. I don't know if it's tourism. I don't know if it's education, I don't know if it's healthcare, or maybe it's of all of those things. I don't know what that looks like, but it just seems with Casper's population, infrastructure, and location that we ought to be doing a little more than we are, and I don't know what that looks like.

Speaker 3: There's another thing I see all the time, here again from my work in the business world, is Casper is awash in money. That's not a lie.
Speaker 2: That's true.

Speaker 3: I mean, there is a lot of investible capital are sitting in banks here, and a lot of people wanting to invest it, but they can't find any place to put it. I had a meeting today that had to do with commercial real estate development, and I'm just on the fringe of that, but we're seeing a lot of that in Casper. A lot of old buildings are being bought up and renovated and then leased, or they're putting restaurants in there and whatnot, but there's a lot of capital sitting on the sidelines.

If somebody could get that moving in the right direction, because usually in the business world, people have great ideas and no capital. They're banging on the doors of venture capitalists all over saying, "Give me this money so I can take my product to market." That's not the problem here. The problem here is a lack of ideas.

Speaker 2: Well, and diversification of our economy, which is what we always face.

Speaker 3: Yeah, exactly. Oil and gas, I think, is tired of investing in oil and gas.

Speaker 2: Absolutely.

Speaker 3: They're looking for something new, and there's some really positive things, but there is a lot of money in this town that's looking for a place to go, because in the bank you're not making it there.

Interviewer: Is anybody working on that?

Speaker 4: There's Breakthrough 307 that CAEDA is [crosstalk 00:31:42]

Interviewer: What was that again?

Speaker 4: Breakthrough 307, and it's people with money have come in and put money into this pot, and the idea is to help startups, those that have great potential. We're not talking laundromats, that kind of thing, but as far as I know CAEDA administers it, so the local economic development group is doing a lot to get word out there on that and reach out to these potential businesses. I couldn't tell you what success they've had, but so far they've been getting a lot of attention, and a lot of people are looking at it, talking to them.

Speaker 3: Yeah, it's an angel fund if that rings a bell to you.

Speaker 4: Yeah, [crosstalk 00:32:29]

Speaker 3: Or a master fund, and what was interesting was when they opened that up, when, about a year ago?

Speaker 4: A little over a year ago, yeah.

Speaker 3: They had no trouble raising money. That's what I mean. There were people lining up to give them money, successful business people. Now they're looking for-

Speaker 4: Now they're looking for the right people to give the money to [crosstalk 00:32:52]

Speaker 3: They need more entrepreneurs.

Interviewer: Okay, any other thoughts under opportunities?
Speaker 4: I think there’s a lot of businesses that have the ability to expand and they don’t know how to do it, they don’t have the right resources. They stay. They just aren’t taking advantage of their growth potential. A lot of them, it’s people that see retirement just right down the road, and so they’re not that invested in it. I think there’s opportunities to connect kids maybe right out of college or younger, connect them with these businesses and establish a succession plan, so people can retire and the businesses can stay on and continue to operate.

All the hard work’s been done, the client base is there, and there’s tons of them. It’s identifying them, and figuring out how to intervene in a positive way, and make connections. In the smaller communities we’ll see an accountant is looking at retiring in five years. It’s the only accountant in that community, but he’s got a good base. How do we bring someone in so that we’re not disrupting [inaudible 00:34:20] in the community and give a lift up to someone who’s maybe just starting out?

I think there’s a lot of opportunities in our community, all our communities actually, for that, identifying them and figuring out how to pull people together and develop a plan.

Interviewer: The first example you brought up of businesses that want to expand but don’t know how, does the university have resources to help them, or they’re just not aware of them?

Speaker 4: I think that’s it. I think they’re just not aware of what potential is out there, what the opportunities are. I think there’s a lot, they don’t know that there’s workforce training grants to help them and [inaudible 00:35:14] of them take a lot of advantage of that, those funds, to their advantage, but I think there’s a lot of people who don’t know about that.

Interviewer: There are, yeah. We see that at every day almost.

Speaker 4: Yeah, and it’s identifying those companies that’s sometimes difficult because it’s hard to get your foot in the door there. "Everything’s just great."

Speaker 4: Yeah, and they don’t want to necessarily talk to us when we go knocking on the door, so how do we get word out that we can make those connections or we can help them?

Interviewer: Okay, any other final thoughts on opportunities?

Speaker 3: You already mentioned the lack of a physical presence and the three to four years Bachelor programs. I think that’s an opportunity.

Interviewer: Can you say that again?

Speaker 2: Particularly with the location of Casper. I think a lot of students from smaller communities around Wyoming like to come to a bigger ... I mean, it’s not a city, but it’s different than Meeteetse. I think a lot of students enjoy that. I think they may come here and some just don’t want to go to Laramie, for whatever reason it is, I don’t understand. Then what is their alternative?

Speaker 1: Out of state.

Speaker 3: Out of state.

Speaker 2: Out of state, unfortunately. That means it’s [Hathaway 00:36:48] and all that, so I would agree with Don. I don’t know, if there was more of a physical presence here in Casper, of the university, I think that would be a great opportunity.
Speaker 1: As many students as there are who want to get out of state to go to school and then say, "Oh, but I want to come back," I hear that all the time, there are students who just don't want to leave and want to do as much education as they can here because for whatever reason, they like it here, they want to make it their home.

Interviewer: Okay. All right, next is more opportunities, specific areas or industries you're looking to grow, and quality of life assets that you have in Casper.

Speaker 3: Any industry that does not have to do with minerals, oil and gas [crosstalk 00:38:08] No, I mean, I say that tongue in cheek, but diversification's the issue, whether that's technology or what. Quality of life, Casper's got a lot of great stuff here. Outdoor life [inaudible 00:38:25] is here.

Speaker 1: Yeah, mountain with skiing, cross-country skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, bicycle riding. They have fat tire races up there now in the winter as well as mountain bike races in the summer run, mountain running, trail running.

Speaker 2: World-class fly fishing.

Speaker 1: Yeah, I was just going to say that.

Speaker 2: Great health care [crosstalk 00:38:54] Good tax structure.

Speaker 1: Yeah, they're doing a nice job with trails and trying to connect those up. We just built one down [inaudible 00:39:07] going towards the mountains. It's going to be great this summer.

Interviewer: Housing?

Speaker 4: Right now it's not bad.

Speaker 3: It's better.

Speaker 4: During the boom it was very, very difficult, over-priced and hard to find, but right now it's pretty good.

Speaker 3: If you're not an outdoors type, I mean, a very vibrant art community of all kinds. We have a great symphony orchestra for the little town of Casper, Wyoming, at least I think they're pretty darn good.

Speaker 1: Theater opportunities, music, music in the park, indoor-outdoor venues, yeah. Speakers that come through town. Plays.

Speaker 3: Lots of restaurants [crosstalk 00:39:50] All kinds of stuff.

Speaker 4: Real good shopping.

Speaker 3: It's funny, for years and years people would complain about there's nothing to do in this town. I hired a lot of people from out of state, because we had to, to bring that expertise in. They'd come here and then they, "I can't believe you've got this. I can't believe you've got that. Guess what we did this week? When I lived in Chicago, you couldn't do that." That kind of comment. It was an odd thing.

Interviewer: You talked, the healthcare industry. Is that an industry that could grow here or is it ...
Speaker 3: Yeah, I think the business volume could grow. I don't think it needs to grow infrastructure-wise. We don't need on MRI on every corner like we have, but yeah, there's a lot of unused capacity, so certainly we could. The problem you have in Wyoming is, you've got Casper's population's centered in the middle of the state, and everything else is on the border. If I'm down in Rock Springs and I need a new hip, I might just as well go to Salt Lake City, where it's cheaper and closer. Something has to be done to draw those people into Casper, and it will take a lot of work but it can be done.

Question #5

Interviewer: All right, now challenges. Now you get to name the top three challenges and who's working on it.

Speaker 4: The weather.

Interviewer: The weather?

Speaker 2: Nobody's working on that one. [crosstalk 00:41:20] Just economic diversification, and I think a lot of the business alliances and CAEDA, and I know the incubator and Casper College. I mean, I think everybody's trying to work on that, but it's like pushing a big rock up a hill.

Speaker 1: Maybe one of the challenges is there could be more communication, more connectivity amongst those groups, I don't know, I'm speculating, to try to make those connections so that some of those dots can be connected. People would know that "If I want to retire in a few years, who better than an instructor of business is going to know who's wanting to stay in Casper," those kind of things.

Speaker 4: Who wouldn't want a jumpstart in their career?

Speaker 1: Yeah, no kidding.

Speaker 4: Come out of college with a degree in accounting, and you work with someone for two years and at the end of it, it's your practice and they're gone, it's all yours. There's incredible opportunity there.

Interviewer: Economic diversification, and then that opportunity is also a challenge, the succession plan for privately-owned businesses.

Speaker 1: I mean, the airport's a challenge. It's expensive to fly in here, it's expensive to fly out of here. That's just hard. I don't know if anybody's ever thought of, or ... It's probably way too expensive insurance-wise to start your own charter business and fly around Wyoming. I don't know.

Interviewer: Is there anybody locally-

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:43:38] when the airport's working [crosstalk 00:43:43] the airport manager. I've been trying to entice United Airlines to up their seat capacity here. It's pretty tough.

Speaker 1: Yeah, I mean, they have gone from props to jets, which is really nice.

Speaker 4: Yeah, haven't we just lost one service to Vegas?

Speaker 1: Yeah, Alliance. We had Alliance.

Speaker 4: I used that a lot for business travel. A lot of people did, and we just lost that in January after four or five years.
Speaker 4: A lot of it, it's just the population. It's fewer people supporting something that's a fixed cost, so it costs more, and people don't want more people here. The biggest complaint you'll hear in economic development, "Yeah, I'd love to have another mall, but I don't want more people here. Yeah, we'd love to have this, but I don't want more people here." You have to understand, smaller populations who choose to live here and have the quality of life, there's some things you're just going to have to do without or grit your teeth and pay it. I don't know what the answer is to that.

Speaker 1: Yeah, that's just one of the challenges.

Speaker 3: There's something odd with that, because in the '80s we had two airlines just like we have now, but they were flying big jets in and out of here and they were always full. There was Western Airlines, which I think got absorbed by Delta. There was original Frontier Airlines, they were flying 737s in here, and they were full, and it was relatively well-priced and everything.

I can't figure out what's happened, because now we have these dinky little jets, that if you're over about 5'7" you can't really get into, and they're packed constantly, and they're exorbitantly priced. I don't know what's changed, because in real terms, fuel prices are not that much higher. That's one of the driving things in airlines, but anyway, like you say, the [dal 00:45:55] thing, everybody of these economic studies I've seen says transportation's a problem.

Then you hit on one, we call it the NIMBY crowd, Not In My Back Yard. There's a pretty good attitude about that. I actually encountered a new group that we can call BANANAs, which is Build Almost Nothing Anywhere Near Anything. They [inaudible 00:46:14] "Well, we got to keep the pristine nature of the West," and all this. That's perfectly fine, but at some point you got to build something. There's just that attitude by a lot of old-timers, "We didn't do it that way when I was a kid."

Speaker 4: It worked then.

Speaker 3: Yeah, exactly.

Speaker 3: I've got to scoot, to go teach, so I apologize.

Interviewer: All right, thanks for coming.

Speaker 3: Yeah, I hope it helped.

Interviewer: Appreciate your input, yes, very much so. [inaudible 00:46:49]

Speaker 3: See you, John.

Interviewer: Just looking some other [inaudible 00:46:53] potential challenges ...

Speaker 3: Take care.

Interviewer: Opportunities for youth, educational opportunities, access to health care, support for entrepreneurs. Any of these things stand out as the special challenges? Here under connectivity, they're talking more about partnerships, relationships, networks, are the key constituencies connected, which I'm hearing, at least in the case of business succession development, no, they're not necessarily connected. Then, amenities, which it seems like you have here. You have good infrastructure, you have good broadband access, community centers, downtown plaza. Any of these other areas stand out as challenges?
Speaker 4: The aging population and the young leaving. We've got a huge gap, we've got a problem there.

Interviewer: Youth leaving?

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Interviewer: Maybe after high school?

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Yes, and after college.

Speaker 4: Going elsewhere and the population's [crosstalk 00:48:11]

Interviewer: The out-migration is increasing? Do you have infrastructure for that, then? You have all these hospitals and clinics and MRIs. Do you have-

Speaker 4: We have lots of assisted living facilities.

Interviewer: Okay, are they full?

Speaker 4: No, I think in Casper, I believe some of the assisted living there's space. I think nursing homes, the very last stage, I think it's really hard to get into them, but assisted living, as far as I know there's some facilities here with space.

Interviewer: What about 20 years from now when us baby boomers start? Are people looking at that?

Speaker 4: I know there's been a couple of studies that the city's done. I don't know what's come of them. I think the city of Casper has tried addressing this, or at least trying to develop a plan, but I don't know if they have.

Interviewer: Okay, it sounds like earlier you said that support for entrepreneurs is strong here?

Speaker 4: I think it is. I'm just not sure a lot of people realize what's available to them. If they could just get their foot in the door with any one of many organizations, they'll find out that all those organizations are connected and they can come together and provide the resources they need. I just don't know that people necessarily know where to go initially.

Interviewer: Do they teach entrepreneurship in the high schools?

Speaker 1: Short answer, no. Longer answers, they're trying to encourage that, that thought process, through financial literacy. It gets brought up there.

Speaker 2: We have an entrepreneurship program at Casper College, but the business school, that's actually a very small percentage of our business majors. Why? I don't know. They found out that an Associate's in business administration transfers better. Wherever they want to go, that's just the reality, whether they go to Laramie, or they go somewhere else. I don't talk to a lot of students coming out of high school that have that entrepreneurial spirit, at least the ones that I see.

They're more, "I want to get work for a big company and move to Denver, or move to San Diego." That's the youth, that's the youth thing that you're talking about, so I think that's intertwined. I don't know if that's a cultural thing. [crosstalk 00:51:03] That's what I did. I mean, I wanted to go to Florida
and come back later, but when I wanted to raise my kids I wanted to bring them back here. I don't know how we tie it, because that's tied, the entrepreneurship and the youth and the education opportunities, that's all tied together.

Speaker 1: That's a really interesting comment, because that is the comment that we hear over and over and over again. One I hear, "But I want to come back and raise my kids here." That is a huge gap between high school/college age and 30-

Speaker 2: 30 to 40 [crosstalk 00:51:43]

Speaker 1: Yeah, but that's a challenge, something that needs to be looked at.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts about challenges? You mentioned students that don't, in business school [addarnij 00:52:23] did in entrepreneurship. Is that, do you think, because it's known that most new businesses fail, or that's just because they're looking for a ticket out?

Speaker 2: I don't know. I think a lot of them want to start businesses, but they're thinking real small, "I don't know that they can do great things from Casper, Wyoming," and you can. Especially now, you can do it from anywhere, particularly I mean, if you're going to be in Wyoming, the infrastructure we have, where is it better? I don't know if it's an educational thing, just exposing them to it, or-

Speaker 1: I think it is because what do we see? We see in Casper, the kids see oil and gas, business, education, and that's what they think.

Speaker 2: Well, look at the largest employers in Natrona County, the hospitals, the school district, the college. It's not Apple, it's not Google, obviously, but it's-

Speaker 1: That's what they see and when I talk to kids, and they're thinking entrepreneurial things, they're thinking, "I'm going to fix cars and own my own showroom."

Speaker 2: Right, exactly and there's nothing wrong with that.

Speaker 1: No, no, no, absolutely. I pay a lot for that, and I encourage them, "Man, if you want to work with your hands, you can start your own electrician company, plumbing company, any of those [crosstalk 00:54:09] and those guys.

Speaker 4: You can never get any. Everyone else is booked clear out. It would be an excellent opportunity if they're trained.

Speaker 1: That's where the entrepreneurial experience is in the career-minded education.

Speaker 2: It's not in the disruptive technology or disruptive processes or new ventures. It's just not, and I don't know why. We don't have enough creative stuff going on, I don't know.

Speaker 1: It's good to think about, right? Sure, good to have this conversation.

Interviewer: ... Any other challenges stand out for you? These are all really good ...

Speaker 4: I think what you have up there are actually not challenges. Our amenities are great, I think community is great, infrastructure is pretty good, [inaudible 00:55:32] so those aren't really challenges. I just think you have a lot to do.
Interviewer: The youth leaving-

Speaker 2: Leaving the town, yeah.

Interviewer: If we had to identify three things, the top three?

Speaker 1: Diversification and youth thing, that goes together really well.

Speaker 4: The reality is, when you talk to a lot of kids even in high school, they know what our minerals industry does. They also know that if they come out at a time when it's on the upswing, they can go straight into one of those jobs at $90,000 a year plus benefits with absolutely zero education beyond high school. We get that. We have a lot of people who come in from Texas, same attitude, teenagers, they know they can do it. They come in and on the downside they get up and they get out, and they leave the state. [inaudible 00:56:38] is just the reality of it.

The kids here, they see their parents go through that. They see their parents make good money, have a nice house, they work in the oil and gas industry and ... It's just what happens when you have something like this in the community. Where I grew up in Colorado, we had the same thing. All the kids knew that when they graduated high school, they were going to go straight into the steel industry, because they had a refinery there.

That's what Mom and Dad did, that's what the grandparents did, and it shut down the year I graduated and left a lot of people not knowing what they were going to do, but that was just the mindset. I think it's the same here.

**Question #6**

Interviewer: Right ... Okay, last question is, how do you think UW can help?

Speaker 4: If I knew who to contact when I'm working with a company or a business, because honestly, I don't know who I would contact here, who I could reach out to. If I'm going to get someone who can actually say, "Yeah, I can come over and sit down with your company and find out what their needs are, and I can talk on behalf of UW," that would be great.

Speaker 2: Well, the College of Business has gone through several deans here recently. That might be a good point of contact if it was for business.

Speaker 4: Pretty much, yeah.

Speaker 2: I know they have an interim dean and they're doing a search now. I don't know that would be the point of contact, but-

Speaker 4: Yeah, if I just knew who it was, because a lot of times, if it's someone from out of state, we usually end up going through Laramie, which really does no one any good up here in Casper. We need someone who can talk to Casper and what's offered here, and can talk to the partnerships they have with the College and SBDC. I know Manufacturing-Works has an office here on campus. If I just knew who to contact, and then I know it's not someone who's only interested in teaching a night class, but someone who can actually come in and talk to the university, that would be really helpful.

Speaker 2: I'd like to see more of a physical educational presence here. I know the trend is online, I know the return on investment is there. I know it's cost-effective. The education is different with online, not better or worse, just different. I think if the University of Wyoming wants to compete in Casper for online students, they're going to lose, for online students, because we're not bound by geography.
If you're going to compete for online students here, you're going to lose. Where you're going to win is, you have a physical presence, even if it's a small percentage. I mean, even if someone wants to get a Bachelor's degree and whatever, and they can take one physical class here a semester, and even if everything else was online, that's going to go a long way, because Grand Canyon University can't do that. University of Phoenix can't do that. University of [Murry 00:59:56] can't do that.

Southern New Hampshire University can't do that, or whoever it is. University of Wyoming could. I think they would help not only keep some of that youth here, but engage them more in some of those other educational opportunities. I don't know if that's cost-effective. I don't know, but if anyone could do it in Casper, the University of Wyoming could. I don't think there's anybody else that can do that.

Speaker 4: Yeah, I think promoting the benefits of having physical classes, as opposed to going online, that they know it's appealing. They think you can go home and put on your jammies, and turn on the computer and get your MBA, but I think if there's a way that it could maybe market itself or position itself to show people the advantages of actually going and interacting with people in a physical-

Interviewer: Right, because that online, that doesn't appeal to all students.

Speaker 1: No, it doesn't, no.

Speaker 2: I don't know what your experience is. I'd be interested in finding out if students think ... because I know what my students think, that they can graduate from Casper College or Kelly Walsh or NC or Roosevelt, and go to the University of Wyoming at Casper full-time. Do they think that?

Speaker 1: Yeah, that's a great question. I don't think so, because I've had a couple ask me. They were inquiring, and they were hoping, but then saying no, that you start at Casper College and then you transfer to University of Wyoming. There's some crossover while you're doing that. That a good description?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: I'd tell them.

Speaker 2: I think with the students here, I think what we see is they think, "Oh, I can just go across the way and take classes in this building. It says the University of Wyoming in Casper." Then they come over and they talk to people, and they realize, "Oh, it's 100% online?"

Speaker 1: Oh, see, I didn't know that.

Speaker 2: Why do you have that sign there, then? Now, I know there are some classes that they teach here, and I think there are some programs that you can take, but I don't think it's many, and maybe they have to select with budget purposes, but I think that's how you guys could help is, there's a misunderstanding, and until that student's ready to graduate and they go talk to the people in this building right here, they don't know that, "Oh, it's all online? Well, why should I go to the University of Wyoming, then? Why do you have this building here?"

I think they can help either educate or remedy it in some fashion. I don't know what that looks like, but I think they could, like I said, they're the only institution I think that could do that.

Speaker 4: What I hear often, and I don't know if this is true or not, people say "If I go to take classes at the Casper College, they don't transfer to UW. I'm going to do all this work up here, and then ..."
Speaker 2: Really?

Speaker 4: Yeah, I hear that all the time.

Speaker 1: What happens is, is that you have an older population whose experience that was. Now they're feeding it to the younger generation, just like, "Oh, you have to take the SAT if you're going to go to California to go to college. No, you don't. If you want to take the SAT you can, but every college takes either test, but it's parents who, that's their experience.

If you were going to Flagler you had to take the SAT because they were on the East Coast. No, not anymore, but I think that gets passed down because that was some people's experience and it's not the case any longer. That is something that UW can help with and that education of getting that word out there, that you can start at a community college and you get your Associate's degree, all those credits, you can bring that to UW and you'll be a junior, that kind of a message.

Speaker 2: The other thing I'd like to see them do, and we have started doing up here is, we have Two Plus Two agreements with the community colleges, where you go two years here and two years there. Why don't they go further into grade [inaudible 01:04:34], back to the high school and say, "Okay, if you're going to be an engineering major, well, here's what you should start thinking about taking when you're a sophomore, junior and senior," rather than, "Hey, I graduated from high school, but the last math I had was Algebra 2. Now I got to take ..."

I think, and I don't know how they do that because all the school districts are so difficult. Maybe that's the role of the community college, I mean, Casper College can certainly work with the high schools here, but I think to integrate backwards, to get those students, because I cringe when I hear people from the University of Wyoming say, "Oh, it takes six years to get a Bachelor's degree." Of course, you're going to say that. They're collecting $17,000 a year. "Yeah, take six years, not four." Of course, but maybe that's part of the reason why some of the kids are leaving.

Speaker 1: That's right, because you can-

Speaker 2: Or they get frustrated and-

Speaker 1: Because their school didn't guarantee, "We'll get you out in four," and one of the things that some other schools are doing now is saying, "We'll lock the price in when you start as a freshman." That's a big deal. I can go to a private school, smaller class sizes, and have the same amount paid in at the end of four years, or six years at the University of Wyoming, and that's 30 grand.

Speaker 2: They really do say it with a cavalier attitude, "Five and a half to six years." Well, 17,000, that's 34 grand extra. Don't be cavalier. I don't know what that looks like, but some type of integration backwards where the students are either a little more prepared or truly can get through in four years.

Speaker 1: ... Yeah, that would help.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on how you thought you could help address these opportunities, challenges?

Speaker 2: I think they struggle with the economic diversification just as much as we do, because I know they're trying. I really do. Everybody's trying in Wyoming [crosstalk 01:07:01]

Speaker 4: If it were that easy it would have been done decades ago.

Speaker 1: [inaudible 01:07:10] I'm just thinking about that. Maybe there's a way to start asking that question of the students when they arrive on campus, both here and there, start to ask that question, "What can we
do to keep you here? What can we do to diversify? What do you think would work in Wyoming?" Because we're asking all the people who have been here, been down the road already.

Speaker 2: What about the people that UW draws in from around the world? I mean, they have a tremendous asset just in their student body.

Speaker 4: They do. [crosstalk 01:07:46] I think most of what they do, they keep everything in Laramie, and it makes sense. That's where the university surely is based, and it makes sense that you don't see those people up here, you don't see research going out of here. We're just a place where you go in, sit down, and take an online class apparently. I don't know that that necessarily helps university when the image is down there, and they're involved with Laramie, that they don't care about Casper or any other place in the state.

I know that's probably not the right perception, but that's the perception for the people here, so that's a Laramie thing. I don't know how you overcome that, but I think it can be done.

Speaker 2: Well, we've all heard the University of Laramie.

Speaker 4: Yes.

Speaker 2: That's what I'd love to see them break through.

Speaker 4: That's what they need to do. It's our only university and it's just the mindset. It's been here forever and ever and when you think of UW you think of Laramie. I know UW's been here for years, and yet people don't think about it in that respect. When you think of it, you think Laramie. That's where all the talent is, that's where all the buildings are, and that's where all the classes are.
Interviewer: Okay. So they have developed six questions and they're pretty straightforward. The first one is are you aware of UW partnerships or joint projects within the community? And you have specific examples, and what was the experience, what were the results?

Speaker 3: Historically?

Interviewer: I think they're looking for stuff that's happening now.

Speaker 3: We have the UW partnership with our school systems, Epp Score. Yeah, biomes project. What else. We are now in the early stages of one with our community elders and aging, to make that more available to the community. But that UYO program, before they really put it together, they want to pull together this community seniors who are part of that aging umbrella and then develop programs specifically to meet their needs versus just a shoot it out a template, fits all people.

So I really like what they want to do. They're going to make it specific to the Arapaho community.

Speaker 1: Are they educational types of programming or-

Speaker 3: Yeah, educational, information sharing, resource sharing. Just to be more inclusive of Arapaho people, and this is was the initial meeting tonight. Yeah. It was with Babette ...

Speaker 2: Hernandez.

Speaker 1: I was just going to say, Hernandez.

Speaker 2: Hernandez.

Speaker 3: Is it Hernandez?

Speaker 2: Uh huh.

Speaker 3: Okay. No, it was Cruciatot.

Speaker 2: Oh, really? Someone different?

Speaker 3: Somebody else. Cruciatot, because she said it was a Portuguese name. Yeah. And with those two-

Speaker 2: Probably with youth, UW's Upward Bound program, that works out here with the school districts and then that was the only program ... and my daughter went to Upward Bound and I was in Upward Bound but I didn't go to school in the state of Wyoming. She went all the way though Upward Bound through high school. That was a really good experience for her.

But now CWC has the Upward Bound program. So that changed, it was a shift. I think that they still offer both Upward Bound projects.
Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Just trying to think what ...

Speaker 3: I think the Upward Bound with CWC is with Gary Trautman and Mark Harrison.

Speaker 2: Is it BOCES?

Speaker 1: It's separate.

Speaker 2: Okay, okay.

Speaker 3: Quite a while ago.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: We heard about that a little bit last week.

Interviewer Like 30 years ago. That long ago.

Speaker 3: It was quite a while ago, yeah. The last education program with [inaudible 00:03:30] through the tribal college where they graduated with 13 community members with teaching degrees.

Interviewer Do you know where we can find more history on that or ...

Speaker 3: You have to talk to Marlin Spoonhunter.

Interviewer Okay.

Speaker 3: Yeah. Because he was part of it.

Interviewer Okay.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah and the another thing UW did was ... shit I just lost it. It's just been over the years, in all the different, been involved with the university one because they're the only ones that offer four year scholarships. I think they were running a program for some of our community members who would travel to Casper to do outreach. That was before they had the outreach school at CWC. So there was some ladies who would go to Casper every weekend with their classes and then come home. And that was through UW. So I don't know how that was set up, that program.

I graduated Outreach at CWC.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewer Okay, any other partnership thoughts before we go to the next one-
Speaker 2: Yeah, okay, University of Wyoming education counselors for school districts to get ready for college and so I was actually [inaudible 00:05:10].

Speaker 1: For helping students fill out the FAFSA?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I went to all the school districts on the reservation and helped high school kids get ready for college.

Speaker 1: Yeah, that would be like Teffany Fegler, Hattie Penny, worked around the county for that.

**Question #2**

Interviewer Which is ... that's the next question: are you aware of UW professionals serving in the community and what their role is with UW?

Speaker 2: Yeah just Teffany and then all the people that used to work there are probably not there anymore. They retired or let go. Cindy Gustin and I'm trying to think of his name, he worked at TW something, at the army, and now he's not there anymore. He retired. [inaudible 00:06:03]

Speaker 3: Amy McClure's with the [inaudible 00:06:05]. She retired, now it's Amy Schmidt

Speaker 2: Yeah. Amy McClure.

Speaker 3: Wealth of information.

Interviewer Okay.

Speaker 3: Oh, here's one. You know the professionals who ... he was consistent, he didn't work directly in our community, was Tim Rush. He was always here in the community.

Speaker 1: What was his role?

Speaker 2: Teaching program.

Speaker 3: He was in a teaching program at UW. But he's well respected and well known in his community. He's now retired, just a cowboy.

Speaker 1: Great.

Speaker 2: And then Raina Tendor.

Interviewer What's that?

Speaker 2: Raina Tendore. Raina Tendore, she works for UW right now and she's their ... what is she?

Speaker 3: She's the AIS ...

Speaker 2: American Indian ...

Speaker 3: American Indian Studies, she's the director now. She graduate with one of my students, yeah. She was just appointed to that.
Speaker 2: Last year she ran a youth program down at UW before. It was almost like an Upward Bound program but it was for kids to go down, I don't know exactly what they did but it was a youth program.

Question #3

Interviewer: Okay, so those first two are pretty specific. They get a little more open ended now. This was one is just: what is your perception of UW as a partner? When you think of UW, do you perceive it to be engaged with community on a deep level? Go investing and developing partnerships? And to what level do you perceive university being present and listening?

Speaker 2: I think that university, I'm just talking about here recently, I'm thinking that UW are not really good at communicating. I think that if they're gonna do something, they need to come into the community and they need to have community engagement. And they're not doing that, and what they do is they come through and they say we want to do this here, and they just find somebody to contract with and then they do it.

But there's no direct communication and I think that if they want to be successful in working within our community and providing what we need in our community, our needs, then I think that needs to happen. That hasn't happened.

Speaker 3: I'll agree with everything she said, because what happens is that ... right now we know that the native students from our reservation at UW, abysmal level. And that's a given. And it comes back to the fact that UW would come out sporadically. Whenever it's academically/politically expedient for them to come out. But there's no sticking around. And they bank on the fact that our students would stay over there.

But if they're going to stay over there, you have to have programs that are gonna keep them there. It's called maintenance and retention services for students. Granted the lion’s share of the responsibility for a successful student is upon a student, still the institution can at least in a casual way have some efforts to say, “We want you here, we want to see that you graduate.” And that hasn't been happening.

So I believe that we're now at a point where UW sees that these two tribes who have invested lots of money, the Shoshone, Arapaho in their endowments, and those are now to millions, and yet working with us directly, long term, hasn't happened. How about if both councils decided ... it's no longer JBC, what's it called, inter tribal?

Speaker 1: Inter Tribal Council.

Speaker 3: Inter Tribal Council. How about if somebody put out on the table said, “You know, UW is holding ten million, or whatever the dollar is, they're holding ten million dollars, we're gonna take it out.” Well that would cause a political brouhaha. Yeah, and the UW’s going to have to step up to the plate and say, "We better work with them, the tribes."

Historically, it doesn't seem like it's happened to a degree that we're comfortable with. But we're now at a time where UW sees that is a must to have a face to face relationship with this community. And that's good, yeah. The scales have been removed from their eyes. Now they gotta work with us. If they want to see our students there, whose wonderful that Renette was now the director of that. And you've got Brother Charles working in there, Pary, and others, that there's some tribal people.

But that's only two. And they're over there. We're over here. And like Milly just alluded to, maybe they need to contract with some tribal people to say, "This is what we really want to do. Now let's put some skin in the game."
Interviewer: I was going to ask if you have an example of your first comment where you said the representatives from the university come and make contact but then they contract with somebody else to complete the project.

Speaker 2: Yeah, so how many times have you been out here?

Interviewer: Have I been here?

Speaker 2: Yeah. How many times have you been out on the reservation?

Speaker 3: Well, Michael works right out of Riverton.

Speaker 2: I know but how many times have you been out on the reservation?

Interviewer: Oh, I don't know. Dozens.

Speaker 2: Okay, and how long have you been working with the reservation?

Interviewer: Only it's been the seven years that I've been with the college. But again, I have no connection to the University of Wyoming.

Speaker 2: Okay, but I'm not asking that. I'm giving you an example. How about you, how many times have you been out here?

Speaker 1: Well I used to work out here.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: But I've been with the college now for seven years.

Speaker 2: Okay, so you're familiar with what, and you know what I'm asking.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Yeah. That's exactly ... that's a prime example is that a lot of people want to come out here and they want to do these types of informational gathering but they have no idea, they have no idea. They've never been out here, they have preconceived notions of what it look like out here, and so that's an example. Is that they work from their office down there but they rarely come up here to do that work and to meet people and talk to people and start building a relationship with whatever foundation, organization, program.

So for me I think that's part of what they need to work on, is they need to actually come out here and do that. When you talk about an example. Specifically, I don't have an example. Think about, I'll have to think about it.

Speaker 1: Do you know if ... you said Reinette.........

Speaker 3: Reinette Tendore.

Speaker 1: Okay. And she's based out of Laramie, is that correct? Is she able to come up here a lot with her job to do outreach here physically or does she stay-
Speaker 2: She just now started that. Last year she was just doing it as part of being an actual student [crosstalk 00:13:22] graduate assistant. But now she just got hired within the last two months?

Speaker 3: Maybe two months.

Speaker 2: So pretty recent so I can't answer that.

Speaker 1: Okay. ‘Cause I would be curious to know if part of that job's role is to spend half their time here doing recruiting and retention for-

Speaker 3: But here is what I would say because I know her and her husband, they were students of mine just same as you. I bet you they're here every weekend, just to touch base. And that says something. But the point being, what Milly's saying, is that we're gonna have people who want to partner with us. What is your perception of UW as a partner? Well, the perception is that partnership has been nice on paper but it hasn't been reality.

That's would be my answer. I just think it's necessary that we have UW people who are going to be out here. Not based out of Laramie, but based here. And that would go a long way to work directly with CWC, with tribes, the families, touch based with Renette or James Troshberg, however.

It calls for a lot of networking but networking at a tribal level is not about this. It's about this. It's human beings, regardless of ethnicity, gender, it's human beings. This is what's been missing.

Speaker 2: And it's not just UW. It's pretty much all the different programs. The state programs, Fremont county programs. We encompass entire Fremont county yet we don't receive the services from Fremont county. And Fremont county will service Lander or Riverton and Lander but they won't service the major part of Fremont county.

So that's kind of what we're talking about, as we're talking about... it's not just UW that we would like to build programs that benefit us. And not... when you have a partnership, everybody gets something out of it. Both partners. But usually it's the other people getting the partnership, they're the ones that are getting whatever out of it and it's rarely us getting anything from it. Just the fact that they cannot be related to the service and they're gone. See you later.

Speaker 3: To add to that, all these programs, our gas and oil tax dollars fund those programs. 50 years, hundreds of millions, nothing's come back to us. Minimal in some state tribal programs. Of minimal drops. Pennies on the dollar have come back to us. And now here we've got this foundations at UW, we should have a greater delivery of services from UW.

Question #4

Speaker 1: I think that, does that lead into our next question, as we move on opportunities? Are you okay if we switch because I think that's the direction we're going here.

Speaker 3: We better move forward because I was gonna bust out my Amster hat. I was going to [inaudible 00:16:37].

Speaker 1: I think this is going to be a good question to build on some ideas that I think you're thinking about here but what are three grand opportunities in your community? Where can we go? It sounds like you're kind of thinking of some ideas, you're starting to allude to those, but what could those things be? Is there anyone working on capitalizing on those opportunities? What are those outcomes, what do you want out of what you can see here?
Speaker 3: Well, if I may ... when you say name the top three grand opportunities, we have existing programs that are opportunities in and of themselves. But grand, they are not, because we don't have the capital to maximize what we could do. And if UW wants to get into one of the three top grand opportunities, UW's gonna have to help out to much greater degree with capital so that we can move forward on maximizing existing grand opportunities.

Speaker 2: I think they want to hear-

Speaker 3: I don't know what three grand opportunities we have here.

Speaker 2: I do. They're not the way that UW would look at them as grand opportunities. I think that when we talk about economic development on the reservation, one of the things that we found from the study that was done is that our people are not well, and it goes back to historical trauma and so how do we get our people well?

So it goes back to treatment, wellness programs in our community, and working with our youth. So it's youth leadership, just leadership in general, and then civic engagement. Empowering them to understand that they have say in everything. Even in voting. For me those would be the grand opportunities would be to work on wellness with their communities.

It may be, for example, University of Wyoming for their graduates are going through getting their degrees or master degrees in counseling, maybe working with different programs on the reservation to have their students come up and do those-

Speaker 1: Their internships?

Speaker 2: Yeah, their internships on the reservation. Just providing more opportunities for us. We want to help ourselves, we want to take that and we want to do the work for our people and we don't want anybody else coming in telling us how to do it, because really actually it's us that have to do the work. But that would assist us in everything that we're doing.

Our tribal college, maybe come in and assist in us in that process and helping us get to where we need to be so that we can apply for the money to have our own college and to be able to provide those opportunities in our communities, all of them. Because you know the reservation is a huge area. When you say communities, I'm thinking the whole res, 'cause that's where I work. I work all over.

That's how I see collaboration and networking for us with UW is to assist us in providing those services to our people so that we can start building a healthier force with all of our elders, our children, and our adults.

So when you say grand opportunities, I'm not thinking money. I'm not, and that's the difference I think between us and everybody else is that for me, it's not based on money.

Speaker 1: You're looking at resources.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: I am and just even, we can get into water, our land, our wild game. There's so many things we're working on. Yeah. I'm not talking about selling it. I'm not talking about economic development in the definition that everybody else [crosstalk 00:20:56] I'm looking at people, yeah. People power.
Speaker 1: Great. That's fantastic.

Speaker 3: Check 'cause she was working on capitalizing. I want to think that our business counselors. We may have individuals because a lot of people have ideas about what we could do when I mentioned timber. We got a lot of bark beetle kill that has to be harvested. Pellets, trucking, logging, and re-fertilizing, I don't think that's the right word, but replanting those areas where that kill took place so you don't have erosion.

We got so many hundreds of thousands of acres that is unfarmed. You could have Ag industry with classes with CWC, UW. Again you have trucking industry. You have farming. You've got the college education. But maybe every field build five or six houses so that people could live there and have a unit manager and have the farmers and their worker bees.

Then you've got trucking and you can send organic wheat free hay around the country to all these horse tracks around the country and pay top dollar. There's places around the world, Saudi Arabia, who are buying alfalfa from all over. We could be a part of it, that's economic development. Then with the proceeds, again, do something more for the community.

We need ... I remember Rick Radisson [inaudible 00:22:28] Patrick will agree with this. Right now as we talk we need minimum one thousand homes. One thousand. You can't just plop down a home. I mean permanent homes. You need infrastructure. Roads, water, sewer, electricity. Money from that could help out because [inaudible 00:22:47] government or housing. Patrick can only build, what, 11 homes a year. Yeah.

So we've got some internal things that we can capitalize on if we had, to use Milly's words, if we had those resources. It's not always about money. But the necessary dollar is needed to move forward.

Interviewer The next set of questions is about challenges so-

Speaker 2: Renewable energy. We need to move in that direction.

Interviewer So that's an opportunity.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 3: Our areas up here have already been studied where we're in the top five areas for consistent wind flow that will move those big turbines. With the capital, we can put up enough turbines, even if we just funded the electrical needs for reservation tribal members, so people wouldn't be paying ... I was talking to Mike Henway a couple of weeks ago. They had a bill last month, a couple months ago, $800 for High Plains.

Speaker 2: For heat.

Speaker 3: For heat.

Interviewer Electricity? Yeah.

Speaker 3: We could be funding our own electricity for our community members. That’s just bear sweat. And then when the weather turns warmer, High Plains, legally and ethically, will turn off the electricity. They won't do it during the winter because people will freeze. But in the meantime, that $800 starts building up, so come May, they may owe $3000 and tribe can only help out so much.

So again, our homes needs to be weatherized. Those are some of the challenges.
Interviewer: More on the opportunities. Specific areas or industries you wanna grow, you talked about a couple of those already but what are the quality of life assets you have here, what's unique about this community?

Speaker 3: You know what I think? Regardless of the physical, the tangible stuff, we're happy. We still pray, we still sing, we still dance, we have song, ceremony, sweat. I see that children I work with at school. It's not as if it's all doom and gloom. Yeah, there's tragedy. There's death. But it's still good. We haven't thrown in the towel.

But you know what specific areas like wind industry, solar. If every house here just had their own solar, there's electricity, there's hot water. Solar's expensive. But then you start looking at the tail end of ours, or you looking to grow, and you look at states around the county who are now growing hemp. Not that I'm an advocate of the ganj, but there is hemp that can be used for materials, for clothing, for industry. It doesn't have to be smoked. You look at Colorado to the south, they've got a surplus in their bank 'cause they went that route. Washington went that route.

Myself, I've been worked in alcohol, drug programs for 20 years and then in the federal correction. I don't endorse it. It's just another means for people to fall prey to abuse so I don't endorse it but we have to start to really push the envelope and say what could we do reality based to help out the community?

Speaker 2: I think the quality of life, too, what he talks about is that we find that our tribal nations ... I realize this but I just knew about northern Arapahos because I'm northern Arapaho. But I knew that the majority of our youth, like 80% of our tribal population is under the age of 25. So I know that that's why my job is so busy working with the kids is I understand I'm racing against time. Because when we look at the number of elders we have, we don't have many left. And so for me I know that soon ... and in my age group, there's not very many of us either. So I know that soon we're going to have to step into those roles.

So leadership is key. I feel like our culture is a major part of our life and I think that that's what we're working on, is reteaching our kids about our culture, strengthening their identities so that they can take those roles that they would detect. I sometimes I feel like I put too much pressure on them because I'm like you need to be doing this and this and this and this. And sometimes it's just hard because I feel like I'm putting too much pressure on them.

But as we move along, I know that that's what we're reaching is our children. And we have to invest that time and our money into them so that they can push us into all the areas that we need to go and pushing education. Sergio earlier said that our kids finally got new schools and if you look around the state, we had to try really hard for our schools and it took us years to get our schools and you know what, our schools are beautiful. And our kids deserve it, our communities deserve it and it's crazy how we have to wait that long to get school systems. It's so unfair.

I don't want to talk too much about the negative aspects because there's a lot of things that we have going and quality of life, for me, the only way I can say is that I went out there, I lived out there. I left when I was 13 years old and I came home when I was 18 back to high school and then I left again. And I went to college and when I came back and then I started a family, I didn't want to raise her anywhere else but here. Because I raised her with my religion, I raised her around her grandparents, I raised her around all her 28 first cousins and they're all like brothers and sisters. For me, that right there, I can't get that anywhere else.

For me, I feel like I gave her everything and now it's up to her and she's gonna live her life and what she's gonna decide what to do with her life. For me I think that our quality of life, a lot of people look at the negatives but there's a lot of positives. I don't like to go down that road because working with kids I can't afford to. I always have to be thinking of the positive.
So I think that when we talk about specific areas or industries that we're looking to grow, it's our kids. It's education, it's educating them so that they can take us, take my grandkids and my great grandkids, take care of them. Because if you look at our tribal nations, we are multimillion dollar businesses is what we are. So it's gonna be up to them what they do with that, that's their legacy. I want them to be well and I want them to be good and I don't want them to worry. I [inaudible 00:30:27] go out there and live and a lot of people do, a lot of our kids never leave the reservation. I want them to leave the reservation and get that experience and come back.

But for me, I did that. And I came back and I know I'm here. I'm gonna stay here because I understand that when you go get education, you come back and you help your people, and that's what I'm doing. And I'm okay with that, that's something that I feel really good about. I've lived here my whole life and my area has always been the [inaudible 00:31:05] area. But my work is across the reservation, yeah. And even our border towns, Lander and Riverton, you can work with their kids there. We make sure that they get the services because they don't get it from Lander or Riverton.

So that's pretty much ... to talk about quality of life, those are important to us.

Speaker 3: I agree with her. That's why I started saying that a song bath ceremony children. It's still good. But there's so much more that needs to be done. And Milly alluded to this several times. It's about education. Our kids must be able to read, write, compute, common sense, creatively think. Yeah. We got a big chore in front of us. Especially when the state are testing and I don't agree with their motives of testing. And vilify us because they say that 70% of our students are below efficiency. And 30% are.

Well I venture to say that bring all these other students from around the state and live here with us. They're gonna be below proficiency. Our students are very capable. I see it everyday. We just have to stay focused on it. And I've said, and I've used this phrase, too. Where tribal operations are multimillion dollar businesses. And we as people, regardless of being tribal, we as people, we cannot run a multimillion dollar business, and this is Windall Cheenum, these are his words, I heard that at an economic development conference 20 plus years ago.

We cannot run these businesses with nickel and dime attitudes, with nickel and dime educations. We must have college prepared people who are professional, ethically oriented, sound for the future. It will be done. It's happening. It's happening right now, even with our council. It's just work. And I've lived off ... I've been hung on 11 years always came home all my life. This community knows who I am.

And I've always ... I like what Milly says. I tell the students, "Leave. This place will be here. [inaudible 00:33:33] to see. Leave, come back, wait 'til you finish your degree. Buy a couple of homes in Phoenix or Denver. Then come back. We'll still be here." And I did exactly that. Never gonna leave. This is it. Snow and all.

Speaker 2: I love the snow.

Speaker 3: Even if I slip on it.

Question #5

Interviewer Okay so now challenges.

Speaker 3: I think we've addressed all of those already. We already know what the challenges are.

Speaker 1: Do you have anything that you want to add to ... I mean I think we have talked about that.
Interviewer: Are there some other ones maybe that we didn't touch on there one? Do you have people who are the [inaudible 00:34:26] support for entrepreneurs, you have young people who have an idea that want to start a business, and enterprise but just don't have the resources to ... they don't know how.

Speaker 3: We have a program. [inaudible 00:34:37] program, isn't it-

Speaker 2: Wind River Development Fund, yeah, that's what that's about.

Speaker 3: Entrepreneur stuff.

Speaker 1: Do any of these other topics spurred any particular additional thoughts?

Speaker 3: Any one of them, you could write a small paper. Really, you could.

Speaker 2: Even the access to healthcare too. Because if Wyoming would have passed our healthcare ...

Interviewer: The Medicaid expansion?

Speaker 2: Yeah, Medicaid expansion. Then that would have really helped us because how it would have helped us is our people would have been eligible for healthcare and for the ones that need to go to treatment, they feed it toward treatment.

Interviewer: What is available to them now?

Speaker 2: With our programming, it's about $10,000 per person. I don't know what it was then and I don't know how much we have now in there but we can always send poor people to treatment.

Speaker 3: Per year.

Speaker 2: Yeah, per year. If they had the healthcare then it could be so much more. Because even our kids are really struggling to be able to ... they have kid care so that helps with them but for all of us, 10,000 tribal nation, if we had over 60% of them, like 6,000 people that healthcare, they'd have that opportunities to be able to go get health.

I will not say all of them would, but I'm saying the majority would. They have that, open that door for them, because of the poverty cycle and all of the social ills that we deal with in the reservation. We're the leading ... what was the leading, the age that we ...

Speaker 3: Oh, the life expectancy for men? Arapaho men, 57 years of age. Other tribal men around the country is like 61. Arapaho women, 63. Other tribal women, maybe 63, 65. But the non tribal men in America can live 79 to 81 years of age. So 57 to, let's round it to 80, we're talking 23 year difference. If this were happening in Scottsdale, Arizona, I can tell you Senators Flake and everybody else, it'd be convening commissions and Senate select committees and why is this happening.

But within the people, no problem. Kind of like when Milly made mention of our schools, I was up in our Port Washington gymnasium and school. Bout damn time. A hundred years that school has been there. Asbestos, lead pipes, even our Wilman elementary. It's about time. And yet schools around the state of Wyoming, Casper, they get a new high school every five or six, seven years. They don't have to wait. There's that serious racial disparity.

Speaker 2: Yeah, racism. It's a challenge.
Speaker 3: Sometimes people take offense when you throw out the R word. It's reality 'cause of this. And Wyoming still has a lot to grow. I saw it on a state level, serving as a liaison for those two years. I can tell you this, in the legislature, I'm gonna say that maybe 20% in either party, primarily Democrats, they see you, they nod, they acknowledge you, say hello.

But the 80%, they see you but then they look through you or they go around you. They couldn't even talk to me. And I think a lot of it is fear based. They don't want to hear from an articulate Native woman, an articulate Native man. We put fear in them. That's called racism. It's gotta stop. But that's personal experience, it's history.

But right now I'm home, we're doing the best we can and it's good. Tomorrow that sun's gonna rise up, be a good day. And now when I go out to my car, I shuffle real slow. That Saturday just before general council, I shuffle out there. Ah jeez, I knew I was in trouble. Damn I ate it hard.

Question #6

Interviewer: So last question. How do you think the University can help ... I know you touched on some of these things already but ...

Speaker 2: I think that like we said at the beginning of that, UW really does need to start building partnerships. And they need to work on the tribal level and start building relationships there with our leaders. I went to a meeting ... I actually am helping organize [inaudible 00:40:02] on the reservation, it's called Search and Rescue. I had all the WRPD, Wonderbrook Police, I had them there and I had Fremont County Search and Rescue and Lander Search and Rescue there.

These men have been working together for SAR, for Fremont County, had never been [inaudible 00:40:28]. It was the first time that they got to meet each other. That's what I'm talking about. So it's time consuming and for me, I think that that's how it's going to have to start is that UW is going to start building partnerships and they're going to have to start coming to the res.

I built a partnership with [inaudible 00:40:50] leadership school and I had them come out to my office. A lot of those ladies had never been on the reservation. So now we meet in my office or one of the other areas and then the next week we go back into Lander, to their national office. So we go back and forth like that. And so I think that by doing the partnerships, because collaboration and networking is so important, I understand that. I try to work with a lot of different programs so that we can assist each other because I know that it's easier to have help than to do it by yourself.

If they have a better way of doing things, then I want to do it that way, I don't want to say I control this, and this is mine, and this is how we're gonna do it. Because I feel that we've already been through that too many times and I think that historically that's probably why we have those walls that go up and when we look at an organization like University of Wyoming, we're like, okay, no want to go there, I don't, because we're doing good the way we're going and I just don't want to deal with UW right now.

Even though, for me, it's about taking walls down. Taking them down and sit at a table and do the discussion and get to the same place and all that so they can explain things. Because I know that we have barriers, communication barriers between us and all other organizations and I think that that probably is the biggest problem that we have in creating these relationships that we need to have.

That's what I think. I think that UW can do a lot to help us, but it has to be 50/50. It can't be any of this, okay we're going to come in and do this study and then leave and that's it. And we don't get any benefits of that study. And so I think that in order to be successful in becoming collaborating and networking and building that relationship, it [inaudible 00:43:06]. Our tribal councils, they're the ones that run everything on the reservation but there's a lot of different organizations that need to be on the
table too. At the same time. Like our school districts and all of our different programs, whatever it is, whatever the topic is or whatever.

Interviewer  Okay. Well thanks for coming and sharing your thoughts. And I will email you the [crosstalk 00:43:41] so if you have other thoughts that you want to share later on, you'll have my email and we'll include that in the final report.

Speaker 3:  When do you hope to get done with all of the 13 statewide ...

Interviewer  Well, I'm glad you asked 'cause this is our timeline. So the focus groups for the [crosstalk 00:44:04] all through February into early March. And then the final report is due April 1st. And then I'm not sure when it will be available to the public but it will be made public.
Transcript: Powell

Special Note: The audio recording did not work for the first two questions. Facilitator gathered responses via email from attendees to re-clarify the first two questions.

Question #3

Interviewer: What is your perception of UW as a partner. Do you perceive them to be present and listening in the community?

Speaker 1: I want to say no.

Speaker 2: I was going to say in Kodiaks [inaudible 00:00:17], yeah. [crosstalk 00:00:18]

Speaker 1: I was going to say what I feel like we're in Siberia. We're so far away from Laramie that we get lost. And now, the one person who was active in our community ... That won't be replaced.

Speaker 2: Yeah I totally agree. I think that even as nice as it is they have that Park Avenue complex. Northwest has a decent presence there, but UW's right there but it just seems like it's not.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: You know by comparison. But ... So yeah.

Interviewer: Can you, explain that a little more; you said it seems like it's there but it's not?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I never see you [inaudible 00:01:20] that often I know they have some classes and stuff and it's certainly not set up to be the same thing that Northwest College is in that area, but, I just think that, yeah, I feel like that Bighorn Basin actually has a hold against the left off the table when they start talking about trying to do things that are ... out of Laramie out of UW and I think with all the talk about workforce development and of course the endowed and then ... I just think that we need more of a presence. We need more people coming up and having groups like this and getting some community leaders around and figuring out, you know what they can do to help our little neck of the woods grow. And I don't get that at all from them.

Speaker 3: Think back over the last few years and I think of UW what comes to mind is the UW foundation. They certainly have had some strong activities and gatherings in Cody. I don't know that is what UW is looking for I realize that UW Foundation is necessary and important and they do good work and they need to be out there out there and raising money but my ... That leads to my thinking about the UW presence in my community as being one of fundraising rather than one of partnerships, so, for what it's worth.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 4: One of the things was up on the board previously was an exchange of ideas and information-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-
Speaker 4: I would struggle to name information that heads south from Park County. I think we do somethings that come to us [inaudible 00:03:16] fundraising and programs that kind of thing. But as far as a perception that they're up here gathering data and taking it back that in someway might help us later. I have a hard time thinking what that might have been in the last few years.

