



Casper College

2024 Annual Report





The College Tour

Front Cover: CC Student Jordan Napier is shown during the filming of her segment for "The College Tour," with Director of Photography Wes Hall and Producer and Director Daren Woolsey. The 30-minute show will premiere on Amazon Prime on April 17, 2025. (Zach Nagy, Casper College photo)



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Letter from the President

Dear Casper College Community,

As we close the chapter on an eventful 2024, I am honored to share our collective achievements and the progress that positions Casper College as a leader in higher education. Guided by our mission of providing “Education for a Lifetime,” we continue to deliver transformative opportunities that empower students and enrich our community.



Enrollment and Student Success

This year, we saw a slight increase in enrollment — a promising achievement amid national trends of declining high school graduates. However, we remain mindful of the challenges ahead and are proactively addressing them through innovative strategies in recruitment, retention, and student engagement.

Program Innovation and Development

In 2024, we launched three new certificate programs and one Associate of Applied Science degree: Emergency Medical Technician Certificate, Emergency Medical Services — Paramedicine Certificate, Emergency Medical Services — Paramedicine AAS, and Construction Staking Certificate. We have submitted three other programs for consideration in early 2025 to meet evolving workforce demands, including certificates in the art of sound recording, and graphic design, and an AAS degree in general agriculture. These offerings reflect our commitment to equipping students with the skills and knowledge to thrive in today’s economy.

Strategic Planning and Forward Momentum

Our newly completed strategic plan serves as a roadmap for the years ahead, with priority areas focused on student enrollment, retention, and success; community outreach and educational partnerships; program development and innovation; and employee engagement.

Students First: A Culture of Support

Casper College continues to lead with a “Students First” philosophy that prioritizes every learner’s growth, well-being, and success. This initiative is central to our efforts to create a dynamic, welcoming, and supportive environment.

Looking Ahead

As we search for Casper College’s next president, we are excited about the opportunities to further our mission with visionary leadership. The presidential search process is well underway, and we remain committed to finding a leader who shares our values and aspirations.

On behalf of the entire Casper College family, thank you for your continued support. Together, we are building a brighter future for our students, our community, and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brandon Kosine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brandon Kosine, Ph.D.
Interim President, Casper College

Casper College Board of Trustees



Back row:

Jay Swedberg
Trustee

Dave Applegate
Chair

Brad Cundy
Treasurer

Todd Milliken
Vice Chair

Front row:

Kim Byrd
Secretary

Dale Bohren
Trustee

Kathy Dolan
Trustee

Casper College Deans

Rachel Chadderdon, MBA
Dean, School of Business, Industry, and
Workforce Development

Peter Van Houten, Ph.D.
Dean, School of
Social and Behavioral Sciences

Jeff Sunn, MA
Interim Dean, School of Science

Julia Whyde, Ph.D.
Dean, School of
Fine Arts and Humanities

Bernardino D. Madsen, MS, MLS (ASCP)
Dean, School of Health Science

Corey Peacock, Ph.D.
Dean of Students

Casper College Executive Council

Brandon Kosine, Ph.D.
Interim President

Jerry Hawkes, Ph.D.
Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs

Lynnde Colling, CPA
Vice President for Administrative Services

Linda Toohey, MPA
Vice President for Student Services

Rhonda Franzen, MPA, PHR
Director of Human Resources

Kent Brooks, MS
Director of Information Technology

Chris Lorenzen, MBA
Director of Public Relations



Casper College Sound Design Program: Crafting Artistic Soundscapes with Third Rail of Cheyenne and Saratoga

*Students enrolled in the Sound Design Program at Casper College go over recording levels with instructor **Larry Burger**, center. Students in the program work hands-on with state-of-the-art recording equipment with actual bands from Wyoming. Students pictured, l-r: **Alyssa Bullock**, sitting in chair behind elbow, and standing **Laura Kearns**, **Gregory Kearns**, and **Bridger Jones**. (Chris Lorenzen, Casper College photo)*

In an exciting collaboration, the **Sound Design Program at Casper College** embarked during the summer of 2024 on a unique learning experience by recording two singles for the country music band Third Rail out of Cheyenne and Saratoga. This hands-on project not only provided students with a practical application of their sound design skills but also allowed Third Rail the benefit of a state-of-the-art recording studio and the fresh talent of students.

“Third Rail is a band I put together over five years ago after committing to playing a street dance for Lingle, Wyoming’s 100-year anniversary in 2018,” said lead singer Casey Jones, lead singer/acoustic guitar/mandolin, who’d been playing live with fiddle and guitar player Logan Feezer and his cousin Alan Jones.

The band travels regionally, performing in several different live venues. In 2021, they released their first album, “Centerline,” available on Spotify, Amazon Music, and Apple Music. The album includes songs written by Jones about his life experiences and journeys.

In addition to Jones and Feezer, Third Rail’s musicians now include Bill Snow, lead guitar/lap steel; Devin Smith, drums/harmony vocals; and Connor Koch, bass guitar.

