NWACC Board Approves Next President’s Contract

Contract with Dr. Evelyn Jorgenson Begins July 1, 2013

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (December 6, 2012) – The NorthWest Arkansas Community College Board of Trustees approved a three-year contract today (Dec. 6) with Dr. Evelyn Jorgenson to become the next president of NWACC.

Under the contract, Dr. Jorgenson, currently president of Moberly (Mo.) Area Community College, will assume her role as NWACC president beginning July 1, 2013. The contract continues through June 30, 2016. Dr. Becky Paneitz, current NWACC president, began her tenure in August 2003 and will continue to serve as the college’s chief executive until June 30, 2013.

The board chose Dr. Jorgenson from among four finalists who visited Northwest Arkansas in November for interviews with the trustees and forums with various college and community stakeholders. Trustees authorized pursuing a contract with Dr. Jorgenson at the board’s Nov. 12 meeting.

Prior to the naming of the finalists, a nationwide search was conducted with the aid of the Association of Community College Trustees. A presidential search committee, led by Trustee Randy Lawson and including such college stakeholders as faculty, staff, students, donors and community members, reviewed materials from 30 applicants from 17 different states for the position. Six semifinalists and later the four finalists were chosen from that 30-applicant pool.

“We are delighted to have reached an agreement with Dr. Evelyn Jorgenson to serve as our next president,” said Alex Vasquez, chairman of the NWACC Board of Trustees. “I am confident she will be a great fit for the college and for Northwest Arkansas and will be able to build upon the great foundation laid by Dr. Bob Burns and by Dr. Becky Paneitz.”
Vasquez said the trustees wanted to commend Dr. Paneitz for providing significant lead time for the board to identify and hire her successor. Paneitz announced her retirement in April. “Dr. Paneitz planned her retirement so that the college and the board would have a smooth, seamless transition,” Vasquez said. “It's exciting to see this coming about.”

The contract sets Dr. Jorgenson’s initial base salary at $176,826 per year. In addition to the stated salary, the contract also includes standard employee benefits and an annual housing allowance of $18,000, all in accordance with State laws and regulations.

The president also shall be provided with a vehicle through the College Foundation. Nunnally Chevrolet is continuing its longstanding partnership with the college to provide the vehicle. “The George Nunnally family has been such a strong supporter of the college, and we are so grateful for their continued generosity,” said Dr. Meredith N. Brunen, executive director for development.

Vasquez said that he anticipates the contract to be fully signed soon after the Board’s approval.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a smart choice for students wanting to pursue quality higher education. As an accredited institution through The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, NWACC is a public two-year institution that serves and strengthens its surrounding communities in Benton and Washington counties by helping our students maximize their potential and exceed expectations. With state-of-the-art facilities, NWACC provides excellent academic instruction and workforce training needed to succeed, offering personalized attention from highly respected faculty, staff, and administrators. For more information, visit www.nwacc.edu.