Interviewer: So what would a partnership look like? What should it look like?

Speaker 3: I don't think you can negate the importance, back to Sandy's point, of a person who is dynamic in the community and represents the university, someone like Tara maybe in a modified role. But you need a point person. You need someone who is the face of the university really. Who ... If there are university issues, if there are questions, if there's liaising that needs to be done. Everybody in the community knows who to go to for it. And I think that's critical. It could be much larger than that or a single person or anywhere in between. [crosstalk 00:04:31]

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:04:32] a lot larger. Maybe it would be half of that Park Avenue complex and but I mean, dreaming big ... But yeah, just somewhere you could go or someplace that would have a real positive impact, gathering that information providing some curriculums, helping out with workforce everything that you would expect a university to do would be a game changer at least for our area I think.

Speaker 1: I also think without that presence, here being so close to Montana, that there's a huge amount of leakage from a commercial standpoint students going to Montana because we don't have a presence of UW here particularly. And so there's no positive impact that UW has here and I'll bet if you look at statistically, there's just a huge amount. I mean, a bunch of my friends kids went to Bozeman and never even considered UW because that's where they went to play. To ski to hike or that sort of thing and so I think UW misses ... Especially on border towns, I've gotten the same story kind of Sheridan leakage out to the Black Hills. And so as you are looking to increase your customers which are students, you know, what are you doing up here in the hinterlands to make that a viable choice for those kids, other than the halfway house culture.

Speaker 3: I'm not sure what the key is to a university presence ... And we do have Northwest College that offers a lot to the communities in terms of academics. So what is it that we would really look for as a community for this half of Park County complex. Would they offer academic classes would it be adult education? Would it be making sure that when a Shakespeare program comes to Laramie it also comes to Cody? I'm thinking all of that.

Speaker 2: I think all of the above. And I think that ... and Northwest College is a great partner. It's imperative that we keep them. I think UW has probably a wider, broader curriculum and the amount of resources that they have. Which is ... Be very helpful to, you know, help with those kind of educational ... I mean, in thinking like, he Mike- Right? Said ... Shooting for the star, kind of, thinking big kind of mentality. You know, having two big educational pieces Northwest College and UW just kind of working at the same level in Cody would be very helpful for our town.

Speaker 3: You know, one example of that that used to happen, and this was when I was in Shell, actually, that is the big one, [inaudible 00:07:49]. I used to ranch in Shell and we had University of Wyoming partnered with ranchers, individual ranchers to pursue what they called UW Department Ag Department, faculty called CRM, coordinated resource management programs, which were enormously helpful to local agriculture. I have no idea if there were ranchers or farmers in anywhere in Powell and Cody that took advantage of that or not. But, and I don't know if it still goes on today, the coordinated resource management program. But it was something that was very specific and it spoke to ranchers on certainly kinds of landscapes that needed assistance. In looking at their
Central Wyoming College

landscapes and their livestock operations in a more holistic way. And it was a terrific program and I have no idea if it continues or not.

Interviewer: Some of the ... In the first question some of the partnerships you referred to, do those come meet the standards of that they laid out in this question of UW being engaged on a deep level, co investing and developing a partnership or is that just more of a service that they provide or how would you characterize those partnerships we talked about in the first question?

Speaker 2: Well I was the bridge for the partnership in the first question, at least the example that I gave, so. I really can't say I did ... I mean, just ... They have in that program made it so I could connect these two people. But UW wasn't up here saying, "Hey we got this" or "What kind of business school issues do you have that we can help you out with?" There wasn't anything like that.

Interviewer: So then more driven from the community then from a mutual approach.

Speaker 4: I would say not to dwell on this too much, but when we had that position coming out of the ag extension office, that was a really tangible way that the university contributed to the function of our community. Because they had this person who'd go in and facilitate difficult situations and make some of our non-profits more effective, make sure the community was actually engaging with each other in a constructive way.

Speaker 4: We saw several years ago she coordinated a vision setting for the Chamber of Commerce that involved 50 people from across the community and all this stuff. Those are the kinds of effects that you'd hope that those kind of partnerships would have if you think about what a university should do in terms of educating and enriching residents of a state, particularly I think a land-grant university. We send a lot of our kids to Laramie and they don't tend to come back.

And at the same time I think there's a gap in UW having a visible presence in making this part of the state more successful. Whether it's research around ... And there might be a lot of ag research and stuff going on, I don't have a lot of visibility to that whether it's business stuff whatever else, other kinds of things the university might do in terms of providing resources. We don't see a lot of impact in that in this corner of the state and as a result, there's probably less chance that some of those bright kids that we send off to UW come back here because the university's got an opportunity probably to do a little bit more in developing this corner of the state. And I don't mean just in the business perspective it could be cultural, it could be ag, whatever it is. I think in a big picture perspective, if we're sending our kind of young, bright minds down to Laramie the people in Laramie would be doing something to enrich our communities and doing it in a visible way.

Interviewer: Okay. Any other thoughts on UW's level of engagement as a partner?

Speaker 1: It's just, you know ... With the first question we kind of struggle to find those partnerships, so, obviously it's not deep-

Interviewer: Right.

Speaker 1: And obviously it's not. You know, we know who they are and maybe what they do or maybe not. I mean if there's no really from what I can tell, any deep relationship between this part of the state and ...

Speaker 5: And to address the issue of the dark office over in Cody. The 52 people that got let go from UW last year, one was my office associate. She went onto a wonderful job but that really hurt because I mainly
work over here on the Northwest campus. I go on Mondays over to that office but it's sad. We've lost Tara we lost my office associate, yeah. I'm glad you're stepping up.

Interviewer: So Tara left and just wasn't replaced? They just didn't replace the position.

Speaker 5: Yup.

**Question #4**

Interviewer: Name the three grand opportunities in your community, who is working on capitalizing them, and what have been or what are the desired outcomes. You don't have to limit to three either.[crosstalk 00:14:07]

Speaker 3: So this is UW aside, this is grand opportunities?

Interviewer: Grand opportunities.

Speaker 4: And whose working on them currently?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- or is anyone working on them.

Speaker 4: I want to defer to the mayor and the Chamber on this one.

Speaker 4: The Chamber project.

Speaker 1: Well, I want to say being on the board Forward Cody, that Forward Cody is our economic development organization. And that we have recently facilitated Cody labs expansion, a 50 million dollar expansion, for a production facility to make pharmaceuticals and I think that's an important ... And they currently have 130 people working at the end of this expansion they'll have over 200 I believe and good paying jobs and fits into the ENDOW thing perfectly with the diversification that we're less dependent on the price of oil and I think that's important. We've also been facilitating the expansion of a couple of gun manufacturing companies, which once again fits into the ... let's get more ... less dependent on the price of oil and I think those are things that are super important and the city's been so supportive of all of those things because we have to go through the city to get the grants from the state and you know the Chamber is doing a good job as well.

Interviewer: So the Forward Cody, the city government, and the Chamber are the three players in that?

Speaker 4: Forward Cody is really the driver in that and the city [crosstalk 00:15:58]

Speaker 1: And that's pretty much privately funded, that organization. So it's not ... you know, things grow from the ground up. Nothing grows from the top down. And when you start with top down things, it all filters down into nothingness. So you have to start from the ground and you have to determine what's important in the community. And when we get these top down things, you know, they don't work.

Interviewer: Do you have an example of that?

Speaker 1: And when you simply throw money at things they don't work.

Interviewer: Do you have an example of a top down thing that didn't work?
Speaker 1: I don't know how this ENDOw thing is going to work. How this top down, you know, the governor says we need diversification but who's driving that? Diversification in Cody's different than diversification in Gillette, it's different from the diversification in Cheyenne. A so the impetus has to come from the community. And really maybe from like Cody Labs maybe from a single business owner from a guy who moved to Cody because he liked to hunt and he had a brilliant idea for a thing that he could patent and then he needed to grow his business and then his business was bought by a large corporation, and now it can grow but without that guy coming to Cody to hunt, we don't have any of that.

Interviewer: That's a familiar story in Wyoming. People move here for the lifestyle.

Speaker 1: And that's why tourism is so important because a lot of people who move here their first experience with Wyoming is Yellowstone Park.

Speaker 4: Sure.

Speaker 1: And then they think, "Oh I could live here. So the cooperation of tourism and economic development is key especially here.

Speaker 3: I think one of the grand opportunities that we have kinda of addresses some of the questions that we have if we can partnership more closely with the University of Wyoming on an academic side to address the issue that you just brought up. We could take students from Park County and to be more specific, Cody, and educate them from the cradle almost to the grave and they would never have to leave this area with a little more intense partnership and maybe I took the grave to one extent but with our school district six and then with our concurrent and dual enrollment Northwest College, the University of Wyoming, our population doesn't have to leave Northwest Wyoming and I think that's a grand opportunity that we have and I think that we are working on that. We could get Dean and Lisa, but NW College and the University of Wyoming are working on that, but I think that's a grand opportunity for our students in this area. And they can stay right here and get their entire education.

Speaker 4: Because, I think that does kind of ... You know, whatever you want to call it, workforce development or anything, I think one of the opportunities is, if you look at UW now, one of the kind of shining stars in that thing is the geology department and the engineers they turn out, it's directly tied to our energy industries, right? It is a nice, kind of closed loop, ecosystem. There's an opportunity for UW to get out ahead of that a little bit more and we could use the Cody Labs thing. There's going to be 200 people that work there from my understanding. Maybe a majority of them going to be chemical engineers. So what kind of a program do we have a UW to produce those types of people? They might come here, they might go somewhere else get it, you know ... Get that employment out of their degree but we can do something there.

What are the other things? So, like that degree that's coming out [inaudible 00:20:35] I've talked to several people ... Been involved in some of that ... whole thing with that and that's an opportunity, I mean, that's a degree that's aimed at things that are the Northwest corner of the state. I mean, there's the environmental tourism stuff. 50% of the hotel rooms within Wyoming are within a little 75-mile circle that has Cody and Jackson in it. I'm not sure how much they've engaged in this corner of the state in the conversation around that, degree. As a matter of fact most of the conversation hasn't engaged anyone in this corner of the state in a meaningful way. The big opportunities are to match hopefully good education and things that people want to do with what's going on up here. And taking the opportunities like the degree. And what do they call it: Tourism and Natural Resources, or something. I know it's out at Hobbes, but, you know, there's an opportunity there for them to engage our community much more closely in those kinds of development opportunities.

Speaker 1: I'm only aware of the one meeting that I got copied on. They met with Keith McAllister, the other education-
Speaker 1: Faculty and Marni Crawford, maybe Vern Duly but I only know of one meeting. Dean, were you a part of it? Yeah, yeah. So and then I got an email about it. I'm like you, I need more.

Speaker 4: Which is kind of interesting and please take it this for what it is. Meeting with folks in academics is one thing but if these guys want jobs outside of academics, probably worthwhile to interface with other people in the community and I, the amount I know about it was just because Jessica Westroom, whose in the Hobbes School and was involved in putting this all together with Victoria Zero I think, she was involved in that, I served on a committee with them last year. And you know, we got to talk about that quite a lot in that committee but I don't think engaged community level very much outside Laramie and the academic community but, you know, that's something I think that the university is probably doing right is the big idea, the execution, probably is more if they engage more with the hinterlands in the state.

Interviewer: Okay. Other grand opportunities and you don't have to limit it to three either. Specific industries that you want to grow here?

Speaker 1: The one department that I'm sad that fell away was the education department. My husband was able to do his whole UW degree in Powell and then they cut that program three years ago, the elementary education program, and I'm on a committee that speaks up pretty loudly. Because you guys are right, people don't want to leave this beautiful area. And then currently, you might not be aware of this, we have no UW student teachers. So the new superintendent, Jay Curtis, he's a UW graduate, he was sad because we're not able to then recruit them to be good teachers in our communities. So, I'm a squeaky wheel on that one.

Speaker 4: Very surprising, no UW student teachers.

Speaker 1: No. Yup. Yeah. So that's sad. Don't get to tap into that pool.

Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewer: So, that program was combined distance education and-

Speaker 1: Never had to set foot Laramie campus it was all taught up here and a NW faculty or two taught for UW and Northwest College.

Interviewer: And besides you who was working on that?

Speaker 6: There was a huge committee called the Teacher Education Initiative and it's got lots of people on it. Powell people, Cody people. So they did come and do a focus group last fall that I attended. And they heard from students loud and clear, "We want to keep teacher education up here too."

Speaker 3: One other sort of grand opportunity, I think, this may be too big. But one grand opportunity I think that we can in Park County we're always as a community looking toward and looking at and dreaming about is the fact that we're surrounded by enormous acreage of protected public land. And our relationship to our protected public land is extremely important to us. It's life or death for this community. That's why people come here because they're on the way to those protected public land places. So what I'm getting at is that as we plan for the fate, if you will, of protected public land moving forward, I think the leaders have been the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, [inaudible 00:26:23] Outdoor Council, Climbing Wilderness Association, you know leaders like that have taken charge of ... and then some other kinds of multiple use groups actually that have been leaders and trying to shape the future of our relationship to protected public land. And I think maybe that's something that the University of Wyoming could be more ... of great help to us because of the resources that you have there and the knowledge that you have at University of Wyoming.
Interviewer: Well, how would you envision their role?

Speaker 3: You know, maybe a public education role, participating, partnering with some of these other organizations to bring, to educate the public about the value of one or another aspect of a plan. Whether it's an examination of these road less areas or these wilderness study areas or you know. I think there maybe some kind of an opportunity there too. To help educate the public. Course a lot of this has to do with the public doesn't live here, you know, the rest of America is land-formed too, everybody else too. But still I think public input and public comment, is driven by knowledge and it's amazing to me how little a lot of people know of about ... the public lands that surround us.

Speaker 4: Why even just again, back to that facilitation. A lot of those conversations can get pretty strident. And there have been some really good people convened ... conversations-

Speaker 4: But there are very strong viewpoints on both sides. And I think the university has a role in making sure that those are professionally facilitated.

Speaker 4: It's one they've advocated. The other thing that I would just say from a bigger perspective ... I mean, they've advocated that facilitation role back at my position. The other thing that I would say is from a research perspective, and how they utilize their student resources and all that stuff. I'm aware of very little actionable research from UW that affects this part of the country. Affects UW, or affects the Northwest corner of the state. Yeah, I know there's a lot of ag research-

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 4: I see that, but that is about the end of it. Like-

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 4: And we can really use it. For example, there's no one that knows how many people come through Park County during a summer. It's really one of the basis of our economy.

Speaker 4: No one knows.

Speaker 1: Well Park County travel when we do a visitor survey, which we do about every three or four years we use the University of Montana.

Speaker 4: And so, you know, and if you [inaudible 00:29:53] other industries, the arts or whatever it is. We really fly blind as far as any data to make decisions around living up here. It's hard to get any sort of actual data, no matter what we want to do. We have the basic stuff like household incomes, you know, things that are based on taxes, but that's about it. And UW could ... I think there's a myriad of ways that, you know, could contribute just by researching, collating some of that data.

Interviewer: Okay. And aside from the amazing public lands that surround this area what other specific quality of life assets do you have here?

Speaker 2: I think that it would be tragic not to say the museum, I mean, [inaudible 00:31:00] of the West. And I know that they're trying to partner with that tourism thing, cultural resources degree. And just the cultural jewel that that is, just for the area. That's certainly an asset.

Speaker 4: Yeah, I mean, we've got a pretty ... Park County in this part of the country has a pretty lively cultural aspects. There are a lot of writers and artists of whatever ilk that are here. That's probably another option for UW to engage. However that looks.
Speaker 2: We actually have a pretty decent music ... I mean, there are quite a few solo artists and [inaudible 00:31:59] in town. When I was down in Lander month or so ago, I found this low-water band thing-

Speaker 2: Yeah! I was talking to those guys and they were just ... and they know. There's just so many musicians in the Cody area that are around that ... I mean, way more than they even have even in Lander, which, you know, Lander's pretty culturally young, you know Knoll's and stuff-

Speaker 2: I mean, they've got a lot going on there. But it was kinda nice to hear somebody from outside of Cody telling me how cool our little music area-[crosstalk 00:32:43]

Interviewer: And lots of venues for them to perform?

Speaker 2: I don't know, there's at least maybe, maybe there's a half a dozen. I mean, I count like Juniper and some of the other bars and stuff. In the summertime it's a lot easier, they can play outside, but yeah. Like six to eight, maybe?

Speaker 3: They even have a band shell kind of space.

Speaker 3: Which are way cool. [inaudible 00:33:10]

Speaker 3: If we're still on grand opportunities-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 3: For this state, I'll toss this out, I have no idea what role your risks play. I have no idea how to get arms or brains around this. But someone mentioned here earlier about people around the margins of the state orienting elsewhere and so forth. The grandest opportunity this state has, in my mind, is keeping people in Wyoming. We hear retailers here whine about people going to Billings to shop. I was born and raised in Cheyenne. They whined about people going to Colorado to Denver and Fort Collins and so forth. Now we whine about students leaving the state for higher education or whatnot. Well, they grew up in those families where that cultural kind of practice was instilled in them. And I really do think it's a cultural kind of thing in this state that I've always thought boils down best to the perception that people have that quality is someplace else. So they're constantly looking for that across the borders and so forth. I don't know how to get out this, but if you just think of the population within say a hundred miles of the border all the way around, that's a lot of folks.

Speaker 4: That's a lot of the state.

Speaker 3: Yeah, it's a lot of the state, yeah, it really is. But I do think it's a cultural issue and I don't think it's going away and I don't think it's easy to target. But I sure see some opportunity there as a guy who was born and raised in this state.

Speaker 3: Some of the things that work against that are the fact that in those places, you know, in the southwest corner of the state everybody looks at Salt Lake. Well, the tv stations come Salt Lake. Yeah. The newspaper they read in Evanston is Salt Lake, and so forth. And then here with Billings Gazette and it's in Montana. I don't even get Wyoming public tv on my tv I get ... or radio or whatever it is. And I get both of them. But I get Montana loud and clear on both tv and radio.

Speaker 3: So to some degree- [crosstalk 00:35:47]
Speaker 3: Being in South Dakota, you know [crosstalk 00:35:49]

Speaker 3: Yeah, sure.

Speaker 3: And every, you know, and then Cheyenne it's the Denver weather that you're looking at and the Denver news. So that's, you know, unfortunate that it tends to engage people and maybe pull them in those directions.

Speaker 3: It is unfortunate ... But it's, on one hand, it's a little dichotomous because the very thing we've talked about that we like is the rural areas, the low population and so forth but we tend to focus toward those population areas where the major television stations are and daily newspapers and so forth. So maybe it's just one of those things that is always going to be that way.

Speaker 2: Well, I think that cultural kind of mentality of having to go find quality elsewhere could probably be somewhat addressed if we had a little bit more ... If we had a network within the state. Like a UW presence ... More ... I hate the phrase "hinterlands" for the area that I live in. [crosstalk 00:37:01] Anyway, but, I mean, if there were more of a presence up here I think that would slowly start to counteract that cultural thought that you've got to go to anywhere but the University of Wyoming to get a really good education when, you know, like say, you know, your mom and dad or whatever are taking some classes while you're in you know, junior high or something and you see that kind of feedback and that education kind of instilled in them from a campus that's unique to the state. So, I mean, maybe that's how they can try to overcome that to some degree.

Speaker 1: A neat thing that President Nichols introduced a year ago was the WUE Scholarship for western states. Before that we didn't have that Scholarship for Montana, Utah students to want to transfer. They love it at Northwest College but then they have to pay out of state tuition to go down to Laramie. So now if they have a 3.4 GPA and an associate degree they can get the WUE Scholarship and I'm getting a lot of ag students that want to go down to UW.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And we can steal them out of those states.

Speaker 2: I'll also say this as far as that goes: there is still that silo kind of mentality in the state of Wyoming. I mean, how many graduates from Northwest transfer to UW still? I mean, that should be probably ... Whatever that number is it should be more.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: And I think that some of that is probably lost on ... Because of the way ... And I don't know this, but I mean, maybe that's because of UW being like, "We don't really, I mean, we're ... " You're the community college system and, you know, we're here whenever you want us instead of actually going actively in these areas and say, "Hey"

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: "Come to ..." Having a UW person setting up for all the AA kids that are getting ready to make their next transfer and being the first conversation they're having, "Hey, come to UW. We have this program for you. We have this amount of credentialed professors here. We have, you know, snowy range right there." I mean, talk about trying to sell it a little bit or at least bridge a little bit better between those institutions I think.
Speaker 1: So I've worked in hiring a long time, 25 plus years. I was the career transfer coordinator at Northwest and I can tell you, even 10 years ago it was hard to transfer to UW. Which it shouldn't have been because we're in the same state. This past year they hired a consultant named Heron Consulting and that was the biggest thing they said, "You really need to glean these transfer students." When they come to UW, their GPAs are higher than when people start as freshman."

So it's ... They didn't need to hire a consultant, I could have told them this. The people in the state are already here. You can easily wine and dine them if you just get up here. So now with Hathaway and these two plus two plans that they've developed over the last few years, it is a hundred percent better. I have only worked in this position two years but I can honestly say, ten years ago I don't know if I would have wanted to work for UW. And I know that's on record right now, but, it is way better and President Nichols has done-

Interviewer: Okay we can edit that out if you want.

Speaker 4: I think you have to make it easy though. Because-

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 4: There are four four-year institutions that are closer to where we live than UW.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 4: Right? Because you've got Montana State you've got the ones from Billings and BHSU.

Speaker 1: And even Black Hills State is closer. Yeah.

Speaker 4: I know.

Speaker 1: The other thing that UW maybe needs to look and a great opportunity is that there are a lot of us that have a Bachelor's Degree or a Masters Degree and we're looking for more education but we don't want to leave home. And when President Nichols was here and did our initial tour and was talking to people I went to one of those meetings. And overwhelmingly young people in the group said, "I have my Bachelors I need a Masters or I want to get a Masters and UW made it so hard that I went to some online school." And then I think a lot of that was the lack of presence here.

Speaker 1: And the difficulty of transfer credits and even people that their Bachelor's degree was from UW-

Speaker 1: They found the barriers to getting into graduate degree programs and being able to stay here to do those programs was insurmountable. And it didn't seem to have to do with money-

Speaker 1: It seemed to have to do with ease of entry.

Speaker 3: Accessibility.

Speaker 1: Accessibility.

**Question #5**

Interviewer: That's actually a good transition into the next question, which is: challenges. So, now we talked about opportunities, now what are the top three challenges in your community and who is working on them and what are the desired outcomes.
Speaker 1: [crosstalk 00:42:37]

Speaker 2: Encapsulated right there and then whose working on it. I'd love to put some to put some of my time into it I just don't know where to start sometimes. But, yeah, I don't know who else if anyone is really working on trying to make these programs so they're more accessible from an online presence from UW so you don't ... You know, you can have the outreach here. I personally am contemplating, you know, looking into a Masters in Public Administration. Luckily, I can actually take that I think online from UW. But, you know, I gotta do the all the legwork myself to go try and find that out and sure I could probably ask someone in this room but prior to this evening I might have had a hard time trying to, you know, connect the dots to get there without just calling directly down to Laramie. But ...

Interviewer: Those other students you refer to that want to pursue another degree are they looking for a distance education or would a, or do they want a physical presence here?

Speaker 1: Well apparently from I heard at that meeting they're not having a physical presence it's just that some online universities are easier to get into. And not just get into from an academic standpoint but navigate the accessibility. And I heard that over and over and over again. I, were you at that meeting?

Speaker 5: Yeah, I was there and the biggest one is the counseling program you have to travel three weekends a month to Casper in the winter. So, everybody I talked to, and I don't even want them to be on the road, you know, slick road. So, with ... To me a big challenge in our community is mental health and I really think we need more Masters certified people, counselors and then here this program is making it difficult. So they do go elsewhere to get online counseling degrees.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 3: Part of it might be awareness. From the University of Wyoming standpoint. People in the Northwest corner here may not be just available of what's available to them.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 3: I'm saying, you know, I agree that it's not always accessible but I ... sometimes we just don't know what's accessible to us as far as that goes.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- yeah.

Interviewer: Back to yours. You said mental health is a challenge, you mean, just access to treatment?

Speaker 1: Treatment, suicide prevention programming, yeah. There's been [inaudible 00:46:10]

Speaker 2: And our state should be leading the charge in trying to educate and having degree programs for that.
Interviewer: Is anyone working on that?

Speaker 1: Well, we do have a Bachelor's in psychology that I'm the advisor for for the distance students, but after that I just don't even feel right telling them to get on the road to Casper three weekends a month. There have been some that have done it. And they, you know, the motel room expense, the gas money ...

Speaker 3: Wasn't there some ... Didn't we have some conversation about bringing that program to Cody at one time, Lisa?

Speaker 1: Uh, I've, I've-

Speaker 3: Is that really-

Speaker 1: I've had too many roadblocks.

Speaker 3: Not only is that a need in the Northwest. The need to have qualified people to be able to do that. The counselors and that sort of thing. It looks to me there would be the opportunity advanced degree in this area to train the counselors-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 3: Who ... People on that line.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 3: And make it accessible.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 4: Can I ask the question?

Speaker 4: What responsibilities are on these things does one have even have as a land-grant university. You said you looked that up.

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:47:24] Yeah, just wanted to know what's a land-grant university about. They were founded for military tactics for agriculture and agriculture outreach. But also to provide a broad liberal education to people who could not afford what at the time was an ordinary university ... 1862. So it's ... Those are the sort of ... That's the mission if you will.

Interviewer: Absolutely. Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Good summary.

Speaker 3: I'm not sure how we're doing with the military tactics.

Speaker 4: Seems like a big opportunity for me.

Speaker 1: Foreign Air Force. [crosstalk 00:48:04]

Speaker 4: Some other things to consider on challenges. I think youth, that's come up quite a bit, the challenge of keeping youth here. Access to health care, support for entrepreneurs, infrastructure, aging population that's been a theme in some of these, connectivity, and by connectivity meaning are there
relationships, networks, partnerships in place to address these challenges or exploit these opportunities.

Speaker 3: Access to healthcare seems pretty good here.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 3: For our county. We're fortunate.

Speaker 1: I think we still struggle with economic diversity. No matter ... I think ... We're very ... Especially in a property tax base, 75% of our property tax is paid by the mineral industry. And so when the price of oil goes down the valuation goes down just by virtue of that. So I think that whole economic diversity is a challenge for the world. Not just us and not just Wyoming.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 1: But everywhere.

Speaker 3: I'd say access to healthcare if you can afford it. I think there is certainly, and I don't think unique to Park County, there is certainly an economic disparity that exists and so there are a variety of ways that those things are being addressed, the free health clinic, for example, open one night a week, that sort of thing. And the Program [inaudible 00:50:12] Foundation, they grant forward poverty workshops to help people understand what the issues are when you're struggling economically. So there are some different groups that are nibbling at those issues, I think and making some progress in those areas ... but ...

Speaker 3: You know when you hear about someone really struggling, they're trying to hold down a couple of jobs and they're, you know, you go to the Citizen's Academy to learn about what goes on with the city and one of the big issues, I can't say it's a big issue, an issue that I learned about in that class was there are people who are in danger of getting their utilities cut off because they can't pay their bills. And that's not saying the city is hard-hearted that's saying that there are people who are really struggling. And I don't know, that may be leading down a path that UW can't necessarily be involved in, or I'm not sure what that I see a role for those kinds of things, but those are challenges here-

Speaker 3: Just like anywhere else.

Speaker 4: Well, I went to, you know, there are a lot of dynamics in there, sometimes people are trapped in those situations that UW can't affect. But there are certain numbers of people that ... They can't afford to leave, they're working two jobs, and they don't have access to extended education where they could perhaps get other jobs outside service industry or whatever.

Speaker 3: So as a way out of that being education-

Speaker 4: Right.

Speaker 3: The access isn't there.

Speaker 4: The access isn't there and obviously not everybody that's in those spots.

Speaker 3: Sure, sure.

Speaker 4: There's a wide variety of things-
Speaker 3: Sure.

Speaker 4: Mental health, [crosstalk 00:52:17] whatever-

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:52:17] Everyone's got their particular issues.

Speaker 4: Right, right, right. But, you know, I know that a lot of people have to leave to get degrees to move up on the social ladder. Oftentimes, people are trapped here because they can't leave and we haven't done a good opportunity-making ... Or we maybe haven't done a good job of making those things come accessible for the people in this corner of the state.

Interviewer: Okay. I saw somebody's ... When we talked about aging populations somebody sort of nodded in agreement, is that? I know a lot of Wyoming communities that's a big issue.

Speaker 3: Yeah, well, that, well ... I think the sort of flip side of that is youth retention or youth attraction whatever, however you want to articulate that maybe it's the same thing. It's the same issue. But I think a significant percentage of youth leave all Wyoming communities. The question is, do they come back? I think it's good for them. Don't you? [inaudible 00:53:30] ... My daughter's out of here. [crosstalk 00:53:33]

Speaker 3: You're doing quite well.

Speaker 3: But I have a feeling that she'll be back. I have a feeling that, you know, she'll be back. I think the question is, will there be here something here-

Speaker 3: Well, what's the opportunity, what's the draw? [crosstalk 00:53:46]

Interviewer: Right.

Speaker 3: I mean, yeah.

Speaker 3: And that's the challenge.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 3: Yes public lands, yes clean air and clean water, yes a sort of western lifestyle, but can she get a job?

Speaker 3: And I think you said that.

Speaker 1: So, I never that I can speak to this because I left my community and moved here and stayed. [crosstalk 00:54:07]

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:54:07] Yeah, that's right. I'm one of those too. My community back on the East Coast [inaudible 00:54:11] talk about me leaving. [crosstalk 00:54:14]

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:54:12] So what is it about here that presented the opportunity?

Speaker 1: [crosstalk 00:54:18] Well, initially it was a job.

Speaker 3: So that's what we need to think about is, what would create those opportunities.
Speaker 1: Initially it was a job and then developing a sense of community. And Wes is one that left and came back.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: I would say ... And I have a struggle with this because I'm never sure what ... you know, state entities or universities or whatever can do to really support entrepreneurship. I struggle with that I really have a hard time finding out what that looks like. But, you know, the university is full of smart people so they probably know the answer.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 1: But none of them are entrepreneurs.

Speaker 4: Right. [crosstalk 00:55:03] So you get into this catch 22. But the one thing I will say is that, especially over the last several years I think there has been a change in the number of people in their mid-twenties that have come back and tried to make it in Park County. And I think we have kind of an abysmal wash out rate for a lot of those people who come and try to make it happen here. They try to have their own business they do whatever and they leave. The ... Northwest has made some good efforts to help people, the state, the small business development council and stuff have some resources there, but I think the university perhaps has a role to play to make that happen.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 4: I see it a lot and you probably see it a lot too. There's a lot of those 25 to 35s who come back for clean air and a couple of plans and they're like, "I'm going to be a video editor" or "I'm going to be a whatever whatever remotely" and they can't make it work.

Speaker 3: Lone eagle.

Speaker 2: And I think that maybe that the universities piece to that is to help try to provide some kind of education when ... I might actually try to start up an entrepreneur group ... We're meeting this Thursday for anyone that's interested at the Au Blend [phonetic 00:56:20]at 6:00. And ... Anyway just to kind of take the model that Scott Fitzpatrick at Silicon, I always [inaudible 00:56:32]

Speaker 3: Couloir. [phonetic 00:56:33]

Speaker 2: And basically just start having meetups where you can get entrepreneurs, people that want to start business, create business in your community and they'll start telling you what they need. And then being able to utilize the university or the college as a resource to say, "Okay, you need this. This can be provided here, if you, here, call this person." [inaudible 00:57:00] This is a way that can go that help out-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 2: And so it kind of utilize the university as one of those networking-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 2: Or conductivity devices for growth in the community.
Question #6

Interviewer: This is a really high functioning group here because you've already transitioned into the next question which is: How can UW help address your challenges? I didn't even have to ask. That was great. So that ... In the time we've got left here, the seven or eight minutes, yeah just kinda throw out brainstorm, ideas, wishes, things ... How can UW help either address your challenges or take advantage of your opportunities? I know some of the stuff is come out of the conversation, but maybe try to specifically articulate those in the last few minutes here.

Speaker 3: We already started by showing up.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 3: That's true.

Speaker 2: That's what I was going to say. Is that ... If you're just a ... Have a ... Are a bigger and better presence within the community we'll help tell you what we need. So, just maybe trying to start to restaff some of those offices and maybe I mean, come down to my office and give me bunch of brochures that I can hand out or go visit some of the key players like the museum or the Chamber, or maybe just like go to Sunlight Sports, and say, "What can we do to help? Or what do you think we can do to help?" You'll be doing that for an hour probably that's because Wes goes off on you. [crosstalk 00:58:37] Rightfully so. So, yeah, really have a better presence in the community would help at least, with the conversation starting.

Speaker 3: Wes has come to that research?

Speaker 2: That's very interesting.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 2: I think, yeah, especially-

Speaker 3: This is specific for me something that really can happen.

Speaker 2: Well, and if you think The decisions that we're having to make nowadays accessible data is that can be used to make those decisions, yeah. I mean, I know that 537,000 people supposedly went in and out of the east entrance but I don't even know which direction either ones were headed. Having that breakdown, having some real knowledge about human flows would be-

Speaker 1: It's not people, it's visits. Get into that discussion.

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:59:45]

Speaker 4: Yeah, I think it's one level. That question is on my mind, in order to try to figure that out for my own business. I was on the department of transportation site. Looking at their highway sensors [inaudible 01:00:10] trying to track for daily traffic how many people in an average car. Somebody smarter than me should be figuring this out.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 1: We're looking at the Park Service at Yellowstone Park saying we're reaching capacity and so we're going to ... It's maybe on the table to start limiting entrances into Yellowstone, the number of people
that are allowed in a day and could UW do some research to say okay, here are the actual number of people not 2.3 per car blah, blah, blah, blah, blah but if we could get some real data in Yellowstone to let us know what the actual use is. Because you're there on the Fourth of July 16 million Chinese people who don't understand the culture. Single week or a single day in the bigger picture then can the ... with that information can the department of tourism say we need to advertise in a different way to fill up the shoulder seasons a little more effectively. The data piece could be huge and it's well with the scope of what the university does.

Speaker 2: We should be able to tell how many people pay their what's going on with demographics. How do we prepare for an aging population? What are the plans? Happen in five years with that

Speaker 3: Those kind of demographic questions could be mined with a couple good data personnel

Speaker 2: We also talk about affordable housing. What does that mean? What's affordable with the structure of our community and the wages that are paid, what is an affordable house in Cody, Wyoming? I just heard on the radio this morning single home in Jackson. 2.4 million. Probably not affordable, you know, as we talk about can we build ... can a developer build on a piece of land to get that affordable housing.

Speaker 3: Could help us understand what that is.

Speaker 2: That gets into our economy how do you get people to afford to come back and live. Do we understand what that means .what does that mean for inflows and outflows. We're flying blind on a lot to

Speaker 3: He was one of those Wyoming did the study for the travel that was actually his advisor. Why did you go to Montana for a researcher?

Speaker 9: We don't have anyone in Wyoming doing research on tourism in the state of Wyoming

Wyoming tourism, we've tried to hire people it it seems like that person should sit at the university taking up tourism dollars

Speaker 3: Exactly

Speaker 9: And do a better job.

Speaker 3: So are there any other ideas on ... Definitely research is a big theme here. Being here, being present, listening more, research, any other

Speaker 9: Degree programs you don't have to travel for

Speaker 3: Face to face classes

Speaker 9: We're using Zoom right now. I agree with Mr. Hall I'm just one person can't be cloned .two big enough communities, twice a semester but I think that is crucial because we each have our own chambers academic coordinator I keep so busy over here

Speaker 3: I'm going to reiterate

Speaker 9: I agree with that

Speaker 3: That sounds like a big part of the connectivity here
Speaker 9: Quite extensively, tara's great, have another person on like that

Speaker 3: Well thank you all again for coming. I left one of my cards at each seat. If you have a light bulb come on think really should be included in this report. Feel free to contact me. Next steps in th throughout feb into the beginning of march. Due April first, providing the focus groups in the report will be available to the public and I expect you'll see more visits from UW representatives.
Transcript: Rock Springs

Question #1

Interviewer: So to start with, are you aware of UW Partnership's joint projects within the community? And if the answer to that is yes, can you cite the specific examples and outcomes.

Speaker 1: So I probably know most of these. So the Small Business Development Center, SBDC, the Wyoming Business Council, your associates to WRT. There's something associated with it in there.

Speaker 3: Well, the business resource network that we fund is the SBDC, and, yeah. So we have a strong partnership with UW. And there's other gap programs that we offer [inaudible 00:01:06].

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:01:08], 4-H? [inaudible 00:01:11] Nutrition and then the Outreach School [inaudible 00:01:16] here on campus. Those are the main ones that I can think of.

Speaker 3: I know that there's a new partnership between UW and the Chamber that's going to be happening soon. The Universities gonna be bringing students here to tour around different industries to keep them in Wyoming. So they haven't graduated yet, but they want to show them the potential of jobs that are available here. So, that's something.

Interviewer: And how did that start?

Speaker 3: There was a presentation that was made from the Career Services department of the University to the Enterprise committee, which is just an organization committee that meets here in Sweetwater County that's a group of different businesses and school districts and just a lot of individuals who get together and they gave the presentation and got that conversation started. And they had done something similar, out of state where they had taken the students out of state to do a tour like this. They thought it would be a good idea to do it in-state to keep them here. So, of course, the Chamber here decided to move forward with that. It should be happening in April.

Interviewer: Great. Any other partnerships you're aware of?

Speaker 1: We have academic partnerships. The Two Plus Two agreements and, hopefully, the new Ag program that's going in. There's those partnerships.

Interviewer: Can you describe those a little more?

Speaker 1: The Two Plus Two, so that they were completely aligned with the two years that they take care of you, next two years at the university, so that they student doesn't waste any credits moving through. So that's taking our faculty and UW faculty working together to develop specific program areas. That's real smooth articulation. Then, for Western, we're working with the dean of the Ag program to start a new program here where we're not going to have a full Ag program here, but they will take online courses through University of Wyoming and get some of those different level courses, and then they'll be able to reverse transfer a few hours back to Western. They won't have their associate's degree, but they'll already be linked and tied to the University of Wyoming, so that students will have easier transfers and so forth, transition [inaudible 00:03:54].
Speaker 2: Through my agency, federal government, we partner a ton with them on specifically grad students working on projects and things that directly affect the landscape. I know currently right now we've got a couple of wild horse studies going on. Some graduate work going on with that. We have it's called the Wyoming Landscape Coalition Initiative. It's centered here in southern Wyoming. UW is a big partner in part of that in creating landscape scale projects and initiatives and things, so specifically it'll ... somebody will get a wild hair professor or student and they'll come in and partner with us on that. We see a lot of that.

Speaker 1: Another one we have is the INBRE research grant. Our science faculty and students are really involved in undergraduate research. That's been very beneficial, and it comes directly through University of Wyoming grants back to us. Some of those students might also be connecting with you.

Speaker 2: Perhaps. Yeah.

Question #2

Interviewer: Okay. Any other partnerships? It's a good list. The next question is are you aware of UW professionals who serve in the community, and can you name them and the role with the university.

Speaker 1: Troy Archuleta, who's one of my board of trustees members. I don't know what his current title is but director of the Outreach here. So, that's one.

Speaker 3: Following [inaudible 00:05:46], Rob [Codney 00:05:50], who's the regional director for the Small Business Development Center, is in this area.

Speaker 1: And then I'm drawing a blank but whoever works in Extension and Nutrition site, her name-

Speaker 3: Brown hair.

Speaker 1: I know. [crosstalk 00:06:06]-

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:06:07]

Speaker 1: She works pretty closely with this on several ...

Speaker 3: Yeah, I [inaudible 00:06:12] with her too but I can't think of her name right now.

Speaker 1: Oh, and David Bodily who is a nursing professor through the University of Wyoming and he's helping link the RN to BSN curriculum and he actually has an office on this campus. So it's so that our students get their associates degree in their RN and can put it straight into their BSN before they graduate from here.

Interviewer: Okay. Others?

Speaker 3: Peggy Baker. She also works for the Small Business Development Center, she lives in Rock Springs.

Question #3

Interviewer: Okay. Okay, now they get a little bit more open ended. Or quite a bit more open ended actually. So the third one is, what is your perception of UW as a partner? So like, to what level do you perceive UW to be present in the community and listening?
Speaker 4: I abstain.

Speaker 3: I would say, I, that it needs help. I think that they could do better at that. Specifically here. I think they're making strides though because I think having the career services group that came here and did that presentation at the Enterprise Committee which was just a couple of months ago, was awesome. And I had never been in anything like that before since I've been here for six years. So it seems like they are trying more but I think there could be more partnerships.

Speaker 1: Yeah, I could get used to being with our [inaudible 00:08:15] and theirs that anything we can do to prepare and I said this to four presidents of the university and I think President Nichols is just doing great. But anything really can be complimentary but not competitive is incredibly important because everybody supporting those institutions in the state and I just think we need to make sure that we're taking care of our students the very best that we can.

Speaker 4: I'm gonna speak from an outside view, I mean I know that UW has a presence up here but in terms of the community in general there are barely any visible. I mean beyond the Cowboy Joe club, I'm not exactly sure how many community members are that aware of their presence at all. I mean, I really, I think that's a great thing that they went to the enterprise committee and did that.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 4: I think that was really needed. They're fairly invisible for the community leaders [inaudible 00:09:16].

Interviewer: Can you think of other examples, you mentioned the example of partnership with the university doing tours to expose students who now graduated from high school to different occupations. Would you consider that an example of a real partnership where they're ...

Interviewer: ... developing and co-investing with the community.

Speaker 3: Yes. Definitely.

Interviewer: Are there any other examples of that.

Speaker 6: Wasn't there ... the MBAs were doing a project [crosstalk 00:09:53]-

Speaker 3: Yes!

Speaker 6: What was that?

Speaker 3: That was for the ... yeah, yeah. That's a good. That was for the ENDOW Initiative.

Speaker 3: So yeah, that is another, that's a great example that there were some MBA students from the university that helped the Academic Development Organization here with a plan for innovation so, that's part of the ENDOW initiative.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 3: So they did some research on a big area of land and went through the different uses that could go on that land. And now the Economic Development Organization is using that for expansion and growth. So yes, that's a great answer.

Interviewer: And what are the next steps for that? Or what is the future for that?
Speaker 3: Right now, it depends if, money. If there is money available to put in the infrastructure because there is some great opportunity out there for value added industry for different industries. There's lots of different ways you could go with it but to get infrastructure out there, there's no infrastructure out there, so just to get water, sewer, all that stuff is gonna be close to 48 million I think they were saying, so that's the next step.

Speaker 6: Well, I think initially when they planned the project there was the expectation that innovation zones were going to be a priority for now.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 6: And then innovation zones became not so much a priority and so ...

Speaker 3: Kind of a back burner right now. Yeah.

Speaker 6: But in terms, I think the project was successful in terms of what they wanted to achieve from that -

Speaker 3: Exactly.

Speaker 6: ... collaboration, I think it was successful in that. It was just the goal was to present that to ENDOW and have them respond and then they were like, "Oh, we're gonna pull out [crosstalk 00:11:44]."

Speaker 3: Right. Exactly. And that is accurate. I think that plan that was made and what came out of those, what those students researched. No matter what happens with ENDOW, the community has that now. We'll be able to move forward with Mead if they choose to self-fund through a tax or whatever it will be.

Interviewer: All right.

Speaker 1: I mean one thing they did that was highly visible too, they were doing that study on CO2 injection. [inaudible 00:12:12] out by Bitter Creek, or out [inaudible 00:12:15] in that area and that was highly visible in the community 'cause everybody's really excited about it 'cause they thought there was potential there and then also the mining of ...

Speaker 3: Lithium?

Speaker 1: Lithium. We did that.

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:12:28] presentation on.

Speaker 1: So those were very well received because everybody was thinking that they were coming over to our part of the state and trying to help.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Those were great projects.

Speaker 6: Yeah, they were.

Interviewer: So would you say that those partnerships are examples of what partnership with UW should look like.

Speaker 6: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I think, yeah.

Speaker 1: Maybe the [inaudible 00:12:53] studies.
Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Because they couldn't have gotten the research piece done if they ... And that's kind of what happened with the MBAs too. They finished their course and so then [crosstalk 00:13:05]. Yeah, so I think probably if you really want to talk about something engagements, it's probably gonna have to be longer than just a semester project.

Speaker 3: But that's really where kind of like this idea with them coming and doing the tour and doing like pairing up and then not only seeing opportunity, like job opportunities but then things like, "live here, work here."

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yep.

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:13:29] like that, anyway, so and I kind of show them a little bit about the quality of life in Rock Springs that would hopefully, eventually, although not through the classroom probably but it could lead to an actual, a legitimate partnership.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 3: You know, where they would actually come [inaudible 00:13:46].

Speaker 1: There's been some other talks about doing internships in different departments and I think that would be great too. See if we can get those really setup to go so the students can come in here and spend the summer working in the Trona patch and really learning what that's about. I think there's some great opportunities with that. It would be very helpful to our employers too. [inaudible 00:14:11].

Interviewer: Any other thoughts about UW as a partner in the community?

Speaker 1: You have to get to the right person and not unlike Western Wyoming Community College. Sometimes it's the faculty piece that shuts you down. We're the same way here, I'm not [crosstalk 00:14:38].

Interviewer: Can you explain that a little.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Yeah. It's just that sometimes it's difficult seeing continuation of these projects or even taking them to the next level if you don't get to the right person that has that spirit of innovation or that spirit of doing something beyond the classroom. And I'm not pointing fingers at UW 'cause it's kind of universal. That's one of the things that will help is if we asked commitment beyond that.

Speaker 4: 'Cause even the Lithium is a good example because I mean, it's out there and we know and I don't know the economics of [inaudible 00:15:14] I have no idea. But if they could have taken that to the next level. Maybe turned it over to the marketing at UW and go out, 'cause actually that has big benefits for all of Wyoming as all of our mills do, it's part of the state. You know and just go on forward with it. You're right, I mean, kept up the momentum of it.

Interviewer: Why do you think they lost momentum?

Speaker 4: That's what we don't know.

Interviewer: Because of the people.
Speaker 4: [crosstalk 00:15:42] at a school.

Speaker 3: For the Lithium, I think it's just not economically viable right now.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 3: Is what I've heard. I could be wrong.

Speaker 1: I think the paper gets written or published and/or the students graduate. I mean I think there's certain finite of timing in higher ed and so it's like, I don't know. The partnerships like the SBDC, that's going on every day. So anybody that hasn't gotten from the research side over into the actual technology transfer side. But there's a nice technology transfer unit at the university.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on UW as a partner?

Speaker 1: There's a real benefit to linking our communities with the university and with the existing agencies that in our areas. I think it's a gold mine that's yet to be explored.

Question #4

Interviewer: That's actually a good transition into the next question. Which is name the top three grand opportunities in your community and who is working on capitalizing on them and what have been or are the desired outcomes? And you don't have to limit it to three.

Speaker 1: So I think every one of these industries have an opportunity for innovation. And they're going out of state to do that, so I think if there was, 'cause we only have one university. They're doing some interesting, maybe spreading some of that research capital out throughout the communities so that it's really opened up the whole state. But I think there's an opportunity there.

Interviewer: So industries based here in Rock Springs are going out of state to get the resource they need to operate.

Speaker 1: They are and I just think there's some sort of grand R&D opportunities here that the university could have their name on and it's way beyond the scope of what Western has. We're more the technician, they're the researchers. And so ...

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 4: I'm just gonna paraphrase the letter to the editor that was in our local paper. They guy was from Idaho and he actually had roots in Wyoming. I don't know if you guys saw this. But he talked about the Wyoming mentality as compared to what happened in Idaho. Idaho had very similar thing, they're mineral dependent and Ag and stuff like that but they started thinking outside of that mineral box, which I'm not sure you guys hear this all the time, in all of these work groups that you do all the time. But we've got to think outside of that mineral box. We can't really necessarily hang our hat on coal, which in our part of the state we really try to, even though that's not a very good place to hang your hat. And so our opportunities in this community, in this part of the state are still just in limbo on oil and gas and mineral extraction and we have got to broaden those opportunities. I mean we have to do it because the old traditional way of making revenue in the State of Wyoming. And we've seen it in the past five years.

Interviewer: So opportunities for economic diversity are in limbo.
Speaker 4: Yeah. Economic diversity, I mean even, you know we have a lot of tourism in Wyoming, we probably really need to focus or develop businesses that are tourism driven. We have it in Jackson Hole in spades but like down here, we have a lot of opportunities but nobody ever capitalizes on because we have a lot of things to see in this part of the state. But it's a different type of tourism and all of that. We just never really capitalized on that. We've never really, we don't think outside of the box on that. I still think, we're still really entrenched in the price of natural gas out of the old [inaudible 00:20:09] hub.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 4: That's kind of what we talked about and I think that's where we need to kind of, I mean we do, we just need to broaden out. I think the guy from Idaho hit it on the head. Wyoming needs to get out of that mentality and move to a different direction.

Speaker 1: You know we have a, this 320 something mile primary corridor coming across the south end of the state and they're [inaudible 00:20:35] internet runs all along it but we only have access to it in three places. So not here. So I always think that Rock Springs and Green River have really missed the boat in not getting access. And we've kind of let that stay that way.

Speaker 4: Absolutely.

Speaker 1: And I think right now is an opportunity to get ...

Speaker 3: Broadband.

Speaker 1: Broadband and get-

Speaker 4: I mean that whole, like Karla said that whole fiber optics corridor is [inaudible 00:21:07].

Speaker 1: It is.

Speaker 4: [inaudible 00:21:09] seven or eight in there. And out of that deal was so well brokered by the State of Wyoming that a lot of these communities in Rock Springs really don't have access to that fiber ... It's just, those types of things are frustrating.

Speaker 1: And those are the things that we can do the best. There's also a huge amount of manufacturing, which we have none here, so to speak. I mean, I'm sure there's one or two but we have basically none. But we're at 700 feet we have cooler temperatures. So we're not going to burn as much electricity cooling down plants. So we have a lot of kind of natural resources just in our weather that could make that really an opportunity here.

Speaker 4: I mean, even the water that we export out of state. I mean that poises us to be in a position that we can do things, just that access to the water. And we don't, of course [inaudible 00:22:08] water's another big huge hot topic. And there's all sorts of resources here that we can utilize, I agree. We just don't. And the fiber thing is a great example. It is just something that is just absolutely ridiculous that we're sitting here on this fiber corridor and we don't have access to it. And I know a lot of it had to do with our local cable company and political things that have led that. But that aside you know if we had it, we'd have the opportunity to provide more things to industry.

Speaker 1: Yeah. With the changing of ownership on that, this is the perfect time.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewer: So these things, research and development, lack of economic diversity, this access to broadband, are there people working on those issues?

Speaker 1: I would say no. Do you know of anybody that's really working on getting access here?

Speaker 3: Um ... 

Speaker 2: Are you talking from a UW standpoint? Are people working on it or is anybody working on it?

Interviewer: Are there people in this community working on them?

Speaker 3: I mean we definitely talk about it, broadband. But no, not actively I wouldn't say. I mean, I think ... not specifically in Sweetwater County. I think that with the change that Green River Cable got bought out by All West. I think they are looking at expanding some areas and adding fiber in some areas themselves. But as far as the community goes, I'm not sure. So [inaudible 00:23:48].

Interviewer: Just anybody in the state?

Speaker 1: I mean I have a dream. I've been saying this forever.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Jana's probably laughing at me forever but I need a new soccer field, and they've got this concept where you put a data center underneath the soccer field. And I mean, that's just perfect because it needs to be all underground and then you utilize the top end of it. So it's an educational opportunity and I'm sitting how many feet from the corridor? I'm sick of "This would work really well." And every time I bring it up people laugh at me.

Speaker 3: And I think-

Speaker 4: You've got a dream.

Speaker 1: That's right.

Speaker 3: ... as far as diversification, I think that, that's something that the economic development organization here is working on for sure.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 3: I think that with manufacturing, there's been leads that have been sent out through business accounting for manufacturers that are looking to come to the area.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 3: And they continually put in proposals for those businesses to come here. But the bigger issue, why they don't come is lack of workforce.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 3: And sometimes quality of life.

Interviewer: Okay.
Speaker 3: So how do we work on those things?

Interviewer: That's-

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Interviewer: You're getting ahead of the next question ...

Speaker 3: Right.

Interviewer: ... there. So we'll get to challenges after this one here.

Speaker 3: Okay.

Interviewer: I'm just gonna go a little deeper on opportunities so, looked at in terms of what specific industries do you want to grow and it sounds like technology would be one of those if you had more access to fiber optic broadband.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Manufacturing. Any specific manufacturing operations you're looking at? Or ... ?

Speaker 1: I think high tech I mean we do have, we have two manufacturing-ish, they're more like processing plants, aren't they? The phosphate and the trona, that's processing versus manufacturing.

Speaker 4: [crosstalk 00:25:47].

Speaker 1: Yeah. [inaudible 00:25:51].

Speaker 4: Yeah, that's processes. Yeah.

Speaker 1: But ...

Speaker 4: I mean we have, being on the UP Corridor itself and I'm gonna delve into something probably better keep my name out of this because we are on the UP Corridor and they have held us hostage for years and years and years. My brother has got a trucking company out of Riverton, Wyoming. He was in direct competition with them to do petroleum out here out to Shawnee and then hit it on the [Grillington 00:26:18] Northern and go out. And he actually said, he got a big business council grant with the McMurry’s for an operation they did out of Casper. So I mean the business council in that is there to help people to create jobs but with the manufacturing you need transportation and we are on I-80 which is great for trucks and stuff like that on UP.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 4: I don't know what I want to say here. If you had some trona people in this situation right here, they could tell you all sorts of interesting stories about what has happened, this is why this guys have got, everyone had to build $2 million of rail [inaudible 00:26:58] out there. Because they had stacking up cars to get on the track, on space, on the track. So you know you get these different things going on in Sweetwater County and it ties you ... it makes it harder to do business and when you're trying to draw people in to set up something, nobody wants to have any, see any obstacles. But what are you gonna do about UP now? Absolutely nothing. They're too big to fail, whatever. But yeah, I mean those types of things, I think, I mean, they could be addressed but when I saw what happened with the trona
mines and everyone of those having to build those humongously expensive sidings, they have a lot of power, the trona mines have a huge amount of power and they just had to do it. They just had to do it.