Each year, Casper College sound design instructor Larry Burger puts a call out to area musicians to come record at the college. “My goal for students in the program is to take them through the recording process, from A-Z, where they learn everything from setup to expertly running the software and recognizing potential issues in the recording,” said Burger. “Involving professional musicians in their learning process is a great way to give them hands-on experience.”

“It was exciting for us to get the band together and work on new music,” said Jones. “Knowing that we’re helping students to learn was a big bonus.”

Cont. Pg. 6

Casper College Sound Design Program, cont.

Recording music is much different from performing it live, said Burger. His experience was on full display during the recording session as he guided students through the process and worked with the musicians to fine-tune their sound. The band played together, and then musicians individually perfected their parts in separate recordings. The students brought it all together into a final recording that was mastered over several weeks.

For the students enrolled in the Casper College Sound Design Program, this collaboration was a transformative learning experience. Working with a professional band like Third Rail allowed

them to apply their skills in a real-world context, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and problem-solving in a live recording environment. The project's hands-on nature allowed students to work with state-of-the-art equipment, refine their critical listening skills, and collaborate with a musical ensemble. The experience not only enhanced their technical proficiency but also instilled a deep appreciation for the collaborative nature of their work.

Library, Museums, and Youth Enrichment

Goodstein Foundation Library has more than 70,000 print volumes. It offers digital access to over 200 databases, 680,000 ebooks, and 100,000 journals.

Western History Center has published digital materials for over 180 collections and almost 7,000 items. The Western History Center also has more than 400 collections, and responds to nearly 200 research requests per year.

Werner Wildlife Museum connects the community with Wyoming's rich natural heritage.

Tate Geological Museum
A regional earth science and paleontology education center, offering educational exhibits and programs for all ages. The museums serve as important community and educational resources.

John Wold Help Yourself Academy enriches learning for third, fourth and fifth graders who are interested in science and math.

52

Students

303

Students

GEAR UP serves students from seventh grade to college freshmen, in preparation for college.

Knowledge Enrichment for Youth, KEY Camp serves young people who are intellectually curious and excited to learn during the summer.

135

Students

7,256

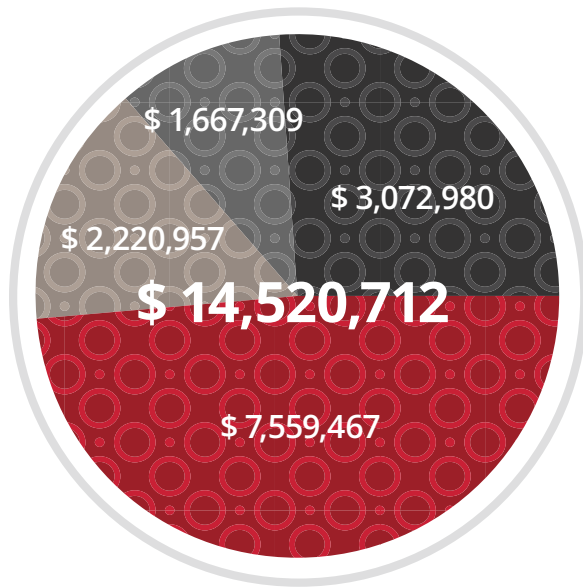
Visitors

16,000

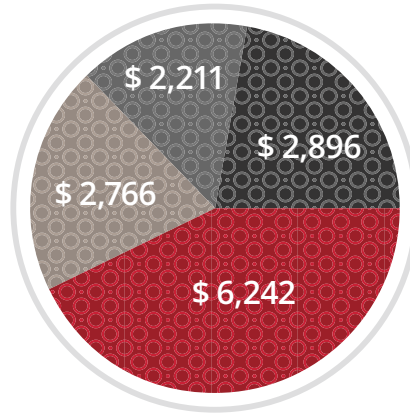
Visitors

Financial Aid and Scholarships

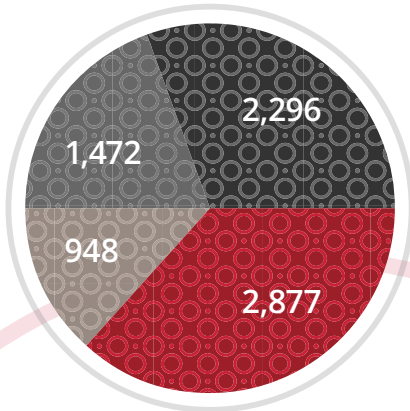
Financial Aid Awarded



Average Financial Aid



Number of Students Offered Financial Aid



Scholarship Funds:
Foundation, State and Institutional

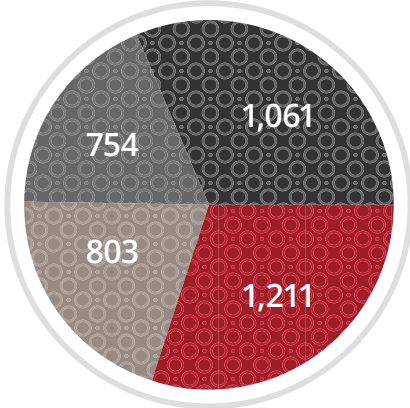
378

Kickstart Wyoming

Began in the fall 2023
Students: **43**
Total tuition awards: **\$102,103**
Average award: **\$2,374**



