



For Immediate Release

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BOARD PRESIDENT’S STATEMENTS ON NORTH IDAHO COLLEGE

Idaho State Board of Education President Kurt Liebich made two statements during today’s regular Board meeting in Boise about recent developments at North Idaho College (NIC). He opened the meeting by speaking about the State Board’s limited role regarding Idaho’s community colleges, and NIC’s accreditation.

“North Idaho College is a really important part of Idaho’s higher education system. The fact that there are concerns about accreditation that have been expressed by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (the accrediting agency) is a very high concern to the State Board of Education.

“The reality of it is though, this Board has limited ability to do anything about it other than encourage the Board of North Idaho College to do everything they can to preserve their accreditation status.

“We are not the governing body for the community colleges. Each of our community colleges have a locally elected governing board and it’s that governing board’s responsibility to govern that institution in alignment with the requirements that are established by the accrediting agency. I think that is the right way to do it,

we are a local control state. Our community colleges have local taxing districts that are supported by local patrons, and I think it is appropriate that those patrons elect local boards to govern those institutions.

“While we (members of the State Board) are keeping a close eye on that situation, all we can do is encourage the trustees at North Idaho College to do everything in their power to preserve accreditation.”

Later in the morning, President Liebich made a second statement, a message intended for NIC students and staff.

“Despite what happens at North Idaho College in the boardroom, the real work happens in the classroom between dedicated faculty and students and the work has been going on without interruption throughout all of this and continues to go on. It speaks to the professionalism, the care, and the dedication that our faculty have for our students.

“For students, regardless of what happens through this process, the credits you’ve earned, whether you are alumni or you just finished your exams for the last semester, those credits are good, and they will be recognized throughout the State of Idaho.

“I’m hopeful, given the letter that the Northwest Commission wrote to the NIC Board, that the Board will do whatever it can to address the concerns that are out there and that’s where I hope we end up. But in a worst-case scenario, and North Idaho College does lose its accreditation, what I will commit to you is that this State Board is going to stand behind our students and we will do whatever we can to ensure that there are off-ramps to other higher education institutions and that students have a seamless path forward to achieve whatever dreams they have.

“I just want you to know that we appreciate all that you are doing and that we have your back.”

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