So I don't think that we're ever gonna get past that. I guess if we had a transportation thing, the situation for manufacturing, we'd be better off to go and here like you said, taking it to the next level. You'd go on and go to private trucking and you'd try to work out these types of deals, and maybe that's something that could be done. I mean and so, speaking of the next level, come up with the idea, I'm not talking about the university people. And then when I say, "Take it to the next level," Then go to different transportation, figure out their transportation situ-, figure out their water situation. And that's something that, then we would actually be ready 'cause when you're talking about infrastructure, I know 'cause I was on the Chamber Board for a long time. And you get on there and you're talking about putting $43 million in infrastructure and [inaudible 00:28:47]. And then things just die on the vine. We've come to that point. And then it's not going any further.

But if you found some company that wanted to do something, or you had an idea and you actually went there and got in the weeds and tried to help this company make this happen and I'm not sure what happened to [Sherridon 00:29:10] and what they did to broker that deal with [Remmington 00:29:14] but I mean it'd be something similar. You know what I mean? And I don't know that we even do that to do it as a community.

Speaker 1: It's the same for [inaudible 00:29:25] we're doing better now.

Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: With the common goal to this but I don't think we've broken very well. I don't ... so my husband says-

Interviewer: Maybe we could come back a little bit, we're kind of drifting into challenges here more.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Interviewer: Think again about opportunities. So your manufacturing, technology. So with those things in mind, think about what are the quality of life assets you have to offer here? What's unique about Rock Springs?

Speaker 1: It's probably the most giving community I have ever seen in my life. It's an unbelievable amount of money that is raised on a Saturday night.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: In the silent auction here.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: You don't see that.

Speaker 3: Every Saturday night.

Speaker 1: Right! They are definitely in that season.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 1: But it is amazing to me because we couldn't raise that kind of money in Northwest Houston.
Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Nobody would I mean people might put out a little bit but people in this community give, and give, and give and I think one of the reasons people give is the other thing that I as an outsider, though after 10 years, I'm getting closer to being an insider. The money stays here.

Speaker 3: Yep.

Speaker 1: It goes to the people who need it here. And that's something else you also don't see in large areas. It goes to administration. It goes to this and that. But when you give money to United Way here [crosstalk 00:30:59] ...

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:30:58]

Speaker 1: ... that kid down the street is gonna get those diapers.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 1: And that's very, very impressive.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 1: However ...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Let's make this a little bit more ...

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Jana you mentioned that you have opportunities for tourism here but it's a different kind of tourism than Jackson. What'd you mean by that?

Speaker 4: Well I think that the opportunities are certainly here for eco-tourism. I mean because you've got the sand dunes, you've got Flaming Gorge, you've got all the ... we're surrounded by all of these things that are fairly unique.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 4: And I'm using that word loosely but you know what I mean. And you've got a lot of Native American country [inaudible 00:31:37] and you've got some mystery with the overland trail and you've got some history with the outlaws and things like that. But everybody has those type of things and people have tried, I mean Casper's done a great job with the Trail Center and all that, those type of ideas. But I think if we could get some actual entrepreneurs here, people that would actually run these things. Charlie Love an ex professor up here actually got tied into one. And I think that they've done good. I think that they've brought people into this community. And gone out on different bus tours and things like that. And I think that 'cause especially with the retirement, you know the baby boomers. Everybody's retiring, everybody loves to vacation, they like ... they don't necessarily like to foreign countries as much anymore, it's a little dangerous. And they are interested in history.

And so anything that we could do within the travel and tourism thing and I don't, and outside of ... because there's enough tourists in Jackson. There's enough of them, there's like five million of these people every year and that's no exaggeration. But I think that we need to spread that out in other parts of the state and I think there's all sorts of opportunities, all sorts of things to see. We just need to think
of those things and get people interested because I mean, if you have those types of businesses ... And that's the problem because I'm also a woman of business and I know how hard it is to make it work. But if you, even get people that are interested part-time. In doing that. And do it, a more of an independent travel thing.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 4: Those type of things.

Speaker 3: I think ... and I don't mean to interrupt.

Speaker 4: No, go ahead.

Speaker 3: I think that, that has tried and failed a lot in Sweetwater County because of insurance reasons. There's been people that have tried to rent, mountain bikes for instance because I think mountain biking is a big thing here and it could be a big thing through to Colorado or wherever, we could really capitalize on our mountain biking trails that we have in Green River. And there's nowhere here, well Jason has started [inaudible 00:33:46] in mountain bikes but where can you rent a four wheeler to go on the sand dunes? Where can rent a kayak to kayak in the kayak water park? Where can you rent a fishing pole to go ... so you have to bring everything with you. So when you have a tourist that's coming in, that's flown in from China, they didn't bring their four wheeler. You know what I mean? There's nowhere here to rent, so yes, there is opportunity for that but I think it runs into the seasonal. So then the business can't sustain.

Speaker 4: I think it is tough, you know what I was thinking more because I know what you're saying about the rental and insurance and four wheelers, all that it's just ridiculous but I think what we could do is promote people and get them here. And so I mean when I say the traveler a little bit more that's kind of what I'm thinking. A little bit more promotion is kind of the Southwest Wyoming is to the North America's largest native sand dunes. And so you'd get them here. They would stay in the hotel, they would eat the food, they would do all of that stuff. But then they would independent travel out to the sand dunes. Which people have a little concern about that too.

Speaker 3: They could get a flat tire. I'm just kidding.

Speaker 4: They do, they have concerns about that too. Or they hired the independent guide.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 4: But if you hired the independent guide, therefore those people wouldn't have any insurance.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 4: And they could just go to it. But I think that there's ways to do it and again we get into the whole thing. You have the idea but then people just need to take it ... 'cause I really feel that Wyoming has got a huge opportunity to do that and we don't really do it.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay.

Speaker 6: But also, maybe this is a little different perspective on the quality of life. But as somebody who's very new to the area. One of the big selling features for, my two things that I say all the time were the clear blue skies because again, it's mostly clear, it's hardly ever overcast unless it's actually raining.

Speaker 3: That's amazing.
Speaker 6: That's huge compared to a lot of other places and we have no rush hour traffic. You can get anywhere in town in like five minutes. You can go run six errands in 15 minutes.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 6: And there's not a lot of places, I mean you either go somewhere that doesn't have that much traffic and there's no stores or shopping or whatever, facilities. So we have, I feel like we have enough amenities to have a reasonable quality of life. And without again, they're not spending two hours a day in the car, in traffic. So you actually have a lot more time where a lot of people would spend that time commuting. We have that time, you don't have to spend it on commuting, you can spend it on living, your family and not going home.

Speaker 3: Going home.

Speaker 6: People don't go home in big towns anymore.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 2: Right.

Speaker 1: You see people go home and it's wonderful so I think even without the quality of life, I think our family structure here is just really amazing. I know that we have, it's very dichotomous I know we have those that have no family. And those that have a real strong family but this a very nice environment to raise your children in and people are coming back.

Speaker 3: And I mean the high wages and then you know.

Speaker 6: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Yep.

Speaker 3: [inaudible 00:36:56]


Speaker 1: But [inaudible 00:36:59] as well.

Speaker 6: And there are a lot of community activities. It only takes a little bit of time to find out again, how to get plugged into those one or two things and it is very easy to be aware of all the activities that are going on. And they're fairly diverse activities and you ... it's different than a large city. But for the population size. Again there's plenty of diversity whether it's arts or ...

Speaker 4: Rodeo.

Speaker 6: Right. Or athletics.

Speaker 3: Or theater.

Speaker 6: Exactly.

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:37:34] Rec Center and sorts of things, there is a lot of variety for the size that we, I agree.
Speaker 7: Hopefully I'm not taking a hard right but you both kind of said something that struck on me, so working where I work in the federal government for a land management agency I think it's huge the amount of public land that's out there, the amount of land that's for everybody. And one of the things that I think is missing when it comes to UW, I talked about we partner with grad students and things like that for scientific purposes nobody's ever really partnered with us to help highlight some of that public land access and some of those outdoor recreational opportunities. And from the BLM standpoint, we just don't have the resources to do it. I think we'd love to do that and highlight some of this stuff we just don't have enough people to do it. So we do a little bit here and there and every now and again. I'm sure people see stuff in the paper and we try to highlight this and that.

But if there was a concerted effort from a university standpoint to help partner and highlight those public lands and work with the public land management agency and I'm not just talking the BLM, I work for. I don't see it that much with the forest service. You see it quite a bit with the parks service but I think you already highlighted, Yellow Stone, Jackson, been done. We've gotta work on other things. I mean we know that those are crown jewels we know that those are gonna draw how many ever millions of people a year. But there's more to it than just, I mean, I'm sure everybody in this room has the same opinion I do, I'd just assume stay away from Yellowstone. Too many people, it's crowded, can't see anything. I mean it's cool, but, eh, it's okay.

So that, and I think people that live in Wyoming know that but we don't do a good job and that's something where I think UW can really interject and really be of value. Not just focused on Yellowstone, Jackson, or any of the Devil's Tower, what everybody kind of perceives as the crown jewels of Wyoming 'cause there's more to it than that. And I think when people get out and look at those things, they realize ... Hey, I mean where you're from Lander's a huge gem. But it's off the beaten path and you gotta kind of get out there and show people. People know about it but I think it's a small group of people that know about it and not a wide range of folks.

Speaker 3: 'Cause real Wyoming isn't Yellowstone and Jackson.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 3: Real Wyoming is this.

Interviewer: Right.

Speaker 7: Yeah, you go out and you tell people "I'm from Wyoming." "Oh, Yellowstone ..." and everybody has the same response to that is, "Yeah, not really."

Speaker 1: Yes.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 7: So, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, you have some real unique landscapes around here.

Speaker 7: Everywhere. Southwest Wyoming's got ... but everywhere in the state's got them. You just gotta know they're there. And that's again, speaking from a public land, I mean there, you go back east you can't really go anywhere back east. You come here, it's open. It's all, you can go wherever you want in Wyoming, with 70 whatever percent is public land, that's for everybody. That's there for everybody.
Speaker 3: During the National High School Rodeo, we had one of the contestants that came into the visitor center chamber that we had at Green River and we have a big window where you can see out to the UP Railroad [inaudible 00:41:11] and he said, he'd never seen a train from the front of it to the end of it in Virginia. Because you could never see that. And he thought that was the coolest thing that he could see the front and then end of the train.

Speaker 1: You also can't ride down the road in Virginia and see a herd of horses.

Speaker 3: Right. Exactly.

Speaker 1: Or antelope.

Speaker 3: Exactly.

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:41:34].

Speaker 3: It was just funny. He thought it was the coolest thing.

Interviewer: Ready to move onto challenges now?

Speaker 3: Sure.

**Question #5**

Interviewer: So yeah, the top three challenges and getting on to you don't have to stop at three but who's working on them? What are the desired outcomes?

Speaker 1: So what I was gonna say earlier and this is kind of a mindset that my husband and I have noticed. He came up with the perfect Wyoming bumper sticker. "Come visit. Go away." So a lot of people don't want things to change.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 1: They like the half a million people and that's ... and I think that drives a lot of decisions.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 4: It does in certain communities for sure.

Speaker 3: Yes. For sure.

Speaker 1: Yeah, some, it's pretty strong.

Speaker 4: Something's pretty strong. Lander is like that.

Interviewer: No comment.
Speaker 2: I actually heard on the downturn, when oil and gas prices started falling and the coal moratorium and everything. I actually heard people in this community go, "Oh, thank God. Now people are gonna leave."

Speaker 1: Exactly. I've heard it too.

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:42:51]

Speaker 2: People were excited about potential recession and I thought, "Well, okay." But ...

Interviewer: Okay. Probably nobody working on that.

Speaker 1: No, but I think people, Adam, you talked about the start and stopping with different things, is I think people do come in with kind of an innovative idea and they quickly get shut down.

Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: We saw that with the Chamber.

Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Things coming and going but the same kind of things. So it's gonna take a lot of momentum to get over that hump with some things.

Speaker 4: Right.

Speaker 2: And I think when we're busting as a state, that's actually the best time to do it.

Speaker 1: Absolutely. [crosstalk 00:43:32]

Speaker 2: Because when we're booming nobody cares.

Speaker 1: Oh yeah.

Speaker 2: Money's good, industry's going good. People are coming in. You know, I always say when we're booming, you're gonna stop signing and eight trucks that pass you all have logos on your door and you're waiting two minutes to make a turn and when we're busting, there's no waiting. And you're not seeing it, so that's the challenge 'cause it's hard for people to wrap their brain around that instead of just waiting for that next boom. It's going on right now everybody's kind of waiting for that, "Okay, what's the next uptake? Ooh, coal's back." And not really thinking outside that extractive industries box. At least in Southwest Wyoming that's a big driver and unfortunately in Southwest Wyoming from my observation it is extractive industry driven but there's a variety of extractive industries, which I think challenges it.

So you've got trona, you've got coal, you've got oil, you've got gas. And so something always seems to be doing well within those industries so everybody kind of hangs their hat on, "okay, what's the next boom coming with those extractive industries?" And then we just kind of shuffle the deck. Okay, oil and gas is down but that's okay 'cause trona is doing good. Or-

Speaker 4: Sweetwater County we've been able to ride that-

Speaker 2: So, yeah.
Speaker 4: But I think, next year, 2018, this year. They're gonna build a gateway west from over by Madison, well into Rock Springs. They're building it to the bridge or power plant. And then the next year they're taking it out of the state. Another gateway south and all this and that. So we've got all of this wind infrastructure getting in here and I mean big time but Sweetwater County, the county commissioners in Sweetwater County. [inaudible 00:45:24]. So ...

Speaker 1: Come visit, go away.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: Talk about a challenge, that's the challenge.

Speaker 3: Right, that is the challenge.

Speaker 1: And that's my husband, I'm not taking credit for that.

Speaker 4: That's a challenge.

Interviewer: So as the wind developers are pushing forward but there's resistance from the local ...

Speaker 3: The local ...

Interviewer: ... government.

Speaker 3: ... government.

Speaker 4: Yeah, they're building the transmission lines, which is the infrastructure for wind 'cause without it we can't get the energy out.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 4: But, and you know they have a humongous wind farm north outside [Rollins 00:46:00] but there's other small entities and this is going on. I'm not saying it isn't. You know this, 'cause you worked with BLM. There's a bunch of wind companies that are out there that are trying to put these things in. The problem is, I think we're so anti-wind because we're so pro coal, don't you think? [crosstalk 00:46:21]

Speaker 1: It's hard for people to hold both of those.

Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: The natural gas.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And the wind.

Speaker 4: We're gonna hurt the-

Speaker 1: [crosstalk 00:46:27] wind and while at the same time if you go to any of these companies, they have those branches in their organizations. I mean [inaudible 00:46:37] got all of that.
Speaker 4: Yeah. They do. They all do now, yeah.

Speaker 1: Yeah. And so, but it’s an either or thing.

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 4: I mean so yeah, maybe we need to get out of our own way.

Interviewer: You see on this handout there’s another list of topics there, where you may or may not have challenges maybe look at that and see if any of those things are applicable to Rock Springs and Sweetwater County. If any of those stand out-

Speaker 1: Well, I’d go back to connectivity.

Speaker 3: Yep.

Speaker 1: As one.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: But we have legitimate concerns with mental health. That’s all of our state, and it’s not just Sweetwater County by Wyoming has a significant suicide rate.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: And I think those and the aging population, these are challenges for us, don’t you think?

Speaker 4: I mean access to healthcare is certainly one too. Although the UW program the WWAMI.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 4: That’s fantastic. That’s a great program that you guys did for rural healthcare.

Interviewer: Could you talk about that more?

Speaker 2: I think-

Speaker 4: WWAMI’s just they pick 20 Wyoming kids every year and they put them through medical school. Then they have to come back and practice.

Speaker 1: For a certain number of years.

Speaker 4: Yeah, so it’s great, it’s a great program and all those kids do come back. I don’t know how many of them stay, they say, I went to the, my nephew actually got in and that’s why I even know anything about it. But they say 70% of them stay in Wyoming after they pay back their medical school. So that, I mean, that’s great.

Speaker 1: Our return rate has really become higher than that now. I’m a, as you know [inaudible 00:48:40] Commissioner and that’s what that runs through. But [inaudible 00:48:45] the return rate and it’s pretty-
Speaker 2: I think one of the-

Speaker 4: Really, really pretty.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: One of the huge challenges that I see is the gender wage gap. I think that's a huge negative thing for Wyoming. I think women make 55 cents on the dollar or something to men. It's horrible, we're the worst state in the country.

Interviewer: Is that particularly acute here? Or is this just reflective of the rest of the state.

Speaker 2: You know I think part of it is, I do see it here and I think one of the reasons you see it here is because blue collar extractive industry jobs have a tendency to attract male workers more than female workers and they're well paying jobs right now. But I think we're excluding a huge workforce by not compensating women the same as men. I just think that's a... in my mind that's a huge negative. And I know UW, I think at the coming, next month the talk about that issue and so my hunch is there will be little to no people to turn out to watch that particular talk. Even though, I think it will be phenomenal. But we just kind of ignore that.

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:50:18] force our students to go.

Speaker 2: So but, you know, I mean a lot of people I think just kind of ignore that issue and I think in my mind that is a huge hindrance to just Wyoming's growth in general.

Speaker 1: You know at the same time not a lot of your job orders are coming across this way. But if you talk to any of these industries they're wanting us to produce more female power for the coal because they don't rate the trucks as badly. They like the welding better from the females. So those jobs are not as dirty as they used to be either.

Speaker 2: Right.

Speaker 1: So I think there's this mindset thing that we have just got to work on changing as well.

Speaker 2: And I know the Climb, which isn't UW, but I know the Climb Wyoming just started the CEO program and so hopefully that's successful.

Speaker 1: Well, we've gotta do it for two years.

Speaker 2: So yeah, I mean hopefully that ends up being successful but I hope that, that translates into the equality of pay and people are just going, "Well, since I've got a female driving my rig, I don't have to pay her as much."

Speaker 1: That's the fun thing about working with Climb. Because they get that data back and-

Speaker 2: Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1: Feel pretty good putting pressure on them saying- ... I think if you have equal jobs for equal pay, I mean of the lines of that, it's about the same.

Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Speaker 1: I think you struck on what happened. Women in the public sector here do well. As well as men. Women that come here with their husbands, if they do go in working the mines, a lot of those types of women become secretaries or whatever in the community. But I'll tell you as a past business owner in this community it's very, very tough to compete, I mean if anybody can get a job at the mine, they're gonna do that 'cause they pay so much better than any place else. I mean every place else [crosstalk 00:52:20].

Speaker 3: Yep.

Speaker 1: And so I think that really adds to our gap then it doesn't have anything to do with the fact that people are paying women less. But I mean there's still a legitimate gap in that, you know, what you're saying too. But I do, we all struggled. Anybody who has a business here struggled. Even the college has struggled 'cause if somebody gets a job at the mines, they're gonna take it and leave you 'cause they get paid so much money.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And the gap continues because of, I don't know what you can do about this because of the nature of shift work. And it takes a very kind of determined woman to leave her kids and to do that plus a 12 hour [inaudible 00:53:04] shift. So I think there's opportunity all over the place in that. But that's a really good one. I'm glad you brought that up. We had a fundraiser down here and they were gonna demonstrate this so they sell the men a muffin for a dollar and the women I cost 76 cents. So they were demonstrating the difference.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Trying [inaudible 00:53:29]. I thought it was very clever [crosstalk 00:53:32].

Speaker 6: That is very clever.

Speaker 1: You know what else I think.

Interviewer: Can we go back healthcare for just a second because it sounded like it was an issue but then you mentioned that there's this system for having a lot of primary care physicians here.

Speaker 4: Well, that's helping a little bit but you look at our hospital and probably everyone else in this state and they're struggling.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 4: Struggling to keep doctors here. I mean this is, what's happened here is just a shame what's occurred here. So now we just don't even have enough physicians to ...

Interviewer: So people go to Salt Lake?

Speaker 4: I think they've got one Pediatrician in this entire town.

Interviewer: So where do people go for care?

Speaker 2: Salt Lake.

Speaker 4: Salt Lake.
Interviewer: Salt Lake.

Speaker 2: But you know you see that and not just here you see it on the other side of the state too. Even in the metropolis that is Cheyenne they're getting, lots of their stuff's getting bought out by the University of Colorado Health. And once those big conglomerates and I know it comes up from time to time here with the University of Utah buying stuff out. Once that happens, what we've seen in Cheyenne is then they're shipping out all the, they'll keep the primary stuff. They'll ship out all the specialists. So if you want anything, you've gotta go down to Fort Collins or Denver, or something that's within their network. So the referrals are really easy but you still gotta travel to do any kind of specialty tests or lab work, or any of that kind of stuff. And then I fear we're gonna start. Well, it's already kind of starting to see that here. Where if you want anything specialty done, you've gotta go to Salt Lake to do it. And that's unfortunate.

Speaker 4: Now my husband and I spend a lot of time at the University of Utah. The number of [inaudible 00:55:20].

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 6: Well and it's even, I mean the difference between being on this side of the state and having to travel to Salt Lake is different than being in Cheyenne and going to Fort Collins. That's an hour, and it's a pretty straight shot.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 6: But we've got three hours over passes, so it's, I mean, and I'm not.

Interviewer: Right.

Speaker 6: But it's different. You know? And then you figure we're not really even able to serve those outside [inaudible 00:55:58] and where somebody from Rawlins, so instead of Rock Springs being somewhere where people could come to us being somewhere centrally world. Even we are having to go for the most part, a lot of times, I am hearing that a lot of people from here were going to Salt Lake. So you figure you have not only Rock Springs going to Salt Lake but you have all of the surrounding areas because they're not necessarily coming here. So-

Speaker 2: And then so, they're not only doing that for their healthcare but going to for a test or something, "Hey, since I'm already gonna be there, maybe we'll go shop and we'll go to eat."

Speaker 6: Stay in a hotel.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 6: Right.

Speaker 2: Versus trying to reverse that trend and trying to get doctors to come here and partner with some of those outside major medical facilities and saying, hey, maybe you come to Rock Springs one day a week and here's your clinic hours and so everybody stays here and we'll do it here even though the specialty physician is coming from somewhere else we can still come here.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Maybe somebody should look at how many dollars are spent in life lights out of all these communities.
Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Because I mean, they bankrupt people for one thing.

Speaker 6: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: And I've heard it's like 30 to $40,000 for the life line and the life light them just like you were saying. If you have, if you show up with one of these that are connected with you and whatever, if you present with certain things, they don't even bother, they just put you on a plane and they send you out. And so I mean, I think that's a huge financial drain outside of the state just in life light.

Interviewer: Is there anybody working on this issue? Is it ...?

Speaker 4: I think, this, I think that that one is that there's multiple things that happen here that cause that. And some of this when we present and issue go no. I'm going to Salt Lake or Reno. And it's ... the hospitals are trying to figure out how to balance those books. Do they put on more staff? It's not that the beds are full necessarily. It's that they don't have enough staff to run the beds and so sending somebody out is probably the most cost effective thing they can do.

Speaker 1: For the hospital, yeah.

Speaker 4: For the hospital. So, but that's very disconnective for the families.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 6: Well even for a lawyer. I have a staff member that has to go down to Salt Lake, they're doing a whole day or even two days off of work, rather than just being able to go, maybe a half-day appointment. I think the financial implications, like you say, not only of lost revenue for the city or area but you have like lost wages going on, so I think that the implications are [inaudible 00:58:39].

Speaker 4: I think Jerry [Klien 00:58:42] when he was here, he did a great job because he set up the partnership with [inaudible 00:58:47] so he served [inaudible 00:58:49]. He went through the processes, he set one up in [inaudible 00:58:53] so he was doing all of these things to try to keep primary care medicine within in our county and he was doing a pretty good job. He's no longer here unfortunately. What he did was great. Now that's all kind of fallen away and things are falling apart but I don't know [inaudible 00:59:12].

Interviewer: Right.

Speaker 1: But didn't-

Interviewer: Um- ... go ahead.

Speaker 1: Let me just go back to your question though. If you look it's the University of Colorado that's ... or CSU or whoever that's pulling that out of Cheyenne. We don't have that presence with our university system here. And it's not uncostly but it is that way with that the University of Utah, that university's name is everywhere. Even people that would not consider going to the university so it's a loss of face for the university I think in our communities.

Interviewer: Right. I wanted to ask about support, this one, there's support for entrepreneurs because it sounded like on one hand there was a partnership moving forward but then Jenny you mentioned sometimes people with innovative, or somebody mentioned people with innovative ideas sometimes get shot down. Is there ...?
Speaker 6: She knows best.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 3: I think that the academic development organization as well as the development center [inaudible 01:00:20] the Chambers all do the best that they can at supporting entrepreneurs. We’ve got "Start Your Own Business" classes. We’ve got a business mind competition coming up. I think if we had more resources and more access to maybe even some investment capital that we could get to entrepreneurs would be helpful. So I think that there's definitely opportunity for expansion of those programs.

Interviewer: Okay. So it's an opportunity and a challenge?


Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 1: I think there's an opportunity in technology transfer which is university language and I think that opportunity is here and I think that would really enhance University of Wyoming if they had more researchers that were looking for those applications. Technology transfer is what will find out the best way to take the Lithium out of the ground.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: And so that R&D is perfect for our community, our students that are here, the University of Wyoming's presence here and I just think we're a LinkedIn short on that kind of research going on. For being an extractive state, I'm not sure we're doing much extractive research.

Speaker 3: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Now, maybe we are and I just don't know. So ... but-

Speaker 4: Well, we're kind of of a little bit of a disadvantage here at Southwest Wyoming now. It used to be every single solitary trona mine was owned by an American company. So there was a lot of investment, stuff like that in it. And now they're all, with the exception of one now, which actually just got bought by an American company are all foreign owned all of them. So then they take out that in, I guess I want to say investment in the community and everything like that. But I think nationwide that's a [inaudible 01:02:07] all of our assets. But that's a challenge, I mean for us, [inaudible 01:02:14] don't you think it's changing?

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Question #6

Interviewer: Okay. Last one is the most open ended of all. Your time to dream big, wish big. How can UW help? I think you've already identified some of these things with research, support for entrepreneurs.

Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: Be a collaborator in our community. Not the hot dog that takes over everything. So my example is, whenever the engineering school was getting up and running. They came in and "We're the best thing in the world." They talked about that and UW but they didn't bring the community in. I mean we were
there but it's like, we were supposed to sit quietly. And it's a real fine line between being hot stuff and really be the collaborator with the community. So I don't know if that made sense but that's one of the things that happens here.

Speaker 4: Karla's gonna make me tell my personal ax to grind with UW and I've gotta say I'm a twice graduate from that place and my kids went and all this and that. So it's not like, I don't like it.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 4: But I owned an archeology business, [inaudible 01:03:44] people don't understand it, with the exception of you, you probably understand it very well. So I started this company and I'm employed in Wyoming probably full-time 20 people. Full-time, pretty good paying jobs, okay, paying, they bought houses, they had kids, they paid taxes all of those things. So like a small business, the type of UW graduate that you're looking for because basically we stay here and we create more jobs. Well, my department done in [inaudible 01:04:22] who I graduated with was hellbent on teaching these kids how to become another academic. How to become another PHD.

Speaker 1: Exactly.

Speaker 4: Although, 90% of all jobs in archeology are in contract archeology, which I get, they were just hellbent on having all of these kids, I had a heck of a time in fact, I stopped trying to get these students from UW to work for me. I got them through another college and I got them from Colorado and here and there. But these guys in that particular department were so focused on ... and like you say, archeology is a tough thing, cultural anthropology, I mean what are you gonna do with that type of degree? And how many professors are there out there in social anthropology. You know? 60? I guess, like I said, I'm doing my personal ax to grind here but it was an issue. It was an issue and it irritated me because I had graduated from there and I was thinking, you guys really should probably try to get these kids to fly to where they can actually get a job in this field.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 4: Rather than just, you're done, I'm gonna have to go to work at someplace else 'cause I can't make ... so I think that's a real issue with the UW. I think that, I mean, and not all departments certainly 'cause I mean I've got another nephew who's becoming a lawyer he's an aspiring lawyer right now and I mean, they're boots on the ground in law school. These guys are out there and they're working in these offices and they're in court. And I mean they do a great stellar job at that. So I mean, I don't want to say all of them but I would look at those departments that are doing that. And you see professors ... you guys see them too. They're focused on ... there's nothing besides research. If it ain't research, it ain't nothing. And I think really [inaudible 01:06:13] should really take a look at those departments because they're not doing a service to their students they're doing a total disservice to them.

Speaker 1: And just to add to that if you go to engineering, they're building classical engineers, that's a textbook engineer. That is not individuals that actually can tell you how that processing plant works. They can tell you how to measure flows and they can do dynamics and they can do those kind of things. What you will find in the mines here is they're going to Texas A&M and hiring those engineers and they have more of a mixed engineering technology plus classical engineering together. They're hiring those that have. So they bring their engineers in here from Texas A&M, now they've got to come to Western and learn how to [inaudible 01:07:00] unit. So it's ... we could partner better with that and of course none of our [inaudible 01:07:06] are accepted in the University of Wyoming in that area, in oil and gas or in compression technology. So they probably need to really figure out what engineering is to these companies who are coming [inaudible 01:07:25] half of them underwrite everything in the state. So I think they oughta [crosstalk 01:07:28]-
Speaker 6: And so maybe just I mean so how could they help? I think it means really be aware and care and listen to Wyoming industry to make sure that we're training ... if you're gonna train, then people are gonna go to UW for engineering and they come out of UW with an engineering degree. Are they qualified to work as an engineer.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Do they have the skills.

Speaker 6: Again, in the State of Wyoming. That doesn't mean that they have to but if they come out of UW with an engineering degree and our Wyoming industry says, "You don't have the qualifications that we need from our engineers than again we're missing, we're not really bridging the gap. So they're still not actually, we still don't have a trained workforce for what our industry needs. And so if we're gonna be Wyoming focused which is what we're doing, if we're gonna be Wyoming focused, then let's actually be, Wyoming focused. Right? If that's what you want, if you want to have UW graduates who work and live in the state of Wyoming then we should train them, in whatever field they're interested in for jobs that exist in Wyoming. Or for industries that could come is. So that we have, we would actually have a trained workforce for the area, for the region [inaudible 01:09:04].

Speaker 1: So I want to make sure because I misspoke and I just want to say, they accept our engineering credits but they don't accept any of our technical credits.

Speaker 1: So I just want to make sure that, and our engineering students who get an associates in engineering here, they also have gotten a lot of that technical piece to it.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: But it's weird we get somebody that's just gone straight through university that, I have these plant managers that you're just pulling your hair out because they're like I want somebody to know that you really do have to turn off the switch before you walk into the room. You know?

Speaker 4: Well I think the real successful universities are doing this, they're examining their own way of teaching and I think that UW and I hate to say this 'cause I say, I've got a huge amount of love for the place, I think that they haven't done a really good job of examining the way that they teach certain things. Some they have and some they have not.

Speaker 1: Nursing they do a great job but they have partners with us, direct partners for years. Our nursing ... that is just, to me, what made [inaudible 01:10:17] has [inaudible 01:10:19] for a university.

Interviewer: So that would be another example of what a partnership should look like?

Speaker 1: Yeah. And I meant to do [inaudible 01:10:27] renew.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: But yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 1: Really, the nursing program throughout is just, that is the kind of program that, they make sure that they are teaching people to work in a rural environment. And it's just really awesome. I mean [inaudible 01:10:45] but that's right. [inaudible 01:10:48] industry here that needs some other kinds of skills like, [inaudible 01:10:53] that was starting too.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on how UW can help with your challenges and opportunities?
Speaker 4: Just 'cause you're here we know that something's changing.

Speaker 6: Right. Exactly.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay.

Speaker 3: Yes.

Speaker 2: Yeah, and obviously you guys work [inaudible 01:11:14] colleges and stuff. Really just like this EO, stronger partnerships, helping with [inaudible 01:11:21] ... I mean there's what eight, nine junior colleges in Wyoming.

Interviewer: Yeah. Seven.

Speaker 2: Seven.

Speaker 1: Seven plus an extra campus.

Speaker 2: Okay. I apologize. I don't count that. But we should be partnering with them. UW should be partnering with them more and not having, I mean I hear students a lot go, "Well, they're not gonna take ... I'd like to stay here at home and kind of knock out some of my basic cred ..." but they only take half of them, or they don't do this or that. And it'd be nice to see that be a stronger presence and a little more welcoming. I hear students a lot saying they don't, if they go to a junior college first they don't really feel very welcome when they try to transfer to UW. Even if some of the credits transfer the welcoming atmosphere, they get treated kind of, "Well, you went to Western, or Central Casper or something." And they just don't feel very welcome to go there and transfer their stuff. So [crosstalk 01:12:21]-

Speaker 1: [crosstalk 01:12:21].

Speaker 2: Yeah, it'd just be nice to see a little bit stronger partnership in that sense. I mean the rising cost of higher education I mean we've gotta do better for our kids. We can't have kids coming out of school with $100,000 in debt and it's just not gonna work.

Speaker 1: Not everybody's destined for a four year institution and I think that's what the junior colleges have done so well. Because I mean they're preparing to get a job and that's why this whole thing where you're doing the [crosstalk 01:12:49] and stuff like that, it's the same wherever. I don't like it.
Interviewer: Okay, so the first question is, get pretty specific, are you aware of UW partnership's joint projects within the community, and if yes, cite specific examples, and experiences and outcomes.

Speaker 2: I'll kick this off, what the heck, because you see [inaudible 00:00:28] pump into each other and work with each other very regularly, we're definitely aware of the grants that are linked to education, which is everything is UW [inaudible 00:00:40] so their health grant that they're doing on the reservation to promote gardens and healthy lifestyles, they also do, help me out here [inaudible 00:00:50] grants, they support our students' research projects in a very big way, often times UW will give a big grant, and give the community colleges, all seven of them, a piece of it, to do work, so often times we're all on the same team, working under a common grant.

And most of them I can think of are in health and science [inaudible 00:01:16].

Speaker 3: Now just thinking of our two plus two partnerships, I guess my roots come back to me, when I first moved to this community 20 plus, plus years ago, when there were not opportunities to get advanced degrees, if you were site bound, and I think the progress that UW has made in partnering and making those things available through the outreach center and now, working with the community colleges, and how many more two plus two programs we have available now for folks who are site bound in our communities.

I talked to students every day who now are able to get their degrees here, and I remember just from the time I started at that stage, to now, you used to have to go down for extended weekends, and you used to have to go ... the progress that we've made over the 20 years, now to get a Masters degree, to get even a Bachelor's degree, all those different levels you can do that from, and be here with children, or for whatever reason if you cannot relocate to [inaudible 00:02:36], we've made tons of progress. And those partnerships are invaluable for folks in [inaudible 00:02:39] county and I think especially to the reservation folks who just may not be able to relocate.

Speaker 4: This building itself, we're in the inner tribal center, and UW contributed at least 1 million dollars, this predates [inaudible 00:02:54] I know that they participated in even, part of the purchase of the joint venture, even in this building, they offer classes in this building, they have an outreach center here that Lori spoke to in terms of offering courses, largely new technology, there was ... speaking of [inaudible 00:03:13], there was called the Education Task Force, and also sometimes has a really really long name, but basically to educate [inaudible 00:03:23] and it's been going on for several years in UW has chaired that process and brought players together and has been good in that regard.

And a lot of different folks from main campus have come here and presented their ideas how to do a variety of projects, just flattering a little bit, but certainly, A for effort, B for effort, but certainly in my circles, involved in UW quite regularly when it comes to things on the reservation and partnership to learn.

Speaker 5: They also have the trio programs, which do a lot of work, and have done a lot of work, all over the county and a lot of focus on the res.

Speaker 4: Trio programs?
Speaker 5:  Trio, yeah.

Speaker 4:  Of trio? Okay, yeah.

Speaker 6:  My involvement is outside of the academic world, I'm more with the non-college going community, through both the newspaper and then [inaudible 00:04:33], UW has partnered with us on a publication we did to help juniors prepare for going on to higher education and we were grateful for their partnerships. [inaudible 00:04:48] was the biggest partner in that [inaudible 00:04:54].

Speaker 4:  What was that called?

Speaker 6:  It was called "What's Next? A Junior's Guide to Education After High school," something like that. But then the other part is, I'm the program director for the rotary club, and UW has been very generous in sending people to speak with us on a variety of topics, and I think that there's something that UW can do, and I think this is maybe something Lori's looking for, is to let this larger community know everything that's going on at UW besides just the people who are involved in the [inaudible 00:05:31]. I think there's huge value in that, and I appreciate them coming and doing some of that through our club.

Speaker 7:  Couple of other things, UW has a board, their board [inaudible 00:05:47] Tourism, and I believe it's called "Tourism Natural Resources Degree," so they outreach and they met with our faculty several times, and so they got in, of course they presented at rotary, and that was a good thing, similarly, UW's extension branch has been helpful for us, sometimes it's just going down there and talking to them and then looking for advice, going down to the Fairgrounds, and sat in their office and say, hey what do you think about this idea, what [inaudible 00:06:20], what do you think, what's the landscape on that, explain to me how things are happening in the [inaudible 00:06:25], blah blah blah kind of thing.

And also, when we did some forum groups, [inaudible 00:06:32] did some forum groups, for free, UW's [inaudible 00:06:38] outreach program did what you're doing, in terms of facilitating the process, and we had nine of those things, and I was so thankful in all the work that went behind that, and offered for free, basically, that was very remarkable, [inaudible 00:06:52], they said we do this for free, and I said, "Wow, that's great, thank you!"

And I'm sure if I think about it more, I can think of other things, but I recognize their services, especially because, like I said, [inaudible 00:07:09] and I kind of know about them and what they do.

Speaker 8:  My comments come more from the industry side of things, what we actually did, our engineering firm did partner with the University a while back, directly on a project, and it proved to be quite beneficial for us. And I think it planted a seed for lots of future work, and to be specific, without getting too technical, we were looking for some help doing a special type of subsurface exploration that involved geophysical survey, and at the time, it was Professor Holbrook, the head of the Geophysical Department that I contacted, and found out that they have a program there where they had quite a bit of equipment that they had received through some grant money, and were making it available to industry to help us do our job, on a limited basis, but there was kind of a catch involved in that we had to intern a student.

And it actually turned out to be quite a beneficial thing, because he ended up coming to work for us, and continuing those services on into other projects, and it kind of gave us a starting point to apply those same types of services on other projects, and expand that in our business as well as throughout the industry.

And it's still early on, I don't wanna make is sound like a great success, but we've done quite a bit of work that's continued from that starting point.
Interviewer: Where would you say these partnerships you've cited here fall on that continuum of true partnership versus outreach? Do any of them really stand out as truly collaborative and mutually beneficial?

Speaker 4: The research grants are, I think they all feed into the same pile of research and so I think that what makes them unique in the United States is that the [inaudible 00:09:31] student research available in partnership with UW so that students can get involved in real research on [inaudible 00:09:37] is significant, and it feels like it's us. There are times when it's like, oh yeah, that UW gave us that grant. That's when you know it's a real partnership and you kind of forget you're so entwined and you don't think ... there are times when we're doing research up the hill and think we're just so awesome, and then you remember, oh, that's right, UW is a part of this. I mean you're so entwined, so in moments like that, you realize something's working really well, you're not a tool or something.

Speaker 9: I think that the work done with Rotary is probably more outreach, but I would say that it puts in front of the community, of Rotary, what the potential for partnerships are. Partnerships they may never have dreamed about or thought to be involved in, or partnership they didn't think anyone would ever want to hear from them.

And here, by having, I think five different folks from the university I think come to different meetings, so they're seeing where there are potential partnerships and that UW actually does care about [inaudible 00:10:50].

Speaker 4: In one case on the other end of the spectrum, and it's hard, definitely don't wanna be critical, because we all have our missions and our reports and things we can control and can't control, but from the experience of the education passports on the reservation, I guess the sense was coming from another college and saying, "we'll offer [inaudible 00:11:15] courses for you, we'll hire the people and take care of business, think of us as part of your team, think of us as part of your college if that helps you, [inaudible 00:11:25] break down [inaudible 00:11:27], we will hire people to [inaudible 00:11:29], we will hire other people.

The goal is this reservation [inaudible 00:11:34], but I think that since the separation, that case prevented it from advancing, because of that sense of entwined partnership, and more of at a hand's length. You give a lot of input, but at the end of the day, we're gonna do it from ... [inaudible 00:11:52].

So that's kind of on the other [inaudible 00:11:55], but I recognize that there's, there's internal challenges there too, I don't wanna be too critical.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on existing partnerships?

Speaker 10: Any other two that I'm aware of and actually just learned about those a couple months ago is the science school with the students out on the reservation, which was a summer project, and both of these were school projects, and then the work that they were doing with regards to drought, on the [inaudible 00:12:25] reservation, those are really the only two that I'm aware of, but I'm not involved in academia, I'm an attorney, [inaudible 00:12:32] so I don't know much.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. So the next question is, UW professionals, are you aware of UW professionals who serve in the community and can you identify them and their role with UW?

Speaker 10: [crosstalk 00:12:58]

Speaker 4: There used to be two Amys and now there's one Amy.
Speaker 10: [inaudible 00:13:05] Amy of course, and the trio of folks, Tiffany-

Interviewer: Tabby.

Speaker 10: And Candace.

Interviewer: Tabba?

Speaker 10: Tabby and Candace, upper bound.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Speaker 10: And well there's [inaudible 00:13:29] UW offices, Mr. Malcolm, a little of the extension offices.

Speaker 4: Yeah I was trying to think of [inaudible 00:13:39]

Speaker 10: Alex Malcolm.

Speaker 10: Oh the extensions is what I was thinking of ... [crosstalk 00:13:45]

Speaker 10: It's just on the side where the corner is. Where my old office used to be.

Speaker 10: I know where [inaudible 00:14:00], it's across the street [crosstalk 00:14:02]

Speaker 8: Oh yeah, there's actually five, I was just thinking of it, five at least that work for Enberg and [inaudible 00:14:14] Engineers and three of those maybe four work in Riverton, there may be others too.

Interviewer: Those are UW graduates?

Speaker 8: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 5: Then there's the staff at the office, that new little building that [inaudible 00:14:34], I can't remember what do they call that building?

Speaker 4: The Weiss Building?

Speaker 5: Yeah. The Weiss Building, there's Tina, Rhonda, [crosstalk 00:14:43]

Speaker 4: That's true, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 10: That's where the [inaudible 00:14:50], I guess I do have one person, that's where the [inaudible 00:14:51], I met [inaudible 00:14:54] she's on the [inaudible 00:14:57].

Speaker 4: There's a few people you'll recognize, I have to admit two folks that I've seen at the extension downtown and here at the Fairgrounds, gosh darn I can't think of their names, but there's also
[inaudible 00:15:10] at the Weiss Building, and I'm assuming, not that it's a bad thing. What's her name?

Speaker 10: Courtney.

Speaker 4: Is that Courtney?

Speaker 10: Maybe 30-ish years old. Sorry I was interpreting that as people who actually work for UW, are you talking UW grads?

Interviewer: No just people who work for UW.

Speaker 8: Oh I'm sorry.

Interviewer: That's okay.

Speaker 4: I think there's a lot of people on the main campus that we interact with a lot, Patrice and they're excellent, I'm very impressed with their president, and [inaudible 00:15:52] and other people, their Provost, but they're not outreach people, but they are out here every once in a while.

Speaker 10: We've been fortunate enough to have ... I think since Lori has been there we've had more visits from their program folks and outreach to our campus, I felt that a bunch, with regard to Rotary. Because they've reached out to our campus, and reached out with the two plus two programs and things.

You really felt that they're trying to find out what's going on with our programs and things, and it's been kind of fun.

Speaker 6: There is nobody that has said no when I've asked them if they would come to talk.

Speaker 10: Yeah it's been kind of neat.

Speaker 6: And that just amazes me. Including Lori.

Speaker 10: And this project, and just getting in touch with us.

Speaker 4: And I think a part of that outreach is them inviting us ... I've been invited to a football game, by Lori [inaudible 00:16:57] I don't know, it just felt really good.

Speaker 10: She's really been reaching out.

Interviewer: I think part of what they wanna find out with this question is for folks like you, do you identify those people as UW, some people know that they're Trio, but they don't necessarily connect that with UW. [crosstalk 00:17:18]

Speaker 4: They don't go around saying they're UW, they say they're extension. Oh yeah, there's a UW sign right there.

Speaker 10: And I think that's what Amy is to all of us, everybody knows Amy, Amy is UW to us.

Interviewer: Right.
Speaker 4: And you see Amy and Jackson that surprises me, [inaudible 00:17:39] outreach has been expanded out there. I see her up there more than I see her down in Fremont so I'm always kind of pleasantly surprised to see.

Speaker 10: And that's how the other Amy was too. It was like you saw here everywhere.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay are you getting more UW questions? Okay. Now they're a little bit more open ended. So a UW partnerships, what is your perception of UW as a partner, meaning when you think of UW, do you perceive the University to be engaged with this community on a deep level?

Co-investing and developing partnerships. To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Speaker 6: Now I'm going to have a very different perspective than you guys. But I'm going to actually say now. I would say they could do a lot more, and I appreciate that they are doing more. So I think the trajectory is correct, but I really do think they need to engage with the non-academic community and the taxpayer, so that they value ... a lot of people love [inaudible 00:18:55] and are really attached to UW in that regard, but really don't have a clue what's going on with UW otherwise.

And more communication and connecting and getting the words out will serve them.

Speaker 10: I would probably have to, at least in part, echo that. Not quite pointing the finger so much at UW, because again I'm not terribly aware of what they are doing. I was very happy to learn what I did about their engagement on the reservation, but in terms of my perception of UW as a partner, I don't know what they're doing other than the things they're doing on the reservation.

I mean obviously extension, but I don't ... I guess Extension has been around so long I don't think of it as a partnership. I mean of course it is as you sit here and actually focus on it, but in terms of just daily life, it's like I take that for granted, even though I think it does provide a very valuable service, I do.

So to me, I would like to know more about what UW is doing and I don't know how you find that out. So that's why I'm saying, this isn't being critical of UW, part of it is on me, because I wouldn't have any idea where to go look to begin with. What I have found out I was very happy about, I thought it was a very valuable contribution, because when you mentioned the health thing out on the reservation, I did not know that UW was responsible, or involved or partnering with that.

I'm aware of that program, I just didn't know that UW had any part of it, so I have no idea really what they're doing really, but I would be interested to know.

Speaker 4: It's kind of hard to answer that questions because everybody kind of has their own expectation, and I guess I don't have the high expectation, partly because of other states, and I think in [inaudible 00:21:04] and I said that well I expected them to have an extension office in [inaudible 00:21:07] county as was mandated by law since 18 something, and so what is the expectation?

It feels on the one hand, I've only been there a few years, the standards and expectations for UW are higher because they're the only University [inaudible 00:21:22], so there's this UW should [inaudible 00:21:26] people didn't expect them to do anything. So I think it's partly ...

It's a different state, it's smaller so the expectations maybe are rightly so different and should be higher. But it almost feels like if you have high expectations, then you're probably just spread too thin in a way. But you do see them involved in different things, and sometimes it's unexpected.
Like oh, that's UW man I didn't know that. But co-investing in development and partnerships and educations, that's obvious, like you said, for us it's obvious [inaudible 00:22:09]. But the expectation also I think for them is economic development state-wide, they have their incubator [inaudible 00:22:19] campus and so what do they do incubate business here?

Do we have an expectation? I don't really know, so it feels like I'm going to see [inaudible 00:22:34] from Masters or PhD, UW has [inaudible 00:22:40] in terms of investing and outreach. I almost feel like UW is frankly doing better than CSU, so the department that [inaudible 00:22:45], in terms of presence in the communities and enjoying grants with people and on the reservation, in personally kind of impressed because they're my alma mater [inaudible 00:22:57].

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:23:05] do you have any thoughts on that, it seems like a pretty successful partnership with Edward Miller.

Speaker 8: Yeah, well I guess I'm not sure I'm the best person to be saying this, because on an educational level I'm not in that circle. I'm looking at it more as an engineer and industry, so I can't really speak to where I see University of Wyoming from a partnerships educational very much.

Just don't have much to offer on that.

Speaker 10: I don't wanna be critical either. I think that the people who work for UW in our community and live in our community, they understand our community and all of the challenges that we have, barriers that we have, I'm not always sure [inaudible 00:23:58] into that last question, is UW present [inaudible 00:24:00]. I think the people that live here and work here like Amy and the [inaudible 00:24:02] staff, the extension office people, they are, but I'm not always sure that the folks from [inaudible 00:24:14] are, present socially.

They don't understand the way this community's built. And we have a lot of really different things than other communities in Wyoming.

Interviewer: Right. Anybody else agree with that perception?

Speaker 4: [inaudible 00:24:34] it feels like it's kind of nichy, I can look at different departments at UW and say, "that department looks like it's dialed in, things related to health and things, things related to nutrition and health," but then I'd look at [inaudible 00:24:49] and I don't think they're [inaudible 00:24:54], I mean honey and eggs and funny things like that.

Sometimes I think they're just off the radar because we're just different, you know?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay, any other thoughts on this before we move on to the next? Okay now, these next ones, these are much more open ended. So name the top three grant opportunities in your communities that ... that's not my language, that's ... [crosstalk 00:25:29] Who's working on capitalizing on them, and what are the desired outcomes?

Speaker 6: So I have a particular project that I think is a grand opportunity for Riverton, and it revolves around tourists. We have seen some decline in the last few years because we were really dependent on the energy industry, but we're the front door to Yellowstone. We're a great place to be, and we've got beautiful land and beautiful [inaudible 00:26:07] and Riverton has a lot to offer.

I think our opportunity is developing assets in Riverton and the marketing those. In terms of capitalizing on them, I think the [inaudible 00:26:22] council is there to support, I think the chamber is still kind of figuring it out, so I don't think anyone is capitalizing on it ... I think maybe the Fly Group is the most capitalizing on this at the moment.
The desired outcome would be, it is about diversifying the economy. But I'm really, really encouraged by the tourists at the natural resources and the rate that they're developing, and that they will have students that will be working on Capstone projects, is that what they're called?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 6: They come into you community and help you solve some problems, I give them 12 months until they send us something. I think that is a great partnership between us.

Speaker 4: I would echo that. I'm not completely an outside, but I look at the state of Wyoming and [inaudible 00:27:18] and it's obviously that we are kind of the lowest of the Tetons [inaudible 00:27:25]. I've scratched my head and said, if you're trying to play the whole mountains and identity, and they're trying to get more out of state students, then you'd better be here in force.

I'm kind of surprised, I'm thankful that they gave up their field station and we got [inaudible 00:27:39] going [inaudible 00:27:42]. That's a huge strategic mistake. And also in Jackson, it's such a wealthy community, and full of opportunities and they're going to do some tourism, but when we approached them about, "Why don't you guys do culinary, there's five star restaurants, there's some amazing opportunities out there."

Sometimes it feels like they don't kind of get it. But this degree is in the right vein, that's good, [inaudible 00:28:06] tourism is good, but the trajectory I think you said was a good one. She's right, there are times when I'm saying you've gotta hit that harder and more thoroughly. There's a huge opportunity, if you wanna do the Wyoming mountain thing, they should be here in force.

And so yeah, big opportunity, I think you're good, if you look at schools that market themselves as the outdoor engager schools, I think it's a branding issue, co-branding? Besides the [inaudible 00:28:45] School does work to brand separately to a certain extent, and I think they try to be this different kind of brand.

I think they need a lot more of that, and play that up, I think cleaning the [inaudible 00:28:57] School will enhance their whole entire brand, their whole outdoor, environmental thing. It's attractive, people like the outdoors. And I think they should probably consider [inaudible 00:29:08]. But they decided in order to hit hard, it's an education program, everybody and their dog has an education program, and everybody and their dog has a really good business program.

You're not gonna compete with Harvard Business School and trying to be the best education program in the nation isn't a very sexy thing, it kind of sounds good, but it doesn't feel that strategic to me. And this is ... I'm not telling the president what to do, but just kind of looking at what's available for them, they need to do this, they need to hit the outdoors really, really hard.

Interviewer: Maybe hold that thought for so, what UW can do comes later on, we're just looking at potential here, what are opportunities, specific industries that you wanna grow and what kind of quality of life assets do we have here, what's unique about this community in terms of opportunity?

Speaker 10: I again have a pretty different view, but anyway, Riverton, historically going back in time, was really a business hub for a very large geographic territory. I can't remember the exact numbers now, but back in the '90s, the daytime population of Riverton was huge compared to the nighttime population, and it wasn't the bedroom community thing that some people ...

They live in a small town and drive to a big town, it wasn't that. It was because people were coming here for various business opportunities and shopping and blah blah blah. There was a big push within the community at large, and a lot of cooperation between the various facets of the community,
meaning city government, county government, CWC was very involved also in that, to really make Riverton a community that people would want to come to and stay in.

Perhaps it doesn't have the same beauty as [inaudible 00:31:13] or [inaudible 00:31:13] or Jacksonville or whatever, but it's got a lot to commend it. It seems like having been away from the community for a number of years and then moving back, it almost seems like, not to psychoanalyze my hometown but almost like our community is depressed and we're just kind of like whatever.