Number of Students Who Accepted Financial Aid



Wyoming Works Grant

Students: **19**
Total tuition awards: **\$48,921**
Average tuition award: **\$2,575**



Ellbogen Opportunity Scholarship

Students: **15**
Total tuition awards: **\$32,250**
Average tuition award: **\$2,150**

- Institutional Aid and Scholarships
- State Aid, includes Hathaway
- Other Aid, includes Foundation
- Federal Aid

Statement of Net Position

Casper Community College District for the year ended June 30, 2024

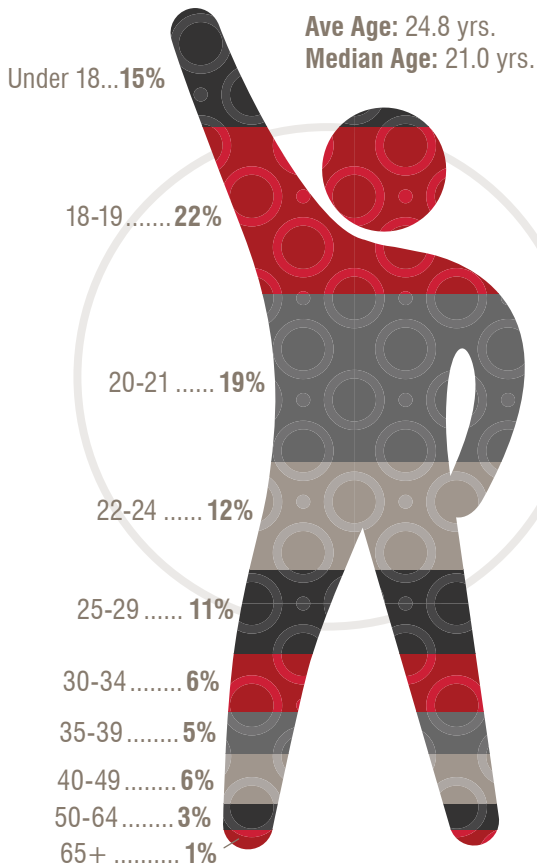
Assets	2024
Current Assets	\$ 60,804,392
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 32,919
Restricted Investments	\$ 6,583,699
Deposits with Bond Trustee	\$ 7,846,233
Investments — Endowment Challenge Program	\$ 20,118,423
Capital Assets, net	\$ 112,134,580
Total Noncurrent Assets	\$ 146,715,854
Total Assets	\$ 207,520,246
Deferred Outflows of Resources	
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	\$ 7,062,859
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	\$ 8,439,169
Noncurrent Liabilities	\$ 55,836,330
Total Liabilities	\$ 64,275,499
Deferred Inflows of Resources	
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	\$ 39,296,891
Net Position	
Net Investment in Capital Assets	\$ 83,877,652
Restricted	\$ 36,720,743
Unrestricted*	\$ (9,587,680)
Total Net Position	\$ 111,010,715

The college's financial statements and audit are presented in accordance with generally accepted auditing principles, uniform grant guidance, and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board for state and local governments, and public colleges and universities. For more information from the college's audit, go to caspercollege.edu/about/audits-budgets.

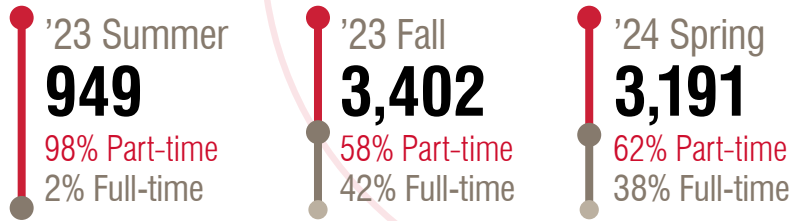
*Reflects changes in net pension liability that includes the college's portion of the funding deficit in the Wyoming Retirement System Public Employee Pension Plan and the retiree's participation in Wyoming's EGI Health Plan. If the effect of pension and retiree health program are backed out, unrestricted equity is a positive \$32,393,375.

