

The **membership drive** is up and running! Brenda emailed the invoice via email right after the first of the year. It reflects the increase in dues to \$75 for 2018. Membership is institutional, so only one person from your organization needs to complete the form. Submit payment to the WyASFAA Treasurer, Brenda Haseman, at Sheridan College, 1 Whitney Way, Sheridan, WY 82801. Please note that your organization must be in good standing and have dues paid by **Wednesday, February 14, 2018** in order to vote in the election, which will take place by the end of February.



Speaking of elections, the WyASFAA Board is **requesting nominations** for the President-Elect and Secretary positions. Please nominate yourself or a colleague to step up and take on a leadership position! Nominations are NOT limited to director-level positions; any WyASFAA school member in good standing may serve in elected Board positions. WyASFAA also needs an Affiliate Member Representative and welcomes nominations or suggestions.



The Conference Committee is putting together the program for the **2018 conference, April 26-27** (with the annual Hathaway Meeting scheduled for April 25) at **Casper College!** The theme is ***Kickin' it Old School***. If you have session suggestions, please let Conference Chair Shelby Garner know: shelbygarner@caspercollege.edu.

We will have a **philanthropy project for Seton House in Casper** this year in lieu of state gifts at conference. Seton House opened on December 5, 1989 as an emergency shelter consisting of three apartments. Since then, it has grown to 30 apartments, a learning center for children's services, and a donation center. Seton House encourages its clients to pursue higher education as a means to a better future for them and their families. Check them out at: setonhousecasper.org/. Please start gathering extra items to bring to conference to donate, or get your staff, department, or whole school involved (with permission from your administrators, of course). There is a list of needed items on the Seton House [website](http://setonhousecasper.org/). Cash donations are especially appreciated.

Speaking of websites, have you checked out WyASFAA's new one? Give it a look at: wyasfaa.wixsite.com/wyasfaa

There is conference information, past newsletters, links to helpful resources, the presentations from the High School Counselor Workshop, a list of WyASFAA members and much more! The site also has the ability to host chat sessions for general financial aid questions, so if your school is interested in setting up a chat time with your students, families or outreach sites, contact Kelcie McBride: Kelcie.McBride@ewc.wy.edu or email WyASFAA's email address directly: WyASFAA@gmail.com

If there are items you would like to see in next month's newsletter, please let Susan Stephenson know by the 10th of the month: susan.stephenson@ewc.wy.edu.



Now onto our sixth **school spotlight!**



Eastern Wyoming College

Year established: 1948

Financial Aid Staff:

- **Terri Hauf**, *Financial Aid Specialist* (verification, scholarships, consortium agreements, third-party payments)
- **Kelcie McBride**, *Financial Aid Specialist* (verification, Hathaway, consumer information)
- **Holly West**, *Financial Aid Technician* (front line processing, student employment, VA Certifying Official)
- **Susan Stephenson**, *Director* (federal aid processing/packaging, R2T4, loans, reports, director stuff)

Tell us a bit about your school: EWC serves around 2,000 students in credit courses, including concurrently enrolled high school students and more than 6,500 students in non-credit and community education activities. EWC's service area includes six counties spanning a 16,000 square mile service area. The main campus is located in Torrington, with a second campus in Douglas and 11 other outreach sites. EWC's most popular academic programs are: veterinary technology, welding, cosmetology (including hair tech, esthetician, nail tech, and barbering certificates), and our ag programs, including farm and ranch management, ag business, and rangeland ecology and watershed management. EWC is also starting a new gunsmithing program on the Douglas Campus, slated to begin Fall 2018. In athletics, EWC's rodeo and men's golf teams consistently excel at regional and national levels.

What is a favorite event or activity at your school? The annual Evening of Elegance is a huge hit with students. It is a fancy prime-rib dinner served by college faculty and staff to students who are dressed in formal attire, followed by an all school dance. The "Nacho Run" at Orientation is similar in that nacho stations (for chips, meat, cheese, toppings) are each staffed by a college administrator (VPs, Financial Aid Director, Registrar) who serve the students as they go through the line. Both events are opportunities for staff to get to know students and students to get to know them, and for us to further emphasize our commitment to service above all. Plus, it's just a heck of a lot of fun to be a part of!

A big hit with the community is the EWC Foundation and agriculture department's annual fund-raising event, *Sagebrush and Roses*. This event is a "Black Tie and Blue Jeans" dinner and dance held at the Goshen County Fairgrounds Rendezvous Center in support of scholarships and other program needs for EWC's ag students.

EWC also has a faculty/staff group called the Freds, which is a group committed to providing that extra bit of customer service to students. Freds contact new students (i.e., Fredlings) prior to the start of their first semester to establish a connection, provide basic info the student may have missed or need (e.g., when is Orientation, how do I get books, who is my advisor), and become a mentor, contact, and friendly face on campus. The program is based on motivational speaker Mark Sanborn's "The Fred Factor," the true story of Fred, a mail carrier who passionately loved his job and who genuinely cared about the people he served. It's about going the extra mile to make a difference to students, and building relationships that can sustain their success. There is also a component of knowing when to "hit the reset button" and reinvent your processes or yourself to make sure you are providing value in your work and life, something I think we all strive to achieve in education and particularly financial aid.