[inaudible 00:31:36] always has to listen to me saying, can we paint the curbs, even if they're peeling, painted peeling curbs looks better than just peeling curbs. But it used to be, you could tell if you drove around in Riverton, this is a blue collar community, but it's neat as a pin, and most parts of Riverton were like that.

That really is no longer kind of the case. It seems like the downtown has kind of... it seems kind of depressed. I think that Riverton has a lot of fantastic people, has a lot of fantastic opportunities, it's just there's always a can-do, can-do, people in this community would just pull together and completely do amazing things.

I don't know if it's the economy of the times, or whatever, I don't know what it is, but Riverton seems, I don't wanna see to have given up, but it's almost kind of along that vein. I would love to see, and I do think it's the grandest opportunity [inaudible 00:32:45] can address much of what other people have talked about, is if we can, once again bring together the community leaders from all different facets, even if the CWC an city council is necessarily working together, historically they did.

And the county, and just getting people communicating about, and pulling the chamber and pulling the [inaudible 00:33:13] and pulling these different entities, and saying, what do we want this to be? We've gotta start communicating, we've gotta start building community again.

Riverton was the magnet community for much of the Bighorn Basin and [inaudible 00:33:28] River Basin, and it just seems to have backslid quite a bit, and yet I see CWC's campus has grown and improved exponentially since when I left in 2000. And they're all fabulous improvements. The Health Sciences building is amazing, the [inaudible 00:33:52] Center is amazing, so there's a lot of good stuff going on, but it doesn't feel very cohesive, and I think we can do just about anything if we would just come together.

Interviewer: So the opportunity would be just to restore that reputation as a hub?

Speaker 10: Well coming together as a community doesn't have to necessarily restore, because I'm not focused on going backwards, I'm saying that we've done it before we can do it again. That's why I'm pulling on that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 6: And I absolutely agree with you, that this community will come together in some amazing ways to help each other out, and that has really impressed me. I'm a newcomer here, and that has really struck me. But yeah, the economic thing has made us kind of listless.

Speaker 10: Listless is a good word for it, thank you, that's perfect.

Speaker 6: And I don't think [inaudible 00:34:44] is ever coming back, I have no idea if we're ever going to get our oil and gas [inaudible 00:34:46] back, now that they've all left. As the industry comes back, whether they come back or not, I don't know. So there is the question is what do we become now that that's past.
Our biggest employers are the college and the hospital. The casino.

Speaker 10: See if you get key people from the various sectors of the community, and just have a think tank or whatever, just people who really care, doesn't need to be formalized, it doesn't need to be whatever. Just people who are like, you know what? This place rocks, let's pull it together, let's communicate.

Because it's kind of like everybody has just gone to their little corner, and it's like .

Speaker 10: Just trying to get through.

Speaker 10: Yeah. And if we sit here and hope, "Well when Uranium comes back, or when oil and gas come back," well maybe it's not going to. But does that mean we give up? No, because you've got a lot going ... [crosstalk 00:35:53]

Speaker 4: And some of the other opportunities, because I had to think in kind of the same terms from the college, but I think there's a huge opportunity, and it's a difficult opportunity, but I think the fact that we have the [inaudible 00:36:08] Indian Reservation right here, and there's all this stuff ...

You can't find a restaurant, [inaudible 00:36:16], you can buy a few [inaudible 00:36:20], the trading post, thank you. But there's this thing here saying if we all came together and realize if the reservation thrives, we thrive. It's the only place worth shopping. And I think that it's one thing that I thought is something with the reservation, in terms of tourism and natural resources that we can ... If we get together, and we team up, and we're not separate entities, we can be good. [inaudible 00:36:46] God bless them, they bought a bunch of land near Walmart, and it's kind of, not coming together, it's like what's the vision everybody, you know? If we pull together.

The other thing I've thought about is that we do have [inaudible 00:37:00] in town, sorry, so i scratched my head and said, "You know what, they're [inaudible 00:37:04], from a media center," so I thought let's rally around new media and media sources. I'm going okay, but maybe we're not Atlanta with CNN, we're Wyoming we have Wyoming with [inaudible 00:37:17] in town, so I almost felt like there's something ... and that's really cool.

I already mentioned the natural resources, but I agree, I think it does feel like we all have the same kind of vision.

Speaker 10: We need to come together.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 10: I think there's another opportunity, this would be a different school on the natural resources and tourism group, and I don't wanna ... I love what CWC is doing, so I don't wanna necessarily fight anybody to come weasel in on the [inaudible 00:37:47], but they're doing some incredible work with prehistoric archeology. Well, archeology, it is prehistoric. Up in the mountains, and I think that that can be a big tourism draw.

I think from a cultural standpoint, it can be a big tourist draw, but it's a totally different set of people. Those are the archaeologists of University of Wyoming, and seeing if there's a way of developing that as a resource in a responsible and safe way, you know? I think there's a potential opportunity there too.

Speaker 7: The other one I was thinking about is, Wyoming did the pass the Food Freedom act, this is one of the few states where you can take unpasteurized milk and a person can sell it to another person.
Speaker 10: And eat as much chocolate as you want.

Speaker 7: There you go. And so I'm looking at this county, we are number one in funny things. From milk production in a county, honey, eggs, [inaudible 00:38:51] but there are definitely ... and there is something there I think you can almost nurture.

And I think that's something to rebuild communities. I don't think local foods is an economic boom, it's not going to replace oil and gas, but if you have more music in the park with banjos, and more fun, it's more livable and attracts more business. So I do think there's a role of almost thinking about what are we doing to grow communities, and not just thinking about this program and that program.

My theory is that working with local groups and local business doesn't have a big payoff, but it creates this living environment that ... the current [inaudible 00:39:30] and people take pride again, and they're not listless anymore, you know?

Speaker 10: And exactly to your point, that was what, at least in part during ... there were different schools of thought, different faces, [inaudible 00:39:44] there was always the contest between well, economic growth I get the people are that will make our community nice, but they hired an economic development director, and he said, "No, make your community nice, so when people come and look here to relocate their business, they'll want to stay."

And so that's exactly to your point, building community through activities and cultural events etc etc. and cleaning the streets.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on opportunities or assets that you have here that can be developed that we have here?

Speaker 8: I think I can echo some of what was already said, but I see from my perspective great opportunity for a lifestyle that people that live in [inaudible 00:40:39] don't have, and if that can be encouraged through communication technology, so people can live in places like this, and then get on a plane and get to where they need to be if they need to go somewhere without any hitch, anything we can do to encourage that is going to help.

I know one interesting thing that happened was Weatherby Firearms Company moved from California to [inaudible 00:41:09] and I understood that they actually considered [inaudible 00:41:14], because of those reasons, primarily the lifestyle for their employees. And they didn't take it primarily because of lack of interstate access.

Which is understandable for their industry. There's probably other businesses out there that wouldn't need an interstate access, but could easily look at our area as a place to set up their headquarters. And I don't know what it takes to get that floodgate opened, but I can see that being a great opportunity.

Speaker 10: So the partnership would be some help in developing those opportunities.

Interviewer: Okay, next question is on challenged. Name the top three challenges in the community. Is anybody working on them and what have been the desired outcomes? What are the desired outcomes?

Speaker 10: Addictions.

Interviewer: Addiction?

Speaker 4: Yeah. That's a big one.
Speaker 4: Addiction is a big part of it.

Speaker 10: And in turn, that's who's working on them? There's any number of them, of entities who are working on them because it's kind of a comprehensive problem. But, I guess you're not really asking for the needs, but there's ... I can answer that, this one, who's working on that?

So we have Fremont County Counseling and they work on [inaudible 00:42:47] Law Enforcement and Corrections, obviously that's part of the judicial system, White Buffalo Recovery Center, the Center of Hope, the [inaudible 00:43:05] Tribe has purchased the 12 Street Medical Clinic, and I know that part of that master plan if you will is to have a psychiatric ward and additions program, and there are some pretty proactive plans to expand that facility and do that.

So I think that I would say that there ... it's not that no one is working on it, but by way of example, some of the providers from counseling and therapy point of view, there's so much high turnover that it really ... you have to wonder and I'm not accusing the place, one of the concerns having worked in the area of people who are either voluntarily or who are court ordered in therapy, having turn over, turn over, turn over, who your therapist is can do more damage than good.

And yet, the person is court ordered to be there, and so, that, number one I think that the service providers, there aren't enough of them, and number two then some of them, not all of them, but some of them have such high turnover rates [inaudible 00:44:28]. And as part of the ripple effect that addictions problem there is a high rate, and I think it goes hand and glove with that, of child abuse and domestic violence.

And so in addition to the therapy needs with regards to direct addiction stuff, there's also seemingly insufficient resources to help children who are abused in any number of ways, and victims of domestic violence.

Speaker 6: The ability to hire ...

Speaker 10: Yeah.

Speaker 6: To hire qualified people to work in those [inaudible 00:45:15].

Speaker 10: And keep them.

Speaker 6: Educated ... keep them, yeah.

Interviewer: Specifically in addiction treatment programs?

Speaker 6: Well in all of those, in law enforcement-

Interviewer: Social services.

Speaker 6: Social services.

Speaker 10: I can actually echo that all the way across, because of the things with the economy I've noticed is this drain of high potential, of talent. And so the talent that's left, there's a lot of training, a lot of work, and then a lot turnover because you have a lot of [inaudible 00:45:45].

I like to think some of that is because we've lost not just people from the oil and gas industry, but we've lost their spouses and those were people filling those jobs.
Speaker 4: [inaudible 00:46:00] because all these social ills definitely reflect themselves and are involved in the college. If we look at the [inaudible 00:46:12] county, and all the factors you look at health wise, or just income wise, Fremont county is one of the poorest and we have more social ills and the truancy rates.

Graduation rates ... sometimes we look at ourselves and we beat ourselves up, but we've got a tough environment, and I think that's what we're talking about here is the kind of core fabric of our ill society is how to address those things. It's one thing to say, "Let's have [inaudible 00:46:42] entertainment for graduation from high school," and I'm saying we're broke, don't throw things at teachers yet.

Because I think this is more societally systemic than the quality of teaching. So I think it impacts everything, the quality of everything, the quality of employees, students, graduates, if you don't address core poverty and addiction issues.

And all the social ills that go with it from domestic violence [inaudible 00:47:09].

Speaker 10: Our crime rate in Riverton, because I'm right in the middle of [inaudible 00:47:15], and so one of the measures that I use to talk about our county is the UCR crime report, and the rates of crime, of serious crime-

Interviewer: What was that acronym you used?

Speaker 10: UCR?

Speaker 10: UCR. It's the Uniform Crime Report.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 10: And so they gather up all that data from the state, and the state they measure it per 10 thousand, increments per 10 thousand of the population, and the state average is around 20, and Riverton for the last full crime report that they printed is 60. And that's huge ... So that really impacts this community.

Interviewer: Is anybody, [inaudible 00:48:12] are you working on that?

Speaker 10: Oh yeah, victim's advocates, Law Enforcement, all the social agencies, everybody has a part in it, but I'm not sure that everybody works together.

Interviewer: Has that been increasing, or has that been stable, or is that ...?

Speaker 10: Well we write our grants every two years and this is my third time, the first time that I wrote grants in this position, the crime rate was 54, and then two years later, which would have been two years ago, it was down to 44. And now it's up to 60.

A lot of that is I think related to the addictions, I'm the victim's advocate at the police department, I have the front seat to every bad thing that happens in this town. The child abuse and everything, and I've been there four years, and I have only had maybe three or four serious cases of domestic violence and child abuse that weren't related to addictions.

And that's pretty sad.

Interviewer: That weren't?
Speaker 10: That were not related to addictions.

Interviewer: Right.

Speaker 10: Well I don't know what the current stat on this is, but I can remember when Lori Matthews was the sheriff, and they were going around advocating for a new jail facility, and at that point in time, 80 percent of the jail population at any given time was alcoholism addiction.

So ... [inaudible 00:49:56]

Interviewer: If we take a look at some of these other topics here, as potential challenges, down towards the bottom there where they ... connectivity, that doesn't mean broadband connectivity, are the networks, partnerships, relationships in place which from our earlier discussions, it sounds like they're not in many cases.

But do you see any other challenges in this list here?

Speaker 4: I think it's just particularly just a lot about, because of [inaudible 00:50:37] diversifying [inaudible 00:50:40] and we do have the [inaudible 00:50:43] River development fund, and then we've got [inaudible 00:50:46] Inc. and there's definitely some good players, but it seems like here as ever else it's so fractured, you've got [inaudible 00:50:55] doing this and doing that [inaudible 00:50:58] and we desperately need ...

Especially if you tie it to the addictions piece because you know people approached us at the Center of Hope and said the second they graduate, we've gotta give them a program, you've gotta give them the certificate so they can work the next day and not start backwards. And in Small Town, Wyoming, we've just gotta get our ducks together in terms of either export your people or you let them stew and sour here with not opportunity.

And I just feel like we really ... and this is where I could relate it to you [inaudible 00:51:30], I said well they have an incubator in campus, and that's great [inaudible 00:51:35], but most of the state is little small towns just like Riverton, and we really need to up our game and really have a very effective investment and not just hope and everybody does their little part, we've gotta take this [inaudible 00:51:52] very seriously.

Because it's just, half the time we either create the employment, or you go to Colorado or [inaudible 00:52:00], or you just stay here and you do something addictive.

Speaker 10: Can I ask you a very quick question? I had heard there's a small business development person here in Riverton who has an office in the same building the Chamber does. Is that a UW thing? [crosstalk 00:52:21]

Speaker 10: I think it's a State of Wyoming thing, so ...

Speaker 10: Okay, thanks.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on challenges?

Speaker 7: Well to be honest I think the government structure of the tribes, they strive, and they've had meetings here just this week about how to develop. There's just systemic things that ... and we're all sleeping in the same house, we're all in the same community, and I think that what I see is a lot of efforts of good people trying to figure out how to have economic development, [inaudible 00:53:02] Tribe [inaudible
00:53:05] at the same time, and they [inaudible 00:53:05] in different people, how economic development should be separate from the political process and we're all ... 

As a college we try to create opportunities. I mean, you can train somebody in welding, but there's not welding job on the reservation as far as I know. Or auto shops or restaurants, and so for the sake of us all, we all have to rise, all ships gotta rise together. And part of this is governance issues and whether you say it's a tribal issue, you know what, it's all of our issue. Because we're all in this house together.

Interviewer: Right, any other thoughts on challenges before we move on to the last question?

Speaker 10: Make it a happy one, okay?

Interviewer: Yeah, this is ... [crosstalk 00:53:55] you get to dream big in this wishlist. How can UW help? Both think about your opportunities and challenges.

Speaker 6: I think if they have any students looking for real world experience in any of these areas, certainly, and projects that could bring work in all sorts of ways.

Interviewer: And what would that look like?

Speaker 6: Like the Capstone project. On the tourism group, it would be somebody that would come in and basically do a study, what are our assets, what are we 100 percent at that we can market, or what are we 90 percent at that we need to grow ten more percent before we can market it.

What are those things, and those students going through that program, that's exactly the kind of stuff they'll be digging into. But I think the same thing, they have similar students going through business programs on economic development, come in and do an inventory on assets on economic development, and provide some advice and I think, actually bringing ... they could even be part of the facilitator for bringing groups together to have an economic summit of some kind between all the players.

So I think for them that would be incredible as a resume builder, and for really gaining real world experience out of their education, and I think we can find a place for them.

Speaker 10: One idea I had, and I don't know if they still do this but years ago, because I've been here for a long time, and I know that they had a marketing program, [inaudible 00:55:42] program, and some of those students, I don't know what further program it was, they would develop a survey for you, and guide you through how to do the survey and stuff, and one of the things that as you were trying to effectuate change within a community that might be really helpful, and I know this isn't maybe what that question has in mind, but it's ...

Is that service available, because it's something those students don't necessarily need learning to do, maybe they're looking for survey practice. But that's something I hadn't thought about until I heard you talking and I thought okay, facilitating local meetings, some of that I agree with, some of that really for sustainable change has to be a grassroots effort and nobody from the outside can really help or it's just going to be another one of those meetings.

The other thing is that the tribes, [inaudible 00:56:55] Advocacy Center did have an economic summit, and I attended that and it was phenomenal, but I think there is a lack of cohesiveness or understanding about next step. So when you're talking about business, econ students I don't know if I got the name right, if there were somebody that, it would have to be something like Masters or upwards or higher level that would just maybe help with that kind of stuff.
I did find myself wondering, not wondering, but desiring that this should be a county wide economic summit. Because again we are one community working together. Not faulting the Native Advocacy Center for that one bit, but I was really surprised there weren't more people from the other communities in attendance because it was a phenomenal summit.

But we need to take the next step, and I don't know what we lack to do that, and maybe, there's something that we could do.

Speaker 6: Sometimes I just think we lack a body to make it happen.

Speaker 4: I was thinking that in a similar mind, the paradigm shift for UW and this happened in my mind a little bit too, is that higher education institutions need to stop thinking like of those people with degrees, we kind of dabble in some other thing with Extension and [inaudible 00:58:33], but really you have to [inaudible 00:58:37], it's my recommendation, is how can they help, is thinking more in terms of economic development.

First, and then the degree production second. That's one thing. Because if you don't think where the people are going to go, and you keep everybody on the reservation, for example or [inaudible 00:58:52] Masters Degree and choose something, that's not going to do anything good. Do what? For [inaudible 00:58:57]? What business?

And so I think, given how small we are, and the distances between us, we have to figure realistic setting. We can't just crank out anything, everything societal economic development. It almost has to be a paradigm from the get go, and so I think stronger economic development summits, trying to pull that together, I don't think it's easy, but I think it's a start.

Speaker 10: You just brought up a great point in my mind, I think it's great, I think it's grand, but along those lines, when you're talking about small business owners, downtown Riverton, downtown [inaudible 00:59:44], downtown [inaudible 00:59:48], wherever, that might be something where, and maybe these already have been speakers to Rotary, because you were saying [inaudible 00:59:57] to Rotary whenever they want, so maybe this is already going on.

But if there could be a circuit of speakers that would come talk to downtown development associations, or help talk to Chamber of Commerce or something on how to revitalize. Because little businesses really are the backbone, collectively, all together in a lot of communities. [crosstalk 01:00:33] But so if there would be a way to maybe continuing ed, or I don't know ...

Speaker 4: One thing I was wondering was, because I went to a [inaudible 01:00:45] school, graduated as an undergrad and I ended up [inaudible 01:00:52] in a different [inaudible 01:00:54] school. And it seems like land grant infrastructure, if redirected can help [inaudible 01:01:00]. Right now, going back 100 years, we have extension agents in every county in the darn United States, but [inaudible 01:01:10] half the time [inaudible 01:01:13] to [inaudible 01:01:16] I really think you've got a whole workforce of people who are out there, and if they directed more from an entrepreneurship development, and almost say, okay we kind of have, we have to tip our head to Exec, because maybe that's our history, but the reality is if you really wanna help bad you help communities.

And so I think, redirect all that people power and money that is just wow, every county in the state has an office, they have a Regional Director, take some of that resource, and have some of their experts to come out. They've certainly got a million people.

Speaker 10: I think that's a great idea, because I really like Extension and what it does and what it teaches, but at the same time I understand that not everybody wants to know how to [inaudible 01:02:06], sorry, I do, but I already know [crosstalk 01:02:12], but if there could be business development or something, or is that duplication of effort because of the Small Business Development Person, I don't know.
Speaker 6: I think they'd want to work with the small business development person and the Chamber and find what is the niche for them, because-

Speaker 10: Really that's a great idea, that's a phenomenal idea.

Speaker 6: This person is mostly about connecting people with funding, but not necessarily how to, and exploring what's the business you want to make.

Speaker 10: And of course part of that is lawyer stuff.

Speaker 4: Their whole extension branch, which is kind of doing, what are they doing over there, I don't know? If you could take that tool and redirect it, I can't help but think you can make an impact.

Speaker 10: Yeah because in terms of specific, I'm coming at this obviously from an attorney point of view who [inaudible 01:03:06], in terms of, I don't like the idea of the Extension office having an opinion on what kind of form is right for you, but the educational piece of here's all the different forms out there so that when that person does go to consult with their attorney, they're at least ... they've got the glossary down.

But the continuing ed for ongoing business owners, or teaching them about marketing, just all sorts of ... I just think that's an amazing idea.

Speaker 6: This is just kind of rally around, not well formed thought, but [inaudible 01:03:42] Power has programs whereby they want you to use less electricity, so they'll come in, they'll pay half the cost for you to put in new lighting so you use less electricity. Can that model be done in other ways that, whether it's the Extension program, where someone comes into a business and can ascertain, this is a gap you have, and we can help you get where you need to go to bring you into the 21st century.

Because most of us, you guys probably have all new computers, I have a really old computer. [crosstalk 01:04:21]

Speaker 10: You remembered that name! [inaudible 01:04:28]

Speaker 6: So I do think that the Rocky Mountain Power model makes sense, but can this help on this other kind of level to help a business advance itself-

Speaker 10: It's kind of like business coaching.

Speaker 4: Yes.

Speaker 6: Yeah.

Speaker 10: And maybe they can help with that gap, or maybe they can at least refer you to where you can, they can't be a one stop shop that's really too much, and it's too much competition with the private sector in my view, but like a business coach.

Speaker 6: Yeah someone who can identify the program, and identify ... or identify the issue and identify where you can find funds to help you solve the issue. Something like that.

Speaker 10: It's a great idea. Aren't we smart?

Speaker 6: We are brilliant.
Speaker 8: My thoughts on the subject have to do more with what University of Wyoming can do in help with leadership and giving kids that come through the educational system here not only a path through to University of Wyoming, but beyond they need some kind of vision. And to give you an example, in my business, we get some students that come from metropolitan areas, they're highly educated, brilliant kids.

But they don't know which end of a screwdriver to hold, and they just can't function when it comes to making a pragmatic decision, and I think that kids in Wyoming have that in spades. They have a guy level sense for things that you need to have as an engineer, which is where I come from.

But they're daunted by the world, they feel very comfortable in their surroundings here, and just don't have a way to envision themselves in a place outside of Riverton, or even Wyoming. And we can't ... our community is not big enough to absorb these students in practical jobs around here.

They've gotta have a path forward, they've gotta have a path outside. We've gotta see ourselves at least for the time being in that capacity is giving these kids a way out. And they need to have someone to look to. A lot of the times a success story like that comes from an uncle who's an engineer in Colorado and he's got a great life there and has all this fun doing these neat projects.

Well there's a vision. I can see myself being that guy, and this is how I get there, CWC and I go through the basic education here, and then it's University of Wyoming and then from there I can get there. But why bother if they don't even know what that looks like. So that's where I really see the University of Wyoming being kind of middle point in that path, and helping these kids form a vision.

Now I can't tell you how that happens, but I think that's the basic concept.

Speaker 4: A mentoring program or something?

Speaker 10: Well the other thing is that I wonder if UW could partner, and maybe they already do, but partner with high schools because some kids are going to be forming those visions as a senior in high school. Some of those kids, like me, are gonna get to college, go to college, and it's like now what do I do?

And so you're going to form your vision there, or you get into the degree that you thought you wanted to get into, it's like oh why did I do this? So I think that there's a continuum of forming that vision, if I understand what you're talking about correctly.

But if I have a vision that I want to be an attorney, it helps if and I don't even know what high schools do, they have engineers come in and talk on their college planning days, or maybe throughout the year. Do they have anything? I mean, there's law day at the high schools, but I don't know what they do in Fremont County, because I've only been back for a couple of years.

Speaker 8: No we do that. Engineers do that. I've done it, I've participated in that, and the number one question is, "How much do you make?" There's no other questions.

Speaker 10: So there's a stage of development issue that [inaudible 01:09:02] colleges may be a better place.

Speaker 8: They're intrigued by how much people make, but they don't see themselves ... there's no meaning to them in being an engineer. It's not like wow I want to work on building a bridge. They don't understand that.

Speaker 10: It's a quality of life question.
Speaker 4: Or a science question, or an excitement [inaudible 01:09:25]. It seemed like to me that there’s so many new undergraduates, and I would kind of look at, if you're trying to impact positively [inaudible 01:09:35] to your communities, which it looks like the survey is saying, how can we more positively impact all our communities. I would say, “What tools do you have?” What tools do you have are mentioned already. Extension service. The other one is they’ve got alumni coming out of our ears.

If you could [inaudible 01:09:48] in a mentoring program, and just really almost call it like their own little Peace Corps, and everyone had agreed to do two [inaudible 01:09:59] a year or something - I was a Peace Corps volunteer - we're expected-

Speaker 10: [inaudible 01:10:02] '70s or what?

Speaker 4: Yeah probably. Can't see it, my earring grew over. But basically what the Peace Corps does is they try to get [inaudible 01:10:15] to continue to go out to schools and talk about the world and blah blah but I think that all these alumni, they could do it. Probably even if you got two, three, four percent of them, get them to be mentors and go to schools and maybe adopt some people. I know one of UW's goals is to try to affect, to improve upon, the college going mentality of citizens of Wyoming.

That's great. But I'm thinking if you use your alumni as mentors, you might actually make some inroads on that. Because there are a lot of them

Speaker 6: And I think it brings them back around to what the [inaudible 01:10:53] in the beginning, getting the UW story out, if it's getting people in to talk to us, we'll get you into the schools, get them into various media, whatever it is. Tell us what UW is doing in every department, in every school.

Speaker 10: And like Brad said, they just got the UW alumni out, they're all here. There's a whole bunch of us here, all they have to do is tell us, and we just have to step out of our door. There's tons of you. That is the one thing that they are, they're everywhere.

Speaker 6: They're connected.

Speaker 10: When you asked that question earlier, and when people started naming previous alumni grads, it's like, they're everywhere.

Speaker 4: It's hard to almost find someone who's not.

Speaker 10: If you mobilize those troops, it would be probably pretty phenomenal. If they had an alumni day that they actually mobilized everybody that was actually a graduate, it would be fairly scary. So, that might be, how they could pull that off.

Interviewer: Alright, well great, thanks for sharing all that. That's the last of the questions, the next steps for this project is, we'll continue to do these focus groups through this month and into early March, and then we'll submit a report to the taskforce on April 1st, and that report will be made available to the public, and then I assume the taskforce will make some recommendations or create some next steps based on that.

Speaker 6: And will they send it out to us if we gave them our contact information, we can do email.

Interviewer: I'm not sure exactly how it will be made available, but you should be, we're collecting the sign ins and emails from all these. I also left my cards here if you walk away from here and think of something you wish you'd have said, send me an email, and I'll make sure it gets included. Alright thanks. [crosstalk 01:13:11]
Speaker 10: And you wanted this, right?

Speaker 10: Yes
Transcript: Afton

Interviewer: So there's six questions, and if you turn that handout over on the other side ... The first three kind of coincides with those purpose statements there. And so the first three is assessing current level of engagement and partnership with the University of Wyoming here in Afton, and then the next set of questions, the second three, is looking at what are the possibilities? What partnership could look like or should look like with UW. And what are the opportunities you have in this community and also what are some of the challenges that you have? So the first one that again, pretty specific, are you aware of UW partnerships, joint projects, within your community? And, if yes, then cite examples of those and then what the experiences have been.

Speaker 2: Well I think the one that I'm always watching is to see how many educators we're able to pull from the College of Education at UW to our community for student teaching and things and so, we are having a few right now, so that would be a partnership that is currently in place. But, I would hope we can strengthen it.

Speaker 3: I'm aware, just in the community occasionally you see University of Wyoming vehicles with graduate students or what have you. They're out doing something but you really don't know what it is, you know, they're just in the community for a week or two, maybe doing field work and they kind of come in and out but not a lot of engagement that I'm aware of, as far as, what are they doing? Geology classes, once again. You'll see folks from UW or University of Michigan or some of those other schools.

Speaker 4: So I guess one that I'm aware of is the University of Wyoming Extension office. Mr. Hill, I think, Hudson Hill is the guy down there in charge of that program through the university, 4-H programs and those kinds of things that he runs and sponsors, and that the university works with throughout the community. So that's an important one for young people to be involved with.

Another from my own profession is our hospital has some joint partnerships with University of Wyoming nursing program, although that one's fairly loose, we don't get students from University of Wyoming come and do their clinical work in our hospital very often. Most of the time that's local kids who can stay at home with mom and dad and still get their clinicals done, and not have to have the expense of a place to stay while they do their clinical rotations.

We have an agreement at Star Valley Medical Center with the University of Wyoming physical therapy program where physical therapy students, or occupational therapy students, come and do their clinical rotations with us for several weeks at a time, and that program works out pretty well. So, those are some specific ones that I'm aware of in the community.

Speaker 8: I think Hudson Hill is not just involved with the youth, which he does a great job doing, some local farmers I think [crosstalk 00:03:44] do workshops and classes and he's been very effective in the agricultural part of our community here.

Speaker 5: We also have a handful of staff members that have participated in the Trustees' Initiative that's a current project that's been going on through the school district. And we also work with University of Wyoming to provide credit courses through professional development that we offer locally. Some of our staff is able to do that through the University of Wyoming.

Interviewer: What is the Trustee's Initiative?
Speaker 5: There's quite a few different benchmarks I think, and Kelly you can maybe speak with that a little bit. There was a counseling initiative that we were part of. I'm not sure which other ones you participated in.

Speaker 2: Well with the Daniels Fund, one thing that we did get through was WY-COLA, so it will be some teaching, coaching, happening in Laramie that teachers can go to and learn a specific type of coaching within the classroom. And just other innovative initiatives with the College of Education, there were other things that were looked into.

Speaker 4: I know that my own daughter participated in this several years ago and that's this sophomores ... Sophomores after their sophomore year in high school can go to some sort of a science ... Sorry, I can't think of the term, uh, workshop for a few weeks down at the University of Wyoming and I think quite a few kids participate in that from Star Valley, the ... It's an outreach program the university provides to high school graduating sophomores that year, they go down that summer and are with a bunch of other Wyoming kids doing science projects and that kind of thing so ...

Speaker 1: There's also a program my granddaughter participated in a medical field, so it wasn't just science. They actually had the opportunity because they go down there and participate in careers in education and have the opportunity to see if that's what they wanted to pursue. It was a great workshop, very positive.

Speaker 4: I guess one thing I did fail to mention is the WWAMI program. We have two hometown kids who went to University of Wyoming, got involved in the WWAMI program, went and got their MD. One's an orthopedic surgeon, the other one's a family practice doc, just recently came back to Star Valley and so that's a great program for local communities in Wyoming to home-grow their own doctors and providers [crosstalk 00:06:23]

Interviewer: To incentivize kind of to stay, to practice here?

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 7: I should mention I currently have a grandson in that program.

Speaker 4: It's a good one.

Speaker 7: He completed his residency in radiology at the University of Florida. We get to go down there in just a couple weeks.

Speaker 4: That's great.

Interviewer: Okay, that's a pretty good spectrum of partnerships there, education, agriculture ...

Speaker 2: Our community also benefited two summers ago from the Wyoming Writing Project. We had some of the College of Ed staff involved with that, and they came here and did a really neat workshop.

Interviewer: Okay, any other partnerships you can think of before we move on to the next one?

Speaker 7: We're trying to ... I said I wouldn't talk but I have to tell you [crosstalk 00:07:21], in terms of recruitment we're trying to work with the athletic department and bring some of their athletes up here. We had last year the wrestling team came up. Next year, they will wrestle another university here and part of the reason is to let the people here know about things and we had a good setup so they could
spend an hour, hour and a half talking with young people and their parents about the university and their perceptions of the programs. Seemed to work very well.

Speaker 1: It was a good event. It was very well-attended and very well-received at the school.

Speaker 4: I think too that as part of that event, my son-in-law was a recruiter for the University of Wyoming at the time, and he was here and had a booth for recruiting purposes for students at the University of Wyoming so that ... But I don't know how often recruiters from University of Wyoming come to Star Valley and hold events at the fairs that we have at the high school.

Speaker 1: We do have a signee this year for football, which is awesome. I'm pretty excited about that. I think it's very positive, they're looking in-state now, so the [inaudible 00:08:34] we've had, 'cause traditionally they've been going outside ... Would have been quite successful if we'd just taken our own kids.

Question #2

Interviewer: Alright, the next question is, are you aware of UW professionals who serve in the community, and can you name them or their role with the university? It sounds like Hudson Hill is pretty well known. Are there other UW professionals?

Speaker 5: Yeah, do you need ... Do you want their names?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 5: Staci Horsley currently works through the ECHO project for the University of Wyoming. And I ... There could be others.

Interviewer: The ECHO project?

Speaker 5: The ECHO project, yeah. It's a professional development thing that the University of Wyoming is involved in. There could be others in the community that serve on that or work with them that I may not know the names of, 'cause it's a wide variety from health to education to all kinds of residential treatment stuff, so ...

Speaker 9: I'm not aware of any others that are permanently in the community.

Speaker 1: Tell me about Shar, she just works under Hudson?

Speaker 9: Yeah, she works with Hudson.

Speaker 1: Okay, 'cause I know she's ... For extension, she's young. I know, I don't know what her married name is.

Speaker 9: Shar Perry.

Speaker 1: Thank you. Shar Perry does an excellent job working with Hudson Hill. She's one of the faces that you see in the community. When you see UW, you know she's ... She does a great job.

Interviewer: Can you say that name again?

Question #3

Interviewer: Okay. Well if you think of somebody as we go on, I can certainly add that in later. So third question is, what is your perception of UW as a partner? When you think of UW, do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing in developing partnerships with you? To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening? And I think one way to think about this ... If you look back at our definition of engagement, the keywords that are underlined, collaboration, mutually beneficial exchange, partnership, and reciprocity, what they want to assess here is UW, are there examples ... So UW goes out and does outreach. Do they go and deliver programming on one end of the continuum and then on the other end of the continuum you have pure partnership where all the stakeholders are involved in the development of whatever program or initiative it is from the very beginning. So with the current partnerships, try to think of it in that regard.

Speaker 5: I can start off on the perceived partnerships, or maybe the level that we would like. I think UW right now is at a more listening level than they've been in the past. We've had some conversations with them, but in specific terms, in terms of student teaching and working with the College of Ed to get student teachers and educators into our district or into this area of the state is a huge desire of ours and so we'd like to see that partnership grow, as well as concurrent offerings or program offerings on the academic side that maybe we aren't getting our needs met on the community college level, with our partnership that, with Western Wyoming, we would like to engage with the University of Wyoming. Right now we're engaged with other universities across the border and I think we would love to see increased engagement with the University of Wyoming for credits.

Interviewer: What other universities are those?

Speaker 5: Utah State University, the BYU-Idaho, and I think we could partner with others, but we're kinda been trying to partner with University of Wyoming due largely to the Hathaway Project. We think it serves kids well to connect to University of Wyoming if they're heading that direction.

Speaker 1: I was just going to say it has improved since Mr. Baldwin has moved to this area. I've noticed for a long time. I've been very proud being a Wyomingite but I thought like they didn't recognize that we were here in this part of the state. Mr. Baldwin being here has really turned that around. It's made a huge difference in this community.

Speaker 7: Thank you.

Speaker 4: We have been fortunate enough to have trustees. Mel is an example of a trustee that serves from our community to the university. Ron McCue, who was the president of Silver Star Communications, he was a member of the board of trustees for several years. That was probably back at the turn of the century though, 15, 16 years ago. But he spent four or five years on the board of trustees so ... It's nice that we have community members that are willing to do that and are well-thought-of enough to be able to do that, so that's nice. But there is still the perception that most people in Wyoming think we're in Idaho.

Speaker 1: Or Utah.

Speaker 4: And so we always feel like we're maybe we have a loose relationship with University of Wyoming but not really strong ties, and really that's geographic and time of travel and all that, makes it difficult to do that, but we certainly, from speaking from the standpoint of the medical center, we'd love to have stronger ties with the nursing program and the therapy program and the College of Pharmacy and all of those things. We'd love to have people come here and do their clinical rotations and see what Star Valley's like and maybe they want to stay and work for us, so we think we could develop that further. But we maybe don't always have those opportunities that the communities that are closer to Wyoming have, so ...
Speaker 7: One of the things that we want the people in Laramie to know and students from all over the state is the quality of our hospital, our medical programs here in Afton, an outstanding hospital, outstanding people, and a chance for people to come and really get some wonderful training. I know that because I served on the hospital board here for a while and I was absolutely amazed at the quality of the programs here.

Speaker 5: I will add to that a little bit in the sense that the distance is often the discussion when it comes to student teachers and evaluating them and communicating with the university, but I would just suggest that we have people in our district and in this area that one, have been well-trained through their own programs that could represent the University of Wyoming, as well as the staff they would send us. And so a true partnership that we can get into with them that trust our local staff to supervise, to train, to provide those professional development things that they would send someone to do ... In a true partnership, I think we can provide what they are trying to offer by sending us those people and so, we're more than willing to reach out and work in a true collaboration with them to provide the sort of training they're expecting their people to get.

Interviewer: Are they able to effectively do that now, with the current structure, or? ...

Speaker 5: They have the skill set to do it, absolutely. I believe. But, you know, there are some things, they may not be university employees, those sorts of things, so you know, they're provided other means to maybe get a stipend and do some of that but I just think, we have some top-notch folks that may not have to make a six hour drive that could fulfill what they're asking people to do from the university. to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing in developing partnerships with you, I guess I would have to say no. Not on a deep level. It's more on a if it works out for us level we'll do it, but not on a investing in the community on a deep level. I don't feel like we're getting that from the university.

Interviewer: Do other people share that perception?

Speaker 3: Well, [inaudible 00:17:30] this is moving away from education, but a lot of the ... There is research that is done by the University of Wyoming here in the valley that's relied on still, you know, the agricultural work that Dr. [Polkup 00:17:56] did is still relied on as the latest data. There are issues I think that come up occasionally in both my work with a civil engineer that boy, that'd be a great graduate project. That happens that there's half a dozen I can think of a guy in mind, maybe it's been done, maybe it hasn't, but it'd be nice to find somebody that could let us know that yes, that research has been done and here it is.

Speaker 4: I guess I don't want you to think that ... My comments, I didn't mean them to be in a negative way. I meant them to be in a way that, I think we're willing over here on this side of the state to be involved more on a more deep type relationship. We would ... I think we'd savor the opportunity, just makes it, the geographic nature of it just makes it really hard. And there are lots of small communities in Wyoming that feel the same way, and it's hard to divvy that up and make sure that everybody has some form of a relationship with the university, so I understand the challenges, but ... Communities always feel like they could get more.

Interviewer: I think they're looking for candid responses, so I don't think you need to be concerned about it being taken as negative.

Speaker 1: I think that's very spot on but I keep going back to when we had wrestling. I mean, it's an athletic event, but when they showed up, I think they realized, I don't know if they've ever had that kind of a crowd and support anywhere else. And I think if they'll give us a chance, whether student teachers, whether hospital training, 'cause you know for years that I've been here I've watched and it's always you know we extend it out, we can do it, we can do it, and well, nevermind and so, we end up somewhere else getting those services, and it's like we can do it. And with technology today, it's
totally possible to do some of the student teaching, and some of the nursing. Those things are totally possible if they'll just explore that partnership idea with us, and it's there. Recognize that we are in Wyoming.

Speaker 9: Yeah, I think, I think the wrestling coach last year said that was the largest crowd that the wrestling team had ever wrestled in front of, when they were here.

Interviewer: So do you think that perception that the university just invests on a superficial level is shared in the community?

Speaker 1: I don't think I'd use the word superficial, but I'd say it could be a great deal better if they would just recognize potential in what we have here. I think that would be a better ... At least, that's my perception.

Speaker 7: May I make one comment, too? One of the things that is difficult at the campus, the new buildings and all the other things that are there in Laramie, really open your eyes if you go down to see it. It's just that it's difficult for parents to take a couple of days and drive that far. Jason said six hours. When I drive it's seven and a half, so but ...

Speaker 2: And then depends on the blizzards and the timing and the ...

Speaker 7: Yeah, that's true. But it's one of those things, again, the distance. From my point of view, if we could get more people to go down, sure to go to a football game or something is fine but to take a look at the new High Bay Research Center, that $8.2 million microscope that fills this room, a microscope, the new STEM Building. All of these other things are providing real opportunities and so, while I said I was going to be quiet, I have to just say that we need to get people to go down there and take a look. I've explored, would people be willing to do it if we brought a bus, a nice air-conditioned bus, provided them rooms at no cost and meals at the cafeteria and just go spend a couple of days and take a look at what's there with the facilities.

Speaker 10: That same bus could bring the other ones out to show what we can do with our student teaching and our nursing programs.

Speaker 7: That's true. I have to mention 'cause I know these folks pretty well, we've got another football player that's gonna go walk. [Hunter Cranney 00:22:10] just called me and I'm setting it up for he and his folks to go down and meet with football people and the dean of students and get it going, so ...

Speaker 9: That's great.

Speaker 7: That's a big win every time we get even one.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on UW's current level of engagement or partnership? It seems like it's more, kind of more on the end of outreach here than true collaborative partnership. Would that be accurate?

Speaker 10: Yes.

Speaker 9: Yes.

Speaker 3: I have a daughter that's a freshman at another college and a son that's a senior this year and I asked both of them, you know, what do you know about the University of Wyoming before you selected where you wanted to go because my one son's leaning out of state too and I said have you had a chance to talk to the recruiters, you know, I'd like to see you go to Laramie, not for only financial reasons. But that's where I went to school, and it would be nice to see them go there, and they
expressed that they felt that they didn't get a lot of exposure to the University of Wyoming at the recruitment fairs and some of these other schools put on a harder sell and convinced them, even campus unseen.

You know, I've taken them to the University of Wyoming, given them my self-guided tour, and in some respects, I may have done it ... I asked my son, I said ... He wants to be in engineering like I was and I took him to the engineering building and he's like, "Boy, some of that building looked kind of old." And I said, "Well that ... I took you through the old part, just, the whole thing's not like that." So I think, I got thinking, maybe I oughta had somebody from the campus conducting that tour that you know, without going in things like those campus guides are you know they get kids excited to come, and having an easier method to do that. We were all there for the state football, but I just had a hard time trying ... Are there going to be any tours while every football team in the state, you know, the top two teams from the state are all going to be here in Laramie this weekend, can we find something campus-related to do?

Speaker 5: Going back on the same sentiments, there's certain times throughout the year that a large group of youth, our students, show up in Laramie with their families or even just with a large group of youth. And I think, if it's directly affiliated with the University of Wyoming I think they knock that out of the park. They do offer the campus visits to kids, but there are things like state football, when you have all of these kids there that I think the districts would highly support something to do on that campus, you know? 'Cause they're in charge of monitoring those kids and kind of supervising throughout the day. What a great opportunity. I think it happens for other things, speech and debate, indoor track. There's times where we congregate in Laramie and boy, I think it would be a great opportunity for the University of Wyoming to share with our youth what there is to offer at the university.

Interviewer: If people in this community want to pursue, say, more education or a degree, do they, do you feel like they have access to the distance education through UW here? Is that a common thing, or ...

Speaker 4: Probably a great to a greater degree, at least in my mind, Western Wyoming Community College does a good job with their outreach programs. The University of Wyoming is maybe not well-known as much, although they offer the online programs and all that. I think Western Wyoming does a nice job outreach to the communities, stuff in the mail, so the community, the people recognize now and we're familiar with, but we're just not as familiar maybe with the university's outreach programs.

Speaker 5: The majority of our adult learners that approach us to student teach generally are not from the University of Wyoming. They are from other programs, Grand Canyon, Western Governors. I don't know if we've had an adult learner come to try to student teach with our district that I'm aware of that maybe would have went through the University of Wyoming.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 2: And I would be curious to know if there are actual facilities here that have like a web-based setups for classrooms. I know that when I did my master's it was much easier to go through a different college because there was a facility here with everything set up and ready to go. And I don't know if there is

Interviewer: I don't know.

Speaker 2: I'm not sure if there is one for the University of Wyoming here. It would be awesome if there was.

Speaker 7: Laurie Nichols is just going to rise to the ceiling when she hears all of this because it's the kind of thing that we're think ... We know needs to happen. Having you people be really honest with us and letting us know what's going on will make a big difference that way so it's coming, particularly as we're listening to you now, it will make a big difference.
Speaker 4: Well, I ... Four of my five kids graduated from the University of Wyoming. I love the University of Wyoming. I've got six grandkids in the community. I want them to go to U-Dub. I don't want them going to BYU.

Speaker 1: Hey now.

Speaker 9: That was good.

Speaker 4: Sorry about that. [crosstalk 00:27:59] So honestly, I feel like I am very supportive of our state's institution and I want my kids to enjoy that too, and so ... My grandchildren, I should say, to enjoy that too, so anything we can do to get more of a recognition, perception of the University of Wyoming in our community, the better, because we do compete in this community very heavily with BYU-Idaho and Utah State University. Those two institutions really recruit heavily and are attended pretty well from our community, and University of Wyoming's probably number three on the list of graduating seniors that attend. Even with the fantastic scholarship programs that we have, but there's just that ... University of Wyoming hasn't quite gotten over the hump of kids really, it being their first choice, rather than maybe the third choice, so ...

Speaker 3: One other observation I've had as I've asked kids about why they didn't go to Laramie, what has come up is the climate and the train's a little challenging. I really like the commercial that plays on our ball games here, where it shows Vedauwoo and rock climbing, some of the more interesting geography around Laramie. And, if you're just driving through on I-80 and you don't stop and get off and look at some of that, you do get that perception that hey this is the high plains where the wind never stops and you know those commercials that they're playing, that the university plays, that gets up into the Snowy Range or Vedauwoo, to show that hey, there's ... Laramie's not the plains you know, it's not a three day trek to get off of this plain and find something interesting to do. The Front Range of Colorado's right close and ... But there's a lot of interesting things to do around Laramie.

Speaker 9: The fishing is great around Laramie.

Speaker 4: And summer's aren't, I don't know a better place for summer than Laramie, that's [crosstalk 00:30:24]

Speaker 10: Would you like us to do a commercial? We can [crosstalk 00:30:29]

Speaker 1: Yeah, but see I'm the [crosstalk 00:30:41] being asked to tonight.

Interviewer: That's been pretty consistent in these groups. There's a really strong affinity for the university that spans generations and cultures and geography.

Speaker 3: I think it even spans people that haven't been there. I've got a younger brother that's never spent a day in Laramie and he ... The Cowboys are it for him. He's gone to ... You know, he got his degrees at other universities but it's the Cowboys, you know. That's who he follows and watches.

Question #4

Interviewer: Alright, well it seems like the discussions tend to kind of drift this way naturally anyway but so now the next question is, what are opportunities, so and specifically what are the top three grand opportunities in your community ... The task force came up with that language, not me ... And who's working on capitalizing them? What are the desired outcomes? Specifically, what areas, industries do you want to grow, are ripe for growth here, and what are the quality of life assets you have here? What's unique about Star Valley, about Afton?
Speaker 7: Well, Kevin, I'll tell you know now, I don't have to be a trustee. My wife and I decided I had a 40 year career in school administration in the state of Wyoming and when we decided to retire, we took a look at several places and this community supports one another. Of course, it's absolutely beautiful. Every morning, even in the winter, I walk up Swift Creek, and I could see a bear and a cougar and deer and elk and moose and summers are absolutely beautiful. And if I want to go fishing, I happen to have a son-in-law with a float boat and he works and I fish. If we could keep the Jackson outfitters from bringing people out and messing up Salt River, I'd ... But it's a wonderful place to retire.

If you've lived in Wyoming, you don't mind winter, the one thing that amazed me the first day we were here five years ago is I looked out and I told my wife, "Come and look at this. It's snowing and it's falling right to the ground. It's not blowing to the ground." It was amazing. In an hour, there were two inches of fluffy white stuff just right there. So from a retired individual's point of view, with the things I want to do, and my wife, it's a wonderful place to live.

I just bought cemetery plots, it's gonna be a great place to [crosstalk 00:33:21]

Speaker 1: It's a great place to raise kids.

Speaker 7: Yes it is.

Speaker 1: We have youth that are tremendous. We have programs here that are supportive of kids, and the emphasis, you go any other places and it's always similar interest or some pro team or something. It's about our kids, it's about the music and the arts and the athletics, they support the children. And it was a great place to raise our children here. And this morning I stepped out my back door on skis [inaudible 00:33:49] and blue skies. Can't beat it.

Speaker 9: I would say the outdoor recreation opportunities are one of our greatest assets. We're surrounded by public land and it's [crosstalk 00:34:08]

Speaker 1: I would agree but I say it's second only to the relationships that we have here, the people here, [crosstalk 00:34:20] It's the relationships and then you can't beat the surroundings.

Interviewer: Okay, so outdoors, public lands.

Speaker 1: I said relationships.

Interviewer: Relationships.

Speaker 1: I mean our facilities, our nature here is phenomenal but the only thing better in my opinion is the relationships. This community cares, we care for each other, we care about the kids.

Speaker 2: And the school system. From the actual physical buildings, we have gorgeous, gorgeous facilities here, and even just the ...

Speaker 7: I know a little bit about schools and I'm telling you it's the best school district in the state. I really ... I hate to say that because I was superintendent in others but they didn't match up. It's a great school district.

Speaker 9: Sorry to interrupt you.

Interviewer: Okay so what are opportunities? What are your three biggest opportunities? You don't have to limit it to three either but ...
Speaker 5: You know, I don't know if this would fit one of the three grand opportunities in the Star Valley area, but I think it is an opportunity. There is a group of people who are trying to and figuring out a way to invest in a post-secondary training facility in this side of the state, particularly focused on probably CTE and vocational sort of things, but they are very interested in making that happen. And there are a lot of people trying to work in a lot of different ways to see what that could mean and what it could look like, but post-secondary opportunities for you know local students as well as adults and kind of vocational training.

Interviewer: What kind of vocational training?

Speaker 5: Auto shop, diesel mechanic, but they're ... It's a big picture group that ... And they want to go well beyond that. Any of the career vocational trades that you can imagine. Building construction, hair and beauty, those sorts of things. They're interested in, is there a way that we can provide training locally for those people that don't have the ability to go to somewhere else?

Interviewer: Where do they, people go for that kind of training now?

Speaker 5: Bridgerland, over in Logan, in one place. They used to go to WyoTech in Laramie. The oil field, they often will go to Western Wyoming, but the oil field has trained a lot of techs in a lot of different ways. Sometimes they receive on-job training at Simplot, Smoky Canyon Mine. Smoky Canyon Mine here locally, but there's a desire really to provide more formal training that leads to these great paying jobs and career and vocation.

Interviewer: And you said there is a group of people working on that?

Speaker 5: Yes, they've already invested a large sum of money to try to make that happen, and looking for ways to make it happen. Conversations that have included dormitories, things like that, as well as other buildings to build these training facilities.

Interviewer: So kind of like a job corps center but for any learners, not just youth.

Speaker 5: Yeah, no, absolutely, definitely for adults as well. Right now we send our kids to Western Wyoming Community College in Bridgerland, generally, to receive that kind of training and there're some kids and students and adults that don't leave Star Valley, but they believe they can provide that kind of training for ... Right here locally, and it would serve all of the local business in western Wyoming.

Interviewer: Okay. Other opportunities?

Speaker 4: I guess we have, speaking from the standpoint of tourism and recreation, we are really tied to Teton County, Wyoming, and I think there are at least 1500 people go to Jackson every day for work from our community. And those are mostly service-type industries that they work in, building construction and those kinds of trades, so our economy and our community is really tied to the Jackson economy. How do we, or do we ... How do we break out of it? Or do we even want to, is the question I guess we should pose to ourselves as a community. I see eventually that we will become more and more of a recreation and tourism area.

It used to be it was dairy farms and then, and cattle ranching. That's kind of turned into gentleman farmers that have 10 or 15 or 20 or 40 acres and somebody to take care of the acreage and they show up on weekends and enjoy the weekend and go back home to wherever they go, Utah or California or wherever they come from, but ...

Our economy is really tied to weekenders, and I don't know what the answers are but we need to capitalize on that in some way. The air travel in Star Valley ... There are more take-offs and landings
in Afton and Alpine than there are at the Jackson Airport. On any given weekend, in Alpine and in Afton there are 40 or more private aircraft that land, spend the weekend. Sunday afternoon, they get back in their plane and they go home. And so, how do we capitalize on that? You know, I don't know as I have any answers for that but that's the type of economy that our community is headed for.

We see, at the hospital, and I think the school districts see this too, that a lot of people come into our community ... They are coming because this is a safe place to live. They're leaving the urban areas 'cause they don't feel safe anymore. They're coming to our community 'cause they want to feel safe. They can work from home then, 'cause we're a gigabit community. They can work from home, and so therefore they'll come here, and work and kids attend our schools. They utilize our services and they're a great part of our community, but that's not necessarily an industry. So, our community does have its challenges, you know.

I look at these questions here. What are the three great opportunities in our community? That's really hard to answer.

Speaker 3: Mike, as you mentioned, gigabit community ... At times there's been talk of data centers. It's our cold climate we can think, I think, think for that, along with the infrastructure to support that.

Speaker 4: I know that the town of Thayne actually had gotten some grant money from the Wyoming Business Council to develop a data center but never really ... They have the money to build the infrastructure and the kind of a business park area for that to happen, but the data center itself never really got off the ground, and I don't know if there are still plans for that or not but I think it's a great idea. What I had heard is you build a nice big data center and whatever heat the data center generates, you build one of those Great Wolf Resorts right next door to heat the water for the pools.

Speaker 1: I think a phrase growing up is still applicable today. My children who chose to be professionals, in fact none of my children live in this community, it's a great place to live, but a difficult place to make a living. If you're in education, you're in the medical field, when you're retired, people love it. And a lot of people come from California 'cause there's no state tax and they don't have to have their [inaudible 00:43:03]. And a lot of retired military will come here, so our assets are definitely people, but it's tough to make a living unless you're in specific, in one of those businesses. Good luck.

Speaker 5: I would go to one of the challenges I think for this area is transportation, it was mentioned the group that leaves to ...