Enrollment for 2023-2024 Academic Year

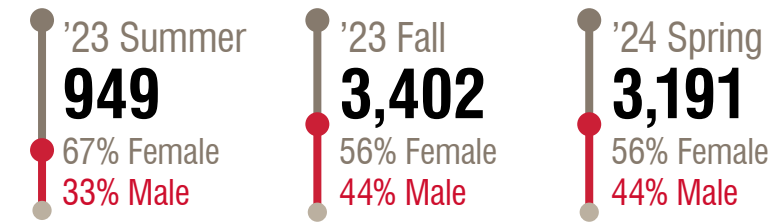
% Students by Age



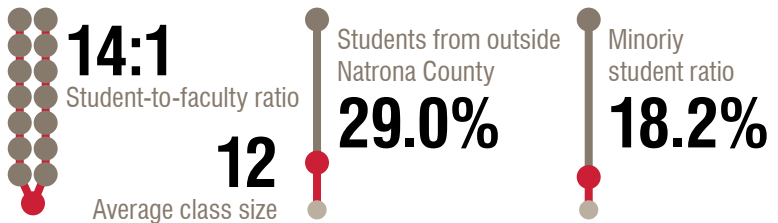
Total Part-time vs. Full-time Students



Total Male vs. Female Students



Student Body



2,735 Degree seeking students
(Unduplicated annual headcount)

1,955 Nondegree seeking students
(Unduplicated annual headcount)

Casper College | **BOCES** Board of Cooperative Educational Services

516 Dual Enrollment

Students taking Casper College classes while in high school

573 Concurrent Enrollment

Students taking college-level courses at their high school

1,282 Total Students

Transfers to four-year higher educational institutions

501 Students **91%** University of Wyoming Transfers

Out of the top five four-year institutions, 501 Casper College students transferred with 91% of those students attending the University of Wyoming.

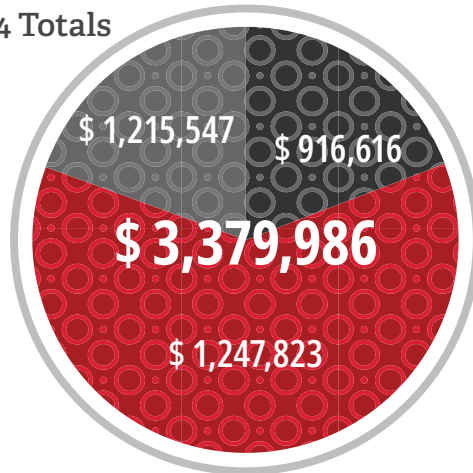
Student Enrollment:

Providing accessible, affordable, and flexible learning opportunities for diverse student populations, including rural residents, working adults, and nontraditional students balancing education with family and career responsibilities.

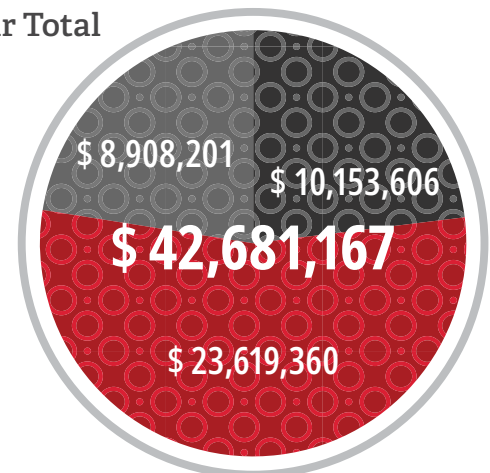
Outside Grants Received by Casper College

Grants are an important funding source in support of the college's mission. Much of the grant funding comes from sources outside Natrona County and supports programs and services of the college and students.

FY 2024 Totals





10-Year Total




-  Federal Grants and Contracts
-  State Grants and Contracts
-  Private Grants and Contracts


Examples of Federal Grants and Contracts:

 The Carl Perkins Grant provides federal funding to improve secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs. Grant money has been used to purchase equipment, instructional materials, career and technical education-related software, and support programs such as work-based learning programs, career guidance and placement, and professional development and training.

 **GEAR UP**, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, provides funding to increase the number of eligible students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education through guidance, community support, and resources.


Examples of State Grants and Contracts


 **State of Wyoming Library Grant** provides funds for the purchase of subscriptions for the Goodstein Foundation Library.

 **State of Wyoming — Wyoming Innovation Partnership Phase II** provides funding in advanced manufacturing for a hybrid computer