As the FA Director, what do you like about your institution? One of the main draws of EWC is its smallness. We know many of our students by name and they are comfortable coming to us with sometimes difficult questions or situations. Mentoring and follow-up is easier at a smaller institution. Working with other departments can also be easier, especially when most everyone is within just a handful of buildings. One of the

main advantages of working for a small institution for me is that I'm not locked into doing one or two things over and over. A large institution might have three or four positions doing nothing but loans all day and at the director-level, there would be little other than meetings and personnel issues to deal with. I have the opportunity to be—in fact need to be—very hands-on in all aspects of processing aid. I do all the loans, R2T4s, packaging, system set-up, etc., but still have plenty of campus involvement that requires lots of meetings. ☺ I'm never bored.

What's the best (or worst!) thing about working in your Financial Aid Office?

The best thing about being in my office is by far the people. My staff and all members of the Student Services office where we reside are a close-knit and fun group. We truly work as a team and try to focus on the needs of each student as an individual. We aren't an official one-stop shop, but function like one so students don't feel they are getting the runaround. We try to do entertaining things as a group at least once a semester, like holiday gift exchange games (this year was a sock exchange dice game), pumpkin carving contests, or goofy pictures of us all dressed up for some theme. This is not only amusing for us and builds teamwork, but shows students our fun side and hopefully makes us seem more approachable.

Are there any unique or unusual facts/stories/legends about your school or in its history?

Eastern Wyoming College was established as the Southeast University Center, an extension of the University of Wyoming and a part of the Torrington School District 3. From 1948-1956 the College struggled for existence on a very limited budget, at one time during that period enrolling only 16 full-time students taught by two full-time instructors and offering only a dozen classes.

In 1956, the school was organized as an independent political subdivision of the state with its own board of control and changed the name to Goshen County Community College. Enrollment increased to 62 full-time students with four full-time instructors offering around 30 classes right after the reorganization; growth has continued steadily since. The name of the college changed again in 1968 to Eastern Wyoming College.

Some interesting tidbits about EWC:

- EWC's very first president slammed his hand in a car door, his thumb became infected and he died as a result of blood poisoning.
- We are one of the oldest of the Wyoming community colleges.
- The criminal justice club won lots of awards in the late 1980s and early '90s. Welding is particularly successful now and students regularly place at SkillsUSA.
- We have had nine presidents in our history. Our current president is quite the Renaissance woman. She was previously the Dean of Business and Industry at Casper College and prior to that was the chair of the addictionology department there. She not only has her PhD in Counseling and Higher Ed specializing in marriage and family therapy, but also has a master's in counselor education, a bachelor's in psychology, is a licensed professional counselor and addictions therapist, has her CDL, has a welding certificate, is highly skilled in cooking and quilting, and may or may not be known as a speed demon on the highway! We are already benefitting from her diverse background as well as her drive, vision, and humor.

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This month's member highlight is Financial Aid Technician, **Holly West!**

How long have you been in financial aid?

I have been in Financial Aid for nine years, all as a Financial Aid Technician at Eastern Wyoming College. My primary duties are importing ISIRS, coordinating Work-Study positions on/off campus and serving as the VA School Certifying Official. I taught preschool for 11 years and was looking for a job that was full time with benefits. I had taught [previous financial aid director] Pam Palermo's two boys and Pam encouraged me to apply for my current position. She said that if I could handle four and five year olds as well as their parents then I could handle college students.

I applied but did not get the position, however the person they did hire did not last long so Pam again encouraged me to let HR know that I was still interested. That time I was hired and I have loved working with college students almost as much as with preschoolers.

What is your favorite/least favorite thing about your job?

My favorite thing about my job is being successful in helping the students who need financial aid the most and have the least amount of help from home. My least favorite thing about my job is being unsuccessful in helping the students who need financial aid the most and have the least amount of help from home. So many wonderful young people out there deserve a good start in adulthood.

What are your hobbies, talents and/or quirks?

I love camping, reading, attending church activities and spending time with my family, especially my grandbabies. In our office, I am known as the baby

whisperer as I am able to calm babies and toddlers. I have a goodie drawer and enjoy interacting with little people; I guess that would be my talent. As far as quirks are concerned there are too many to mention.

What is something you like to do “the old-fashioned way?”

I love to cook and bake and I definitely do both “the old-fashioned way.” Everything just tastes better when you throw in an extra pinch of this or that and make up things as you go. My family gets very disgusted with me because I do not even set a timer.

What is something that your friends would consider “so you?”

This is an easy question – my sneezing is famous around the office and beyond. I inherited my sneezing from my dad (along with being klutzy). I have different sneezes and I have no control over which one will come out. My family calls one particular sneeze “the barking Chihuahua.” At the

office, they simply wait for the last really hard sneeze by saying “wait for it, wait for it, wait for it, wait for it----- there it is!” I sneezed at church one Sunday while I was in the nursery with my granddaughter and my husband and co-worker both said that the last three pews turned to see what the noise was. They both knew it was me.

When asked about Holly, Director Susan Stephenson had

this to say: Holly is the glue that holds our office together. She is our gatekeeper, since she sits at one of two desks in the front of the Student Services Office, and she is our organizer. We would all be completely lost without her! She deals with a majority of the incoming calls for the Financial Aid Office, handles student traffic, manages the filing system and all the paperwork associated with that, as well as administers all of our Federal Work-Study/Student Employment program. She has also done a stellar job taking over as our VA Certifying Official, a position that was thrust upon her about a year and a half ago because of budget cuts and their resulting RIFs and restructuring. Holly is warm and caring, which is vital when dealing with tense students and parents, and I value her creative side (which helps keep my office interesting with ever-changing décor!). She’s also great fun, and a willing participant in our office games, sock wars, and Halloween costumes (see her “cereal killer” costume, left. I’m SO going to be in trouble for including that...). I’m also grateful she’s good with children, because it keeps them out of my office! ☺