Interviewer: Can you hold that thought for a minute? That's the ... We're moving to challenges right after this.

Speaker 5: Okay.

Interviewer: So if you have more, you know, this is more about what could be ... What opportunities do you have here? So it sounds like kinda more diverse economy or more opportunity for those people ... So those people commuting to Jackson is because they can't afford to live in Jackson? Or because ...

Speaker 1: Yes.

Interviewer: But there's no work for them here?

Speaker 1: No, there's not.

Interviewer: And those are tradespeople?
Speaker 4: And it's an hour and 10 minute commute, so people choose to drive up the canyon for an hour and 10 minutes ... Actually, Teton County sends several buses down here every day to deliver employees to the employers up there, so ...

Interviewer: So, to your point there, was the opportunity, would be to disconnect from, more effectively from the Jackson economy? Or be more independent of that, or ...

Speaker 4: No, not necessarily. I think we're going to become more like a Jackson economy whether we want to or not, 'cause as the area grows, I think we'll be tied to that ... We'll continue to be tied to the Tetons and Grand Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park and the recreation that's available around us. We'll still continue to be tied to that, but I look at the Park City, Utah area and how it's grown and with Park City you have Heber City. I see Jackson as Park City and Star Valley as Heber City, and that's, I think that's the natural growth mode that we're going to be faced with. Now, should we do a Soldier Hollow in our community? 'Cause I know that's been talked about a lot forever, but maybe right now's a great opportunity to do that with the relaxing of regulation.

Speaker 1: [crosstalk 00:45:39]

Speaker 4: Yeah, and bring the Great Wolf pool with it.

Speaker 9: Alpine ski resort.

Speaker 1: Natural hot springs.

Speaker 2: Cokeville is the closest?

Speaker 9: Cokeville is the closest.

Speaker 2: Cokeville and Jackson.

Speaker 9: For downhill skiing. So, for the downhill skiing ...

Speaker 1: They turned down the opportunity because it was going to bring the wrong element in. Speaking of challenges, they don't like growth.

Speaker 4: Yeah, so there are lots of great thoughts and have been over the years, you know, ideas of ... There is a brewery in Alpine now that was a recent seed money from the Wyoming Business Council to bring ... It's a craft brewery, and I think it's growing in popularity, the product they produce down there. There's been talk of a distillery for some kind of, I think it's like whiskey, or some type of distillery that has been proposed. I don't know where that's at but ...

Speaker 7: The name of that sure gives me a lot of grief.

Speaker 1: What is the name of it?

Speaker 7: Melvin.

Speaker 9: Melvin Brewing.

Speaker 1: Oh that's right! [crosstalk 00:46:51] compliment for passing.
Speaker 3: Along the lines of tourism, I concur that's a great opportunity and I've noticed in recent years as regulations in the park and things have tightened up there, some of those activities, some of the rafting and the pack boating, things like that, and the snow machine, has been curtailed in Teton County in a lot of areas. So we're starting to see tour ... Actual tour groups come clear out of Jackson, clear down to Star Valley to get at the Greys River Loop, which is parallel to this valley, behind the Salt River Range. They do that. A lot of the whitewater rafting groups spend their day in Alpine where the turn outs near Alpine, Wyoming. You know, Jackson's got the draw 'cause that's where the customers are really. They're there and they sign up for the trips and things but down the road maybe there will be an opportunity to have the customers staying in Alpine. There's a lot of places in Star Valley, if they're just here for the snow machine trip that they're going to end up here anyway, then the tour guide bring them ...

Speaker 1: We just get to provide the search and rescue when they have accidents [crosstalk 00:48:16]

Speaker 4: I know that thinking of ... To David's point on wintertime recreation and the snowmobile industry, this year in particular, there isn't any snow in Utah, so the ... There's like a recreateutah.com website. Guess what they've been ... What's been on the front page of their website this year? Alpine, Wyoming. Because that's where the snow is, and so those opportunities are very abundant, but again you come down to having to work with the Forest Service and other entities to try and make that all happen, and it's a little bit difficult sometimes. But it's a budding industry, you know.

You take Kodiak Mountain Resort out here. If the Call's can weather the growth of that business, that's gonna be, that'll be an important thing to our valley in the future from a recreation supporting wintertime recreation and then even summertime recreation.

I still think we just ... Our wagon is hitched to recreation and tourism, just because of where we live and the beauty of it and ... I don't think I've ever heard anybody say the first time they came through Star Valley, they've never said, “Well, this is an ugly place.” It's always, “Wow, I'd love to live here. How can I live here?” So ... 

Speaker 10: Million dollar question.

Interviewer: Any other opportunities to talk about before we move into challenges?

Question #5

Okay, so now I'm just going to flip that question on its end. What are the top three challenges in the community and who's working on them? And what would be the desired outcomes?

Speaker 5: Well, you know, I was going to mention ... One of the challenges actually could be an opportunity so it's kind of an interesting thing, but transportation in Star Valley. We send all those people to Lincoln, to Teton County everyday. They have attempted with the START bus sort of plan. I think that transportation to Jackson is a huge challenge for a large group of our people.

We also have a group of people that they leave the valley to work in the oil field and work other places out of state and so the families here just go to school and to live, off they go. I personally travel almost every Saturday from November to March and I drive to the Salt Lake Airport and you know when I first started this years ago, I was a lone ranger, and now on the bus and in the terminal, I'm sitting next to my neighbors and people that I see all the time, and they're saying, "Hi." And so we drive to Salt Lake Airport way more than I can even dream of 10 years ago, and ironically enough, Jackson folks now are driving to the Salt Lake Airport, or the Idaho Falls Airport. So I think there's an opportunity for ... There's a lot of travel that happens out of Star Valley and I don't know if the air travel is a true solution to that, but it appears and there's more than I would have guessed sitting in the Salt Lake Airport every Saturday trying to get somewhere.
Speaker 4: I think another challenge that we may not be faced with today but in the near future as our community grows is infrastructure. The days of everybody having a septic tank and drilling a water well, that's gonna become more and more difficult and more of a challenge as the communities grow. And so, having infrastructure up and down the length of the valley is going to become a more important, sewer systems, sewer treatment, water systems, those kinds of things.

Speaker 3: And along those lines, the maintenance of that infrastructure, especially roads where there's not a ... There's not adequate funding to keep up with the, that's gonna be a challenge.

Speaker 9: Jonathon may be able to answer some of these questions before as he was working on these things ...

Interviewer: Welcome.

Speaker 9: because he's a little bit more got his finger on the pulse of he's working on things probably, so ...

Interviewer: So the question we're on now is what are the top three challenges in the community here, and who's working on addressing them, and what would be the desired outcomes? And so what's come up so far is transportation, as a challenge and an opportunity. A lot of people are traveling to Salt Lake City or Idaho Falls, and then infrastructure like water, sewer infrastructure.

Speaker 1: Employment opportunities.

Interviewer: Employment opportunities.

Speaker 1: 'Cause if you're a professional, it's very difficult to have much ... Unless you're flying out of here somewhere, if you're not working for the school or the hospital, professionally it's difficult.

Interviewer: Alright, welcome.

Speaker 10: Thank you.

Speaker 9: I'd also say like affordable housing given this, it's tough going, how hard of a challenge it is for families who the salaries just don't meet what the housing prices are.

Speaker 2: Right, that's actually what I was going to say 'cause that housing, even when we bring in new people to the school district, it's hard to find them an affordable place to live. And then if we take that same concept and think of getting UW students here, you know, if they're from the engineering department doing a project, or coming into the school system for a while, it would be awesome if we did have some dormitories or something like that. I know there's been a little bit of talk about that, some grant money or something to build so that they could come and experience our community and work here and know what it's about. There's really no place for them, unless they're from the valley and have family here. There's really no place for them to stay right now.

Interviewer: Anybody working to address that?

Speaker 2: I know on the Trustees' Initiative, there was a little bit of talk about it, but I don't know that anything's moving forward right now.

Speaker 9: The housing opportunity I think is more of a business opportunity than an opportunity to provide affordable housing for the group that truly needs it. Rent and price of a home is pretty decent.
Speaker 9: We've been affected somewhat in the county, county-wide with like Airbnb and VRBO, they've taken a lot of the long-term rentals off the market, so you know there's kind of a void there that's really not being filled. They've just taken so many of those off the market, any long-term rentals, it's made it challenging.

Speaker 1: I think one of the challenges that I've noticed too, living here my entire life is the people who live here want their children to stay, but they don't want the growth. They want to keep it how it is. They don't want other people coming in. If you've lived here for 40 years, you're a newcomer to the valley.

Speaker 9: 60 years.

Speaker 1: You know, it's just this phenomenal ... That yeah, it doesn't matter how long. If you weren't born here, it's ... And that's unfortunate, because it's like I want it better but I just want my kids. It's like you've got ... You can't have it both ways. You've got to be able to have the growth to have the opportunities if you're gonna provide ...

Speaker 7: I'll just have to tell you a quick story about this, this last summer, I came home and I was fuming, and my wife said, "What's the matter?" I said, "It took 42 seconds for me to get across Main Street." And I just don't want that, I want to get across Main Street anytime I want to drive across it. And we had all that traffic going on the down there. I like ... I don't want a stoplight, I don't want a stoplight. That's the retiree’s point of view and it kind of stymies some of the other growth opportunities that we really oughta be backing.

Speaker 1: For the first time in my life, I went to the show house, I didn't have a ticket, and the show was sold out. I said, "It's never sold out. I'm the only one in the theater sometimes." Yeah, sorry.

Speaker 11: I think that perception is kind of changing though, 'cause I do think that if you ... I do think that if you present it as we're bringing families home, that people do accept it. But I think if you package it up as we're promoting growth, people will not. But I mean, I'm the mix of both worlds, because my father is a rancher, long time, I mean six, eight generation, I don't even know, like before there was Star Valley there was Hale people living here. But I've been and come back, I've been away and come back and the perception is, as long as our kids can come home, we will accept whatever it is that we accept. But I think it's a packaging deal. I think it's only a matter of perception. I think it's an easy fix.

Interviewer: If you look on the handout, there's a simple list of some other topics there, the potential challenges and I wondered if you could just look down that list and see if you think any of those apply to this community. I know a couple of them have come up already.

Speaker 1: I didn't think aging population was a problem, did you, Melvin?

Speaker 7: I'll tell you one of the things that you know I love this valley, I just get the biggest kick out of, when you go to the post office they have a list of whoever died that day on a big sign right there, and everybody goes to get their mail, but they go and see if their name's on the list.

Speaker 1: I check myself.

Speaker 7: And I'm amazed at the number of older residents who passed away this winter, my goodness. I just ... It's amazing.

Speaker 11: My mother says that people usually survive the long winter and die in the spring, so I think it's gonna get worse, Mel.

Speaker 9: Yeah, there's truth in that. Is spring coming?
Speaker 9: I thought it was already spring.

Speaker 11: There you go. It's gonna start snowing on Thursday, so it's winter again, we just missed summer.

Speaker 5: Yeah, the top one of course, I think it's not unique to Star Valley, but I would say that the mental health of our youth is definitely something that we're challenged with every day, every day, and then there's not really a solution on the horizon there. I know that the people working in that field are doing everything they possibly can but we have to continue to do more. We can't stop.

Speaker 1: With that being said, we've got some of the best youth anywhere, statewide, they're tremendous.

Speaker 5: Absolutely.

Speaker 1: But yeah, we can't be totally in denial that there's still problems with some of them.

Interviewer: Are you referring to high rates of suicide and, or substance abuse, or what specifically?

Speaker 1: Yes, all of the above.

Interviewer: All those? Well, yeah, I ask 'cause some communities it really seems like their substance abuse is a really big issue, as well as, and suicide throughout Wyoming, but just wondered what your take is on that here.

Speaker 11: It's interesting, several years ago, like I always equate everything to when I've had my hide chewed the most, and we did a series on alcoholism in the newspaper. And we had a kid dressed in an SVHS varsity jacket holding a beer, turned so you could see his shoulder and the beer, so you knew that it was a high school kid, but you didn't know ... And I took so much flack over that from parents who called and said, "Why don't you write about the real problems, instead of trying to make up problems and cause problems?"

And I thought, the whole reason we did the story is because I had an entire newspaper crew, they're all 16- and 17-year-old kids come in and talk about how the night before they had been driving home and two of the drivers had been drunk, and they were in the backseat, and they hadn't been drinking but they were in the car. And it was this whole big discussion, and they had been pulled over and they were so-and-so's kid and so it wasn't an issue, and ... And I sat there thinking, wait a minute, is the message that it's okay to drink if you're this kid and this kid, but if you're ... I was like, wait a minute. So we did a whole series and that was just one of the pieces. We did a bunch of different ones, but ...

Yeah, so I think that the denial is still pretty big on ... It's not so much, it used to be, "Let them be children. I drank when I was little and I turned out okay." I mean, that was one of the arguments I heard several years ago. Now I think it's more along the lines of, I think people are starting to realize ... I think that with the hosting laws that have changed in the state they have become more aware of the problem. I think that's been a help. But the shift has been more away from alcohol into other things, so I think the problem is still there. So maybe alcohol's not as big of an issue, but there's definitely lots of other things that are issues.

Speaker 1: I say welcome to my world with four years as a health teacher. I can honestly tell you that even though we've got difficulties, we've got kids that are making better choices ...

Speaker 11: Absolutely.

Speaker 1: Better choices, and more percentage-wise, our kids are making it. We still have problems, we can't deny it, but great youth here.
Speaker 11: Yeah, for the most part, people keep it together pretty good.

Interviewer: What about support for entrepreneurs? People want to start a new business here, do they have, are there resources available?

Speaker 3: I think the Wyoming Business Council has been a resource that some people have used, that's what comes to my mind.

Speaker 11: They have Jump Start Your Business, which is a pretty good program. It's designed to teach people that are starting a business how to do a business plan and how to get the things in place that they need, and then they have a competition. Whoever presents themselves, whoever presents their idea the best gets money toward renting a building and telling it on their feed. So I think that's a pretty good program, if it's done right.

Speaker 7: Looking forward in my life, this aging population thing is one that's more if you just can't handle your own private home now, is there some kind of facility that you can afford, that still provides a good lifestyle? And, as near as I can tell, we don't have much here in the valley, and that's a little bit concerning for me with my wife's health especially, just within the next few years. That and the food service thing in the valley, like when that new motel came in on the end of town, why didn't a Perkins restaurant come in and have a big family restaurant? Those kind of things are opportunities in the valley, but evidently the funding isn't available, and people aren't willing to take the risk for those kinds of things.

Speaker 11: It's interesting, 'cause I think the business community in Star Valley is highly unique. I think things work here that don't work anywhere else, and things that work everywhere else kind of struggle here, and I'm not sure what the recipe is for what does and doesn't work, but I just think it's an interesting business environment.

Interviewer: What about access ...

Speaker 1: [inaudible 01:03:46] in the business, they'll buy the product [inaudible 01:03:47]

Speaker 11: There you go.

Interviewer: What about access to health care?

Speaker 11: I think the medical center does a great job.

Speaker 7: It's pretty impressive.

Speaker 4: Yeah, I think that our community is really fortunate to have the access to health care that we have. It's a critical access hospital, so that's, you know, we're still out on frontier here. And then we as an organization can't provide everything from the health care standpoint, but we've got a good share of the really important bases covered.

Speaker 1: Two years ago, my husband had a heart attack and I was out of town. It's the last time he got to be alone, but not only do they have excellent facilities, they know how to take care of them and get them out of here to where they need to be and as close as we are to Life Flights, to University of Utah, Idaho Falls, I feel really secure about our health care. It's tremendous. I still have a husband because of it, so it's good.

Speaker 7: This connectivity is interesting for me, and I have to say, I grew up as a child in a small town newspaper, I know the problems that exist. Sometimes I just yearn to see the basketball scores from
all over the state on Saturday morning. Not very many people are concerned about that, but I think that's a connectivity issue kind of thing that at times we aren't even aware of what's going on in the state, let alone in the region.

Speaker 1: WyoPreps is wonderful. I've learned that my computer can get you almost any access.

Speaker 7: Yes, ma'am. I think, then you've got me that hates computers, but I want to see a newspaper that I can look at and see ...

Speaker 1: Yeah, I think you need the Casper Star here.

Speaker 7: Spill my hot chocolate on it or whatever, yet I'd really like to see it.

Speaker 3: I think one of the great connectivity things is the SVI Media broadcasts [crosstalk 01:05:54]

Speaker 10: Yes, absolutely.

Speaker 3: That's [inaudible 01:05:54] the games, but I mean anybody in the state can log in and watch their team play Star Valley. Sarah, I don't know what the statistics are on where they come from.

Speaker 11: It's insane. Yeah, it makes my head hurt when we start talking about how many people watch. I'm like, "Oh my god."

Speaker 4: [inaudible 01:06:07] told me that the state semi-final football playoff ...

Speaker 11: We broke livestream.

Speaker 4: ... Had like 42,000 viewers.

Speaker 11: Yeah, when we played ... What game did we play? Was it Lander? I can't remember. We broke livestream 'cause they hadn't set enough bandwidth aside for us. And then, that one, we had well over 40,000. Yeah, it's insane.

Speaker 1: Now would you please get Dan to get the state to let us do the state champion tournaments?

Speaker 11: We can't. They've sold those broadcasting rights.

Speaker 1: For how long?

Speaker 11: I think for another five years, they're tied up.

Speaker 1: I've got a good attorney, my son. We can fix this.

Speaker 11: So you can watch a one camera that doesn't move broadcast of the state game, for the next five years.

Speaker 9: And I FaceTime with my boy. Yeah, I FaceTime with an iPad and it's way cleaner than that.

Speaker 11: It seriously, it's insane. [crosstalk 01:06:57] But no, they sold the rights. The Wyoming High School Athletics Association sold the broadcasting rights, because no one was broadcasting, so why wouldn't they? And that's tied up for another few years. I think it might be three now. I think when we started it was five.

Speaker 11: But we do have regional basketball, we're doing all the games for regionals so ...

Speaker 9: All the games?

Speaker 11: Yeah, we can do everything except state championship games.

Speaker 9: They just have to pay a fee, right?

Speaker 11: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 9: We're fortunate in the valley that ... As far as connectivity, I always think fiber and broadband and ...

Speaker 11: Silver Star's incredible.

Speaker 9: [crosstalk 01:07:33] gigabit community. After being one of those ...

Speaker 11: Yeah, a gigibiz is what they call 'em.

Speaker 9: And we have diverse route, I mean, we have connect-, redundancy with the [inaudible 01:07:42] network. We have it to Salt Lake, we have it going east, so I mean we're set up pretty good I think there.

Interviewer: Okay. Any other thoughts on challenges before we move into the last? So the last question is the most open-ended of all, which is how can UW help?

Question #6

Speaker 10: I have two ideas. One, I'm sitting on property that's been donated for the purpose of education and I would love to see some sort of a secondary something there. Property's been donated, has to be used for education.

Interviewer: Is this along the lines of what you were talking about?

Speaker 10: Yeah.

Speaker 5: It could be something separate, but that goes to my point that there are people willing.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 10: Yeah, anyway, so I would love to see something ... I don't care if it's a tech something. I don't care if it's ... I don't care how it comes, I would love to see something. So in the pipe dream, that's ... That would be it.

And it will be at some point. It will either be a partnership with private entities so that we are training people to work at Simplot, or those sorts of things. Or it will be an education thing where we partner with different universities. Or it will be ... It will be something, we just don't know what that looks like so ... It's not a question of will it happen, it's just a question of what it will look like.

Speaker 5: And to piggyback that, and to follow up on kind of maybe this is my desire too ... When we met with the community college on this topic, the solution was, "Yeah, just send your kids to us. We'll train 'em
up and send 'em back to you. We've got a perfect model." The idea of the people that approached us was, "We don't need them. We want to build something here that's brick and mortar. We want to train 'em here. We want to keep 'em here."

Speaker 10: Yup, absolutely.

Speaker 5: And so I think, how could UW help? Maybe a conversation could get started with that.

Speaker 10: My other thing is, last May we held a education fair at the high school and Idaho got a really great bunch of kids, because nobody from Wyoming colleges showed up. And the invitations were all sent out, but we had Idaho State there. We had Boise State there. We had every Idaho college you can possibly imagine with their banners, and they were giving away cool stuff. No University of Wyoming, no Central Wyoming, no Northwest, no Western, nobody. Nobody showed up. No Casper College. Not one person, and they were all invited. So I sat there and the room was packed and there were hundreds of kids and it was great and I thought, "Oh, Idaho just got some really great kids." And they did, and good for them, but I would really like to know ... I need something there so that when I call and say, "This is what we're doing," someone shows up.

Speaker 7: When is one you're planning for this year?

Speaker 10: We didn't ... We haven't planned one this year. Last year was the first week of May, but we haven't done one for this year.

Speaker 7: Would you let me know please?

Speaker 10: Absolutely.

Speaker 7: I think I can guarantee that there'd be a group from UW.

Speaker 10: Kay, 'cause yeah like ...

Speaker 1: And they'll wear brown and gold.

Speaker 10: Yeah, like I say, I sat there, I looked at the room, and I thought, "Oh, this was ... Okay." So, but I do know the invitations went out, and we even got responses from emails saying, "Thank you for the invitation." But, we had a captive audience for two and a half hours and nobody from Wyoming.

Interviewer: Other ideas on how UW can help?

Speaker 5: While everybody else is thinking, we have a huge desire in the school district ... Right now, there's legislation, we'll see what happens to it, to increase computer science and computer programming and coding at our high school. Because of our unique relationship with the community college system in Wyoming, I assume we're going to be approached by Western Wyoming to see if this thing can happen. Computer science kids generally go on to receive a four-year degree, and I think it would behoove the University of Wyoming and, as a district, we would love to have them at the table to see what this looks like. We've hired four computer science folks, each one of them a BYU-Idaho grad, from their computer science program. So I think UW could be at the table at that and really help our post-secondary computer science program get off the ground in Afton. You know, so ...

Speaker 4: With 17% of the nation's economy being centered around health care, the shortages of staff, both from a provider and doctor standpoint, as well as nursing staff and other technical positions that are clinical ... The needs are just huge and not just in metropolitan hospitals, but in rural hospitals. We probably struggle more than larger urban areas because it's just harder to recruit people to come to smaller
communities. So, how can University of Wyoming help the local hospital here in Star Valley and that would be strengthening the relationships with the College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy, the WWAMI program, the ... I just hate it when a local Wyoming kid goes through the WWAMI program and it's, they get an offer to buy out their WWAMI contract so they can go to another state to practice. And, I just hate it when that happens. And somehow we gotta retain those people here in Wyoming and those relationships really need to be strong with the university.

Speaker 10: Absolutely.

Speaker 2: Jason, do you happen to know why at the high school that we have so many other college classes being offered, and not very many ... Is it just hard to get the UW credentials, or ...

Speaker 5: So part of the relationship is the community college quadrants, so we are directed to have a community college consortium with Western Wyoming, so all of our concurrent enrollment goes through them. And if they don't offer it, then we can seek beyond that. So the one course that we offer is calculus at Star Valley High School for, and that's through the University of Wyoming. Everything else is through Western Wyoming, unless ... We don't have to go through them if we go through Utah State or somebody else. So part of it is that interesting thing, and I'm guessing that forces U-Dub's hand a little bit, but you know in terms of computer programming or some of these other things I think it'd be great to have them at the table and see, even if we do have to go through Western Wyoming, at least they're on the back end saying, "Come on through and get to Laramie. When you get here, we'll take care of you."

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on how UW can help address your challenges, opportunities, exploit your strengths, your unique amenities?

Speaker 2: I would say just continue listening. It's really nice that, I mean, obviously this year a lot more efforts have been made to reach out to the smaller communities and hear from us and make sure that we are on committees.

Speaker 7: Yes, Dr. Nichols' commitment as we hired her to be the new university president would to make the university a state-wide university. You know, it's always been said that it's the University of Laramie. And at times leadership there has just said, "That's true." We had two or three presidents that just simply did not want to make a commitment to the state. As one who strongly wanted to hire her and voted for it, she's working very hard to listen to these groups and again I want to say, and I'm sorry I talked more than I should, but [inaudible 01:16:44] but she didn't want a UW group to come and listen to people. She wanted someone to listen and then get that report ready. I'm absolutely certain that one of the priorities for our five-year plan will be more services out into the state. It's very expensive.

You know, one of the things that I would love ... I just have to tell you that I don't drive seven and a half hours every month to go to a board of trustees meeting. The university plane comes and lands and I get on it and in an hour and 15 minutes, I'm in Laramie. Otherwise, I wouldn't be on the board 'cause I'm just not willing to take two extra days. I don't drive at night anymore. If we can somehow use that facility to maybe help some kids that say, "If I could just get home once in a while for a weekend," but it's just too expensive, as we all know, air transportation. That's one of the things we're working on.

I will tell you this, and I think I can say it and not get in too much trouble, the moms in Star Valley want their little girls to come home on the weekends so they can do their laundry and make sure they're safe, and they can do that from Utah State and BYU-Idaho. It's a lot tougher when they're in Laramie, so that's a mindset in Star Valley that I don't know we could ever overcome. When you go to college, you just go, and when you come home on Christmas for a week, and then you go back and
maybe you're home on Easter, but you're a college student and you're out seeing the world and so forth ...
Transcript: Sheridan

Interviewer: Okay so the first question is just, are you aware of UW partnerships joint projects within the community? If yes, can you cite them and describe them the experience, the outcomes?

Speaker 2: One of them I'm aware of I believe is the Saturday university. At which, a dozen or so years ago we tried to get something like that started with the University of Wyoming coming up to Sheridan and coordinating with Sheridan College. It was met very reluctantly. They were not happy to see UW come up.

Speaker 3: The college wasn't?

Speaker 2: The college was not, and that woman has been long gone so things have definitely gotten better in the 12 or so years that I've been involved in the university coming up. Mostly at Jean's drive.

Interviewer: So the Saturday university was a recurring event?

Speaker 2: It wasn't a formal Saturday university. It was just an event where they had a couple of speakers from the university that wanted to come up. Partnered with Sheridan, and Sheridan didn't see it that way so between apparently Doctor Young and Jean Garrison things are much better now than they were back then.

Interviewer: So that, that's not happening anymore?

Speaker 2: No, they seem to be getting along quite swimmingly. Because they've had the Saturday university down here. We've had it up at Wigwam.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Speaker 3: That's the most obvious, I've actually participated as an instructor and speaker at the Wigwam concession, and it worked very well. Some of the partnerships with Wyoming humanities are on my radar for sure. Wyoming humanities is also a part of Saturday U. I have worked a couple of times with Jean and the visiting presentation for Mark Jenkins, which is the global studies I think that's his spot, is global studies. So I have him in my classroom on multiple occasions and I have great interactions with that program and students. The global studies graduate students, as well have been in the classroom. I would credit that with just building some personal relationships with faculty and staff at the university. Those happen from personal phone calls or personal emails. They are formalized partnerships, but I think having a direct connection between, for example between Mark and myself. I just heard from Mark last weekend, "Hey I'm in town. Can I come see your students?" So that kind of personal connections, how that seems to be happening most easily for my students. Those are the two that come to mind.

Speaker 2: They've done presentations for the global studies at the library too. They haven't all been in UW, Sheridan College activities. Of course the extension, this has been here forever. It's probably the longest standing.

Speaker 3: That was the one I would mention is the extension office, yeah. But in saying that I was thinking it might be taking a guess, if how active it continues to be. I've lost touch with it a little bit-
Speaker 2: Yeah, 'cause Scott's, yeah since Scott retired.

Speaker 3: Yeah, the leadership has changed recently I'd say in the last few years, but Kent Willis for a long time was really active in the community and had a strong presence, so that's the first example I could think of.

Interviewer: Okay, any other partnerships or projects you can think of?

Speaker 4: I have a student that works with us in the writing center on our campus who is a current UW, full time UW student. So she's a distance only student in social science program and I think that's one of a few programs that it's possible to remain site bound, and complete that program.

Speaker 2: Do you work at the college? The community college?

Speaker 4: I do, I do.

Speaker 2: And what's your role there?

Speaker 4: I'm a faculty administrator.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 4: Chair of humanities basically.

Speaker 2: On the sports side, the wrestlers came up to Gillette a couple years ago, and down to Cheyenne, I mentioned to the coach that maybe Sheridan would be an opportunity there. They used to do a football game in Billings between Montana State, and many, many years ago, but not too many years ago they've had basketball games in Billings between Wyoming and Montana State, and maybe the University of Montana as well. The Cowboy Joe club does sponsor a trip for the coaches up here every year.

Speaker 4: I can say there's definitely some fundraising that's taken place in the community that I think demonstrates partnership and support for University of Wyoming, probably mainly the booster club or cowboy Joe club, there's like the Michael Phillips Memorial golf tournament every summer, you know, a few things like Jean works directly to try to find sources here in the Sheridan area to help support some of the UW programming. We're a pretty philanthropic town, Sheridan.

Speaker 2: Hastings does well with their wrestling team, you know, maybe the wrestling team would come here. Hastings is a freshmen on the wrestling team this year and the reason they came to Gillette was the Gillette kid being Cox on the team at the time and the coach was not happy with the Gillette turn out. My brother thought that the turnout in Cheyenne was pretty good a couple weeks ago. Because there is a Cheyenne kid. Michaels, I think.

Question #2

Interviewer: Okay, well as we go along, if you think of something else, you can just interrupt and throw it right in there. This is not real formal. Okay, so the next question. Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in the community? Can you name them or their role with the university?

Speaker 3: I think of Kent and I think there's a faculty with the nursing program that's [crosstalk 00:06:48].

Speaker 4: There has been a chair, and endowed chair. I cannot name that individual.
Speaker 3: It says Candy Raven a year ago, but.

Speaker 4: Many years ago. There's been two since-

Speaker 2: Scott Woods, technically. He was the extension agent.

Interviewer: What was that name?

Speaker 2: Scott Higer was the extension agent but I'm not sure who is replacement is.

Speaker 3: Yeah. I don't know either.

Speaker 4: We have, there's staff in this building [inaudible 00:07:15]. We just think of this as the UW building. I miss it, I used to teach in here. I loved walking over here. We definitely, there's a UW presence, but I don't interact a lot with the group of faculty and staff that are here. That may have more to do with my field than anything else, but.

Speaker 2: What's your position?

Speaker 4: I teach English, but I share Social Science, Humanities, English, and Education. I'm not head of nursing.

Speaker 3: See for me a long time ago, I know there was John Tomlinson, who was here at the Sheridan college campus who was a UW recruiter and admissions counselor. I don't know if someone like that still exists here and .. I happen to have a high school senior, he was not considering university of Wyoming as his school choice. I asked him before I came out here tonight, I said well “What would you say?” And he said, "They don't have a presence at our school at all, so I don't know if there's a person you know in the community that is actively recruiting or not." I'd like to pretend he's a fairly engaged student because he could and should be, but he also, you know, chooses, he's a 17-year-old boy, so yeah. I can't name someone here who's, recruiting for ...

Speaker 4: I'm having your son in class currently. If there was a recruiter, they would know your son. I mean he would be a kid that [inaudible 00:08:50].

Speaker 3: He's a national merit finalist.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 3: He said to me, "Well, if they gave something for national merit finalists, I would consider UW."

Speaker 4: He's a kid that everybody would be glad to recruit.

Speaker 3: Apparently there are no incentives.

Interviewer: Right, you can move down here if you want to. [crosstalk 00:09:11]

Speaker 3: I can scoot down too.

Speaker 5: No, I can just here, let me just ...

Speaker 3: We all know each other. [crosstalk 00:09:19]
Speaker 4: No, it wasn't his fault.

Interviewer: Thanks for coming.

Speaker 5: I'm [removed].

Interviewer: [Removed], I'm Michael.

Speaker 5: Hi Michael, nice to meet you.

Interviewer: We're assessing UW's current level of engagement in partnership here in Sheridan and the question we're on now is “Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in the community?” Well first of all, what is your role here?

Question #2

Speaker 5: I work at Sheridan Memorial Hospital. I'm with the foundation, so philanthropy and fundraising for health care.

Interviewer: Alright, great thank you. These are the questions we're ... Okay, so, you can think of the role and not the person. Even if there is a person in the role.

Speaker 3: Yeah, I don't know if there's someone in the role. Like serving as a recruiter, or admissions counselor for UW here in Sheridan. Remember John Tomlickson?

Speaker 5: Yes.

Speaker 3: But he retired several years ago.

Speaker 5: I guess I am a little familiar just with some of the nursing programs, the BSN program and the Whitney Endowed Chair for that, so I do know a little bit about that, because ...

Speaker 3: Can you name the person?

Speaker 5: It's Wendy.

Speaker 2: Oh it is, that's right. It's Wendy Neeson this year, that's right.

Speaker 4: [inaudible 00:10:58].

Speaker 3: Oh, that's right. [crosstalk 00:11:02]

Speaker 5: Yeah, we do talk about that a lot at the hospital, just because there's a push for nurses to have a BSN and not just the ADN from Sheridan College. I think it's been a great addition and Whitney made that happen. It's been really great for a lot of our nursing staff.

Interviewer: Any more? Any others?

Speaker 4: I'm trying to think when my kids were in high school ... I don't even know that I knew much about UW then, but it's been ten years ago.
Speaker 3: I was saying I have one of those now.

Speaker 4: Yeah, I wish they would have known more. I think I do, but we didn't have it. It was just starting, so maybe that was part of it.

Question #3

Interviewer: Okay, next one is, what is your perception of UW as a partner? When you think of UW, do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships? To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Speaker 2: If it wasn't for Jean, it wouldn't be much probably.

Speaker 5: I think yeah, the CVC promoting the Saturday University, I see that but I have never attended that.

Speaker 2: Bryan Morgan, he's a long-serving Cowboy Joe rep here for the athletics side anyway.

Speaker 5: I guess, yeah, that would be my perception as someone who ... I've been in Wyoming ten years and Sheridan ten years but I'm from Montana. The presence of the athletics is what I see, kind of as an outsider looking in. Coming from a place where we don't have one, multiple universities, that's the overwhelming sense of the university for me is athletics. Outside of work, I mean, I have lots of connections with the university because of what we do but that feels slightly different. You're asking about community engagement. To me, the first thing I think of when I think of UW in Sheridan is the athletics. People are so tied to the football team in particular, but all the athletics at UW. There's a lot of pride here. It's much more divided, if you're a Montanan and it doesn't work quite the same way, so that strikes me.

Speaker 2: Yeah my mom was a Grizzly, dad was a Cat.

Speaker 5: Yeah, I have that at my house too.

Speaker 3: I think there, for me as a community member, there have been concepts from University of Wyoming, or opportunities, but they never seem to take hold here necessarily. I'm an alum, I graduated from UW. I don't participate in any way with UW, but I have friends from other colleges that monthly, the big Notre Dame gathering, or the big at whatever school. They'll have activities where they gather and then, financially support their schools where they received their degree.

For my work, when the University of Wyoming Literacy Center came about, that was something of great interest to me for our work in this community and early childhood education. Met several times, now I'm embarrassed to say, I can't remember the name of the dean of that department. She came to our office a couple times and discussed what partnerships would look like. I don't know, I can't tell you another thing about literacy center, what it's doing in Laramie or for UW students. I know that's a real area of interest in the Sheridan community, is further supporting early childhood education and resources for families and parents and caregivers ... We have a lot of momentum here. I think UW would be an ideal partner. I don't think that's currently taking shape in any way. Maybe it's our onus too, to reach out and see what resources could be available to us.

Speaker 2: We have had community members on various boards down there. I think Dad was on the AMS board of advisors. I and Kristen were on the national board of advisors. Dick Davis was in the trustees for a long time and now Michelle Sullivan.

Speaker 5: I was going to say we should probably say Michelle Sullivan is in our community.
Speaker 4: [crosstalk 00:16:02]

Speaker 3: I know, I asked if she was coming tonight, she said I don't think they want me to be a part of this focus group.

Speaker 4: I would say something that sounds a bit contradictory. President Nichols spoke at our graduation here on campus last year and I was very impressed. That was my first interaction with her. I especially loved hearing ... I'm very passionate about our open access at the college and the community college mission. It's different than what the university looks like. She's embraced that and was very vocal about saying we needed to partner with community colleges. That felt different to me. I've been here long enough to feel that shift. Since then in the last year, we are working very diligently on this campus to help close our alignment with the university in terms of curriculum and transfer students. That's a difficult process. I have the sense that it's important to the university and it's important to them for our students to be able to make that choice more easily, going between our community college and the university. It's not an easy process. I think faculty on this campus are working really hard. Again, it's those personal phone calls that are increasing those [inaudible 00:17:23]. I think that the larger picture is definitely there and that's exciting for our students, but it's a lot of work. It's a lot of phone calls to people you know personally. So it feels difficult. It's happening but it's-

Interviewer: Would you say that UW's present and listening in that process?

Speaker 4: On a one-on-one. Our faculty, I'm thinking particularly in English, it's what I know the best. We can easily pick up a phone and get a call through. I think sometimes there's the perception that we teach the same curriculum, that we're the same kinds of places that we're not. That's sometimes hard to communicate. Outside of those personal relationships. We have very different students. We serve a different population and so our curriculum is a little bit different. We have to work on those relationships.

Speaker 5: Sometimes I thought that that was a challenge, like the students need to understand that, how that was gonna help them when they transferred down into the university, like with my [inaudible 00:18:35] child. It really took a lot of time and effort on her behalf to figure out all of that. I thought "good for you." I was going to try to jump in and help and I didn't know how to, because I wasn't really familiar with anybody. She just handled it. I know she took a lot of time and effort for her to kind of make all of that happen with the transfers.

Speaker 4: I think it depends, it's department by department. There's some departments that have worked very closely together for years and other departments, there's been lots of change. I think there's room for improvement there.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: President Nichol's talk a couple of months ago was fairly well-attended. I can't remember the university president ever coming out before.

Speaker 5: Yeah, I feel really bad because now I just thought of another professional.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Speaker 4: You can share.

Speaker 3: My brother-in-law, Larry Griffin, at the WWAMI program. Kind of, he's a liaison to the university. [crosstalk 00:19:34].
Speaker 2: Oh okay, because there's Dr. Saunders and Dr. Magerson, I think both were WWAMI.

Speaker 3: I guess I see a huge change in bringing students, Wyoming students back to practice medicine. I think that's happened because our CEO and our leadership too, but I would assume that that's happening across the state. Because we really have a need for great doctors and we have a lot of them coming back here because they love the state.

Speaker 2: We have three, right?

Speaker 3: I can remember a time when 15 years ago and people saying "Why aren't we present with that WWAMI program?" We didn't really have residents here in Sheridan at the hospital. Now we have a really big presence and we have a lot of students rotating through. It seems like it's really healthy right now and what's happening, so, that's been really positive.

Interviewer: You've mentioned in your first comment about ideas or concepts that didn't take hold or hadn't taken hold. Do you have an example of that?

Speaker 5: It was just the literacy.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Speaker 5: That was my first. I'm trying to think of another. I think sometimes we see opportunities. Sheridan's pretty good at self-starts. We've had a healthy Rotary program and I think our community college is really healthy. Our theater, arts community, public arts, so I think there's a real opportunity between the two ends of the state to collaborate and have a bridge of sorts. Sometimes, just from a community perception, it seems like there could even be competition, though, or a little you know, you're here and we're there, kind of a push and pull a little bit. I can't think of another example, something I didn't start, but ...

Interviewer: Okay, any other thoughts on UW's current level of engagement and partnership?

Speaker 3: I would agree and maybe it's because we have a trustee that lives here in the community, but your comments too, about Lori Nichols coming to Sheridan. I would guess she works well with Dr. Polygon here. I think there's a change, a positive shift in the last year or two. I think maybe some of my comments are drawing on five years ago. Whereas I do see a trajectory of better engagement.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative), okay.

Speaker 4: I think one thing that worked really well and maybe it's just me and my personal experience, but as a Master's trained instructor without a doctorate, to be asked to participate in Saturday U as an expert in my field, alongside university professors was really empowering. To be able to tell my students, "Hey, I get to do this." Those kinds of partnerships that show value in what we're doing at the community college looks different than what happens at the university, but it's incredibly valuable on all levels.

I think back on the opportunity, more of that, sort of, equalizing is the word that comes to mind, I think that's really powerful on lots of levels. Not just for me personally, but also, as I said I can share that with my students, my children, my children's friends. Those kinds of things elevating what's happening in communities sort of up alongside the university can make a huge difference.

Interviewer: Alright, any other thoughts on partnership before we move on to the next one?
Speaker 5: Well I'm not sure of the exact structure, but I think somehow Wyoming public media is folded under the umbrella of University of Wyoming. I know they broadcast from the campus. Had an issue where the inception was through UW. I'm not sure if they're separate, or, fiscally run independently of each other now, but I think that's a resource for our community also.

They've made a real concerted effort to have a presence in the North. We've worked with them directly when they hired their education reporter. I know they're trying to raise funds to hire a full-time reporter that would be based in the Sheridan-Gillette area. I don't think that's happened yet, but, certainly I think of, as far as being a communication and news network, they've done some great stories in the last few years that received national air time. I think that's also a good community engagement and community partnership.

Speaker 2: Yeah because I think the only TV reporter we have is from Rapid City.

Speaker 5: That's right.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's interesting, I haven't, that hasn't come up before.

Speaker 3: I don't listen to Montana public radio too. You have two different stories sometimes, but.

Speaker 4: It's a different from one radio [crosstalk 00:25:27] from another and then they're just a little bit off.

Question #4

Interviewer: So the next three questions are now about what partnership could or should look like. The next two questions are opportunities and challenges. You don't have to limit it to three, but what are at least three grand opportunities in your community? Who's working on capitalizing them? What are the desired outcomes? Specific areas or industries you're looking to grow, quality of life, assets. What's unique about Sheridan? About this community?

Speaker 2: It's unique enough that we decided to come here.

Interviewer: What's that?

Speaker 2: I said it's unique enough that Weatherby finally decided to come here.

Speaker 2: I think they tried to come 19 years ago, either Casper or Sheridan. My grandson finally got permission from grandpa, so they're coming in about a year. I've heard that a couple of other armament-type companies might also follow a bullet company and something else.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: We do have an industrial park on the north side of town. We have one sort of on the south side town and no one's really talking about it. Is it, renegade is the other one?

Interviewer: So just opportunity for more manufacturing businesses?

Speaker 2: Well Rentco is ... I'm not sure exactly what they are. They say that they're a carbon fiber research organization. They run into some problems on their applications for maybe being incomplete or inaccurate. They're looking at mining the coal and then doing some research on the north side of town, north of the industrial park. They had to rezone that and then maybe some manufacturing.
Speaker 4: I would echo what Jenny said. One of the new things that I'm working on in my area, is our early childhood liaison. I think our commitment to early childhood education in this community is growing rapidly where we can ... Momentum is the perfect word. There's lots of momentum from a lot of disparate parties and it's starting to coalesce a bit. I think there's great opportunity there, it's been going on for a long time, but ...

Speaker 2: What is that?

Speaker 4: Early childhood education, the college is partnered with the school district and the need to add this early childhood liaison to kind of hopefully move all these disparate parties in one direction. I'm seeing great things happen there and I think that's an opportunity.

Interviewer: What would be the desired outcome there?

Speaker 4: We're looking specifically, the college position, specifically is looking at Kindergarten readiness. We're focused there primarily right now. There are lots of desired outcomes. Please jump in Jenny because you probably know more than I do. Initially came out of a project trying to keep graduation rates high. It was determined that this kind of a position would help in the long run to keep our students in school. It's had a long-term plan in place. It's part of a large group of initiatives to increase our graduation rates. There's a lot of coaching, what's it called, a coach, the graduation coach.

Speaker 2: Does [inaudible 00:29:38] even exist anymore? It's natural resources research institute.

Speaker 2: Well Dr. [inaudible 00:29:48] was in charge of that before he became president. I think it was an energy-focused group. I think the one project I worked on was institute gasification of coal. Energy is obviously a big part of this state, whether we like it or not boom or bust, it's still here. I don't know what the university is doing now-

Interviewer: Is there an opportunity here around industry, I mean around energy industry that's not ...

Speaker 2: Well there's certainly ... We've got the coal and we've got oil, and Johnson County has uranium. I think our last uranium mine was shut down. Of course your neck of the woods had uranium until it was shut down.

Speaker 5: When you look at the first and last bullet points, like grand opportunities, and what's working, or capitalizing and the quality of assets here, I think Sheridan really is a community where when you get the right group or the right momentum towards any initiative, it can happen. I think economic sustainability and diversity for our ... Not only for our community, but for our state, is really important. I think there are a lot of people thinking about what that looks like. To be honest, I'm not in those conversations, but I think there is a lot of attention being paid to oil and gas, to coal, to agriculture, to tourism and recreation. I think those all really have potential for growth, or could look differently five years from now than they do currently.

Also to add to what Sarah said about early childhood, it's about again, in Sheridan, having every child arrive at school ready to learn. That they've had the opportunity even if they've had some adverse childhood experiences throughout their live, those first five years. I think Sheridan's a community that
can support all the kids in this community. Again we've got all the right pieces sort of lining up to think about a shared vision to move the dial on that. It's just finding out how we work together to get to some of those more vulnerable kids or families in our community.

Which, ultimately, we want successful graduation, and they can carry on with further ed. It starts at birth. Those to me are two grand opportunities. The last one, though I put it a little bit with economic diversity is, I think recreation in this community. I think we see a lot of places around the State who have been able to really have to capitalize on hiking and biking or skiing. They're trying to reopen our ski slope. We've got a lot more trails system coming into place. The water pathways, we have a little bit of water on either side of Sheridan with the reservoir and Lake Desmet, and a river system. I think there again, are a lot of opportunities that we haven't quite put all of the pieces together, but there ... Sheridan is becoming seen, much more as an outdoor community and recreation town.

Speaker 2: The Polo Grounds, I think we've got the soccer, state soccer tournaments sewed up for a few years anyway. Because it's such a great facility. They did the last coal plant they tried to put in here, that got NIMBY'd down. I think ... Tourism, nothing big. Nothing big [inaudible 00:33:41].

Interviewer: You said in terms of economic diversity and sustainability that things like tourism and ag would look different in five years?

Speaker 5: I think potentially.

Interviewer: What do you think it would look like in five years?

Speaker 5: Again, I don't think I'm part of those conversations, I'm not going to ... I think we have great people in our travel and tourism cohort, the chamber of commerce, the [crosstalk 00:34:03] group, the air, what was the transportation group that air group, it has a name? [crosstalk 00:34:15]

Speaker 2: Scheduling their service is mandatory. We've got it now, we're good. I don't think we'll keep it for that long.

Interviewer: Okay, so a lot of people are working on economic diversity?

Speaker 3: There are several healthy non-profits in the community that I think have really drawn on the experience of really good board members and good directors who are thoughtful about ... Even in the medical community, that have a longer-term strategic vision, not only how it impacts their own non-profit organization, but how it really betters the greater community. I think we have a group of really strong leaders and that's the key.

Speaker 5: I see a lot of multi generational type projects and people coming together on these types of things. Really fun, and I think vibrant for young families. I don't know, I just think that's ... Offers so much. It's a great place to work and to raise kids, but it's also nice retirement community, so there's a little of all of that. I have friends and people from the hospital who have moved their parents here. I find that really interesting. That it's happening a lot. We have a lot of new employees and they love it here and then they're bringing their families. I'm like that's really neat.
Speaker 2: Yeah, is Sheridan county the oldest county in the state now?

Speaker 5: I don't know.

Speaker 2: I haven't looked at the statistics lately but we were a real dumbbell community where we had old retired rich people like me, and [crosstalk 00:36:36].

Speaker 4: I would say, I think it's a great ... As someone who came here to raise my children, very deliberately, I think it's great for young families. great for retirees. If you were single in Sheridan, it's tough.

Speaker 5: It's tough.

Speaker 3: So much fun.

Speaker 4: Yeah, just have to throw that out there. I mean I don't know if that's an opportunity, but I think that if you are a single parent or a single young person ... I have colleagues that are like, “I got to get to a bigger place, I need to meet people.” I think that's hard.

Interviewer: Anything, unique assets this community has that creates opportunity?

Speaker 2: Yeah ambiance. It's a great place to raise kids.

Speaker 3: You know, I just find it amazing, the arts here, too, and I think that when my family comes to visit, they're always surprised at our theater and the college and what's happening out here has been remarkable.

Speaker 5: Well one time there were sixteen artist in residency colonies in the United States. There's two within 20 miles of here.

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:37:47]

Speaker 5: Yeah, the county museum.

Speaker 3: the extension of the water and downtown and

Speaker 5: Public arts, the sculptures.

Speaker 2: The county museums, like [inaudible 00:38:07].

Speaker 5: Yeah, the county museum.

Question #5

Speaker 4: I guess, maybe I'm transitioning too soon to the challenges, and it's not really a challenge, but we do ... I also work with Wyoming humanities. We have so much programming in this community, it's not a bad thing. It's a great problem to have, but we do run the risk of diluting our audience a bit and so I think we have to be mindful of ... You know, partnership may not necessarily look like bringing more
to our community. It might look like helping to grow what we have or promote what we have, or, to extend what we have. Because we have so much going on that I think there's ... We run a bit of risk there. It's a great problem to have, a really good problem to have, but I do see it.

Speaker 2: My sister's in the Bozeman. We have company that gets to see a lot of folks come in and see a lot of people from California that come in and say, well we've got it narrowed down to Bozeman and Sheridan. We're in a desirable location, based on the beauty of the place.

Interviewer: Right.

Speaker 2: The lack of wind. We don't have as much wind as the rest of state.

Speaker 3: Challenges, I think is we have poverty issues here, too. It's not often seen. It's more invisible in our community, but I'm sure from a county hospital perspective, Ada could comment. We have a backpack, a food program for kids. We had a homeless shelter, that was fairly full on a kind of consistent basis and they closed down about a year ago. I hear even from high school kids. There's a, I want to say anywhere from 10 to 25 high school kids at any given time that are homeless. Moving from house to house.

Speaker 2: You can't be truly homeless in this weather.

Speaker 3: Couch surfing, yeah. They do a lot of couch surfing going from one spot to the next for a few days at a time. Or, a lot of families that will pool in together, where you'll have seven or eight people living in a one bedroom apartment. I think we have those challenges too like many communities that need to be considered and addressed where possible. How to make sure again that everyone has access to all the great amenities we have here.

Speaker 4: I also think that we have some significant equity [inaudible 00:40:45] inclusion work to do in this community. I'm proud to say that I think the college is leading the way with that effort with some of the things that have happened on our campus recently. I'm really proud of the way this institution has responded. But we have significant work to do. I've recently started thinking about Sheridan as a border community. It just seems like an odd thing to say, but, we just had a really interesting and heart wrenching forum for Native American students on this campus. Because we had some incidents of racial slurs written on doors on this campus. Thinking about it as a border community, I grew up in Eastern Montana, but pretty much this part of the world. I never considered that really the whole area is Crow country, and we are a border community with some similarities to places that we think are-

Speaker 2: Sort of like Riverton, at least.

Speaker 4: Well, also, the Canadian borders or Mexican borders. We have significant cultural borders happening, so I think we have big challenges. But I think that we're in a unique position to lead the way for that. We've got some community leaders that are committed, particularly with our Native American population, but also just across the board, but we have very significant challenges.

Speaker 2: Did you see Greg Nickerson's film on that?

Speaker 4: I have not seen it. I've heard about it, but yeah.

Speaker 2: It was a film, Dr. Nickerson, one of Dr. Nickerson's, [inaudible 00:42:17] did a film on the American Indian days. What prompted Sheridan to do that. I forget the exact date, but during the 50s, there were no dogs or Indians allowed in the bars and that sort of signage. So a couple of folks, Nick Jones and a bunch of others, developed all American Indian days, which did a lot to help on that front. It's
obviously not perfect, the Crow reservation has its problems. A lot of the folks up on the res send their kids to Dell River to get out of the perimeter.

Speaker 3: So from that early childhood research, Sheridan County is ... They have this colored chart of the United States of America. Sheridan County Wyoming is one of the best places in the entire nation to be born into poverty. Because your chances of getting out or bettering yourself is so significant comparatively. One of the worst places is literally 20 miles North in Crow reservation. It's the worst place to be born into poverty because you have zero chance of getting out. We're just 20 miles away.

Speaker 4: I think we have a unique opportunity. It's a huge challenge, but I think because of the existence of border community, we can start with very direct conversations that can then teach our community about sort of all the issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity. At the college we see under-resourced students have all sorts of similar challenges, regardless of ethnicity or race and so I think we have the opportunity because of where we are with this very unique culture right next to us, that we have so much conflict with. We've got a really big challenge, but we can make great strides I think. I'm not sure how high it is on the radar outside of when it's happening in our classrooms on this campus.

Speaker 2: For the few Crows on the basketball team but not very many.

Speaker 4: Yeah, just raising the awareness of the community is to how significant the issue is, I think is the first step. Because it feels endemic to me, but that may be because I'm hear around this campus.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Poverty issues and homelessness, diversity, inclusion, cultural barriers. Any other significant challenges? There's kind of a list of prompts there below the question.

Speaker 2: Keeping our kids here.

Speaker 2: I don't think we're any different than the rest of the state but we have a hard time keeping our kids here. None of my kids will come back.

Speaker 3: I'm so lucky.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 4: It took me a long time but I came back plus one of my brothers. I think our youth have ... I look at these and I can guess with challenges with youth, challenge with education. For the most part we have good access for those things. I can't speak to health care, or I shouldn't speak to health care.

Speaker 2: Our education is fabulous.

Speaker 4: Yeah, it's top notch.

Speaker 3: I think it's okay for kids to go away for awhile. I did the same. Not very far, not very long. In looking, I have a couple high school students. I think it is important for them to get out and see other parts of the country and the world, to have a bigger perspective. Then, myself and my two brothers, we've all came back after we had kids. Because it's then, okay, let's come back to Sheridan where you can have a strong education and an arts and access to health care and good recreational opportunities.