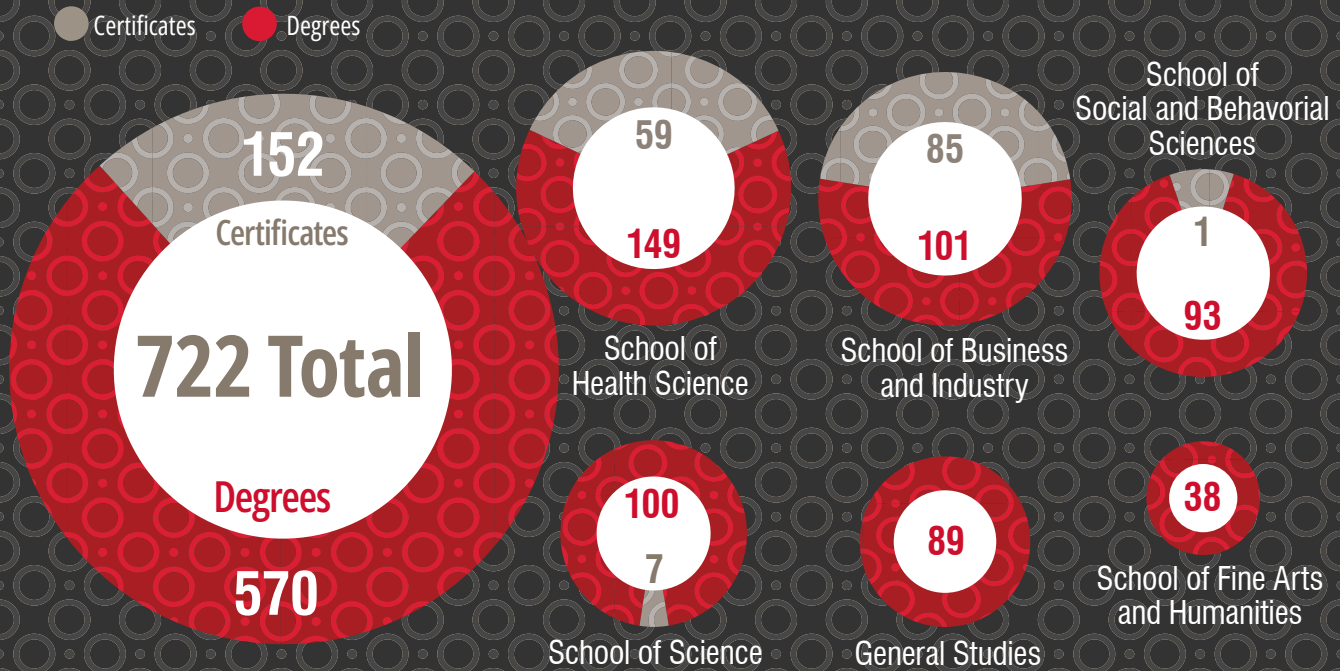
numerical control, or CNC, technician and cobot environment program. Funding in addition studies is to expand its program and partnerships.

Examples of Private Grants and Contracts

 **The Board of Cooperative Educational Services, or BOCES**, provides innovation grants in addition to funding a variety of programs that support education at all levels in Natrona County. Innovation grants have supported college programs this past year including the S.T.A.R. grant, Successful Transition & Academic Retention; the Second Chance Adult Education Grant; the Testing Center Grant; the Balloon Engineering Eclipse Project Grant; the American Sign Language Signfest Grant and American Sign Language Art Grant, and the Veterans Services Grant.

 **The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, or OLLI Grant** provides an engaging variety of classes, field trips, lectures, and social events geared towards adults aged 50 and above, but anyone over 18 is welcome. Casper College was the first community college in the U.S. to offer an OLLI chapter in their community and is also the only OLLI chapter in Wyoming.

2023-2024 Academic Degrees and Certificates Awarded



Community and Workforce Development Programs

Workforce Development offers programs designed to meet Wyoming's evolving economic needs, providing specialized training and certifications that support the state's workforce growth.

900
Students

1,074
Registrations

650
Courses

Continuing Education programs offer training and educational courses that enhance skills, support career growth, and foster lifelong learning.

1,414
Students

2,777
Registrations

248
Classes

195
Instructors

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute supports intellectual curiosity and community enrichment for adults 50+.

689
Members

4,453
Registrations

228
Classes

104
Instructors

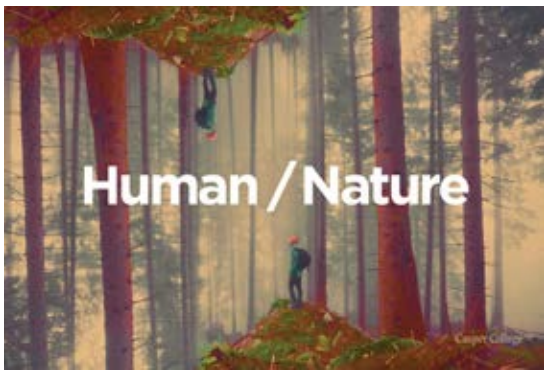
Recognitions and Highlights

January

Six Casper College instructors, **Dale Anderson, Diane Ginsbach, Fred Kuck, Doug Neubert, Kent Sundell, and Eric Unruh**, received emeritus standing from the college. All six instructors retired from the college in June 2023.

February

“Human/Nature” was the topic for the 39th Annual Casper College Humanities Festival and Demorest Lecture February 20-24. The



festival keynote speaker was Susan Rogers, a multiplatinum-earning record producer, engineer, mixer, and audio technician best known for her work with Prince from 1983 to 1987.

Kristina LaPlant, assistant professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, presented a talk titled “Explaining Women’s (Under) Representation In America and Abroad.”