Speaker 2: That's where I came. My girl's in Sheridan high.

Speaker 4: I've been learning a lot recently about entrepreneurship. Because it's not my area at all. I do think there are some efforts in the community to support entrepreneurs but I think we have all of the same challenges that entrepreneurs in the state have, access to funds-
Speaker 2: [crosstalk 00:46:43].

Speaker 3: We forgot about John he doesn't work for UW anymore. He's at First Interstate Bank.

Speaker 4: Really?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:46:55] was in that entrepreneur contest last year. Who was sponsoring that?

Speaker 3: UW and it had some local, the Scott foundation was one of the sponsors.

Speaker 5: Yeah, that was a neat thing.

Speaker 4: But access to funding, I think that's an issue, that's a statewide issue. Certainly that's something that could be a challenge.

Speaker 5: That was a good program from UW. I know they had completed it prior in Casper. Last year was Sheridan's first year. They had a great turnout. It's a lot of submissions and the final ten or whatever, I thought it was very interesting.

Interviewer: Somebody, an entrepreneur has an idea for a startup, you're saying they don't ... Are there resources to help them?

Speaker 4: I wouldn't know where to send people and I work at the college.

Speaker 3: Then there was John Dick with this incubator. I don't know if he was replaced by someone.

Interviewer: The small business development center? Is that here?

Speaker 3: That used to be him. Now, I don't know if it's still here.

Speaker 2: He's still in town, right?

Speaker 3: He works at First Interstate Bank now.

Speaker 2: Oh, I was going to say his wife is still in town.

Speaker 5: We have a lot of economic development. It's kind of like maybe three or four different organizations that are not really co-mingled. That seems to be kind of an issue. Because there's so many different people working on different things but we're all working on the same thing. A lot of, maybe a lot of dollars being spent because there's so many different people working on the same thing.

Speaker 2: Well yeah because she's in charge of a foundation or two or three but Sheridan has gotta be one of the most philanthropic places in the entire world. Because with the Scott foundation and the Griffith and Whitney.

Speaker 3: I think there are over 50 registered and functioning foundations in Sheridan County. [crosstalk 00:48:52]

Speaker 5: Funding organizations. Yeah, because when you look at the nonprofit registers-
Speaker 3: Well then there's like 90 nonprofits.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Speaker 4: When I meant funding, there's lot of access to grants but if you're an entrepreneur looking for capital that's different. I wouldn't know if I had someone come to me and say ... I wouldn't know where to send them.

Speaker 5: I would think some of those organizations [crosstalk 00:49:15] or some of our chamber would be able to help people that are looking for support. We certainly get money back to Sheridan for economic development through the state.

Speaker 4: Do you think we have good access to health care Ada?

Speaker 5: I guess, working there I'd like to think that we do. But I think there are access issues. I think it probably has more to do with poverty and just ensuring that people that live in poverty have that access.

Speaker 2: Well he definitely have access. It may not all be at Sheridan Memorial Hospital. Dad went to Billings for surgery, my wife just went to the VA in Cheyenne for an operation. We have people that go to Casper.

Speaker 5: We do have a VA. We have a couple of urgent care clinics. We have the Sheridan Health Center, which works-

Speaker 4: We have significant problems with mental health care access.

Speaker 5: Yeah, mental health is a big thing.

Speaker 2: The VA used to be mental health.

Speaker 4: But they're a regional center for mental health for veterans but it's very, very difficult to get, particularly psychiatric care in this community. You can generally get counseling care.

Speaker 5: We have a terrible problem at the hospital.

Speaker 3: In our local hospital you can only do like a 24 hour hold, right? Then you have to ship somewhere else.

Speaker 5: We oftentimes don't ... There's nowhere to ship to. There are not enough hospital beds for mental health within our state. I think our hospital leadership for probably the last 15 years has been meeting with local government agencies because we're required to take those patients when they're brought to the emergency department. We don't have mental health trained clinical staff.

Speaker 4: Even just getting regular psychiatric care to manage medicines. We just don't have psychiatric care.

Speaker 5: Yeah. We're doing some telehealth and things like that now. But I think there's opportunity for growth with healthcare in that way for sure in all of our rural communities across the whole state. It was interesting because we were at a hospital board meeting, I think over at Cody. They were talking about Medicaid and Medicare expansion and programs. Our CEO here just said we have a lot of issues but we can talk about this for a long time but
Interviewer: How do they take care of them now?

Speaker 5: Well, carefully. I don't know all the ins and outs of that but they come to the hospital and we have two patient rooms that are for mental health patients and issues. Then they work really closely with the county and with the state to place them. They have meetings all the time about it and access to care.

Speaker 4: Yeah even non-emergency mental health care just getting psychiatric care [crosstalk 00:52:45] just maintenance is hard to get. Tele-health [crosstalk 00:52:51].

Speaker 5: There's a big need for, I think, health care workers and nursing staff and RNs and all of those specialty areas of care. As we've grown, I think we're looking at a healthcare ... As a more general healthcare organization and not just a hospital but providing all of these different services. Finding the right staff to work in specialty, like cardiac care and the emergency department, and the ICU, and mental health, all of those challenges for us. We have traveling staff here a lot. I think that's across the country. How do we keep our graduates in Wyoming?

Speaker 2: There's the cancer center.

Speaker 5: The cancer center is staffed but I think we have different loads over there too. We have oncologists that come from Billings to see patients here at the cancer center. Then we have two oncologists that live here.

Speaker 2: One is about to retire.

Speaker 5: I don't know that much about mental health with us. I just know that sometimes they have that meeting up there and the county attorney and the city officials and the county officials are there. They're all just trying to figure it out.

Interviewer: Any other challenges that stand out to you? Does this community have ... If you had an influx of manufacturing businesses, do you have the infrastructure and the-

Speaker 5: The housing?

Interviewer: The housing that they need?

Speaker 5: I think we have some housing issues.

Speaker 2: I think we can build it pretty readily.

Interviewer: Is housing affordable here?

Speaker 4: No. I would say no.

Speaker 2: Compared to Jackson, absolutely. Compared to Newcastle, not so much.

Speaker 4: Don't we have one of the highest housing prices in the state?

Speaker 2: Yeah median houses.

Speaker 5: Yeah we never had a downturn in 2008 where areas like property prices went down. They never did here.
Speaker 3: And affordable housing is definitely a challenge and rentals.

Speaker 4: There is no rentals.

Speaker 2: I got three of them and one of them is open.

Speaker 4: Really? Now we know.

Speaker 2: When do you want to move in?

Speaker 4: I imagine you won't have that for long.

Speaker 3: I was going to say how long has it been open?

Speaker 2: A couple months.

Speaker 3: Really?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 5: I always hear that rentals are a challenge but I haven't had to rent for forever.

Speaker 2: I think it's just the time of the year. The folks that were in it kept bumping it, we're going to stay one more month, one more, one more. Then they left in December.

Speaker 3: I have to go soon sorry.

**Question #6**

Interviewer: Okay, last question then is how can UW help?

Speaker 4: I would love to see a way ... I mean, I think I've had a significant exposure to the hospital here in town. I see physicians coming back. I would love to see some kind of incentive through, whether it's WAAME or RICHIE to get more psychiatric MDs in this community. I think there is a tremendous need for that. I think it's through those other partnerships that already exist that UW can maybe incentivize that. It's going to be increasingly important. I'm seeing it at all levels of this community. In our lowest socio-economic bracket all the way to our highest, a need for that care. It's just almost impossible to get. I think if there's any way to incentivize those, to encourage more physicians to look at mental health care as an opportunity and to incentivize them coming home or staying home. If that's a possibility.

Speaker 2: Who are the psychiatrists in town?

Speaker 4: I'm very interested ... We had the new director of the, I believe it's called the American Indian Center. She was here for a forum. I think we could use that guidance. She was very ... I don't remember her name. Again, embarrassing. She was very willing to help and said stay in touch. Any leadership that the university could provide in that. I think, at least at the college but I think throughout the community, we have strong interests in doing something significant to support our identity as a border community. Any guidance that that Native American Center can provide or the faculty or even the students. We have good mentoring happening with our Native American students on this campus but it would be great to have students from the university come here and help us learn how to do this better. It sounds like they're making strides at Laramie. That would be really helpful.
Sharing faculty. I don't think it's fair to say we don't have any American Indian faculty but it would be nice to have that presence. That was one of the recommendations that was made at our forum. Maybe a visiting faculty member that is American Indian would be helpful.

Speaker 2: Check with Nick Syble and see what he's got for context up there. Because we do host ... The first event of the rodeo is the American Indian Relay Race. The Indians really get into it. Of course, when we first started it they were all PC “What are we going to call it?” The Indian is racist. A relay, okay.

Speaker 4: I think it would be powerful to have, even visiting faculty. We don't have American Indian coursework and Indian American coursework, but it would be great to have a community member teaching it.

Speaker 3: Even at other levels, it's really important, like within elementary schools. That would be really awesome for kids to share.

Speaker 4: I think there's tremendous potential to share faculty. We do a bit of it but there could be more. It would be good for us as faculty members to have those kinds of relationships but it would also be great for our students.

Speaker 2: Yeah [inaudible 01:00:01] looked like there was an Indian kid in the back. I couldn't believe he didn't stand up saying oh, Indian music was the first music.

Speaker 4: Oh. I wasn't here this time.

Speaker 2: Oh, you weren't here this time? Okay, yeah. Well Barbara Zeigler managed it. She's a psychologist.

Speaker 4: I also think there are people in our community that are working really hard with those entrepreneurs. I think about the travel and tourism folks. I think the university ... I know one of the professors in entrepreneurial studies. We could use that kind of partnership.

Speaker 3: I think too as much as sharing faculty ... We sponsor an internship program here at Sheridan College. The foundation pays students to work with nonprofit organizations in the community, about eight each semester. They're learning nonprofit skills but it's really in their field of interest. Maybe it's early childhood, early childhood care center. Or, they could be at the hospital. They could be at the CVC. They've done it beautifully, the dog and cat shelter. I think of ... Again, it's our young people and the great skills that college juniors and seniors have. When we see them come and do their student teacher practicums and probably things like nursing practicums, it'd be interesting the different fields, again as it relates to the different diverse economic structures we're looking.

She was on the cover of the UW magazine. I think I still have a picture in my phone. Tabby Brisco is her name, Tabatha Brisco. She's a rock climber at University of Wyoming. She's made some bag or a drop pad that she hand-sewed is in trying to now sell them or make an industry out of it. I think, gosh, some of those people ... She's from Casper. I've just known her her whole life. I think gosh, get some of those kids up here talking to our trail people at the land trust. This is what would be interesting. Or, at the hospital thinking about access for young people. Or, even if they're in the mental health field of study maybe not as a physician but could come in. [crosstalk 01:02:24]

Speaker 5: We just met. I [crosstalk 01:02:26] four nurses doing their practicum up here at the hospital. Having them coming here to the college. I don't know what the ... If they're connected to Sheridan College in that way through their bachelor's program but we have a residency program for nurses now at Sheridan Memorial that has been recognized nationally. Those are new nurses, whether they're with their bachelor's or their ADN from Sheridan College. It's a six month, kind of a one-on-one mentorship for brand new nurses. It's a really neat program. It's keeping them at our hospital. We're
finding that they're not leaving after they finish that residency program. Now we're starting to see applications come from other parts of the country. Because people want to come here and work. Those nurses would bring a whole different experience.

Speaker 3: The other thing I just maybe comment on is how can UW help. Well, maybe we just need to know who's here. Because that's sort of what's reflected in our opening comments. Because, I don't know what resources are here. Is there someone here that's recruiting or doing admissions for students? I don't know. Does Kent Willis still work here? I don't know. Or, there was a nutrition person, Sandy somebody ... Cultiska. Do you know who I mean? I think it maybe is a good time for just-

Speaker 5: Introductions of all those people.

Speaker 3: Yeah, awareness and introductions. I would say for whatever reason the new Sheridan College ... And I don't know her well but Bobby Maxwell who's doing their alumni relations. I've paid attention now. There's been a switch of like what's in the newspaper, what's on the radio, what they're emailing, what signage you see around town it's become more consistent. There's a clear message. I guess I don't know what that is with UW. Maybe introductions and awareness of what is here that the community can access and engage.

Speaker 4: So many students that I work with are leaving money off the table to go outside the state. I think there's significant ... It's mostly because they don't know -

Speaker 3: When they're finishing their program here. Is that what you mean?

Speaker 4: In some cases. Our largest rate of transfer is still the University of Wyoming. Anecdotally we hear from students that they ... A lot of education students are going to South Dakota. Anecdotally we see that. By the numbers most of our transfers are still going to Wyoming.

Speaker 5: That brings on something different. Because I just had some friends who wanted to get back into programs as older students. I saw them going out of state for online programs. [crosstalk 01:05:37]. It was so difficult for them to figure out how to get in to the UW program for early education or education specifically. That made me kind of sad. Because I go gosh, we should be one state working to keep our-

Speaker 4: Well I think it's hard because there are just not a lot of programs that you can complete completely that are online. That's part of it. Again, our largest numbers are UW, by the numbers.

Interviewer: Can I just go back real briefly to your ... It seems like early childhood education was a big opportunity and something that's being worked on. Can you just maybe talk about how UW could help with that effort?

Speaker 4: I don't know enough about the bachelor's level program to really comment. I do know that most of the individuals that are enrolled in our program and our coursework, early childhood education, are site-bound. I think providing opportunities for our teachers ... We have other universities that are working where the students can stay and get their four year degree and their student teaching experience without ever leaving the county.

Speaker 5: When you're saying site-bound?

Speaker 4: They want to stay in Cherokee. They don't want to go to Laramie. They don't want to go. Right now in education early childhood has a higher level of those online enrollees that I see. Again, that's anecdotally. That's what the instructors that I work with tell me. Most of their online students are early childhood. I think we need more online programming in education. That need is being met by
institutions outside of our state right now. For students who are seeking teaching certification, if they want a University of Wyoming degree right now they have to leave. That's not an option for many of them.

Interviewer: Right, okay, thanks.

Speaker 3: I would just be curious, I guess, what educational opportunities are available for the laborers or childcare providers. Who are working direct contact with birth to five. I'm not sure what UW offers. There's certainly pockets across the state where this is really a focused effort. Thermopolis has their model, which Sheridan has kind of followed. Becka Stinehorst with the Wyoming Kid's First, based out of Casper ... We do a lot of work with Mary Garland [inaudible 01:08:22] Foundation in Laramie. There's a real statewide conversation. I think the good part of where it's gaining momentum is our K - 12 education. It's not gotten on board to say, oh right, we have 400 kids that show up for Kindergarten. 80 of them don't know which way to hold a book. Well, how can we do something about that.

I think there is going to be a much stronger willingness to have training and conversation and opportunities for that birth to five. To be honest, it's one of our lower educated workforce areas and lower paid and transient, there's a lot of turnover at least in our community for childcare providers. Just strengthening that role, that professionalism of it-

Speaker 4: I was just going to say, growing that professionalism of that provider.

Speaker 3: Which also leads to the Pre-K, early childhood curriculum that we're still working toward.

Speaker 4: We could use that professionalism there.

Speaker 3: Yeah. That's a lot of rambling for me. That's a lot more talking than I do generally.

Interviewer: Alright, well thanks again for coming.

Speaker 3: Thank you.
Transcript: Gillette

Question #1

Speaker 1: Do you find Gillette's a very [inaudible 00:01:03] community, there's people here from everywhere? We're not the typical Wyoming community where most people ... More people here are not from Wyoming than from Wyoming. Yes, it's a very diverse community. It makes it a very welcoming community.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Because everybody here is from somewhere else, and so I find living here is a great experience.

Speaker 2: My husband's from Utah and he lives and works there.

Interviewer: All right, so the first question is-

Speaker 1: Could you pass some more of these out?

Interviewer: Yeah. Are you aware of UW partnerships or joint projects within your community, and if yes, can you give examples and outcomes, results?

Speaker 2: Are we supposed to just say our answer or are we supposed to write them down?

Interviewer: Just say.

Speaker 2: Say? The only thing that I am aware of is occasionally those Saturday universities.

Speaker 4: I was just going to say that, the Saturday university at the public library.

Speaker 2: Yeah, that's the only thing that I'm aware of.

Speaker 4: Do they have something with ITC, Phil? They're involved in that, right?

Speaker 1: We actually have three partnerships going on at the university right now. First of all is the Advanced Carbon Products Innovation Center. We're partnering with the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources to develop an advanced carbon products development center. Basically, they have a lot of research at the lab level of how to do things with coal and turn it into other products like asphalt and graphene and carbon fiber, but nobody's commercialized that.

We're building, we have a one and a half million dollar grant to build a facility to take that lab of research to commercialization. We're partnering with School of Energy Resources on that. They're a very important partner on that. They're providing a lot of guidance and help on that, so that's one. Another one is with the president's office, Dr. Nichols. We have a higher education task force that we're working on here with Gillette College to bring higher-level degrees and needed certificates to Gillette to support the various businesses here.
We've just completed an extensive marketing study on that. Campbell County, the college, BOCES and University of Wyoming each contributed to get that study done. We were working with Chris Boswell in the president's office on that. We just reported last week to the legislature, had a session down there explaining a little on what we did. It's an extensive study.

Going forward, we're establishing subcommittees to work on each of the areas that were identified as needs in the community, and so UW's a very important partner in that. Another area is with the College of Engineering. Dr. Michael Pishko, he is ... Actually, put into his budget an engineering position he put here at Gillette College to help bring more technical education to our area.

He's working partnership with Gillette College to do that and we're assisting with that as well. Those are the three things that I know about.

Speaker 2:  I guess I'm aware of my own company's partnership with University of Wyoming, Cloud Peak Energy, we have a partnership with them regarding scholarships and then we've done some things with them surrounding carbon capture technology, so we continue with that. In a couple of weeks, we're doing Cloud Peak Energy Day at the University of Wyoming, so continuing that type of partnership, but we don't broadcast it.

Within this community, we're probably the only ones that are not-

Interviewer:  What happens on that day?

Speaker 2:  We go across to several of the different colleges, a lot of engineering classes, a lot of business classes, communications classes and speak to students. Our CEO presents to the MBA students, so we try and partner ... Depending on the year, last year we had a big carbon capture forum and a bunch of different speakers, so it depends on the year, what we have planned and it's continuing, we're on our fourth year.

Speaker 1:  That brings to mind another one. We've been able to connect UW School of Energy Resources with Cloud Peak, and Cloud Peak is working on a couple different things. I'll just lead with that.

Speaker 2:  Right.

Speaker 1:  With UW School of Energy Resources. Actually, we brought Dr. Nichols down here. Alison was on that tour ... Where we give a tour of [inaudible 00:05:58] to try and connect UW. I think she really enjoyed that. Chris Boswell was on the tour. Did you come on that tour?

Speaker 2:  Yep.

Speaker 1:  Was Alison there?

Speaker 2:  Yes, I think she stayed on. I know she was there earlier in the day.

Speaker 1:  Okay. We've been able to do a number of things with UW. Now, nobody in the community knows this; it's all pretty quiet. I think UW's fairly well engaged, primarily because of Cloud Peak and their willingness to partner with them, of our county commissioners, our city council have been very open to reaching out with a new view. I happen to know Dr. McGinity very well, so when I came here we started that relationship with UW.

When Dr. Nichols came on, we just continued that. Dr. McGinity facilitated that, so we've been able to do quite a few things with UW.
Speaker 2: Yeah, on a very one-on-one basis. I would say it's not widespread community outreach.

Speaker 1: I agree.

Interviewer: Any other partnerships you can think of?

Speaker 4: Well, from the library perspective, we do teach classes and the libraries communicate with each other, so I have a really good relationship with Diana Adler, who's the college librarian here. We do a book discussion quarterly, so I come here and you actually have the English students come to the book discussion, and so they get class credit for participating. An English professor chooses the book topic and stuff, so we actually incorporate and help literacy and development in that way.

There's a lot of partnership between the public library and the college library in that aspect and we really communicate with each other. It helps that we have a Wyoming state library system and consortium in Wyoming to help with that, and so we share a lot of databases and all the librarians in the state communicate with each other well, so that's really helpful and professional and educational.

Interviewer: Did you want to add something.

Speaker 2: Well, when you started talking about that, "Oh yeah, I know about that." I don't have anything else that I can think of.

Interviewer: Would you think, in general, these partnerships are not known, or people wouldn't identify those as UW being a partner?

Speaker 1: I think community leadership knows about it. I think population in general don't. We've tried to put out some information about our higher education task force, we've been pretty vocal about that, but in general, most people don't pay attention.

Speaker 4: It will benefit the community, but whether they fully realize.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 4: It's a result of the partner. I don't know, but community leaders are certainly very well aware.

Speaker 1: In a couple years when some of these programs come to fruition, we get some stuff going on, people will say, "Boy, I'm glad this is here," but they won't even think about all the work that went into to get them established.

Speaker 4: If it turns out the way we want, certainly UW will have a bigger presence here.

Speaker 1: Yeah, absolutely.

Speaker 4: With the programming that would be added to Gillette campus, obviously, they'd have a much bigger presence here. The community would know then. No, an assistant effort, like the Saturday University, it has taken a while to get that ... Obviously, we've had to change that. We changed it up from Saturday to Thursday evenings to try to increase foot traffic. We've changed location from the college or the library.

It's an effort, I will say our audience is growing, but it can be challenging to get the word out.
Speaker 2: We hear the input about Saturday University at the library, and the audience is definitely growing and it's positive, what people are saying about it. I think that's a really good thing that we're getting in the community. That's really a positive [inaudible 00:10:13].

**Question #2**

Interviewer: All right. Next question is are you aware of UW professionals who serve in the community and can you name them and identify their role at UW?

Speaker 2: Besides Phil, the woman at this desk.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Dawn?

Speaker 2: Dawn. She helps with Saturday U and then she facilitates video conferencing over here. Very nice.

Speaker 4: The only person I know is Dawn and even though I work here at the college, I never see her, ever. I just know her name is Dawn.

Speaker 1: There are a bunch, actually. UW Extension.

Speaker 4: Yes. That's true.

Speaker 2: Yeah, it's funny.

Speaker 4: Yeah, I forget that they are UW.

Speaker 1: Yep.

Interviewer: What's that?

Speaker 4: The UW Extension.

Speaker 2: Now Phil's made me feel really stupid.

Speaker 4: Right? [crosstalk 00:11:28]

Speaker 1: I was going to whisper, so UW Extension, their offices are downstairs of the ...

Speaker 4: They're right next to the courthouse.

Speaker 1: Then the SBDC staff, Susan Jerke and Linda Calhoun, and they're very active in the community. They're the front-goers of businesses that want to get started. We have Cassie. Actually, she's headquartered in Sheridan. School of Energy Resources, they don't have any professionals here but they're up here often enough where we use their services quite a bit.

Interviewer: Do you think other people in the community recognize those individuals as being part of UW?
Speaker 1: No, I don't think so. Susan has people coming into her office all the time. They see her as SBDC and if you look at her card, it's got a buffalo on it and it says University of Wyoming and it's SBDC, but I think they look at the buffalo and then the SBDC and then they may notice the UW.

Speaker 2: I even think the Extension folks. I think they associate those folks with the county more so than the university.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Which, obviously, I did. [crosstalk 00:12:52]

Interviewer: Okay, any other UW professionals?

Question #3

Interviewer: Okay. All right, the next question is what is your perception of UW as a partner? When you think of UW, do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships? To what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Speaker 2: I'd say your new president, Nichols, there's been a huge change. I think it's in its early stages. Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: I think we will see good things to come. I think it's not been as prominent as we would like, but I think big change is coming [inaudible 00:13:49].

Speaker 1: I would agree. I think prior to Dr. McGinity, it was a tough relationship all across the state. Dr. McGinity turned that around and Dr. Nichols is continuing that. They're very engaged. I'm sitting in a number of meetings with commissioners and Dr. Nichols and it's just been very good. Open communication, supportive on both sides. I think it's been excellent.

Interviewer: Those partnerships that you talked about, where would they fall on that continuum of outreach versus pure partnership from the ground up?

Speaker 1: I look at it more as partnerships. SBDC is co-located with us, so we look at them every day. Cassie from Manufacturing Works, I've been able to give her a couple of tours of the community and some local businesses. I know that they're very involved with L&H Industrial right now, so projects to come on ... L&H. They want to be engaged with other manufacturers in the community.

I think [inaudible 00:15:01]. One of the issues is they've got one person in this whole region, so I'm sure that keeps Cassie very busy as well. I think they're as engaged as they can be. I consider them partners.

Speaker 4: I think it's getting better with Dr. Nichols. She certainly ... I think there's some optimism there. From the coal industry's perspective, we've struggled a little bit over the last several years. With our partnership with UW, personally with Cloud Peak. We have reached out to them multiple times for a mining engineering program. Most of our employees are graduates of Montana schools. Montana Tech, specifically for engineering.

That partnership as far as employees and recruiting goes has been not as strong as I think that some of us would like, but I do feel, like Phil said about Dr. Nichols, is apt, one of our minds, and so we're optimistic that we can continue that partnership. Yeah, I see those partnerships throughout the community. If you're looking at recruitment for students, I don't see that.
If that's what they are pushing for, I think that's something they have to reassess.

Speaker 1: More in athletics.

Speaker 4: Yeah, and with athletics. As far as engaging with community leaders and corporate partners and economic development, that sort of thing, I think the future looks promising.

Interviewer: Any thoughts on UW's level of engagement or presence?

Speaker 2: Well, one thing we see in the library industry, there's a lot of public libraries in the state and some academic ones and special libraries as well. There are no library programs, so in order to get your master's degree in the state of Wyoming, you have to go out of the state of Wyoming. That's just something you need to consider. If anybody wants to become a professional librarian, you have to get your master's degree and you have to go outside Wyoming to do that.

In order to be a manager in a library, in order to run a library, you are required to have that higher education degree. That's just something, if you are trying to encourage people and to fund libraries, which I think are important for education and for research and things like that. It's just something to consider.

Interviewer: Does the perception that they're not present recruiting students, do others share that perception?

Speaker 4: I do. See, I wouldn't know and I'm surprised to hear that.

Speaker 2: I had a very bad experience when I decided to get my master's degree. I came down here and said, "What do I need to do?" and I was just handed a book and said, "It's all online." Okay, and then I went through the application process, I was told I had enough work experience that I did not need to take ... my mind just went blank, the test.

Speaker 4: GRE.

Speaker 2: GRE, there we go. I wanted to say CRE and I knew that wasn't right. Then, I thought, "Good," and then I was told I had to and then I just thought, "Forget it." It was just so complicated and I couldn't get any information from anybody there and then I decided that I was going to go ahead and pursue it and I went through another university and they were so great to work with and so helpful and it was a piece of cake. I had not a good experience.

Interviewer: How long ago was that?

Speaker 2: Well, that would've been about three and a half years ago, and then I just started my master's program this year with another university.

Speaker 4: Yeah, I agree. I did start the online MBA program with UW last fall and I took a break this semester but I had to really dig. Anna, I was able to find out that there were other students in Gillette but I would've never known and I felt like that was something that maybe the program could've facilitated. It was very disconnected, I feel, from the students. At a high school level, I graduated from University of Wyoming ten years ago, but I still hear it today.

My nieces are in Sheridan, and I hear it so often, especially small town Wyoming that they don't want to go to the University of Wyoming because they feel like their whole class is going to the University of Wyoming and I remember thinking that. I came from a town of 800 people, Moorcroft. I remember worrying about that, too, with my small class. That was not the case; obviously, the University of Wyoming has thousands of students.
I feel like that is one of the obstacles that they have to recruiting high school students and I don't see that being even addressed at all. I don't see them present here, recruiting often.

Speaker 2: Suppose I did have a similar situation to complain.

Speaker 4: We'll do it for you, Carol!

Speaker 2: I blame myself for lack of initiative. Eight years ago, five years ago I was beginning my bachelor's in public administration, but in my master's in public administration through the University of Wyoming, utilizing the outreach that I can [inaudible 00:21:14] and it just seems like, yeah, you're given a pamphlet or brochure and it seemed overwhelming or challenging to figure it out and do it.

Currently, I still don't have my master's nor am I enrolled in their master's program. I blame myself for not taking more of an initiative.

Speaker 4: Yeah, it is. You certainly have to take a lot of initiative. I was able to do it, but it was all ...

Speaker 2: Working at a college, I know that you need to make it easy. If you want to attract students, you need to make that experience easy for them, otherwise you're not going to attract students.

Speaker 4: You can have a thought in your mind for ten minutes, "Oh, I want to do this," but if it's complicated and they give you the run-around or don't provide you the information you need, then ...

Speaker 1: Especially with the new generation.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Because younger people than me would get really frustrated with that. My daughter had the same experience, too. She got her associate's in education here and she did not want to go through UW to get her bachelor's. She said, "No way," she's had a bad experience applying and her friends had the same situation.

Speaker 4: You talked about Wyoming losing a lot of students to the surrounding states. Here, primarily, it's education. They are all going to Black Hills State, and so ... Yeah. That's something that ... The University of Wyoming has a wonderful education department and college and program, but nobody knows that here. They're not seeing that, or they're not doing anything to recruit them.

Speaker 2: A lot of the time when students are looking for something, they're looking for what they want to study and what interests them. You might want to be looking at how to recruit these kids and their actual interests. I think that's a primary focus. When we're at the library and stuff, we see people from low income to people with PhDs and a lot of young people, and a lot of people prepping for college and trying to [inaudible 00:23:44] it's very confusing.

Everything's confusing and the more simple it is and the more information they have the better off they are. [inaudible 00:23:56]

Speaker 1: Another experience [inaudible 00:24:02]. Both of my sons attended UW, they didn't graduate but they went on to University of Nebraska at Lincoln. They got PhDs in dentistry. I talked to the registrar's office. I talked to the registrar about six months ago when there were the new labs in ... Dr. Nichols introduced me to her, she said, "I'll call you because they can backfill those credits and get the degrees from UW," and it's been over six months and I haven't heard a thing.
Dr. Nichols was excited about that because it gives UW more credibility to have graduated these guys, they're doctors. Nothing has happened. I think a lot of this is the registrar's office where the fault seems to lie.

Speaker 2: Just not think that we're so driven towards technology, like, "Oh, you can go online and find out." Well, I don't think so. Not when it comes to enrolling in a higher educational program, because then we're just staring at the UW website trying to find out, "So how do I get into the master's program? What do I do?" I remember it even ... Obviously, now things have changed with Dr. Nichols and whatnot.

When I was enrolling down in Laramie for my orientation, I had zero guidance. I remember my parents and I sitting there like, "So what am I supposed to ..." I had my planned major that I was going to do and trying to figure out what classes to enroll in. Yeah, it's maybe a disconnect with support staff and that sort of thing, but that's the front line. Those are the first people that the communities and the public see, so that's concerning.

Question #4

Interviewer: All right, thanks for sharing all that. No, they want to hear all this. Now, the next three questions are more asking for what UW could do moving forward here and what are the opportunities and challenges that are unique to this community. The first one is can you name the ... You don't have to limit it to three, but the three grand opportunities in your community, who's working on capitalizing on them, what's the outcome they're working towards, what specific areas or industries are you looking to grow, and what assets do you have here?

What's unique about this community?

Speaker 2: Well, I think one's got to be the seeds of higher education, steady and enhancing the dual program. The one of them, I think, has to be introducing more partnership with UW and Gillette college

Speaker 1: I think the partnership with industry is huge. Wyoming's economy is so dependent upon the existing metals industry and we love them, but the danger is ... If you look at mining communities across the nation, they disappear when the mines go out of business. Our opportunity is to find alternate uses for coal, because we have thousands of years of coal available but power plants are being closed down.

Not because of an environmental sort of thing, but because they're reaching end of life. They've been there for 30, 40, 50 years and they've just reached the end of life. Tragically is no new ones are being built, so in 40 years or so, those power plants will be gone and new ones haven't been built, there's no need for our coal. We need to develop alternative markets and some of those alternative markets are advanced carbon products.

Carbon, asphalt is a huge one. Coal makes a great asphalt, but nobody's developed that coal refinery to do that, so who can develop those markets, then that's how people continue to mine for years and years along with the other coal companies because now they're not hoarding it, but now they're doing their thing. That, to me, is a huge opportunity but that's not going to happen the next two or three years.

That's going to happen over the next ... I can't remember who it was, somebody from UW who gave a presentation here at one of our conferences and said, "These things are 15, 20 years out. If we wait 10 to 15 years to get started, they're still 15, 20 years out,"

That's not going to happen the next two or three years. Cloud Peak has been a great partner.
Speaker 4: Notwithstanding the most recent setback at the headquarters, I just think that Gillette campus has a huge opportunity to grow with the work, with UW introducing engineering program here, when you talk about what areas that we'd like to see grow. I know discussions with Dr. Pishko, obviously, it's enhancing engineering programming right here at Gillette campus through UW is huge.

I know the commission feels really strongly about that.

Interviewer: The outcome there would be that people could earn a four-year degree here and not have to go to Laramie?

Speaker 4: Yeah, we would like to be able to have more associate degrees offered and some four-year degrees being offered right here. We want similar to what's happening to Casper's campus. Casper's become a little mini UW and that's [inaudible 00:30:16] to college. I think that we have comparable if not better assets and possibility, I think, right here at Gillette College campus.

Interviewer: Are there people working on that?

Speaker 4: Yes.

Interviewer: Who are the players?

Speaker 4: The county commission, city of Gillette, you've got your area leaders working strongly towards it and it seems, like I said, Gillette College folks, it seems like UW's amenable, certainly Dr. Nichols is agreeable.

Speaker 1: That's our higher education task force.

Interviewer: Are there opportunities? Think big.

Speaker 4: Bigger than a mini UW campus right here?

Interviewer: Yeah, so higher education partnerships, develop alternative uses for coal, more opportunities for growth here at the community college. Any other opportunities?

Speaker 4: Carbon capture utilization and storage for sure, from Cloud Peak's perspective, and we've worked with them a little bit on it and now their congress has allocated some additional funding for that. We hope to continue that partnership and I could see the university playing a part in that as well.

Interviewer: Any other industries outside of the energy-related industries that-

Speaker 2: Well, nursing and healthcare of course. We just don't have the money, number one, to hire any additional faculty but we can expand any of those programs.

Speaker 4: Education was talked about, I think, when Dr. Nichols was here one time referencing that they're all going to Black Hills right now.

Speaker 2: Advanced manufacturing, too. That's another area that we want to be able to develop more programs and training, because we see that as another when we're trying to diverse ... we see that as another industry. We're right on an interstate, we've got air service, rail service, all of that.

Speaker 4: Tech center. I don't know what other opportunities it would be, but that's a fabulous facility that has decent mechanics alone.
Speaker 1: There's a demand for technical PLC programming.

Speaker 4: Yes.

Speaker 1: Things like that.

Speaker 2: There's something you do with a certificate that we also talked about, but I don't know what those-

Speaker 4: That's more network security and stuff.

Interviewer: You lost me there.

Speaker 1: Silver industry has [inaudible 00:33:43] for example. They have a high demand for PLC programmers, technicians, engineering techs, lab techs, chem techs, things like that. Some of the business of working with a crew, you bring them to the area and something possibly working to move forward on requires those types of skills. That college has been involved with that, you don't need to get involved with that if it wasn't for certificates and certain degrees.

Interviewer: Okay, so more technical training, certificate level or credential level? Okay.

Speaker 2: It's actually a really good point to bring up because on the nationwide level there's a lot of studies that have come up and we're talking about education, that's very important, and advanced education is very important. They have been talking about service jobs and people that need certificates, people need mechanics and things like that. That work force is dwindling on the national level.

Speaker 4: That's true.

Speaker 2: That's actually not a good thing. If we can offer certificates and training on things like that, that's very important. That's something the public library is looking into. People can learn to study for tests, for certifications and things like that. It's really basic database training level stuff, but it is important going into whether you're going to get a degree or a certification for something.

I think this is a really important conversation to have because ... I'm glad that you guys are doing that because that's really needed.

Speaker 1: One of the things that came out of our marketing study was the new certificates, but not just a certificate in this area but stackable certificates. You earned this, which leads to this certificate which leads to this certificate, and if it's done right, then you could come out with an associate's degree and if you stack up enough of them, you could get a bachelor's or a higher level degree.

People in today's world, if you're just out of high school, yeah, you can go to college. When I got my MBA, I went back into the online MBA through ... an awful lot of work. I had to work around my schedule. I couldn't go down to Laramie for two years. Stackable certificates and new type of training is important.

Speaker 4: I do feel, though, I have to say ... Speak a little bit just in favor, or in support, of just a good quality liberal arts education, though. Because I know that the world is shifting and is recognizing technical skills that not every person has to go to college and get a four-year degree, but I think a good, solid liberal arts education may be selling a little bit short because you show me an individual who is well-rounded, well-read and I'm talking about even fourth grade level, that person will excel at just about anything you want to do.
I think if you have a good, solid, good quality liberal arts education, you put them out into the world and I think that they will succeed, generally speaking. I think we're thinking our efforts to start focusing on more of a technical education. We're shifting resources away and cutting programming for liberal arts, humanities-type disciplines and I think that might be to our detriment.

Speaker 2: I would agree with you on that sense, it's hard to see ... Because I have a humanities education and it's hard to see degrees like English and history and things like that not as prominent. I think those are very important to understanding the world.

Speaker 4: Yeah, but what are you going to do with that degree? It's not a degree you get a job in. [crosstalk 00:37:44]

Speaker 2: That's true, but then on the other hand you look at the whole problem of student loan debt and how many people come out with a liberal arts degree in some cases and then they can't get a job and they've just gone through a [crosstalk 00:38:02]. They've got this huge student loan debt. We have 1.4 trillion dollars in student loan debt right now in this country. It's more than credit card debt.

That's the other side of it, too. I think it starts at an early age, where you get some counseling or advising and get kids engaged at a young age and in different fields to see what they're really interested in but they'll go into debt and have $100,000 of debt when you come out of college and not be able to get a job that justifies it, that doesn't work either.

Speaker 1: You need a well-rounded education, and the idea of certificates is good for specific tasks, but to have an overall education, you certainly need to have classes in English and humanities and all of that.

Speaker 2: Absolutely.

Speaker 1: That gives you a well-rounded education, so you're a better person. I'm an engineer, so pray for my wife, but some of my best classes were English classes where you have to ... The technical writing I probably used more than my engineering degree. In those you relate to people and talk to people, it's key. Whereas, a lot of times engineers, accountants, they're not going to have that.

Having that well-rounded education is incredibly important. Unfortunately, the students when they're going through that don't see that. I want to get my degree, I'll be able to work more-

Speaker 2: I understand like [inaudible 00:39:38] was saying. Student loan debt is ...

Interviewer: To finish out this question, what are the quality of life assets you have here? What's unique?

Speaker 2: We have a great school system. It's a great place to raise kids, we have a lot of cultural activities, we have a great library. Our Camplex, our Heritage Center, the things we have, we have a lot of youth programs through our county parks and rec department. We have all kinds of programs for kids. Gosh, lots of stuff.

Speaker 4: It's a great location, too, because it's right in between the mountains. It's right in between the Black Hills, it's a nice place to live.

Speaker 1: There are over 100 miles of walking and riding trails in the community.

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Parks everywhere.
Speaker 2: Lots of great infrastructure because our city and county did a great job in planning it. We've got a lot of roads, it's easy to get around.

Speaker 4: Nice facilities. I've only lived here four years and I come from Michigan, and I would say coming in as an import ... I've lived in Wyoming for ten years, so I came from another Wyoming community and this community is very welcoming and very kind. That is really wonderful to me. I think it has something to say for the diversity of Campbell County, that people come from all over, but also just that we are ... They are who they are and they're very genuine, so it makes it an appealing place to live.

Speaker 2: I think we have a great college, too.

Question #5

Interviewer: All right. The next question is, so flip that question on its end, what are the challenges in your community and who's working on them and what are the desired outcomes?

Speaker 2: Economic development is our challenge and Phil's working on it.

Speaker 1: We're working hard to diversity our community, but it is a ten to 15 to 20-year battle. I won't see it completed but I want to get a good start so whoever takes my place is on the path. Everybody looks at Cheyenne saying, "Oh, they're so lucky because they've got Microsoft and they've got Sierra Trading Post and they've got Walmart." Well, you know what? They were lucky 30 years ago when they got the business parts and put in the infrastructure and got ready for it. They're seeing the seeds of what they planted 30 years ago, so we're planting seeds now. In 20, 30 years, I want this community to be diverse with multiple manufacturers. My goal is somebody comes to the town and says, "You used to mine coal here? Really? But you've got L&H Industrial," which is an international company, and you've got this company which is an international company with all of these things.

Our coal mines are still running and still operating because they're providing coal to our advanced carbon products industries. That's why coal miners are still working. Our students, instead of graduating and going out to drive a mine truck, those jobs aren't going to exist because those mine trucks will be [inaudible 00:43:20]. That job goes away but now they're coming here and getting the certificate in engineering technician and stacking that on and they go and work at XYZ carbon company and carry that on.

Eventually, they go to the mining program at University of Wyoming and get their mining engineering degree or their whatever degree and they come back here and now they're going to be the manager of the company and run the company, that's where we want to go. We're a long ways away from there but we've got to get started and that's where we're willing to go. One of the struggles we have is getting others in the community to catch that vision, to help us drive that vision.

Speaker 2: I think if they get that air service bill passed through the legislature, that'll help and depending on what else they do with that endow initiative, I think some of those things will help a lot, too. I wanted to say, too, another great thing about our community is we're doing a lot with STEM education in most of the grade schools. The college has ... it's called Area 59, it's a [inaudible 00:44:32] and that's going to be opening up this spring.
Then, in about another five years, hopefully five to seven years, we'll be building a STEM center here on campus. We're doing those things, too, in order to help with diversifying the economy and training people for those jobs of the future.

Speaker 1: We're just at the beginning stages of putting a business incubator together. We have a volunteer director now. She hasn't started yet, but I talked to her yesterday and I'm pretty excited.

Speaker 1: I knew it would be somebody who's retired, who wanted to be involved with the community and who had that experience, I just didn't know who it was going to be. I think we've hit a home run to be able to have her.

Interviewer: Other challenges here? Maybe some prompts are listed there. Other potential challenges. Some of these you've already talked about. It seems like they are not challenges.

Speaker 2: I think that's a Wyoming "why" problem.

Interviewer: Say that again.

Speaker 2: Well, I'm just going down your list. We probably have that issue here, youth in the community, but that's not unique to us.

Speaker 1: I disagree. I think it's good for youth to leave, go away, find out what the world's like, gather experience and knowledge and then eventually want to come back to Wyoming. The problem is we don't have jobs for them to come back to. I know, for me, I graduated from WU and I had a life in Seattle working for Boeing for 12 years. We wanted to come back but there were not ... I'm a computer engineer. There weren't jobs for computer engineers.

When we finally decided to come home, I thought I had a job lined up, I came back, I didn't have that job. I was given a great option by Boeing: take a year, go to one of these undesirable locations or take a year's pay and leave, so I took a year's pay and leave and it took me a year to find a job, which transformed into what I'm doing now but we need to develop those jobs so kids can come home.

That helps to have experience. It is invaluable to Wyoming. If we just become inbred and don't get that outside world experience, we won't know really how valuable we are, what a great community we have. A good bad example is taxes. Everybody says, "Oh, we're so overtaxed, we pay way too many taxes." We don't pay taxes in Wyoming. When I lived in Washington state. Our tax burden was huge compared to what it is in Wyoming and the rest of the nation, the other states.

Thank you, Cloud Peak, because you paid all our bills. People who have lived elsewhere don't know that.

Speaker 4: That is very true. In Michigan, taxes were ridiculous.

Speaker 1: You have income tax, you have property tax, you've got sales tax.

Speaker 4: Yep. If you're a small business owner there, watch out.

Speaker 1: You have corporate taxes, yeah.

Speaker 2: I have to run, but Michael, do you want me to email you this form?
Speaker 4: I would say other things that we have challenges with, I don't know necessarily if we have a huge aging population. I know the public library we have a big outreach program, but the median age here is about 35.

Speaker 1: I moved from Riverton. I was one of the young people in Riverton. I moved here and I'm one of the old people.

Speaker 4: Don't say that, Phil!

Speaker 1: That's the way it was.

Interviewer: What about access to healthcare?

Speaker 4: We have a very, I think, fine regional hospital here. It got just ... an award, one of the top ten or top 20 rural hospitals in the country. It's got a great cardiac unit, a cancer care center, so I think we have a good hospital. We have quite a few doctors I think. If it is something more serious, some people are Rapid or Casper, Billings and whatever, but I think we have good healthcare.

Interviewer: You mentioned earlier a need for more programs to train nurses and healthcare professionals. Are they able to staff these healthcare facilities?

Speaker 4: Well, we're as staffed as we can be, but it comes down to money. We just don't have any more money and we'd like to take a look at doing maybe a surgical tech program because there are no other two-year surgical tech programs here at the state. That might be something we could look at, but we do everything with the nursing faculty that we have and they do an amazing job. Right now they're doing an EMT class and they just started a CNA class for Climb Wyoming.

We started a medical assistant program and then we have our nursing program, and we have 32 students in each class, so a total of 64 students. We do all of that with the same faculty, so we're a very lean organization and we use our resources very well.

Speaker 1: Michael, you know how the community college districts work. We are a sub-campus to Sheridan. The only reason why this building exists is because the county commissioners and city council paid for it. Cloud Peak and the business at St. Clair TEC Center, that was paid for by the community. Same with the brand new arena that was built and the new student housing. We get very little money from Sheridan, and rightly so, Sheridan County doesn't want to spend their money in Gillette.

This is all built by this community. People who know what's going on are very proud of this facility but we don't have a dedicated funding stream.

Speaker 4: Right.

Speaker 1: That was a big part of the impetus behind trying to pass the [core of penny tax, which Dr. Nichols sent us a great letter of support. Had that passed, then we could have some of that dedicated programming and really expand the capabilities of this facility. It was a shame that that didn't pass, but we're still struggling by. Dr. Eggbert and I have had discussions, we're not going to quit.

Just because we didn't get the funding we need, this community deserves, we're not going to quit. We're going to keep working our very best to move forward, which is why we have a volunteer director of our incubator. Judith will be great.

Question #6
Interviewer: Any other thoughts on the challenges before we move onto the last one? Economic diversity, obviously it includes a lot of challenges. The last one is how can UW help? How can they help you take advantage of or capitalize on your opportunities and help you address your challenges?

Speaker 1: You know who's very engaged here as far as I can see, with the things I mentioned before, I think they're very engaged? I think the recruiting of students and athletes to UW could be improved. I don't work with anybody in the area, but on an economic development level, UW is excellent and they're very supportive. They're always willing to help out, they're always willing to meet.

When we've had businesses come into our community, they've been very supportive and brought staff up for those visits when they needed them. At that level, they've been great to work with. Since Dr. McGinity came in and transitioned to Dr. Nichols, it has improved significantly. Prior administrations didn't seem to care much about the community. The story we heard from Casper when they were trying to bring in higher-level degrees is that UW not only didn't help but pretty much opposed it.

Casper went and sought out other institutions to provide those services and then UW climbed on board and they've had a good relationship ever since then. I think UW's doing good things at that level.

Interviewer: What about in your ... You mentioned your opportunities for higher education partnerships, alternate uses for coal, opportunities for growth here at the college. Are they involved as they could be or should be?

Speaker 1: Chris Boswell is on our higher education task force. Of course, he's retiring in March. Chris, if you listen to this, we can't allow that to happen. Chris is a great guy.

Speaker 1: He is, in March. A couple of weeks away from retiring. We're looking at a replacement, we've had a couple of suggestions so we're considering those out of the president's office, or perhaps a trustee. We've got a couple suggestions. We have our higher education task force meeting next Monday and we'll be discussing that among other things. We see UW as a very important [inaudible 00:55:45].

Interviewer: Other thoughts on how UW can help, how can they be more engaged?

Speaker 1: Student recruiting.

Speaker 4: I think, yeah, what we've all been talking about and what's really come up in this conversation is perhaps more student recruiting. I think we see that a lot with the younger people that I work with, certainly. They're definitely ... They struggle to know what they want to do and where they want to go with their education. Perhaps something more on that level.

Interviewer: You mentioned the Black Hills State, so students that want a teaching degree go to Black Hills State. Do they recruit here?

Speaker 4: That's a good question, I don't know. Perhaps they do.

Speaker 5: I'd guess you'd have to check with the high schools. I was just told that. That came out [inaudible 00:56:42] I want to say a year ago, she was ... and they came out in a discussion that took place in this room and I can't remember. It was just information I got from another presentation, another discussion that took place.

Speaker 4: A lot of that kind of stuff does happen at the high school level.
Speaker 1: I know my daughter graduated from high school two years ago and she got letters from Black Hills State, from Montana colleges, from all sorts of places and I don't remember anything coming from UW. Well, there was thing that came, it was a letter inviting her to come to a tour of the campus day or something, but it wasn't really personalized. It was like, "Come be part of this mass group and see what we can do." Didn't seem to be personalized at all.

Whereas the other places were, "We see you're graduating, we see this is what your GPA is and we think you'd be a great fit here, come and meet with us and talk to our staff and our students." It wasn't, "Come sit in this auditorium and listen to our presentation."

Speaker 4: Obviously, I come from a different state, but in Michigan I ended up not going to my mom's university where she was an alumni because ... They were both in the same city where I grew up, partly because the university that reached out to me, that actually gave me a scholarship, was one that gave me a more personal invitation. The one that really was like, "Hey, come see our campus, come on this meet and greet day."

My mom's alumni university was like that more of an impersonal, and they just didn't ... Acted like they didn't really want me. I was like, "Well, okay." I applied numerous different places but it just reminds me of when I was 17 and not knowing what I wanted to do or where I wanted to go. That just brought back that memory.

Speaker 5: I think our school does a really good job of recruiting with the local high schools. We have these preview days where we invite students on campus and we do a lot of really cool things as outreach to the high school students, and also non-triads, too. I think we just had tech battle days where we had all these students come in from those different schools and we do a lot of fun things.

Speaker 1: You have to make the students feel wanted, like you want them to come. I just didn't see that for my daughter. She didn't want to go to UW. She looked at the list of her colleges and she's now up at BYU and my other daughter's at BYU Idaho. I want a BYU [inaudible 00:59:38].

Speaker 4: Tell her you're only going to pay for UW. That's how you fix that.

Speaker 1: They didn't care.

Interviewer: Well, thanks again for coming. I can turn this off now.
Transcript: Laramie

Special Note: The speakers are not well identified in this transcript. The same identity was used for multiple people, making the reading of the transcript difficult.

Interviewer: So the first question, this should be interesting here in Laramie. But are you aware of UW partnerships joint projects within the community? Yes or no. And if yes, if you can think of those, walk through a specific example, and describe the experience, the outcomes.

Male: I can't.

Speaker 5: The city of Laramie, and our partners. I was in the Laramie chamber of business alliance, were economic development partner, of which the city of Laramie is the largest investor. Does partner quite a bit with the Wyoming technology business center, which is known as the incubator. In trying to find homes for companies that are incubating from the UW system. I would say that relationship is more reactive than proactive, and we're working with the folks at the WTBC to see how we can forget a stronger partnership with them, and serve their clients better, in a more holistic fashion than responding to an after-the-fact need.

So that's certainly one example. We have a transportation task force, trying to figure out public transportation issues that is jointly chaired by city contacts, and UW contacts. Those are two partnerships that immediately come to my mind. And I'll try to dig a little deeper. Thank you.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 4: So, my example's warm fuzzy visual. In 2011, the learning and student alliance partnered with the University of Wyoming art museum, to start the Laramie mural project. So we have a series of murals, that have been painted by community artists, throughout our downtown, that are spilling out into the community. And we've been recognized for this project, at the national level.

Speaker 5: Through Wells Fargo.

Speaker 4: We were on the stage, at the national main street conference, getting an innovation award.

Speaker 5: From Wells Fargo.

Speaker 4: [inaudible 00:02:41] partnership. Edward Jones helped [inaudible 00:02:44] anyways, what does that mean? I don't get it. It was a joke. I don't get it. I was on the stage, [Sarah 00:02:53]. I don't care who funded it.

Speaker 5: I just thought it was funny.

Speaker 4: Anyways. Laramie's become a leader in redefining what public art means, in terms of community development, or economic development, because of this partnership. So, Susan [Muldenhauer 00:03:09] was the director, there. She went out on a limb to do this kind of ... Didn't ask for permission, just felt like it was the right thing to do. Saw the potential. And we were equal partners in this for the last ... til she retired. And unfortunately, the new director does not wanna be a part of this program anymore, so I don't know the future of the process, or the program.
But just to say that was a very visual, impactful, off-campus opportunity that arose and took place. Honestly with just a lot of conversations in the coffee shops downtown, about what that should look like. So ...

Speaker 5: So, the Laramie soup kitchen partners with the university. Usually multiple times, each semester. We have ... I guess there's two ways that we do so the most. And that's service learning, which I know is kind of a new university idea. Which is slowly growing, and being managed better under the SLC office. But that provides a good portion of our volunteers to run the soup kitchen. And then the other thing is that we actually partner with individual classes. And we've done so, about three to five times over the last two years.

And so the first one was marketing senior design, and it helped us with starting to contemplate a rebrand, and also developed marketing techniques. And then probably the most successful one recently is with an ongoing partnership with UW business. It's kind of interesting because it's not so much always what the students bring to it, but also opportunity. So when they present and do the conference at the end of the semester, we get invited to it. We usually get to go for free, which is very helpful. And then the other people in the room are some of the [inaudible 00:05:08] across Wyoming essentially, are very influential individuals.

So that gives us access, a little bit, to that group. As well as the benefits of the work that the students have done. Actually the most recent newspaper article talked about how upstream and downstream risk within donations coming into the ... so what we receive as donations, and where we're able to redistribute those donations. That terminology came from our relationship with UW business. So kind of this project of eliminating food waste in Laramie is being facilitated by efforts of students in the UW business.