Dash Lloyd, a Casper College nursing major, was selected as the 2023-2024 Shaping Wyoming’s Future Student award winner.

Lloyd, who had a 3.82 GPA, was accepted into the nursing program where he is now pursuing his Associate Degree in Nursing at Casper College.

The award is possible thanks to a partnership between the Wyoming Business Alliance and the Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees. Each community college in the state selects a student as its winner of the Shaping Wyoming’s Future Student

Award. Students selected have a high focus on the industry of their choice and are a role model for their peers.

March

The Lady Thunderbirds won the Region IX Northwest Plains Basketball Tournament

for the third time in a row by beating No. 19 Plainswomen of Northeastern Junior College 81-69.



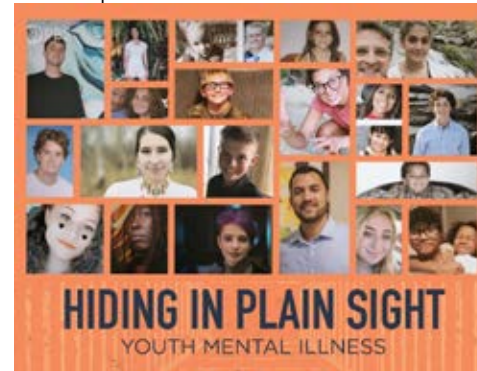
For the seventh year in a row, **Dwight Gunnare**, the Casper College Women’s Basketball team’s head coach, **was named Coach of the Year for the All-Region IX North Sub-Region for the 2023-2024 season.**

For the first time since 2010, the Casper College **Lady Thunderbirds secured an opening-round win** against the Blinn College Buccaneers 72-61 during the **NJCAA D1 Women’s Basketball Championship**. The T-Birds lost to No. 3 ranked Northwest Florida State College the following night, 76-69.

April

The **35th Annual Casper College Wellness Conference** was hosted in April and featured

the acclaimed Ken Burns’ PBS documentary “Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness” with Casper College alumna Kee Dunning, who was part of the documentary.



Longtime Casper College Theater instructor **Richard Burk presented his final production** at Casper College with “The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical.”



The Casper College Indigenous Student Alliance hosted its

Second Annual Casper College Traditional Powwow on the Casper College soccer practice field. The event was well attended by both Native American tribal members and the general public.

The **Casper College Chamber Singers** were joined by the Black Hills State University Chamber Singers in a special concert.

disease in deer in his presentation “How Animals Respond to Infectious Disease” at the Zimmerman Biology Lecture Series.

Lewis Gordon of Sunshine Coast, Australia, was selected as the 2024 graduation speaker for Casper College. Gordon was chosen from a group of students who applied to compete in the 2024 Graduation Speaker Tryouts.

The Casper College **Talkin’ T-Birds** returned from the Phi Rho National Tournament with three gold medals, two silver, and 10 bronze.



Casper College announced the appointment of **Brandon Kosine, Ph.D., as its interim president**, effective May 13, 2024. The decision came after thorough consideration by the board of trustees.

May

“Remembering Our Fallen, Tribute Towers of America’s Fallen from the Global War on Terrorism” memorial display was at Casper College May

3-5. Hosted by the Casper College Veteran Services, the memorial was displayed and open to the public in the “Swede” Erickson Thunderbird Gymnasium. The keynote speaker was retired Army Maj. Gen. Richard Kaiser.



Kathleen “Kathy” Dolan was selected as the Casper College Alumni Association’s Commitment to Excellence award winner. Dolan continues to serve the college on the board and has been the president, secretary, and treasurer at various times.

Jon Schaffner was named the Casper College Alumni Association 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award winner. He is the security cooperation division chief within Space Command’s Strategy, Plans, and Policy Directorate, developing strategy and plans to expand and integrate allies’ and partners’ space capabilities into the United States’ space operations.

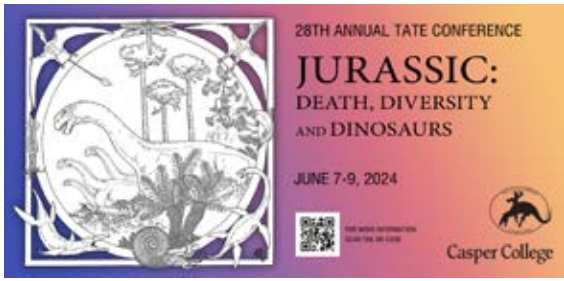


Fourteen Casper College Men’s Soccer team players signed letters of intent to play at the university level. The team had a 3.56 GPA in the 2023 fall semester. “To have 14 team members move on to the university level is a huge achievement,” said Ben McArthur, head coach.



Casper College **freshman Susan Noah walked away with the \$1,250 prize** for the John P. Ellbogen \$50K Entrepreneurship Competition in the Top Submission, Female Entrepreneur category.

Quantitative ecologist Gabe Barrile, Ph.D., shared his research on disease in wild animals, from a fungus that infects amphibians to the plague in prairie dogs to chronic wasting



June

For the 28th year, the Tate Geological Museum at Casper

College hosted its **Annual Tate Conference June 7-9**. On “The Jurassic: Death, Diversity and Dinosaurs.” The keynote speaker was Matt Wedel, Ph.D., of Western University of Health Sciences, co-author of “The Sauropod Dinosaurs: Life in the Age of Giants,” author of “Totally Amazing Facts About Dinosaurs,” and the co-producer of the Sauropod Vertebra of the Week website. Participants from around the country attended the popular event.



Casper College hosted the **Rocky Mountain Cybersecurity Symposium** on June 11-12, featuring top security experts, including former CIA spy Peter Warmka and Debra R. Richardson, a certified fraud examiner.

The 78th Annual Casper College Commencement Ceremony was held on May 10 and over 245 students elected to march.

Casper College announced the **search process for the next president of Casper College**. A website was created with information about the search and provides updates on its progress. Those interested in learning more can go to caspercollege.edu/president-search.



The Casper College **Respiratory Therapy Program** was chosen by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care to receive the Distinguished RRT, Registered Respiratory Therapist, Credentialing Success Award.

Keenan Morgan was selected as the 2024 recipient of the Jon E. Brady Award in Political Study at Casper College, where he graduated in May with three Associate of Arts degrees. He is the 23rd recipient of the annual award.

July

Two Casper College students competed in the SkillsUSA Championships held in Atlanta.

The two students who won gold during the Wyoming Skills USA Championship were Alex Brown and Emily Dundas. All state gold medalists earn the right to compete nationally. Brown competed in the computer numerical control programming competition and took fourth place.

Four new programs were available for the 2024-2025 school year:

Emergency Medical Technician Certificate, Emergency Medical Services — Paramedicine Certificate, Emergency Medical Services — Paramedicine Associate of Applied Science, and the Construction Staking Certificate.



August

A new mascot for the college was introduced to students and employees during move-in day just before the beginning of the fall semester. The bright red Thunderbird mascot is named “Thunder.” Employees and athletes voted on the name.

September

The Casper College Men’s Rodeo team has a new leader, **Interim Head Rodeo Coach Sandy Bob Forbes**. Forbes is replacing former Head Rodeo Coach Jhett Johnson.

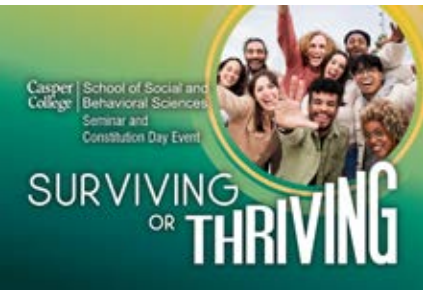


The Wyoming Supreme Court

brought an oral argument to Casper, along with an educational event for Casper College students and the public. Both events were well attended by Casper College students and the general public.

Patricia Alvarez, Ph.D., associate researcher at CIMA, Universidad de Navarra Cordillera Azul, Peru, discussed her work as a forest ecologist and nurse in the Peruvian Amazon in her presentation “Health and Ecology in the Amazon” at the fall Zimmerman Biology Lecture Series.

Hundreds of volunteers removed litter from the river and its banks, invasive species, and worked to protect native habitat.



Casper College's **School of Social and Behavioral Science** hosted its annual seminar on “**Surviving or Thriving.**” The keynote speaker was Corey Ciocchetti, an award-winning professor

of business ethics and legal studies at the University of Denver, a published author, and a top motivational speaker.

GEAR UP of Natrona County, a partnership between Casper College and the Natrona County School District, celebrated its 19th year of success. GEAR



UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a federally-funded, statewide grant in Wyoming that provides services to 2,000 seventh through 12th grade, income-eligible students annually. Currently, 330 Natrona County students participate in the program, and its services are free to qualifying youth in Natrona County.

“**Perspective**” was the theme for the **38th Annual Casper College Literary Conference**. The conference featured



four guest writers: Elizabeth Gonzalez James, Matt Daly, James Fujinami Moore, and Chad Hanson.

The student Welding and Auto Body Club participated in the Platte River Revival. The Platte River Revival is the cleanup and restoration effort of the North Platte River near Casper.

New tenured faculty for the 2024-2025 school year were Marvin Aragon, welding; Luis Alza, biology; Deanna Corey, nursing; Christopher “Layne” Carroll, auto mechanics; Rebecca Garner, nursing; Micheal Johnson, diesel power technology; and Kristina Pham, psychology.

October

The Casper College **Talkin’ T-Birds scored forensics wins at the Fran Tanner Invitational**, hosted by the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls, Idaho. The team earned a bronze award in squad efficiency due to the team’s overall performance and competitiveness.