Speaker 6: So a lot like the soup kitchen. Of course SLCE, which is student volunteers. They'll help us out occasionally with projects that they come up with. But other than that, it's mostly specific departments. Department of social work. I have an intern. So I consider it a true partnership [inaudible 00:06:25] with the social work department. Because the student benefits from the placement in our organization, and then we benefit by having an intern help us out with various projects. Then also with communication and journalism.

We had a young woman that came and helped us out for the first semester. [inaudible 00:06:50] kind of like an internship thing. Outside of that, that's about it.

Speaker 7: Yes. The college of business is working with various communities, through their Chambers of Commerce. To try and let the community know about potential internships. In the community, potential job openings in the community, opportunities for students to work together as teams, to help businesses in the state. Laramie is one of the first ones to be able to do that. Then we advertise, or the university advertises through our business lines, for those positions. So that's a cool program.

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 5: None of us mentioned something called The Big Event.

Speaker 4: Sorry. That was on my notes.

Male: That SLC too is [inaudible 00:07:47]

Speaker 4: Student leadership community engagement, I think is what that stands for. [inaudible 00:07:55]

Speaker 5: It's SLC.
Speaker 4: Is that right, SLC?

Male: The SLC?

Male: It sounds good.

Male: [inaudible 00:08:01] SLC.

Speaker 4: So, my understanding is their mission is to empower students to get engaged in the community. So whether it's a long term internship or placement, or one-time volunteer opportunity, or just figuring out ways to connect and make a difference. They have one big day of giving, called the big event. That happens the week before homecoming. Where they go out and just do service projects for community members. So if it's [inaudible 00:08:27] the lawn, if it's painting, if it's fixing the beds, if it's moving or reorganizing stuff in the soup kitchen. Whatever that might be.

I mean they're sending out. I think their goal has been like 700 students throughout the community, on that day. And I think that has had a big positive impact on the way the community views our student population.

Interviewer: Okay. That's quite a list. Any other partnerships you can think of?

Speaker 4: I would just reiterate that the college of business has been the most open to either internships or student projects within the community.

Male: Yeah. The university was a big help in [Cirrus 00:09:09] sky park [inaudible 00:09:11] too. They were really a leader in that. [inaudible 00:09:13] a lot of that project [inaudible 00:09:17] largely because of his forward thinking.

Speaker 5: You may have caught us when our coffee has run out because I can't believe [inaudible 00:09:28] that either. They are co-owner. They own part of the [Cirrus sky 00:09:34] technology park, which is the state's first business park zoned specifically for technology. And we've partnered with UW, really on securing our first tenant for that park. So not only were they at the table, and in some ways leading the way to it becoming a park, and contributing financially. They also have housed our inaugural tenant while we were building them their headquarters. So I'm so glad. I'm grateful that you mentioned that, and I'm sorry. I'm not running on all engines right ...

Interviewer: It's okay.

Male: So one thing I did think about is that there was a way the university used to partner with civic groups. And they don't anymore, so I don't know if that's of interest.

Interviewer: Sure.

Male: So the university used to help facilitate AmeriCorps volunteers.

Speaker 5: Mm-hmm (affirmative). [inaudible 00:10:33]

Male: But then they canceled the program, and it became a responsibility of the global nonprofits to do it. And so you pretty much have to dedicate a staff person full-time, to run the AmeriCorps program, if you're gonna [inaudible 00:10:47] grant. So like my AmeriCorps comes from the city of Green River. But almost all the other ones in town come from action resources international, or feeding on your value in town. But all of that used to be managed by a position at the university, which made the AmeriCorps program very easy to work with, as a nonprofit.
Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: So that's a big [inaudible 00:11:11]

Interviewer: These partnerships that you cited. Do you think most people on the community are aware that UW plays the role that they do, in those?

Speaker 5: I think that problem extends beyond UW. I think we could do a lot better job in writing about our successes, and celebrating our partnerships, for sure. So I think, at least for the cities part, we own a little bit of that lack of knowledge at the public level, and it's certainly something the city is motivated to improve.

Male: I think it's probably like that story of people with blindfolds on, touching different parts of the elephant. I think everybody probably has a story about involvement with the UW, but they don't see the big picture. I see the social work department. Somebody else sees the college of business. Somebody else sees the theater of dance. I mean there's a lot of outreach, but you never see the whole picture.

Male: I think it waxes and wanes as different leadership comes in. When we had a gap in leadership, for a few years at the university, between Tom Buchanan and [inaudible 00:12:32] and in that period, they were more involved with trying to get their own house in order, as opposed to working within the community. Or even though they were working within the community, not letting people know what's happening. Because there was some blackouts, pretty much.

Speaker 5: Yeah. I would agree.

Male: There's a challenge in the university, for instance with Cirrus Sky park. Their partnership with that project. It causes other communities to say, "Why are you not doing something [inaudible 00:13:04] Why are you not [inaudible 00:13:06]" So that's a challenge that the university faces, about how to message that.

Male: When I was on the business council, it was always the University of Laramie. People would talk around the state, about the University of Laramie, not the University of Wyoming.

Interviewer: They still do.

Male: Oh. I'll bet that.

Question 2

Interviewer: Okay. Next question. Are you aware of UW professionals who serve in the community? And can you name them, and identify their role with the university?

Male: Laurie is involved in a lot of things. She's in women of courage she's on the Ivinson Memorial Foundation board. [inaudible 00:13:52]

Interviewer: This is president Nichols?

Male: Yes. President Nichols. I'm sorry.

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:13:59]
Male: So, she's involved.

Male: [inaudible 00:14:03] business person of the year.

Speaker 5: That was awesome.

Male: Yes. [inaudible 00:14:05]

Speaker 5: And that was so wonderful.

Male: So she is very involved in getting [inaudible 00:14:11]

Speaker 5: Chris Boswell from the president's office, is on my board as a UW liaison. And I can tell you that both he and our previous liaison, Mark Collins, were more than just figureheads. They were very actively engaged in what we were doing. And it was helpful for us to understand where our priority projects intercepted the goals of the university, so we could help work on those together. And now Chris is retiring, so I don't know who that new person will be. That's been a blessing for us.

Male: [inaudible 00:14:51] the chair of United Way, on campus? You have a chair [inaudible 00:14:58]

Male: It's really been Paul, but he's worked with Laurie Nichols, president Nichols, to do that. Tim Nichols is on our board at United Way.

Male: [inaudible 00:15:08]

Male: Yes. And he's a big time leader [inaudible 00:15:12]

Speaker 5: Oh, cool.

Speaker 5: Gary and I serve on a subcommittee for a group called the pilot hill land purchase committee. We're on the economic development committee. But it strikes me. We've just had one meeting, but at that one meeting, we did have ... I'm sorry, his name is escaping me, but he's an economist at UW, who is helping us. Yes, Rob Godby. He's helping us to prepare, I guess a cost-benefit analysis of this land purchase, and an economic impact analysis. But at our inaugural meeting, I think it was very evident that UW is very supportive of this project, and very keyed in. A trustee is on this committee, so that's a very contemporary example.

Speaker 5: She is a UW employee, who I understand has been allowed to work part-time, so that she may also be co-employed. So I don't know that which hat she's wearing. But I do know the Hobbes school is involved in another subcommittee. I know that there's a professor whose class project is to develop marketing materials for this land purchase. So those are some other really timely partnerships with professors.

Male: We mentioned before, Bill has recently retired, just recently retired with Bill Gern. The VP of research was very involved in our community.

Interviewer: What was that name, again?

Male: Bill Gern. G-E-R-N. Tim Nichols also went out of his way to connect with us. As soon as he came in, he brought his class in, and he volunteered. Unlike most professors who are like, "Here, You're required to go volunteer [inaudible 00:17:42] number of hours at the soup kitchen." Tim was at the soup kitchen, every time one of his students was volunteering. So I mean that was huge. Because of
that, we were able to meet Laurie. So I mean [inaudible 00:17:54] partnership. He's still [inaudible 00:17:55]

Male: Ask [Randy 00:18:06]. She's involved with a lot of things. She's on the board of reproductive health. She said they were two. She didn't give any names. Two professionals from the university on reproductive health, also.

Question 3

Interviewer: Okay. I put one of my cards around, for each one of you. It had my email on there. If you think of something that you wish you would have said, as you're driving away from here, tonight. Shoot me an email, and add that. Okay. The next question is then, just what is your perception of UW as a partner? And when you think of UW, do you perceive it to be engaged with the community on a deep level? Co-investing and developing partnerships? And to what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening? This is questions, probably for more of the outlying communities, than right here in Laramie. But I'm interested to hear, how it feels like here in Laramie.

Male: Again, I would say it's hot and cold. As [Phil Dubois 00:19:13] was here. It was high. It became less after that. And now that Laurie's back in [inaudible 00:19:22] it engaged caring. I mean really caring about the community. So she asked all the right questions, and she gets the people together to make things happen. As a partner, they've been great, and dark. [inaudible 00:19:42] right now, it's excellent.

Interviewer: Other thoughts on UW as a partner?

Male: I mean it's been about personal relationships. And as soon as those disappear, so it's gonna be like what Gary was saying, with the hot and cold. It's just that if I lose connections with enough people, then if they leave, then I have no connections. So there's not a clear place to go, or person to go to, to rebuild those connections. It's just kind of like a draw. So every time we're able to form a new partnership or relationship, it's that longevity is preserved with the university [inaudible 00:20:30] relationship. But if I were to lose all those. I don't know how I would reconnect.

Male: An example I would use is the Bill Gern example. Who's the new guy to replace him?

Speaker 5: He's the new Bill Gern, is what everybody calls him. The new Bill Gern.

Male: As far as I know, he's not engaging. Like you would know, you would know. Mrs. [Sizvansky 00:20:51] or something like that? Nice guy, but as far as I know, he hasn't reached out. And I will say, and it's just a personal opinion. I don't see an awful lot of faculty doing much of anything in our town, or deans.

Male: So I can address that, I think. From my perspective. I reach out regularly. To me, it should be a great resource, the university. There's a lot of knowledge, obviously. So I could reach out for example. Just today, I sent an email to people in the art department, asking for some assistance with something. And then the social work department. Communication [inaudible 00:21:38] business. I actually have reached out to business and marketing. And honestly, if I don't connect with the right person, I may not even hear back.

Because I've taken a stab in the dark, when I send out an email for help, I don't know if I'll get an answer or a response. It's a hit-or-miss kind of situation. Sometimes I do get a very positive response, and very helpful [inaudible 00:22:06] get it returned. But most times honestly, I don't get any [inaudible 00:22:09]
Male: I served on the cowboy joe board, and I will say athletics. Especially cowboy joe, [inaudible 00:22:18] are involved, but not in leadership positions. If there's an event that happens, they will show up. But they're not taking leadership positions in anything. But at least they're out there.

Male: I think the leadership comes out of the president [inaudible 00:22:37] And I think [inaudible 00:22:41] president Nichol's time, she'll get those folks doing things that they need to do, but they haven't had to. Prior to her, they haven't had to do stuff for quite a while. We were at a dinner with her, the other day, and we're talking about the city government. And president Nichols said, "Why don't you do something about that?" And it's like that was the first time I've ever heard anybody from the university actually care about the city. You know, what could we do? So I thought that was really good.

Speaker 5: I was gonna say. Our last conversation with her. We just kind of check in. Specifically with this idea of how can downtown be a recruitment tool. So we're trying to increase enrollment, is our goal in that. She did say she wants to create an office of engagement, that would be an entry point to UW. So this idea that you don't know where to go, and you're shooting blind. There'd be one place to connect, come in and use those resources, and an office that would help you say, "Let me personally introduce you. Make sure you have a [inaudible 00:23:41] to this person or this person, whatever. To help us in the community [inaudible 00:23:46] idea of what's going on, on campus." So I'm super thrilled with that idea.

Male: That's a good idea.

Speaker 5: This hopefully isn't too off topic, but I think at the local level, one thing that we're struggling with is to really emotionally engage our residents. So that instead of passing litter and saying, "Oh why won't the city take care of that?" Our citizens love their city enough, that they're not waiting for somebody to take care of this, but they're literally picking up the trash, themselves. And how we accomplish that? I'm not quite sure, but what you've just communicated about your dinner conversation, I think is really encouraging.

Because I think that as our largest industry, and employer. If they are not waiting for the city to fix it. But have this spirit of, "Well, we're gonna roll up our sleeves, and we're gonna fix it." Then maybe that will have a spillover effect to the entire community, setting that tone.

Male: [inaudible 00:24:56]

Male: I think that from what I understand, a [inaudible 00:25:02] environment is common, when you're in a university town. There seems to be seems to be a university community, and then the community around the university. And I think a lot of that's true in Laramie. I think it really is, too. When I went with the United Way to speak with the deans at the different groups on campus, it was clear to me that ... these people, I knew a bunch of them. I know them to be good people, that are very committed to what they're doing. They're very focused on trying to maintain their department, and their faculty, and their students, and take care of them.

And I'm sure they're very consumed with that. University just went through a big cut, and they're licking their wounds, and they're pretty focused on what they have to do to maintain their groove. And to look out and care for the community right now is probably not at the top of their list. And I don't blame them at all. So I think I'm hopeful that with some time and relationships, that can get a little better in the future. But right now, I don't expect much from faculty, in terms of help. [inaudible 00:26:29]

Male: I've got several friends that are faculty members, on campus. And to be honest with you, they're bitter. They're bitter. They got hit. They got hit hard. They're hurting. Personally and professionally. And the
cuts from the state were not kind to the university, or our community. It bled through to us. And it's gonna take a while for those wounds to heal, from my perspective.

Speaker 5: The community is hurt. We've all said goodbye to new friends. And longtime friends, through this. One thing that really strikes me is that spouse of a faculty member came in, and she just dug into this community, and created so many different programs, and initiatives, and works. Some of which ... [Trey 00:27:25] might cry, be careful. She partners with main street quite a bit, and I believe has been a pivotal volunteer. They're now moving to New York. He's lost his position, and they're moving to New York. And certainly that's not something that could have been prevented.

What I think I'm trying to express here, is that the community is grieving the losses, the faculty and staff losses as well. I don't know how that weaves your way into the report, but I think that's worth noting, that we care about these people.

Male: Absolutely.

Speaker 5: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think you're asking the question, "Are they engaged on a deep level?" And that speaks to that.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Interviewer: Any other perceptions of UW as a partner, and their current level of engagement?

Speaker 5: I guess this is one thing. On our last kind of economic development strategy meeting. There were some people from the college of business that said something that I've never heard said. You know what I'm gonna say?

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Speaker 5: From campus, before. This idea that us coming to the table and strategizing with the community on economic development issues, is the least that we could do. Because we don't contribute to the taxes. And I'd never heard anybody from the university connect that, understand that, understand that UW doesn't pay into sales or property tax. We are the poorest per capita community in the state of Wyoming. Poorest. We have the least amount of resources to take care of streets, our people our roads, fire, all of that. And most times, those conversations about the importance of being scrappy, and rolling up our sleeves, and working together.

There's been a complete disconnect of why. Why do we need to do that? But when you had those people in the college of business recognize that, say that. They say that it's the least that we could do to contribute. It was like, "Whoa. Something has changed."

Male: I love having the university here, and I understand that arguments. If we don't have the university, we don't even have sales tax. We have nothing to take care of it. But I would just like to see more ... when I walk past the parking lot at the university, see a [inaudible 00:29:49] circle by Laramie [inaudible 00:29:52] center. Instead of something out of Denver, where they just don't spend money.

Speaker 5: Yeah. I can say the businesses, when they write a business plan, they don't consider the university population into their demographic. Because they're not shopping an awful lot.

Interviewer: I think we're getting ahead here a little bit, into challenges and opportunities. These are great lines of thought, here.
Male: I thought it was a partnership, too. Okay. We'll get there.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on current level of engagement?.

Male: I don't know if this applies here, or applies [inaudible 00:30:28] but another idea I had. I was very impressed with the joint effort between the city and the university, on the state footnote to change 15th street. So the fact that they held joint town hall meetings. And it was very clear the city was just as interested in hearing our opinion as a university, because it's on a university campus, right? A couple of them were.

Male: In my opinion on that, for what it's worth. It's that I think [inaudible 00:31:01] in educating the community on the value of changing [inaudible 00:31:05] street. I feel like that they probably had really good reasons for wanting to do it, but I [inaudible 00:31:12]

Male: It didn't actually come from the university. It came from a legislator. It wasn't even in Albany county.

Male: No. It was [inaudible 00:31:19]

Male: That was the challenge.

Male: Well, they didn't do a very good job of educating them.

Question 4

Interviewer: All right. So the next three questions are about looking ahead. So we've kind of been assessing UW's current level of engagement and partnership, now. The next question is, what are the top three grant opportunities in your community? Who's working on capitalizing on them? And what are the desired outcomes? And if there are areas or industries you are looking to grow.

Male: I'll start out with one opportunity. I think Wyo tech is a major problem, but it's also a great opportunity. [inaudible 00:32:08] LCCC's got something going on with it, right? The county.

Interviewer: This is the vocational training school?

Male: Yeah. The vocational training school. I think it's a great opportunity for Laramie to keep that going, for our community to get that going. And I think it would be an opportunity for UW as a partner. That's just my opinion.

Interviewer: What's the status? Is anybody working on that now?

Male: Yeah. LCCC is doing is doing something right, and the county commissioner. They had meetings just this past week.

Speaker 5: And the city had been part of a work group to prepare a proposal to president Shafer to communicate the needs and opportunities, with respect to saving that campus. And that is no doubt an incredibly important project. But what I will say is that WyoTech exports most of its students. In other words, they graduate and they leave. A large percentage. As does UW. We joke that, in Laramie we educate Colorado's workforce. And our economic development mantra in Laramie is to halt the brain drain. And that needs to happen in whatever form that Wyo Tech takes in the future.

And then certainly at UW. Our median age in Laramie is I think 25 years old. And me personally, I think one indicator of economic success is that we see an uptick in our average age. We want these
graduates to take root in our community, to start businesses, to start families, to accept jobs. And I believe that UW leadership would agree. And with that, we need to have jobs that tailor to the talent coming out of UW, but then also focus on entrepreneurial initiatives, so that people are starting their own businesses here.

And I think the tides are turning, definitely. And I hope that what we will see in the next 10 years is that we're not just a bunch of 25-year olds, that maybe we're inching closer to 30 years old, here in Laramie.

Male: On the Wyo Tech issue, a couple of things. There is a private group that is gaining traction through the legislature, and with investors. So there's some hope there, that that might well. And as far as when you look at the Wyo Tech. Yeah, they're exporting talent. Some stays, but not a lot of mechanics' jobs here. But by the same token, they are paying taxes, through the state taxes. They are providing 75 to 100 jobs for people making a very livable wage. So there's major positives in resurrecting Wyo Tech.

I'm hoping that LCCC has done a marvelous job of working with them. But I'm hoping that the private group can do it. Just it gives a little bit more national exposure. And I will say the first meeting that we had to try to resurrect Wyo Tech, and Wyo Tech [inaudible 00:35:58] was there.

Speaker 5: She was. She brought a trustee with her. They took time out of a meeting to spend at WyoTech, and WyoTech took a big chunk of time that I don't think she had. But she made the time, and was very engaged.

Male: I don't see a good partnership there.

Speaker 5: It's an awkward fit.

Male: I just can't see that on any level. But she took the time.

Male: You don't see a good partnership there [inaudible 00:36:27].

Male: Not with the university. It's not a fit, at all. Absolutely. It's a way better fit with LCCC or the private sector.

Speaker 5: But I do think that UW and WyoTech could really work more closely with our economic partners, to attract industries suitable for the talent that we've got. I think philosophically we all agree, and I think we do do it to some extent. But maybe not to the extent that we should. And this is maybe off topic from UW. But when you hear about employers like Volvo, literally freaking out that this campus will close because WyoTech trains Volvo's workforce, then maybe that's a gateway to an opportunity to maybe attract a business like Volvo.

And that's just one, maybe pie in the sky example. But I think that there are maybe some other UW examples of an industry that really relies on UW talent, that maybe could benefit from being a little bit closer.

Male: Yeah. I guess I'd like to see the university work as a leader to encourage the tech sector here in Laramie. Which can be done, certainly out of the research office at UW. I think that the university has promoted entrepreneurialism on campus, which I think is beneficial. They have 50K now. They're trying to push that down to [inaudible 00:38:18] Which I think is a good program, but they need to continue to focus on that leadership. Because we can talk about bringing businesses here all day long, but at the end of the day, the best businesses are the ones that are started here, by the people that live here.
Speaker 5: Yes, right.

Speaker 5: Yes, amen.

Male: So as they come out of the university. If those students can open a business or start a business, that's the best case scenario.

Speaker 5: Yes.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: We need the university's leadership to help us with that.

Male: I would have said that was one of our three grand opportunities, also. Who with the university is helping it this point in time? Anybody? Except [inaudible 00:38:55]

Male: For that entrepreneur?

Male: [inaudible 00:39:01] to the tech part. The entrepreneurship, I understand that, but I didn't know this. I didn't know it was open to anybody. I thought it was only open to university people. And that's something the university [inaudible 00:39:16]

Speaker 5: I have an intake form, now. For businesses to fill out.

Male: So I agree. One of the three [inaudible 00:39:25] is the IT section. So they're keeping ... we have what? 63 tech companies in Laramie.

Male: Well, and those come out of the university, so it needs to be encouraged by the university. So I don't have access to the students. I don't have access to the faculty. They come up with the new ideas. The university needs to build the culture that we want you to go out and start a business. That's [inaudible 00:39:52] to go do. Or give you a certain direction or path [inaudible 00:39:56]

Male: That ties right into Cirrus Sky.

Male: Yeah, correct.

Male: It's a huge tie-in.

Male: Some of our biggest success have come out of the university. [inaudible 00:40:08] turned into fantastic businesses, here in town.

Speaker 5: A quick example is a PHD student who developed a technology, and then decided academia wasn't his cup of tea. He wanted to be a business person. He moved his business, developed on campus upon graduation, into a garage. He eventually made his way back into the incubator system, and then partnering with the WTBC, we were able to build him a headquarters. Which now houses 45 employees, many of which are hired through an internship to employment pipeline. His company has been bought by a San Francisco bay area company.

They're keeping their presence in Laramie. Their Laramie crew is really kind of their think tank, which is pretty impressive. But if you go to the new parent comp's website, and you go to their HR page, they are promoting Laramie, Wyoming. Alongside San Francisco bay area. Which just feels like we're a little orange in a basket of apples. But if we can replicate that on smaller, and larger, and
similar scales, over and over again. That would just be an absolute game-changer for our community. And that's where maybe we would see the uptick in our average age.

Male: That is impressive.

Speaker 5: It's the model project for how this should work.

Male: [inaudible 00:41:47] within 10 years, 150 to 200 employees here. It's unbelievable.

Speaker 5: And they fully anticipate that their leadership positions will spin off and create their own businesses. Hopefully here in Laramie.

Male: The beauty of technology is that as we look into the future, you will not be forced to live anywhere you do not want to. We believe ... I heard this said a couple of different times, and it makes great sense to me. Is that the number one thing for people will be quality of life. And we have, I think a wonderful quality of life, here. If you can get past the wind, I think that it's really we're very fortunate, though.

Speaker 5: There's no bad weather. It's just bad clothes.

Interviewer: Ha. You can see that's on the list. What are some of those quality of life assets? What's unique about Laramie?

Male: I'll tell you. My wife and I moved here 30 years ago, because it's a university town. Because of the arts, the theater and dance, the actual debate amongst the community members that takes place at a more intellectual level. And about policy, and the future of our community and state. It's more vibrant, and so it's more intellectual. But like I said, the theater, the dance, the art museum, the speakers that come, the basketball games, the football games. There's a culture that surrounds a university town, and that's a part of it that I think it does affect. It actually is to me a huge part of the quality of life in Laramie.

Male: I could not leave Laramie, and go to another town that was not another university town. [inaudible 00:43:43] I must have a university town.

Male: I'm with you.

Male: There's always something to do because of the university. Tonight, there's two speakers.

Speaker 5: The Egyptian thing?

Male: Yeah. Well and then there's a film that's being played.

Speaker 5: Well, and Cheech Marin was just here.

Speaker 5: Yeah. He smelled so good.

Speaker 5: Cheech Marin smells good. Hm.

Speaker 5: Meet and greet at the art museum.

Speaker 5: I [inaudible 00:44:12] to steal a thought from you. I'm sorry.
Male: I was gonna say that I lived in Denver for six years. And for my family to go to the mountains took every bit of an hour to get to the mountains. Here, I'm up in the mountains in 10 minutes. That is super cool. Super cool.

Male: Outdoor activities [inaudible 00:44:30] The fishing is great. The hunting is great. The hiking is great.

Male: Hiking and biking.

Speaker 5: Hiking. I ski on my lunch hour. We've got I think more snow biking trails than anywhere in the state. Lander might be right up there with us.

Interviewer: No. We're working on it, though.

Speaker 5: And we've got a huge Nordic community. We have two coffee roasters.

Speaker 5: [inaudible 00:44:58]

Speaker 5: How many breweries? Yeah, I wish I could rattle all this off.

Speaker 5: With our quality of life assessment sheet.

Speaker 5: We have 22 live bands. We've got I think 88 professional artists.

Speaker 5: How many yoga studios?

Speaker 5: Seven yoga studios. I think that's unreal for a town [inaudible 00:45:21]

Male: It says something.

Speaker 5: We just crunched these numbers, and it is incredible. And it supports nicknames I've heard. Not just Laradise, but I've heard Laramie called little Berkeley, and little Brooklyn. I mean we really do have access to amenities that you would not expect in a town this size. We've got gourmet food.

Speaker 5: 270 locally-owned businesses in our downtown, alone. And 35 of those are restaurants and bars.

Male: Lovely.

Speaker 5: We have 75 locally-owned restaurants. So we don't have this chain invasion in Laramie.

Male: We have [inaudible 00:46:03] you guys. One of the most incredibly strong nonprofit groups in this town. I mean everybody. You go through the United Way, on down. And it is absolutely amazing. And what a [inaudible 00:46:18]

Speaker 5: Yes.

Male: [inaudible 00:46:20] In January, we were running low on food. And I just took a gutsy gamble to go out and reach out to the community and ask for food. Within four days, we had two tons of food that came in, two bags at a time. 10 pounds at a time. The outpour was just amazing. It's overwhelming. And thousands of dollars. Checks came in with it. There was an article in the paper, and a posting on FaceBook. Two things, that was it. I thought, "Oh my gosh. How is the community going to respond to this? What's gonna happen?" I was really nervous. It was amazing, and it's still coming in. [inaudible 00:47:09]
Male: [inaudible 00:47:10] on the highway, so the trucks wreck it.

Male: [inaudible 00:47:15] cheese.

Male: Yeah, cheese.

Interviewer: If I could just ...

Male: Refocus us?

Interviewer: Review your opportunities. So your biggest opportunities are Wyotech.

Male: Yeah. That's one of the three.

Interviewer: And then to grow the IT sector of the economy here. And then as kind of an adjunct to that opportunity, the opportunity for UW graduates to stay here and start their own businesses, as opposed to moving to other communities?

Speaker 5: Absolutely. If you could add advanced manufacturing to that tech sector. That's something that's been growing accidentally, but I think there's a lot of benefit, and I think that there's a lot of ...

Male: [inaudible 00:47:58] we are actually recruiting manufacturing, at the economic development level.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: We have [inaudible 00:48:04] that we recruited. [inaudible 00:48:08] is at the offshoot there.

Speaker 5: Avid.

Male: So it's [inaudible 00:48:12] so it's a recruitment effort, but we are getting manufacturing jobs.

Question 5

Interviewer: Okay, all right. The next question is then, what are the top three challenges in the community, and who's working on those? And what are the desired outcomes? Below this question, I've listed some prompts. Those are a lot of the things that have come up in other communities. Like people are having a hard time thinking of.

Male: Well, ideal within [inaudible 00:48:45] tech on a daily basis, with people that fall through the cracks. You know there's a lot of great organizations and great nonprofits, and great businesses, health care facilities that are in Laramie to help people, but all of them [inaudible 00:49:02] to see who they can help the best, and people fall through those screens. And then they choose the ones that they can help. Eventually, there are people that fall through all of the screens, and that's who we work with. So my view is a little tainted.

I hear sad stories, every day. And there's a lot of them. And to me, what I see from my perspective. Is I see the three challenges as ... it's either one out of five, or one out of four people in Laramie are living below the federal poverty level. Okay, that's a real deal. I mean just this morning in the food pantry, a guy. He's like our age, man. And he had a Carhartt jacket on. Just a typical guy. He says, "I can't get anything more than $8 an hour in this town, and I'm really embarrassed to be here." [inaudible 00:50:02] at the food pantry.
It took a lot for him, but he was hungry. And he had to come in for food. And he can't get a job, more than $8 an hour. He's probably manual labor all his life, but now he's pushing 60 years old or something, and he's just not on the list. There are a lot of people that are poor. A living wage. And I'm telling you, even for a city that's got something to say about this, too. It could help a little bit, but [inaudible 00:50:35] people a little bit more money, and to give a living wage. The poverty is not unemployment. It's underemployment. And then there's people that are legitimately disabled.

There's people that are living on social security and $800 a month. Which there's a good population of people trying to live on $700 or $800 a month. Think about it. Just think about trying to live on $700 a month. And there's a pretty good core of people now associated with that. The other two issues from my perspective is housing. I mean a story that I've told, speaking with the United Way. A year ago, there was an 83 year old, and 82 year old man that was sleeping in a sleeping bag. And his social security, less than $700 a month. He had to choose between food and shelter. And he was living in a sleeping bag, just two blocks [inaudible 00:51:37] campus. Housing is expensive in Laramie. To me, that's a problem. Health care is a problem. Dental care is a problem in Laramie. These people, they don't even think about dentistry. It's not even on their radar. There's nothing they can do about it. If you're poor, there's no dental help for you in town. There's just not. And health care is a big issue for people, if they're poor. If they don't have Medicaid/Medicare, and they don't have insurance, they just don't get health care.

I mean we're dealing with a man right now, that was discharged from the hospital. And he's either got failing liver or cancer. He's dying. And he has no options. Nothing. There's no options for him. There's nothing he can do. He has no money, he has no insurance. He's not covered by [inaudible 00:52:39] The other problem I think in Laramie, is transportation. I think there's a lot of people from the nonprofit sector that would like to be on your committee and talk about the transportation issues.

They're pretty significant. Getting the poor people around town. Getting them to health care. Getting them to jobs. It's our second biggest line item. We spent $86,000 in 2018 for housing, for helping people with housing. Then next line item is going to be at 39,000 or something like that, will be transportation. Helping people get around. And utilities, and lodging for people that are homeless, and we keep them in hotels to keep them from being homeless. There's a lot of that. Every day we see it.

Again it's my perspective, but that's because I'm working with these people every day, that I can see that. But to me, housing, healthcare, and transportation, are the two big challenges that are facing Laramie.

Male: And I think to go right along with the jobs. I mean we've got to create some wealth in the community by creating jobs that pay better. That is a challenge for us. It always has been. It's getting better. But losing the jobs at the university will hurt.

Male: Oh, it hurt.

Male: I mean it hurts the economy [inaudible 00:54:11] a number of people that lost ... it was at 400.

Male: [inaudible 00:54:17] I talked about it [inaudible 00:54:18] times. Probably a couple hundred though, for sure.

Male: So you're talking about a company like Trihydro shutting down.

Speaker 5: Yeah. I think it was actually the number we're using, though I've heard others. Is 300 jobs. But through our partnerships with the LCBA and the Wyoming business council, we've been able to grow 400 jobs.
Speaker 5: Wow.

Speaker 5: Wouldn't that be a game changer? 400 jobs. So for the first time ever, it hasn't hit the economy as hard. But there's kind of a silent faceless part of our community that it probably did get hit, or are really always hit to some extent.

Male: We have underemployment, and a high cost of living.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: That's what we got.

Speaker 5: Absolutely. And with respect to housing. It's expensive and substandard.

Male: Second highest in the state, last we looked.

Male: I was just having a conversation today [inaudible 00:55:27] I don't know if that was still the case, but it used to be our cost of living was only second to Jackson. It's like something's wrong with it.

Male: You could talk all you want about supply and demand. There's something intrinsically wrong with having Laramie, with the lowest per capita income while having the second highest cost [inaudible 00:55:47]

Speaker 5: And then perpetuating some sort of slum lord culture. My husband and I have some rentals, and are looking to acquire some more. And our realtor literally will just stand at the door. And he'll say, "I just want you to know. This landlord is going to hell." And he will open the door, and it will just be the most god awful home. And then to learn what they're charging is just criminal.

Male: It's brutal. I mean it's brutal.

Male: I have a rental unit that I keep my kids in, that I keep getting calls from property managers, "I can get you another $200, if you want." And I think a lot of it has to do with ... there's my supply and demand. We don't have a lot of developable space. We're sort of landlocked by very many issues, and the cost of development is difficult when it's always on the developer.

Speaker 5: Exactly.

Male: And we have no money to help develop. It is a catch-22. It's horrible.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: I mean looking at Cheyenne. They've got housing that almost anybody can afford. It's nice, and it's new stuff. [inaudible 00:56:59] put up so many of those. And we just can't seem to get it done.

Interviewer: So do people commute from Cheyenne to Laramie?

Male: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Interviewer: A lot of people?
Male: And Fort Collins.

Speaker 5: And Fort Collins.

Interviewer: It can't be less expensive to live there.

Male: Yeah. They don't come up from Fort Collins too much.

Speaker 5: I think I have 15 people in my building. Two come from Colorado every day, and they have for years.

Male: But it's not because the price of housing there is cheaper.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: It's just because they like living in Colorado.

Speaker 5: One of them in particular. His issue is, "My spouse makes more money." She's the breadwinner.

Speaker 5: [inaudible 00:57:44] yeah.

Interviewer: So if we had to list three here. It would be people living on the margins, poverty. Housing. And then with this lack of jobs/wealth. Would that fall under economic diversity, or?

Speaker 5: There's so many reciprocal causes here. It's hard to narrow it down to three.

Interviewer: But underemployment, and high cost of living. Would that be the best heading for that challenge?

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: [inaudible 00:58:15]

Male: Yeah. I feel that.

Speaker 5: If I could throw out just one more. You touched on that it's enormously expensive to develop in Laramie, and that is in part a reflection of how enormously broke our municipality is. I think that needs to be on the list, but I also recognize these are other ... 

Male: Needs.

Speaker 5: Yeah. Other needs.

Male: You know. Because it's really true though. Without that infrastructure, [inaudible 00:58:52] infrastructure being supported adequately. The services and the support for nonprofits is ... We got paid $10,000 last year by the county. They didn't have the money, and I'm not looking forward to [inaudible 00:59:05] this year, I can tell you that. So that hurts us. So I agree with you, that the tax base or whatever the problems are, that the lack of support or infrastructure for the government. That does hurt us. That does trickle down to us.

Speaker 5: And another thing ...

Male: No more. We can't have anymore [inaudible 00:59:31] and challenges.
Interviewer: So the high cost of development. That's just kind of a contributing factor to the overall high cost and shortage of housing?

Speaker 5: If you wanna ... I mean literally, we are the poorest municipality in the state. I mean I think that's the larger issue than ... that is what causes the high cost of development.

Male: We also have the second highest cost of water.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: We have lots of water, but it's harder to get to people.

Male: We have no infrastructure. Fix it.

Speaker 5: Right. Because we still have clay pipes.

Male: Yes. It's true.

Speaker 5: Sometimes wooden.

Interviewer: So that's a challenge to you, is the infrastructure?

Male: Well, there's the development issue.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: The municipality is not in a position to fix the infrastructure. So all of the development, when there's development. Then there's a lot of pressure to have the developers fix the infrastructure. So that increases the cost because they have to pass it on.

Speaker 5: But I think just thinking about [inaudible 01:00:43] UW is in a position to recruit faculty, staff, or student. You bring them to town, and you see the crumbling sidewalk in the street, that's in poor repair. That has a negative connotation for them, as it does on [inaudible 01:00:57]

Male: You drive down Ivinson going past university with all the bumps and [inaudible 01:01:02]

Speaker 5: Oh, god.

Speaker 5: Yeah, it's horrible.

Male: If you look at the campus, it's beautiful. But you've gotta watch where you're going, or else you hit something and tear your car up.

Speaker 5: I don't drive up there anymore. I just walk it.

Speaker 5: I ride my bike down it more than I drive it, and it's a rodeo. Just riding a bike. My dad was on a green ride actually this weekend, with a candidate from Cambridge. Interestingly, she was so excited to come to Laramie. She kind of spilled her guts to him, and really hoped that she would get a job offer. But was agonizing because there was no housing on the market, for her and her family.

Male: Like [JerryWe 01:01:47] said. There's the lowest inventory he's ever seen, in Laramie.
Male: There's 60 houses or something.

Male: [inaudible 01:01:56] gonna drive the cost up.

Male: Oh, absolutely. [inaudible 01:01:59] and the cost goes up.

Male: [inaudible 01:02:02] company in bad economic times. People were paying above appraised value.

Male: Perhaps.

Male: That's how tight the market is, right now. And they also want get in before interest rates rise.

Male: Right. If UW could fix all of those.

Question 6

Interviewer: Okay, well now. This is why we ask the last question here. How do you think UW can help?

Speaker 5: I think that the UW has been really helpful in standing side by side with the city of Laramie at the legislature, asking for money. And I think we need to continue that partnership, but I also think we need to strengthen our alliance. And we cannot let the legislature pit one of us against the other. Which I think happens really quite often. I'll give you a very quick example. Our fire department needed funding for a new ladder truck. Because of UW development, they didn't have enough ladder trucks to put out fires in taller buildings.

This is a very crude description of what they needed. And the state said, "Well. UW's the cause for all of these new buildings. Why don't you ask them to fund your fire truck?"

Male: They get funded by you.

Speaker 5: So it's like at the legislative level, it feels like they're asking for our snake to eat its own tail. And so I don't know how to fix that, but I do think that if we really came, we've forged a stronger partnership. And we were more strategic. Then we could not have the legislature by accident or by design, pit us against each other, when competing for funding.

Male: Yeah. It's been worse since Phil Nicholas got out. [inaudible 01:04:09] seems like there's a punishment mode for the university.

Male: You're really right on, there. [inaudible 01:04:20] the university just keeps partnering with us, and [inaudible 01:04:24] university. Laramie's only as good as the university is, and the university's only as good as Laramie is. And that conversation we had the other night? That's what president Nichols says. That you can do all of this work on campus, but when people come to town, and they can't get housing. [inaudible 01:04:43] and there's issues. Then we can't keep them. So we have to work together, so that was refreshing to hear.

Because so often I did hear that, "We're not the university of Laramie. We can't help Laramie, can't stand up for Laramie. We have to represent the whole state." You can't do that and be here. That's just not possible.

Speaker 5: Right. Thank you.

Male: I'd like to say that's very true.
Male: For me, it's all about the leadership. As long as we have [inaudible 01:05:11] here, and [inaudible 01:05:14] to a degree [inaudible 01:05:15] she can do within the town, we're gonna be a lot better off than we have been for the last 15 years.

Interviewer: When you look back at the opportunities and challenges that you decided, can you think of specific ways that UW could help in addressing those? I know you said you didn't think there was a role for the university in the WyoTech resurrection. But what about the leadership role and?

Male: [inaudible 01:05:40]

Interviewer: Can you be more specific about what?

Male: Like issues because of food disparities. Okay, so there's 6,600 people in Albany county that don't have access to nutritious food. Okay. And certainly we have that data, but universities do research. They could help us by researching issues like this. Social issues such as food disparities, or even access to health care. What are some options for health care? I don't know. So to leave it on the shoulders of a couple of nonprofits doesn't seem fair. The other guy that's not here is Pete Gosar from the downtown clinic. I mean then we'd be talking most of Laramie's safety net [inaudible 01:06:30] sitting at this table.

And it's not really fair to put those big issues on our shoulders. We could use some research. We could use some science behind it. What are some of the solutions? Help us identify specifically what the problems are. Why do we have 6,600 people that don't have access to nutritious food? So that's one way the university could help.

Male: Tagging on to that. The university right now, is working unilaterally to solve food insecurity among students. But they're doing so without consulting the two agencies that move the most food in town. And so what they're doing is they're calling me and saying, "We want to open up a food pantry. Can you support us?" And I'm like, "Why are you not using Interfaith" Right? [inaudible 01:07:15] already does it. And they've been doing it for decades.

Male: Or why don't we sit down at the table together, and talk about the food problems in Laramie. It's why is it [inaudible 01:07:26] problem?

Male: What's interesting is, right now I have very limited access to the University of Wyoming. So if I want to put out a notice that says, "Hey. If you're hungry, you can come to the soup kitchen." It's nearly impossible because of the restrictions on outside agencies working with the university. So if the university wants to maintain relationships with the greater community, they have to allow the access back within the university. So like we tried to put together a flier that was basically just saying, "Hey. We need volunteers." And that was gonna be our first one.

And the second one was going to be, "And if you're hungry, come to us." And they refused on it. Even though it was a student project. She was required to do it as a class, and the RSO office said, "We will not post this." So how is it that ASUW is talking about food insecurity issues on campus, but refuses the two agencies that know how to move food to come and educate their students on, "This is how you solve food insecurity. This is where you go and get food." So that's my big problem. Is that I need access. I need to be able to educate students.

The number of times I've gone to university catering, who is a major partner and gives us an enormous amount of food, and said, "Give me access to your employees." It's like I don't understand. Our employees after an event, we clearly label it soup kitchen. And they just come in and they start eating, like with their hands. And once they do, [inaudible 01:09:00] So I talked to them. "Let me come and talk to your students." "Oh, well. They'll never listen." You're an education facility, and you won't let me educate your students about where this food goes?
Speaker 5:  Don't touch that pan.

Speaker 5:  They're like, "If you're hungry ... 

Male:  Yeah. So the thing is that they set aside in their fridge. There are two sections there. Soup kitchen, then they have, "You can eat this." And they eat everything. Then they end up throwing out half of it. So I don't understand why a group that already partners with us, food catering, doesn't give me access. And I don't understand why ASUW is creating all of these solutions, completely separate from interfaith [inaudible 01:09:46] I don't understand it.

Male:  I think that transportation is part of our infrastructure, and the university does play a role with transportation, to reach out a little bit [inaudible 01:09:57] I mean, right now there's a bus that runs up and down [inaudible 01:10:03] avenue. And there's a [inaudible 01:10:05] bus. There's a lot of people that can't afford cars. And transportation would be a great way for the university to reach out.

Speaker 5:  I agree.

Male:  If we put our heads together, maybe we could come up [inaudible 01:11:17]

Speaker 5:  They have access to donors that you don't.

Male:  Yeah, that's right.

Speaker 5:  And they've got the workforce. Something that exists, that maybe could be expanded.

Male:  It's never gonna happen if we don't talk about it.

Speaker 5:  Right.

Speaker 5:  I guess I wanted [inaudible 01:11:32] what Ted said, on a much less direct impact way. Is I do hear the businesses downtown smearing the, "We can't get our message to campus." So if we've got a business that our products is targeting millennials, but we can't market on campus, or we can't get the
word out, or it's a nonprofit [inaudible 01:11:49] to engage volunteers. Whatever it is. There's just this weird no, that I've never heard the logic behind.

Speaker 5: We're our own fiefdom.

Speaker 5: It's so funny. How many people daily come in and say, "Will you hang my poster advertising an event happening on campus, in your window?" And they're going door, to door, to door, downtown. Great. Everybody in the community can be part of campus. But when we go to campus with our events saying, "Come down into the community and hang out." No.

Male: There's a poster board in the basement of the union, you can put it there. [inaudible 01:12:19]

Speaker 5: So it's almost like all of the energy is pointing outward, but they're not accepting anything inward.

Speaker 5: It's the littlest, weirdest thing. But I think even [inaudible 01:12:29] change would mend a lot of hurt feelings or whatever that is.

Male: Being the banker kind of guy. I really think that the university needs to be helped more in recruiting businesses to town. Educating people in our economic development group about how to do this, and try to get jobs into town. I mean the research and development group, they have connections all through the United States. And you can't get access to any of this information, even if you wanted to get it to try to recruit. You can't get that information.

Male: And if they would [inaudible 01:13:14] staff a living wage, it would rise everything else in town.

Speaker 5: The rising tides.

Male: I believe that's probably up to the legislature, though.

Male: Yeah. Probably right.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: But, the answer's always no unless you ask.

Male: Yeah. That's absolutely right.

Male: You were on the LCBA board. What do you think?

Speaker 6: I think that having more active participation in LCBA, in the business alliance, would be helpful. We used to have Bill Gern to show up to our meetings. We haven't had anybody show up to the meetings for a while.

Speaker 5: Is JJ showing up to their meetings, do you know?

Speaker 6: [inaudible 01:13:59]

Speaker 5: Is he extending that grant? I'm just curious.

Speaker 6: I do not know.

Speaker 5: I know I'm trying to be more conscious about that.
Speaker 5: Go both ways.

Speaker 6: Correct. That's true.

Speaker 5: And if there were any time. I think now might be that time.

Male: When you look at the boards on campus [inaudible 01:14:21]

Speaker 5: Powerhouses.

Male: Well, you got strong business leaders.

Male: Strong business leaders. Art leaders. I mean you got a lot of local leaders that proliferate through the college. And you don't see that on this [inaudible 01:14:39]

Speaker 5: The reverse of this?

Male: Yeah.

Male: They're all separate. That's the thing to your point. Even on campus, things are separate.

Speaker 5: Yeah.

Male: The college business advisory board, I've never met any of the other boards on campus.

Male: Well that's true.

Speaker 5: We need a board mixer.

Male: Yeah. That's what we need. Yeah.
**Transcript: Cheyenne**

**Question #1**

**Interviewer:** So the first question is are you aware of UW partnerships and joint projects in the community, and if yes, can you give examples and describe what happened. What was the experience, what were the outcomes?

**Speaker 2:** I'd like to say yes but I can't think of anything current. I know that at the YMCA years ago, probably 10 years ago had a group of athletes doing some summer camps for us, uni sports, summer camps for us, but I don't think we've had that connection more recently. But I don't know really bonafide collaborations and I know at Kiwanis I'm the program chair and any time I've reached out to the university and asked somebody to come over and speak there, they're more than happy to do so. It's no problem at all getting a variety of different instructors to drive over the hill and speak to us. That begins a slightly more casual connection. I'm sure there are collaborations that exist, I just can't think of any.

**Speaker 3:** I feel the same way, I just don't have a contact with them. They have to be here somewhere. I haven't found them ... I'm very new to Rotary, so we had some UW folks speak at Rotary, and there might be a community collaboration there between the science stuff and some grants here. I don't know, that's kind of all in the works here but besides that, I know they're there, I'm just not privy to them.

**Speaker 1:** I'll tell you what I think. TRIO's worked with my office. More of a just getting to know each other type of thing than a project.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Speaker 3:** I feel like in the schools ... My kids have both graduated from Cheyenne High Schools and there's a huge emphasis ... For me that was the only emphasis. Graduate and get the Hathaway scholarship and go to UW. That was it and neither of my children wanted to do that so they out in the woods by themselves because that was a collaboration I feel, with the Cheyenne schools. It's all about getting them kids to UW. That's the focus.

**Interviewer:** Is that still the case do you think?

**Speaker 3:** Well my kids have graduated now. My Son's 25 and my daughter's 21 but I'm pretty sure that's still the case. It's all about the halfway scholarship and maybe CCC as an option but that's the goal.

**Interviewer:** And, Jeff, your work with TRIO, you haven't really done anything with them? It's just more-

**Speaker 1:** I don't know if it was a new person who came into the office or not and just kind of wanted to get a little, "Here I am," sending folks to me.

**Interviewer:** All right, but they don't refer people to you?

**Speaker 1:** No, because we don't really serve that population. That's a tough one, four year degrees we don't really serve as a general rule so that's not our target.
**Question #2**

**Interviewer:** Okay. The next question is are you aware of UW professionals who serve in your community and can you name them or identify their role with the university? [crosstalk 00:04:21].

**Speaker 3:** We have some folks, again in Rotary, who work, I don't know their exact title, but they work through an extension. They live here but work through an extension of [inaudible 00:04:39] here, through an office, however that all works. So they're here but ... Yeah.

**Speaker 1:** They're in this fancy building.

**Speaker 3:** They're in this building and they work for UW but they live here ... I feel so dumb answering these questions.

**Speaker 2:** I think that's the point of the question.

**Speaker 3:** I know of people who work for UW through some type of an extension program.

**Interviewer:** But you're not sure what their roles are or specifically what they do?

**Speaker 2:** I'm certainly familiar with the Cowboy Joe club, that sports thing where lots of folks who ... Quarterback Club or something like that. There's lots of UW Athletics promotion here and fundraising events and that kind of thing on the side of sports.

**Interviewer:** What kind of fundraising events?

**Speaker 2:** I think it's called the Quarterback Club where they have fundraising events.

**Interviewer:** So mostly around athletics?

**Speaker 2:** Exactly. Mostly around football, perhaps basketball.

**Interviewer:** I left my card there so if you think of someone on your way home you can shoot me an email.

**Speaker 2:** We can amend our answers.

**Interviewer:** You can amend your answers yeah.

**Speaker 2:** Sound a little bit more clued on.

**Interviewer:** I think, as you said, this is the point of the question to see if people, if they do know of people, do they identify them as being part of UW.

**Speaker 3:** Yeah, I guess they do as their profession, but in the civic [inaudible 00:06:33] we just move on to our stuff, so you don't really talk about your occupation that much, you just move on to the business at hand.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Speaker 3:** So, I would identify more with that than their role or where they work.
**Question #3**

**Interviewer:** That third question is, what is your perception of UW as a partner and when you think of UW do you see it as engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing and developing partnerships and to what level do you perceive UW to be present and listening?

**Speaker 2:** Unfortunately I wasn't at Kiwanis the day that Jean brought a group for the science initiative and that was, I think, an effort to be really engaged with ... I wasn't there for the presentation so I didn't hear but it seemed like it was trying to establish a different connection. Primarily I just think of athletics. Initially, I don't think of any other connections.

**Speaker 3:** I was there, with Jean and all of the people. We had a really good turnout for that meeting too, it was interesting. That's really the only engagement I've had with them. I'm not from here, I didn't go to school there, so I don't get their alumni news or anything like that, and I'm very uncoordinated and whatnot so I don't go to the sporting events ... I'm just kind of an oddball where it's not something I would pursue other than if there's maybe ...

On the other side of the coin I've gone to some concerts there so the arts side of it through a ticket that I got through a friend. I know they're partners and stuff I guess I just don't run in the right crowds to know what those partnerships are.

**Speaker 1:** One thing I can think of them being involved in is just the extension office itself. Nothing else really comes to mind of a project within the community.

**Interviewer:** Do you know of any programs or initiatives through the extension office?

**Speaker 1:** Just that it exists.

**Interviewer:** Just that it's there. Okay.

**Speaker 2:** I think I know somebody who finished her degree through the extension office. I don't know if that was actually ... This was more formalized, I think she did more things online and [inaudible 00:09:37].

**Interviewer:** I think in asking this question they're looking to assess ... UW does a lot of outreach, so they go out to communities and offer programming. That would be one end of the continuum and the other end would be a pure partnership where all the stakeholders are involved from the very beginning. Does that offer any food for thought? Any examples before the most recent outreach? Before President Nicholls got in here? It sounds like she's been making the rounds through all the service organizations.

**Speaker 2:** Or at least sending out her troops.

**Speaker 3:** Or sending out.

**Interviewer:** Right. Emissaries. But you didn't perceive that before?

**Speaker 3:** I hadn't seen anything before that before no. Back in High School my kids were involved with band and there was outreach through LCCC but not so much what UW would collect. I think they came to ... Went to UW to do something like competitions and things like that but not necessarily working with instructors or anything like that, professors.
Interviewer: Okay, once again if you think of anything after you leave you can pass it along. So those three questions are pretty specific about what's happening now or UW's current level of engagement and then the next three are about what partnerships could exist and what would those partnerships look like or what should they look like?

**Question #4**

So the first question is opportunities. What are three big opportunities in this community? And is anybody working on capitalizing on them and what's the goal? What are the desired outcomes?

Speaker 3: I don't know about UW's involvement; I think of the old LCCC models. I think one of the issues that Cheyenne has is a trained workforce. Part of it is the number of available employees but another part is are they trained and really just more specifically in things like plumbing, trades, that kind of thing, and I think that LCCC is trying to fill that void. I don't know if that's a void that UW can fill in any capacity, maybe it is but that's something that Cheyenne needs. I don't know if other communities in Wyoming need that as well but Cheyenne definitely needs more ...

Interviewer: The trades like plumbing, electrical, carpentry, construction.

Speaker 3: Yeah, basic thing that aren't ... some may involve a four year grade but some may not. But that's really our weakness in Cheyenne and maybe there's some more high tech versions of those things and computer oriented things of doing coding and all that that's coming up. But yeah, I just don't know if there's an opportunity for you or UW, to get involved with that, if their purpose is to educate my own view for Wyoming. It's an opportunity to try and help fill that void.

Interviewer: Was that need being met by Wyotech before?

Speaker 3: I think kind of sort of but not well.

Speaker 1: They weren't doing the diesel mechanics and the more working on an engine type stuff. The only people that are doing the trades would be LCCC, the apprenticeship programs and McMurry center up in Casper LCCC is working with HVAC and folks like that to develop this both an accredited program and a certificate end result program, just to fill that workforce.

They're having some luck, they've got some apprenticeship programs through the federal folks and they're doing some good work. I think they're still looking very much at the tech side of things, with Google out there and in car, and how you pull the next one in because we do have this real good energy, very reliable, we're cold, everything that computer likes, but I know ENDOW is working on that, I know that our local leaders and chamber kind of works on that.

We're hearing that they're having a tough time filling web developer jobs, things like that, that computer science aspect. We've got a very small business school in town that's doing that but it's fairly expensive and they're non accredited so the kids can't get scholarships or grants.

Interviewer: So in information technology, what kind of businesses?

Speaker 1: We're hearing from everybody that both sides, whether they need somebody in the programming side or the hardware side. So they're saying they need both. I think Microsoft has actually more hardware folks up there than software.
Speaker 1: Well workforce services has given this Array School a fairly significant amount of training fund dollars to get the students there, to supplement the cost.

Speaker 2: That's a pretty young school.

Speaker 1: You know, it is, it's a year and a half now.

Interviewer: What's that called again?

Speaker 1: Array. A-R-A-Y.

Speaker 2: Maybe in time they'll become accredited and ...

Speaker 1: Well, their accreditation ... They can't because what they're trying to do is be very nimble and, "Okay, this is the newest brand new thing, we can't take three years to get accredited, we've got to teach it now and make these kids, they're not really kids, we could send 40 year old people."

Speaker 2: But maybe it's an opportunity for LCCC or UW.

Speaker 1: Right, on that other side, that accrediting degree that they're trying to get up and working.

Speaker 3: They seem to be doing well from what I understand.

Speaker 1: They just placed ... We sent a kid there, he's 18, he's now pulling 48 or 50,000 dollars a year which is incredible at 18. So they're doing good stuff, it's just it's expensive and-

Speaker 3: Stuff takes time to get stuff rolling. I've heard about the trades ... My husband is a contractor, a building contractor, it's the same story about having a ... He's very meticulous, very detail oriented, but somebody who is at least somewhat trained, not necessarily in construction management, but in finding a stud, how to frame a house, it's that kind of stuff. It's the same thing in his market as well.

Speaker 1: So LCCC is running an intro to construction technology course, this month.

Speaker 3: I will let him know.

Speaker 1: This is a brand new thing they just got some funding for. They're doing construction, they're doing production and logistics

Speaker 3: Because I'd heard that they'd gotten rid of, I don't know if it was construction management or, whatever they had before.

Speaker 1: That was probably their degree, and this is more practical skills kind of stuff that they're looking for.

Speaker 2: So your degree is a certificate?

Speaker 1: You'll get a certificate not a degree. The acronym is an NCCER, I can't remember what it stands for but it's a motivation I think-

Interviewer: Yeah that's National Center for Construction Education Research or something like that.

Speaker 1: Yeah.
Interviewer: Yeah, they provide all the curriculum and maintain the standards.

Speaker 1: So they're doing good stuff. We're trying to address that kind of stuff in the workforces. But if I know that I can show up to work every day and I'm not on my phone all day long, somebody's going to hire me, so why am I paying $500 for this six week course? It's kind of a weird catch that we get.

Speaker 3: I think you're right though that there could be some supplement teaching that works with UW with Array providing one cog of the wheel whereas you need maybe a bachelors or what have you for the other stuff, however that works. Because you do hear labor shortage, it's across all industries.

Interviewer: Okay, so there's an opportunity to train people in the trades, there's an opportunity to build information technology industries, any other big opportunities for Cheyenne?

Speaker 1: I think oil and gas is going to recover but I don't think UW has much ... Well I suppose you have to train petroleum engineers and stuff. I think we're going to see more of those guys in big trucks drilling holes.

Speaker 3: And that's so cyclical. It's been done and the price per barrel is at such and such for an amount of time they're going to stop drilling and whatever.

Interviewer: So what's the opportunity for Cheyenne?

Speaker 1: Well they've been talking about this area for about a decade. There should be a pretty significant amount of natural gas, it's just when is it going to be priced enough, like you said, to go for.

Speaker 3: Well, on the other side of that instead of being all boom and bust and whatnot, I know they're working with clean coal technology, because we have coal and prices go up and down with that too, I realize that, but making that cleaner, those technologies, and I think that would be a UW thing, because that would be like engineering I think.

Speaker 1: I think they're involved up in the project up in Gillette. The [inaudible 00:21:38] That they're trying to do exactly what you just said. Not only just the clean coal but the value added, "Can I turn this coal into Kevlar vests instead and make it worth more money?"

Speaker 3: Something value added which can lead to manufacturing.

Interviewer: Yeah, advanced carbon products.

Speaker 3: Which could leave to maybe some manufacturing. That's going to make jobs and manufacturing distribution. We have the rail, we have the two interstates.

Speaker 1: Logistically we're set.

Speaker 3: I think it's looking beyond ... Because once they drill the whole frack thing and that business. So they go in and they have the work over rigs ... But the fields kind of take care of themselves, from what little I know. So they drill, and you've got all of these people that are doing really well, but it's for a short amount of time, and then they're done and then they're done. So I think it's looking beyond that. It's great for short term but long term to keep those folks around and yeah ... And if they are already working in natural gas and oil then they already have some of those skill sets so if you can maybe keep them here after they're done drilling and all that business, if there's some other manufacturing or whatever that is involving that, or Co2 sequestration, I don't know, I'm trying to think outside the box here, but something that could keep them here and their families here.
Interviewer: Right, other opportunities for employment once the drilling and exploration is done.

Speaker 2: And also just with the ENDOW initiative bringing in technology companies and data centers and all that, leading those skilled processes.

Interviewer: If you look at the last bullet point under that question. What are the quality of life assets here? What are the things that are going to bring new industries and new people, new programs and partnerships to Cheyenne?

Speaker 2: I think we have a lot. People like to say we don't, but we do. We have LCCC and all the programs LCCC offers, we have a nice community pool, an ice rink, we have a greenway, the civic center, we have the Frontier Days.

Speaker 3: We're close to the mountains for people who just want rec. My husband was in the marines and with his experience, I know everybody's is different, but we have a good VA medical center, and that brings in maybe retirees or people who need to be close to medical. Okay, that's the VA center and that's what I have experience with but I think that can be a draw for folks.

Speaker 2: It's an attraction for retired military and obviously retired military doesn't mean you're 60, it means you're 40 in many cases. So you're going onto your second career but you want to be close to a good VA center and we have one.

Speaker 1: Relatively low crime rate. Pretty good school system. The State University is only 40 miles away.

Speaker 2: And Cheyenne has a stable, relative to the rest of the state, other than maybe the North West, where our economy is much more stable. We don't boom and bust here as much.

**Question #5**

Interviewer: So the next question then is the challenges. What are the challenges that this community is facing and who's working on those?

Speaker 2: Well, the wind, I don't know who's working on that?

Speaker 1: They're not doing a very good job.

Interviewer: That's not unique to Cheyenne either.

Speaker 2: We need to build a mountain range. There's challenges around expanding our economy. Cheyenne's economy is very much related to the government. I don't know the percentage of employees that work for federal, state, local, county, whatever, it's a significant percentage-

Speaker 1: It's a significant percentage.

Speaker 2: If you include schools and the hospitals. It's got to be 70% or more, and that stabilizes the economy but it also makes it a very unique group of folks that live here that rely on the government. We lack that entrepreneurial spirit of people that are going to try something crazy and stake their claim, do something different, like the folks at ARRAY did out there. We don't have a lot of that going on.

Or somebody that wants to build a new [inaudible 00:27:12]. They're going to start this company to do that. We don't have a lot of that.
Interviewer: Not a lot of resources for startup businesses or new entrepreneurs.

Speaker 2: Just not the spirit to do it. I don't know. It just doesn't seem to me. Whereas if you go South a few miles and there are people who are trying to do bigger things.

Speaker 3: There are resources here. There's are the SBAs here. The SBDC offices here, and LCCC, and those are free resources. My husband and I are both entrepreneurs. We both own our businesses and I didn't come here ... I was hired by somebody here first and I started my own business my husband and I say it's treated us well so we've stayed.

I could go anywhere with what I do but we've chosen to stay and there is a big ... It's called Wyoming Entrepreneurs and it's ... Array goes, they're very well attended events in town, so I don't know if it's a function of getting funding to start up a business. I think the education is there. You're not going to get it handed to you on silver platter, you've got to go out and do it, you know what I mean?

You've got to have some initiative, some fire, if you really want to do it, to be an entrepreneur and to be a business owner.

Speaker 2: Yeah, to be able to stick your neck out there.

Speaker 3: It's scary.

Speaker 2: Yeah, to be able to know that you're out there and-

Speaker 3: It's scary. So I think the resources are there, but then again, what percentage of business startups fail, or can they succeed in that? So I think it's there but I don't know if everybody's putting all the pieces together to make it successful. Because of what I do, I have clients in town and I have clients worldwide because of what I do.

To be honest, because everything is sent over the internet for me, that's how it works. I send out big audio files and I could say that I wouldn't be able to make a go of it if I had to just rely on Cheyenne for my clients. So there's that, however that fits into the picture. But I have to go out and find my own clients.

Speaker 2: Broadband internet.

Speaker 3: I have to absolutely positively, unequivocally have to have high speed internet because I'm sending big audio files.

Speaker 1: How are you tied in?

Speaker 3: We're very very lucky. We live in the County. I guess before we moved here, Freudenthal, whoever was the governor before Freudenthal, but the idea of having high speed internet everywhere across the state. We started out with a satellite dish thing on the top of the house and they would beam the signal from wherever it would be. It worked for a while, but it was in and out and it wasn't stable. I can't send this big audio file and have it bleep in the middle of it and not get my audio where it needs to go.

We built our house in 2007. We live East of town off Campstool road, almost in Carpenter, so we're way out there. When we build our house in 2007, what seemed to be kids to us, came in and buried a high speed cable line, and they buried four of them, so we were extremely lucky at the time to have them put in place. So we have a hard wire actual internet connection through Century Link.

Speaker 1: So are you into fiber out there?
Speaker 3: I believe it is fiber. I would have to double check with my husband but it is a hard wire below the ground, hard wire, stable internet connection, and one of the hubs for the county for Century Link is on the corner, if you know Campstool road, if you go East enough it goes South, and there's a hub somewhere before it makes a hard right, going South.

But in any case, we're one of the first or second homes into it, and granted there've been more people there, but we got awfully lucky with that and we took it and ran with it because there's no way I'd be able to do what I do without that high speed internet connection, I just couldn't. So I think that is-

Speaker 2: That's another challenge to complete then.

Speaker 3: -that is so ... But again, with the satellite dish internet stuff, I can't imagine that technology is not going to ... That's just going to improve as time goes on and I would think and hope that that would be something that would improve with time so that would be a more stable, reliable, internet connection for folks.

Speaker 2: The city is working on that.

Speaker 3: I think that's extremely important state wide to have that.

Speaker 1: I know the mayor is making it a point to give fiber companies right of way access. I don't know what it's called, I know that ...

Interviewer: So that's a current challenge? Right of way access?

Speaker 1: From what I read in the paper it is.

Interviewer: For broadband providers. If you look below that there's a list of prompts.

Speaker 1: Well, we're just like the rest of Wyoming keeping our youth. We lose them. Especially as close as we are to the front range, we lose them down South.

Speaker 2: My son lives in Oklahoma city and there's just so many colleges and universities and things just in that city and that's why they have one of the highest percentages of retention of young people, because of that. They go there for school, they stay there and there's jobs. Obviously that's why they stay there too. They go there for school and stay there for jobs so that's the issue for Cheyenne as the only higher institution is LCCC and maybe some other fledgling things but not a lot here.

I think they can go to Laramie or UW, but then there's really not a lot to keep them in Laramie so it's difficult.

Interviewer: You mentioned healthcare for veterans was readily available, what about for just the general population?

Speaker 1: We have a pretty good hospital, especially by Wyoming standards.

Speaker 2: Right, again, I think the blessing and the curse for Cheyenne is our proximity to Denver and Fort Collins and that so, that makes it so that citizens here can say, "I can go to CRNC or I can go down to wherever in Fort Collins." So we can shop a little more easily than other people can so that's good for us but it's hard for the hospital because the people that can afford to pay their bills might end up going South and then they're stuck with the folks that need assistance paying their bills so it's a hard way for the hospital.
That's it for everything. For the restaurants the same thing. It's hard to compete when people can drive 45 miles south and go to a wider variety of places. It's a blessing and a curse. And the aging population. Cheyenne does have a lot of retirees. People do complain about that. I don't know why. I see the other end of it and I think it's great, they like being here and they make the city their stand. They've chosen from wherever, they might have been in the military and traveled all over, now they're settling here, my attitude is we shouldn't fight that, we should embrace it, but I'm sort of an outlier in that.

I think there are areas in Arizona that do just fine embracing the seekers who [inaudible 00:36:11]. Because if they're going to live there they're going to need a house built or they're going to need services or they're going to need ... They need all the rest of it. Maybe they don't ... Maybe they're not hip ...

**Interviewer:** Financially, Wyoming offers a lot of advantages to retirees. I don't know statewide if we capitalize on that as much as we could.

**Speaker 3:** No personal state income tax. When I was offered a job here upon graduation from UNC in Greeley, that was one of the things on the bottom of the email, "And remember, we don't have State Personal Income Tax." Score. You know.

**Speaker 1:** Five percent back in your pocket.

**Speaker 3:** So the offer was a better offer anyway but that ... heck yeah.

**Speaker 2:** And especially once you're retired and you know.

**Interviewer:** So is that an opportunity for Cheyenne?

**Speaker 2:** I think it is. We have had an increase, I think, from casually observing, it seems like there's more of these retirement communities, assisted living, senior communities popping up so I can imagine it brings more people here and that's a good thing. They don't fill other needs so much though. I don't know if they go out much for dinner and if you're living in Spring Chase I don't know that you go out to dinner but maybe they do. Some of those folks still have cars and drive around. All of those facilities need employees, they need skills, whether it's CNAs, physical therapists, it's just another employer. It's just another opportunity.

**Interviewer:** Are they able to find a trained workforce?

**Speaker 2:** I think so.

**Speaker 1:** We train a lot of CNAs for workforce. [inaudible 00:38:29] CNAs which the State doesn't even recognize. There are programs, there's a national certification the State doesn't ...

**Speaker 2:** [inaudible 00:38:43]

**Speaker 1:** Ideally yes, but it's not ... You'll see more as we go on over time. Clinic [inaudible 00:38:51]. You'll see a lot. Half the people you'll see will be CNAs. [inaudible 00:39:00]. I think that's where ... It's all about money, it's all about, "I don't want to have to pay a nurse salary so I'm going to pay a nurse CNA salary."

**Question #6**

**Interviewer:** The last question is how do you think UW can help? What can UW do for you and for Cheyenne?
Speaker 1: For me? I've got two kids over there.

Interviewer: For your community? I can put that in the report if you want.

Speaker 1: Maybe their names. Their student ID number.

Speaker 2: I think this comes back to making sure that the degrees that they're providing are necessary and will lead to jobs. I know there used to be more of a ... I got a liberal arts education myself and the idea was to just go to school and do whatever feeds your fancy and then somewhere along the line you'll get a career but I think these days we're not sure.

As much money as we put into a four year education, it better turn into a job on the other end and a career at that. So as much as it's nice to have people study history, we need people who are going to come out of whatever, a two year or four year education ready to jump into the workforce and provide necessary services in some fashion.

There's all different kinds of ... We need the best trained in doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers and lots of different things. Just UW is providing the right education for our workforce.

Speaker 3: And perhaps UW already does this, but kind of keeping a pulse on what Gillette needs or what Casper needs or Torrington, whatever, to see what those communities need for employers and employees and training. Maybe that's something the fits in their mold but maybe again it's something like LCCC can better fill the niche.

Maybe they already do that but maybe engaging with folks and talking with workforce services, "What do you guys need? What are you seeing that? What kind of laborers do you need? What kind of skilled people do you need?" I know that doesn't happen overnight, and I get that, but just maybe being aware.

Speaker 2: That is the tough one because it doesn't happen overnight. You've got to be nimble. It's like anything. The petroleum engineer program was developing. Well the whole industry was taking off and then they finally got it all figured out and it's not happening. It's hard to respond and react but somehow we've got to figure that out.

Speaker 3: No easy answers.

Speaker 2: You've got to be an octopus, or a chameleon.

Speaker 3: Kind of back to the entrepreneurship thing, for me, I don't have a business background. I have a NASCOM background and a Meteorology background. The NASCOM was not in marketing or advertising, it was in broadcasting, so I've had to learn through opening my own business, how to do the business side of things.

So again, maybe UW does this, I feel kind of dumb answering these questions because I don't know, you probably already do this, but say you're taking a NASCOM class in print journalism and you want to write and blog and do your own column or whatever. That's great that you can write and whatnot, but if you don't know the business side of things, the stuff that I struggle with, the marketing and all of that stuff as an entrepreneur, because you're going to have to do that stuff yourself, unless you have a lot of people working for you, those are things you have to integrate.

Maybe they already do that, they integrate programs at UW.

Speaker 1: I don't know that they have a lot of that.
Speaker 3: And I'm not saying ... Just an accounting class. You know what I mean. My husband and I have different businesses entirely but there's some things that are the same, you've got to keep your expenses and keep your receipts and all that.

Speaker 2: Should all be required to have accounting 101.

Speaker 3: I don't know if that would be a way to help entrepreneurs get started because that's what a lot of us struggle with. We love what we do and we open our business because we love what we do, but then 90% of what you do when you start is not doing what you love to do, you're doing the business side of things, and that's where people get all tripped up. Well not everybody but-

Speaker 2: Frequently when a small business fails it's not necessarily because of market forces, it's more because they had some bad business practices.

Speaker 3: Or cashflow or whatever the case it. And again, I don't mean to speak out of turn because maybe they all do that.

Speaker 1: I don't think they do because my daughter started in music and switched to business and she had no business classes until she switched.

Speaker 3: So I don't know if that's something that would be integratable.

Speaker 2: I can think of one thing that would be ... I don't know what you'll think of this but at the Y we reached out to UW's marketing program and a professor there used us as, this is because somebody else had done the same thing, as one of their marketing classes. We came out ... A group of use went over there to UW and presented what we do at the Y and asked them to kind of use us as a class project so they broke up into groups and they all came up with different marketing plans for us.

Speaker 3: That's an awesome idea I think.

Speaker 2: None of them were entirely feasible because they didn't quite understand our cash flow budget situation, but it was fun to get some feedback from them. That was something that was probably as helpful for them as it was for us, to get some real world experience of ... We don't have a million dollar budget, we can't just do whatever ... How do you ...

Speaker 3: But that could be a nice partnership.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 3: Even if it's for a project like a non profit that doesn't have a ton of money for marketing or a website or whatever, you partner them with somebody who's a graphic design website person, connect them to those opportunities as an internship or whatever you might call it, because that helps both sides.

Speaker 1: I think [inaudible 00:46:42] county is doing that with their school district. So they'll have an industry that ... You know, "I've got 10 major problems, I never get to number 10 because something always replaces number 1," So they have the kid come in, "Solve number 10 for me."

Kind of growing their own workforce and helping themselves up. I don't know what you do in [inaudible 00:47:07].

Speaker 3: But even-
Interviewer: I know some of the other communities have mentioned the UW school of business working with the local chambers and economic development organizations to pair up internship opportunities.

Speaker 1: And for all I know ours do too I just don't know.

Interviewer: You're not aware of it.

Speaker 2: I know auditors for here always had UW interns. Way back years ago had an intern that [inaudible 00:47:40] program doing some fitness stuff at the Y, so I don't know how vigorous it is. It used to be interns were free, now you have to pay interns, so it's not something that every business can utilize.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on how UW can help?

Speaker 1: Whatever you can do with that tuition

Interviewer: I'll see what I can do. [crosstalk 00:48:23]
Transcript: Torrington

Interviewer: So the questions are on the flip side of the handout there, and I think you'll see the first three questions kinds of speak to the first bullet point on the other side is identifying their current level of engagement and partnership. And then the next three questions are the possibilities moving forward. What are the opportunities here in Goshen County? What are the challenges? And how UW can help address those. So first question, pretty specific. Are you aware of UW partnerships, joint projects within the community? And if yes, can you cite examples and describe the experience and outcomes?

Speaker 1: So do you want us to tell you or just write it?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Okay. So this great that's John's here because John, myself ... so EWC, myself, and University of Wyoming SAREC and University of Wyoming Extension have been working on ag diversification and agro-preneurs, and then in line with ... So I have a bunch of entrepreneurs that we're working with. If we have an incubator that we have 89 little businesses we're working with currently. And it's [inaudible 00:01:17] and ideas. And so it's been great with Extension because they help with the farmer's market. And so that gives our little agro-preneurs a platform to maybe test a new product.

We've also been looking at partnerships and curriculums that would align between EWC and UW. SAREC's been great because if I have a company ...

Interviewer: What does that name again?

Speaker 2: Sustainable Agricultural Research Education Center. SAREC.

Interviewer: Say that again one more time.

Speaker 2: The Sustainable Agricultural Research Education Center. It's the Jay C. Hageman.

Speaker 1: That's what I was saying. There's only two in the state. There's one in Powell and one here. So help me fill in, John.

Speaker 2: Sure.

Speaker 1: So it's kind of like a two-way street. We all kind of share customers. So, again, I have the entrepreneurs. They can go work with the UW Extension for the farmer's market. They can work with UW SAREC for research and development maybe. They have been working with EWC for maybe professional development, workforce training.

Speaker 2: They do a lot of internships, and so they'll hire our students during the summers. They'll be able to get UW credit and also be able to do agricultural research out there. We're also working on $7.9 million agricultural technology education center. And we're looking at ... which we call ATEC. And SAREC has been very instrumental in, call it precision ag or looking at different partnerships and so we're exploring opportunities to align workforce, kind of businesses and grow together.
Also, just for the farmer's markets, so on a very small scale, UW Extension is very involved in the farmer's market, economic development, as well as the college partner together in a little fundraising for soup and feeding and looking at that. So what other things should we ...

Speaker 1: I mean, we have a lot of ideas of different things that we could all do together, and we've been talking for about a year. And we've done a couple things already, but we're thinking really big.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I think that ...

Speaker 1: It's still kind of coming together.

Speaker 2: Exactly. I'll let the Vice President talk.

Speaker 4: From the academic side, the partnerships that have probably been very strong are the articulations, the 2+2 with transfer programs, the reverse transfer initiative that UW is working with us. Those have been very, I think, helpful for students that transition, that they can complete in four years, that four year completion of Complete College Wyoming and Complete College America. Also, the articulation with our nursing program in Douglas, the ReNEW program in the School of Nursing, and the State Board of Nursing has been very helpful. So those partnerships from an academic standpoint have really bridged for students the availability to go to UW and not have to really lose credit. They're able to come in their Junior year.

Speaker 1: It's a big deal.

Speaker 4: They've also worked with us in terms of the new initiative with their strategic enrollment management and looking at how we can partner together in terms of enrollment and recruiting students and retaining students. So I think that's, from our side of the fence, extremely powerful. Prior to that, students would transfer, they may lose credit. You've heard the stories of, "Oh, I transferred and not everything went, and I had to take classes over," and so forth. So from our side, that's been a very, very powerful partnership with, not only us, but all the community colleges.

Speaker 2: And I'll also say Dr. Nichols has been very engaged with us as an organization. I think she's been here at least three times. Most recently, she attended our outreach event, which was our Sagebrush and Roses. Her and her husband attended along with trustee Marsh, and I think just the feedback in the community is that she's the only UW President that would have ever have done something like that, and it just spoke volumes to the community, her involvement in that.

Speaker 1: That was really big. A couple other things is that SAREC is working with our producers on research and development, so we love that. That's a huge partnership and a huge benefit to have them as an economic development person., to have them in my backyard. I'd say the biggest project that our little group that I was just talking about and our ag collaborative group that we're working on, is the Ag Diversification Summit. There was just one in Powell around crops and we'll be working very closely with UW and EWC to bring that here on livestock next January.

When we did it in Powell a couple months ago, or a month ago, we had about 100 people there, invitation only, all leaders in crop production, and it was a synergy between ENDOW, Wyoming Business Council, Department of Ag, University of Wyoming, Eastern Wyoming College, Northwest College, their economic development group and mine. So that's been huge.

Other ways they're involved in our community, I think, outside of academia is Cowboy Joe Club's pretty active. All the athletic directors usually come and speak at our rotary group, and we love that.

Speaker 2: That's exactly right.
Speaker 1: We love that. I think everybody here bleeds brown and gold. We're right on the border, that ugly red color. So it's really fun to see the Poke pride here. You know?

Question 2

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Okay. The next question is are you aware of UW professionals who serve in the community? And can you name them and identify their role with UW?

Speaker 2: Yeah. So do you want us to name names and roles?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Speaker 2: Okay. So we have John Tanaka. He is the director of SAREC. We have Kelly Greenwald who also works at SAREC. I'm not exactly certain on her title. Steve Paisley is one of their researchers out there at SAREC. We have Caleb Carter who is the Extension educator in this area. We have ...

Speaker 1: Brett Hess who's the VP of something of SAREC. We know he's over John, but we're not sure if he's ...

Speaker 2: Yeah. He's over all of the research in ag extension areas, experiment stations [inaudible 00:08:08]. What about with the drones? Our buddy.

Speaker 1: Oh.

Speaker 2: I'm blanking on his name.

Speaker 1: Oh. Brian Lee.

Speaker 2: Brian Lee.

Speaker 1: He's like an ag economist.

Speaker 2: And then we have Carrie Eberle. She is a agronomist with SAREC.

Speaker 1: Yep. We love all of them. They're awesome.

Speaker 2: Unverzagt is also a farm worker there.

Interviewer: So those are all people who live here in this area?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Well, Tanaka and Hess do not.

Speaker 2: Right.

Speaker 1: But John Tanaka's on my board, on my board of directors. And he's been amazing. We also have Megan ... and I can't remember her last name, but she runs 4-H.

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:08:47] last name.
Speaker 1: Starts with a B, Britton, [inaudible 00:08:53]. She's well-known in our community, but I can't remember her last name.

Speaker 4: And we work with Marianne Guerrero, I believe that's her name, out of Provost office. Dr. Miller, in terms of our intentional missions, very closely their involvement with the academic side. And I'm trying to think of who else.

Speaker 1: Do you guys have any outreach person that comes to mind?

Speaker 4: Richard Ward [crosstalk 00:09:14]


Speaker 4: ... our outreach person.

Speaker 1: I think that's kind of it generally.

Speaker 2: Well, there's about five other people that work at SAREC, so you have Miller ... anyways. We're getting close though. There's only about three or four more UW folks [inaudible 00:09:32].

Speaker 1: I'm sure there's some out of Extension, but I'm blanking.

Interviewer: Okay. I think the purpose of that question was to see if people identify. Some of those positions that you just named as being connected to UW, a lot of people think of it as just the Extension office, but not necessarily part of UW. All right. Next question, what is your perception of UW as a partner? And when you think of UW, do you perceive it to be engaged with this community on a deep level, co-investing in developing partnerships with you? And what level to you perceive UW to be present and listening?

Question 3

Speaker 1: I would say ... this is my personal opinion. In the last three years, they have stepped it up, and they are very engaged especially SAREC ... I mean, especially with the leadership of Dr. [inaudible 00:10:26] and Dr. John Tanaka, they have done ... with SAREC, it's just at a whole different level. They're awesome. We're super engaged. Same with the Extension office. On the education side, it's [crosstalk 00:10:42]

Speaker 4: I think it's really ratcheted up in the last two years, really since Dr. Nichols. Rather than absentee landowner, they're willing to come to campus. They're willing to articulate, willing to meet, be a presence here versus before. And really, I would say, not only in our community, throughout our whole outreach area, our whole service area from Hulett all the way to La Grange, we're seeing more presence of UW in school districts, wanting to work with us. And so I think it's a developing partnership, maybe even beyond that. Prior to that, there wasn't. There really wasn't. No.

Speaker 1: No. They're really hit the surface. I would say right now I'd give them an A+. Before it was an F. It's drastically changed.

Speaker 2: And I would say that I think UW's doing a good job, but I think it still has quite a ways to go. For one, I think, it's part of deconstructing the model of education, meaning that you can't just keep sending everyone to Laramie to be able to grow. And I think they need to be involved in each one of us' community colleges. I mean, Casper's a great model of that, but how do you start offering bachelor's
degrees or even thinking beyond that, master’s degrees. And how do you share the expertise of local faculty. We have people with PhDs in the community, even here in the college, and how do we allow them to teach some of that curriculum and move students up?

In rural America, and especially to us, we have a unique population of students that really don't want to travel to Laramie, even though it's an amazing institution, I'm getting a degree from there. It's something unique to this, and so I think as a college it's one thing that we're doing is we're deconstructing or trying to get into the high schools more. That's our market. UW needs to do the same thing in thinking about how can we use kind of the expertise of each of our colleges. And I see that this is really piggy backed, probably I see coming down the pipeline, of the ENDOW initiative. When we created these economic zones and we say, "This is what this area's really gonna be known for, this is what's gonna drive it." UW really needs to be invested in the community college and bring that education back.

So for example, here, between our vet tech and our ag program, and putting them under an umbrella, there's 140 students. And we generally send, maybe, 10 of those ... would that be ... out of those two programs?

Speaker 4: Between 10 and 15.

Speaker 2: Ten or 15. So what we're saying is there's still a lot of money and opportunity on the tables. And so how can the university really look at helping us grow. I also think if we're able to retain that kind of expertise in our area, we don't have as much student flight or intelligent flight out of Wyoming. And so UW needs to be able to help us grow programs and initiatives and really offer those here locally. And then I would just say that ... I'll give a plug for Zoom technology, these other things, is that they need to invest in really taking the traditional brick and mortar classes and being able to open that up larger.

Speaker 4: I would agree with John. I think the availability of online programs, blended programs, utilizing expertise on campus. For example, 10 years ago you get an elementary ed degree and not have to go to Laramie. Well, that program disappeared. And so students here they found those Chadron, Black Hills ...

Speaker 2: Utah Valley State or wherever.

Speaker 4: ... Valley City.

Interviewer: They found distance ed programs for education degrees?

Speaker 4: Yeah. And so I think there's an opportunity there to really build upon things, utilize expertise here because I agree. I think, especially non-traditional students, they don't have the means to go to UW. And so they're gonna explore options, University of Phoenix, Grand Canyon, you name it. And I think there's a market there. I really believe there's an opportunity for UW and for us.

Interviewer: So they're offering fewer distance ed programs here than they were previously?

Speaker 4: Yes. There are very few.

Speaker 1: What was it ... someone was telling me about the teaching certificate. So if you're a teacher and you have to renew your certificate, you need how many hours to renew it before you let it lapse?

Speaker 4: It's five PTSB credits.
Speaker 1: And now you have to go back to school. You have to go to Laramie to do that and you couldn't do it online with them.

Speaker 4: Well, I think some of that was ...

Speaker 1: Someone was complaining about that, but I don't know enough.

Speaker 4: I think some of that was with the EHLC credentialing, to where John has a master's in curriculum and a bachelor's in english, and he wants to continue to be a concurrent enrollment, and he wants to take ... he needs nine more hours of 5000 level english. Well, he's inhibited with UW because he can't take those unless he is entered into a master's program, but he really doesn't want to get a master's program. So he's forced to shop someplace else to get those courses. And that was a statewide problem, not just for us, for every community college, and being able to access grad level courses, not have to enroll in a degree program.

Speaker 2: And I think community college role is we can really be an additive process in that we're out reaching and touching non-traditional students, but we should be able to help build their model as much. And so I think that's one of the huge investments that UW's made to our college is also through their educational doctorate program and the nice cohort to that. And they're able to offer people part of the community college system, a free class, and I see those things as very valuable, but there just needs to be more it. I mean, we only have 550,000 people in our entire state. I think the new initiative is to have 60-70% with some form of college, and how do we get there? So the model just needs to be working more. And we need that as much too. Enrollment is tough. It's tough to grow students.

Speaker 4: Forty-five, 67.


Speaker 4: Forty-five containment, 67 [crosstalk 00:17:20].

Interviewer: so would it be accurate to say that this SAREC partnership that you referred to, that would be an example of the pure partnership? But they're still somewhere in the middle of continuum on the academic side?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think the SAREC partnership is excellent, but it's still that, I think, at UW the model is so vast that they also have to get the academic side rolling too. But yes, we have a great partnership with where we're building it, but then need also, maybe from the Dean and on out in academia, to help support it.

Speaker 1: Yeah. I would say that's a challenge. For sure. But their partnership is at an A+. I mean, I think [crosstalk 00:18:00] stepped up.

Speaker 2: It is. I mean, I think that where we're heading at is good. It's just that, I really think, there really is an opportunity to growth bubble.

Interviewer: Okay. That's kind of the next section here is the opportunities, but any other thoughts about UW as a partner and their level of engagement, current level of engagement? Think of those keywords, collaboration, mutually beneficial exchange, partnership, and reciprocity. Do those words apply?

Speaker 4: I think their openness to be a partner is probably, I guess, a ...

Interviewer: Can you say that again?
Speaker 4: An openness to be a partner from a 10,000 foot view, is that there's dialogue and there's some action that's occurred. Prior to that, those opportunities weren't really there.

Speaker 1: Well, I think John Tanaka engaging on ... I mean, he's out of Laramie and he's on my board. And I think that's a huge commitment to be on the economic development chamber and visitors center board. I mean, that's a big deal.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's a big commitment.

Speaker 4: I think they've been on our campus no less than four times this year visiting with students, working with students. You talk to the people here five years ago, they didn't see them.

Speaker 2: And I guess what I was see, which would make a lot of sense, is we're thinking about alignment, that I think we need to have a joint strategic plan. Instead of just kind of developing our own, but really, really a deep meaningful relationship where we create some common targets and common goals. Because I still think that we develop our own plan and, obviously, UW's plan is what you're doing now, is we need to have more outreach, talk more. But really the plan needs to be kind of conjointly created where it really is more mutually beneficial.

Speaker 4: That's an opportunity.

Speaker 2: That is an opportunity.

Speaker 1: It's a good one.

Question 4

Interviewer: Well, maybe that's a good transition then into that. The next question, or set of questions, what are the top three grand opportunities in this community? That's their language too, not mine.

Speaker 1: So this is just in general or just opportunities for UW?

Interviewer: Opportunities for your community. And then specifically what industries or areas do you want to grow? And what do you have to offer here? What unique quality of life assets that you have here?

Speaker 1: Yeah. So I would say ... I'm taking the lead on this one, boys, because this is my game.

Speaker 2: Do it. Do it up.

Speaker 1: Obviously, a-tech is gonna be a huge thing. We're number one in agriculture for the state. It's the number three industry for the state, and we need to have a solid workforce situation going on there. This is a destination for students to come for ag training and for us to complete this ag a-tech facility is gonna be huge for the community, for community events that we can have out of there, for workforce training, and then for traditional education and ag, and ag business. And I think there's tremendous amount of partnership opportunities with multiple entities, but especially University of Wyoming. So that's number one, and we've been really focused with that on our strategic plan.

The other two big opportunities that are coming, that we're gonna see come to fruition this year is a hotel. The tourism economy is number two in the state. It's not even a blip on our radar, and so we're trying to make it become an industry for us, and we have lack of lodging. We have five or six National Historic Sites and Parks within 45, 60 mile driving distance in this area, and we're on the Park to Park tour with Office of Tourism. Tremendous opportunity for outdoor recreation, Western culture and heritage. And so we want to capitalize on those visitors not be a pass through, so you're
gonna see a lot of push on tourism, and it all starts with just even getting some more hotels and more beds so we can put in for conferences and host different types of events. So hopefully that will be breaking ground here this summer.

And the third grand, big opportunity we're working on is an assisted living facility. We have a level one facility and a level four and level five, but not a level two nor level three care facility. And we're looking at a 30 bed unit that the city and county's joint powers board, along with us, is working collectively to put together probably an $8 to $10 million facility. Those are the three big projects I'm working on, but I think there's lots of other great opportunities.

Speaker 4: I think from the academia side, opportunities like John mentioned and the others, online opportunities, students that can complete a degree, that don't have to leave the area, they don't have to go elsewhere. I think a grand opportunity is the use of technology, like John said. I think the opportunity to utilize them in conjunction, a different model of delivery of instruction. And I think capitalizing on the expertise from here, people that ... could we offer courses here? Could they utilize our faculty here as adjuncts too? Offer beyond just 1000, 2000 level courses, 3000, 4000, 5000. So I think there's some real opportunities for us there.

And one too is how can we help build with the high schools the relationship with the university? Like Ashley said, we've got that big red right to the east. I just see it as a great way for pathways from students potentially to come out of high school, go here, and UW could be something they could attend for a degree.

Speaker 1: A lot of people go to Chadron. We lose a lot of people to Chadron. It blows my mind actually with the Hathaway how many people really do Chadron. Before, when you were asking specific areas or industries that we're looking to grow, our county did a target market industry study. And there four ... and it was a year long process. It was a $65,000 endeavor. It was a big deal that we completed this research project. And the four industries that were identified is tourism, logistics and transport, ag and ag value added, and light manufacturing. So those are the four industries you're going to see economic development and our county poised to be chasing and growing. So that's another reason, going back to the a-tech, why that's so important to us.

Interviewer: You said logistics and transportation?

Speaker 1: And transportation.

Interviewer: Like trucking?

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- And distribution as a distribution point because ... We're not in the crosshairs or 80 and 25 like Cheyenne, but we're on the crosshairs of US Highway 85 and US Highway 26, and we're the gateway from Nebraska and the east to the west part of the state. And not only that, the driving conditions on this part of the state are a lot more favorable. So if there's something manufactured here, it'd be a lot easier to get it out to go east or south than honestly, even Cheyenne. A lot of people route around here. I mean, there was a whole big study section on that.

Speaker 4: Walmart cross through here.

Speaker 1: One of the things in my target market study that was identified was to work closer with University of Wyoming and EWC. I get 17 actionable items and there's about three to four bullet points, three items centered around synergies with EWC and UW.

Speaker 2: And I would just like to mentioned or reiterate kind of the ag piece. One of the things that UW has an opportunity here is to really see us driving technology and innovation. And part of that technology
and innovation comes in, this precision agriculture. You look at all the computer processing that does this, the new technology drones, equipment. You have smart sprinklers, your irrigation. What's unique about us is that we do have this agronomy component and all the focus groups that we've done really talked about adding agronomy. So I think it's obvious you have to be the fastest, better than the slowest runner in the pack. Well, South Dakota State University right now is investing $55 million into a brand new precision ag building. Okay?

UW is flirting with some of these things, but the point is this is that they really need to be invested in us to help grow this together. And so we've purchased a commercial drone, we're working with SAREC on trying to get some of these things started, but literally the world is moving and they need to shift with it, and give the people in Wyoming this opportunity. And what part of this, I guess for me, is I do see us as becoming an opportunity to be a destination. You can grow more crops here than anywhere else. We believe the state in agricultural products sold, cattle, calf, inventory, and so if you have that as an asset as a region, that you can have more arid land where you can grow, then you need to use it.

Another unique thing about us is our canal system here. Put in during the 1920s, but we literally are in the middle of food desert, designated by the USDA, but the canal system takes this unfarmable land and makes it farmable. And so if you think about becoming a destination for the world, these are the same challenges that probably 70, 80% of the world fights with is how do you grow stuff in sandy, loam soil? So what I'm saying is I think UW really could market and we want to open up markets beyond just the state and region. So that would be the first thing.

The second thing is really thinking about health and wellness in our community. One of the things that Torrington ... the hospital did a health and wellness survey, and they found out that we have one of the highest percentages of fast food restaurants per capita of any city in Wyoming.

Speaker 1: Tell our warden that. He wants to recruit more fast food chains.

Speaker 2: So their health and things is that ... just as Wyoming, if you look at the difference in our ethic, what is our culture of health and wellness? And so we don't have a county wide initiative about what does it mean to be healthy. And what I'm saying is the university ... that's the reason why people get passionately connected to higher education is it helps you have a better life, live better, and so they can help us live that. And so as a community college we're starting this initiative Community Coalition for Wellness, but we need other experts and to help us figure that out. One thing that happened was when they redid the school lunch program, like in town here, is that things became all processed. And so we're this agriculturally rich community that doesn't eat any of the products that we grow.

And so I think that's a huge challenge, and I think UW could come in classes, training, those kinds of things. The last things I'll mention is just this maker space idea about technology.

Speaker 1: Oh, we haven't even talked about that. Yeah.

Speaker 2: And I'll let Ashley specifically talk about the maker space, but what I want to talk about is in our area we need computer science, we need computer programming. Our local schools need that. As a community college, we need some help adding that into our curriculum, and you look at the way our students are just filtering behind. So we need some guidance there and some technology start-up opportunities and work with economic development. I'll let you talk about makerspace just because you probably talk about that more than ...

Speaker 1: You're good.
Speaker 2: Okay. Well, what we need are 3D printers, and we need to be able to do CNCs and programmable logic controllers, and ...

Speaker 1: Who's our buddy over at UW, the English girl that has the 3D printer [crosstalk 00:30:06]

Speaker 2: Yes. And I'm trying to think. And located in the ...

Speaker 1: The College of Resources and Energy.

Speaker 2: Yeah. They have a brand new ...

Speaker 1: What's that girl's name?

Speaker 2: ... virtual reality.

Speaker 1: [crosstalk 00:30:16]

Speaker 4: I can't remember.

Speaker 1: And she's got the augmented reality and it's in the School of Energy. She wants to do a mobile app. We want that here.

Speaker 2: And we need a permanent lab here. And that's what I'm saying in that to me that's really what UW could do to transition the whole community, change. And there's tons of money, tons of money in enrollment. So I would see that. And then my last point is I see innovation as how do you create a comparative market advantage to the other universities? They talked about a lot of people are going to Chadron and Black Hills, and you can ask why when you have the Hathaway Scholarship. It's because they're offering education at a dollar above the in-state rate. And what we have done inside of Wyoming is we still have this idea that we need to charge out-of-staters, even international people, a lot more money.

And so a lot of states, New Mexico, they have 135 miles rule. If you're within 135 miles of the border, you pay the instate rate because customers transverse state lines, they pay taxes both places on sales taxes, so education needs to be less expensive. And I would just say a plug for economics that the community colleges and UW should get together on a project like that. If you want to get people into the state of Wyoming, one of the best ways to do that is get them into the educational system. They'll stay.

Speaker 1: Yep. I want to speak to the what are the quality of life assets you have here in your community. I think our Western culture history, we have a very vibrant main street in Torrington with nice niche shopping, we're definitely not big box, everything is very niche. Our location, our weather, we're in the banana belt of the state. Our weather is so pleasant. I didn't realize how the weather affected my mood in Laramie until I moved here. I think we have very wholesome values. It's very family driven and centered. I also think one of the quality of life assets we have is EWC. I mean, it's a huge asset to have in our community. I was here yesterday because my kids were taking a little community [inaudible 00:32:26]. That class is actually really awesome. And they just really do a good job of encompassing all assets of our community. And then they have basketball games and stuff like that, so it's a fun place to be, and it adds a lot of value to our community.

Interviewer: All right. Great. That was a great list of opportunities you generated right there.

Speaker 1: Yeah. It was cool because you were ... I was waiting for you to do the non-tangible things. I was just gonna do the three economic development things. I knew you guys were take it to the next level.
**Question 5**

**Interviewer:** So then the next question is what are the top three challenges in the community?

**Speaker 1:** I've got mine written down. Broadband, we're working on that connectivity. I've been back and forth from the legislature working on a bill that's in there with ENDOW right now that could provide some relief for us. Money is always a challenge. Retaining youth.

**Interviewer:** When you say money what, just the ...

**Speaker 1:** Money to do anything, money to get these projects done.

**Speaker 4:** I think youth is critical.

**Speaker 1:** Yeah. Youth, retaining youth.

**Speaker 4:** Opportunities for kids to come back here.

**Speaker 1:** Opportunities for kids while they're here. I mean, we're working on it. I hate to say that as the economic developer, but we're limited in what things there are to do for current and to keep them and for that young crowd. Although, I was at a ribbon cutting for [Membar 00:33:57] tonight. They made it non-smoking. They're trying to make more fun activities down there and it not be so rinky.

**Speaker 4:** Well, and I think economic opportunities and diverse economy, so our best and brightest don't come back. And I shouldn't say not all, but we lose a lot of those students that there's not a lot of opportunities for them to move back. And I think that fits into what are our opportunities, but it's a challenge.

**Speaker 1:** Youth is a big one. With that ...

**Speaker 4:** We're an aging community.

**Speaker 1:** Yeah. And with that, with the amenities, we need a rec center. If you talk to anyone here, and I'm sad that Todd's not here. He'd probably go off right around that. Well, EWC provides us a lot of recreational opportunities on campus and we have a Get Fit gym downtown and then there's the normal high school activities. If you're not in any of those things, you have no opportunity for rec activities.

**Speaker 4:** And we don't have anyone in the county that coordinates it. No county coordination of rec or recreational activities.

**Speaker 1:** No. That's totally out of my deal. We're an ag economy, so commodities drive how everybody's smile is, and right now it's tough because commodities are struggling, although corn was up today. We have an aging population, thus I'm working on an assisted living facility, so they don't go next door to Scottsbluff.

**Speaker 4:** The competition with Scottsbluff is a challenge, for shopping, keeping business.

**Speaker 1:** Yep. And Cheyenne.

**Interviewer:** You said that's 30 minutes away?
Speaker 1: Educational, we've got a lot of opportunities with the community college and we're hoping to grow those with UW. Access to healthcare, I think we are really fortunate to have Banner Health next door. They just announced today they're gonna be ... and this would be another good thing for them to know. We are about to expand $19 million onto their facility. They just built a $10 million physical therapy facility that we did a ribbon cutting on a month ago. They have an $8 million ER that they added a couple years ago. They are investing in our community. They're looking at adding another surgical podiatrist, he was telling us today. They're extending their hours for the clinic on Saturday. We've got an orthopedic surgeon. I mean, we've got a lot going on with healthcare for a community of 6,500 people in a county of 13,000. So I think healthcare we're okay in.

Speaker 2: And the things that I'll just mention or dovetailing that is ... so as a community Goshen County is the second or the third from the bottom for income per capita. And so there isn't as many dollars. I mean, if you look at the household income here is about $35,000, where Sheridan College is at it's $60,000, and do there are a lot of disparities that exist. Secondly, I would just say that, I think, as a state, Wyoming is near kind of the bottom for equal pay for women, these kinds of things. And so to me, I think, part of that of UW living in the community is really also establishing the quality and the return on investment for higher education. And so how do you drive employers to recognize that when I hire someone with a degree or this certificate that they are actually worth more because they produce a greater return on investment.

And so I really see that that's part of, not only producing someone that's very highly educated, but it's also insuring that employers recognize that and what they can do. So I think there's ways that they can live in that. I also think that one thing our community's exploring is a four day week in the high school, and so how could UW work with the community college to really offer a lot of those opportunities on the fifth day. And so then yes, I'll put a plug in for the rec center. I think just quality of life, and I think there's a lot of classes and expertise that could be driven beyond even the community college level that have to deal with rec centers, and so I think there's a lot of business there.

Speaker 4: I think poverty is a ...

Interviewer: I was gonna ask about that.

Speaker 4: It's a high percentage of students in the schools. I think the average here is over 40% of the kids qualify for free and reduced, which living at or below the poverty line. So it fits into opportunities, low pay, all of that. Poverty is a huge inhibitor in terms of opportunities. And I agree with John, I think education's the gatekeeper. That's a way that you can get out of that, but how do you break some of those cycles of poverty?

Speaker 2: And this is what I would like to say is that I'm sure every community is voicing these same kinds of things as you're going around, and UW has to say, “Which ones can we do?” But what I would like to say is that they should make us their pilot and really put the resources and innovation, take the best, the brightest, the brain trust, and live that in this community. Because I think if you try to defuse and try to solve and we're gonna do one thing in Jackson, we're gonna do one thing in Sheridan, soon you have three or four people not really making a difference. And so to me, I think part of UW's strategy needs to be how can we fully invest in one area and really show ... and it would put them on a map for how they're able to change one town. And just as a proof in concept, and I think that we should be the first concept.

Speaker 1: Good for you. I love that you pitched that.
Speaker 2: I mean, I do. I mean, I'm just saying if every school's gonna say UW could do more, well, what's gonna end up happening is you have one or two teachers that's gonna offer one more online class that literally can't ... if we work together and do this, we become the pilot for the rest of the state.

Speaker 1: I want to put a shameless plug in too. The entrepreneurship innovation that they've got going on ... I know they have an incubator in Casper. Are you aware of those? Do you know about them? They went Casper and Sheridan, and I've heard eh reviews on them. And then I love that they're wrapping entrepreneurship into all of their curriculums. I think that's brilliant. I'm really interested in what they're doing. I'm watching from the ENDOW perspective, but the shameless plug I have is we have an entrepreneur incubator here. And I can tell you right away I've worked with the college for years, I ran the program on the other side of the college. It is hard to get entrepreneurs who want to go back to school. I mean, maybe taking that one off class or a training or whatever, and you probably know this as well.

How can we work together with UW to really help our entrepreneurs? And in collaboration with EWC? I mean, I think that's something that's needed. I think it's a program we could push really hard. I have 91 entrepreneurs I'm working with right now, 91 in a county of 13,000. That's a lot. I feel like it's a lot.

Speaker 4: Well, and I think Ashley's point is the mindset that ...

Speaker 1: How do I leverage their resource?

Speaker 4: Yeah. Quickly, rather than going, "Oh, I have to go a four-year degree," or this old concept ...

Speaker 1: They're not going to move Laramie. They're not going to move to Laramie.

Speaker 4: And I think ENDOW potentially is a way to leverage that, but, "Okay. I need a 500 program data technician," and how can we respond and quickly to those from a community college, also from the university helping with that versus saying, "Well, it's gotta go through the chain, be approved by the curriculum learning council, it has to go through the community college commission, and it has to" ... and all of these bureaucratic ...

Speaker 1: Or you have to go to UW. You have to go to Laramie for two years to get this certification to enhance your business idea.

Speaker 4: And all of a sudden Western Nebraska, our competition to the east, goes, "We've got that next semester." And so I think that opportunity to capitalize on, I agree with John. I think do we want to be a mile wide and an inch thick or do you want to be about this wide and a mile deep. And I think pilot invested comprehensive projects in communities are the way to do it, not you get a little bit here. Not to be critical, and probably where you are, if it's spread out proportionately, we know where the resources are gonna go. They're gonna go to the largest communities, and the rest of us are going to get a little sprinkling. And I think a concentrated effort would be huge.

Speaker 1: I mean, there's some opportunity with the a-tech to do some curriculum or development with like a food innovation center and really leverage the research side of UW and other assets of EWC and the entrepreneurs that are already here and invested in this community?

Interviewer: Does SBDC offer services here?

Speaker 1: Yeah. No. We work pretty closely with them. We do the same thing. It's a duplication of service, in my opinion. I hate to say that because I do use them, it's just as another manpower, but it's a duplication of service of what we're doing. I do love the UW resource network.
Speaker 2: And I just think fundamentally, at the end of the day, even in a county of 13,000, there are probably 50 to 100 UW students in this area easy. And every year we could turn out that kind of many, and so I just mean there is literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in enrollment on the table for them. So just seeing that there's an opportunity to do business here and just make that sustainable. So I like to say, just give us three yeses before you give us one no. And just say yes, we can do this. Yes, we can do this Zoom class. Yes, we can do this. Just give us three before you give us one no.

Speaker 1: Spoken as a true foundation director. [crosstalk 00:44:32]

Interviewer: You kind of already transitioned into the last question here, but if you have any further thoughts on how UW can help address your challenges.

**Question 6**

Speaker 4: I think they just need to be an active presence in the community, with the college, the high schools, just in general with the economic development.

Speaker 1: Economic development. Yeah.

Speaker 4: We have one land grant institution. We don't have any competition.

Speaker 1: I'm gonna get a t-shirt that says that.

Speaker 4: But part of that is the diligence to serve everybody.

Speaker 1: Well, it's tough, 23 counties. It's tough.

Speaker 2: My last thing will be, obviously, when money's on the line, people try to horde resources, these things, and it's just like ... we still have a fundraising gap of $1.2 million for our ag building. And I really think that when we look at some sort of partnership, is there a value to UW investing in that, naming a classroom, or one of those things? Just kind of those ideas is a foundation. I think there's an opportunity to raise money together in this shared vision of higher education. So what I'm saying is we can get along in one those things, I think we can get along anywhere, and we just have opportunities.

Interviewer: Any other thoughts on how UW can help?

Speaker 2: No. I just think it overall, I think, is the exclamation point. UW has moved miles in the last three years.

Speaker 1: Yeah. For sure.

Speaker 2: They really have. I mean, I really feel like the college is moving in the right direction.

Speaker 4: Keep moving.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Don't stop.

Speaker 2: But I mean, we have leaps to go, and so that's just my kind of in summation right there.

Speaker 1: So underline that. Exclamation point, you're doing a great job. Underline don't stop.
Speaker 4: Well, and I think it can't be driven by a leader that who sits in the office like Dr. Nichols. It needs to be a sustainable effort regardless of who sits in leadership seats at UW. It should be a long term strategy, so it doesn't matter if John's the president next year and Ashley is the president 10 years from now, it's sustained and it's promoted, not propped up by a very innovative leader that you have right now, or we have with Dr. Nichols. She goes away ... nothing against Dr. Buchanan that was in there and some of the others, they never set foot on this campus. So I think that strategic plan has to be nurtured, and it has to continue, it has to be maintained. Otherwise, it's all these starts and stops.

Speaker 2: And I think some of this will come from what the product is of these discussions. I think it's so difficult when you ask people these questions and the ball is in your court, what is the response? And we do that too. We ask people things and we have to innovate that direction, so I just hope that in their heart, that they really do send the team here.

Speaker 4: You want those three yeses.

Speaker 2: I want the three yeses. So I'm must gonna put that out there is that let's just try it and see where it goes.

Interviewer: All right. I'm gonna stop this now.

Speaker 2: All right