November

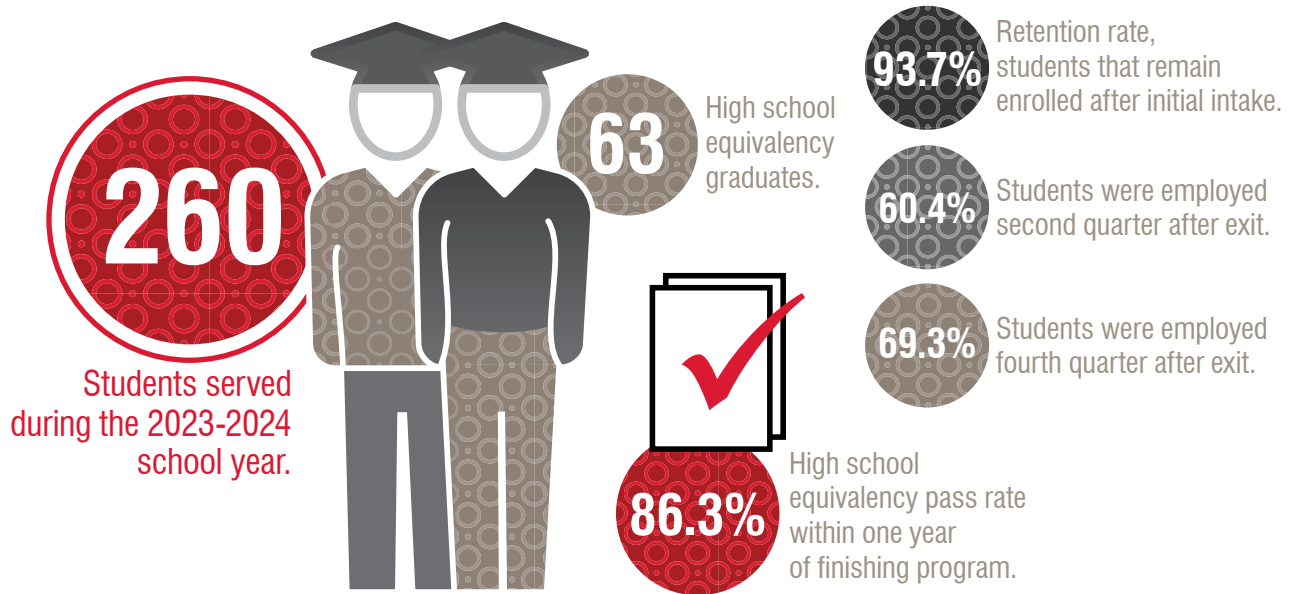
Casper College **Veterans Services hosted five events in honor of Veterans Appreciation Week** and encouraged everyone to wear red on Friday. On Veterans Day, C CVS hosted the Fourth Annual Veterans Ball.

The Annual Casper College **Christmas Tapestry concert, titled “10 Years,”** featured new songs and songs from previous A Christmas Tapestry concerts to nearly sold-out audiences over two nights.

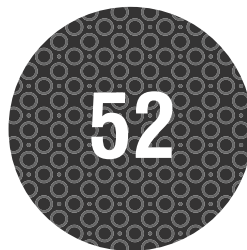


Castellow Adult Learning Center Statistics

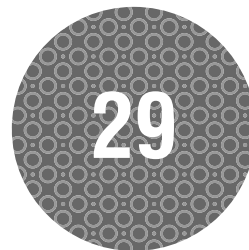
Castellow Adult Learning Center provides free assistance to out-of-school adult students who need to improve their basic reading, writing, and math skills in preparation for their high school equivalency certificate.



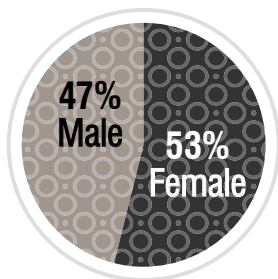
Adult Basic Education Students



English as a Second Language Students



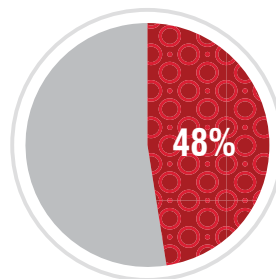
Incarcerated Students



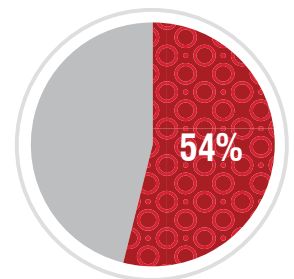
Male students vs. female students



Non-native English speakers



All students of minority background



16-24 years of age

Captivating and Charming Fulbright Scholar From France Teaching at Casper College

A captivating and charming Fulbright Scholar from France stepped onto the Casper College campus to begin teaching classes in French for the 2024-2025 school year.

Capucine (cah-poooh-seen) Cesmat (cehs-mah) comes to the college from Compiègne (kohm-pee-ehn-yeh) in the north of France. Cesmat applied to the Fulbright Scholar Program in December 2023, finding out in May 2024 that her host institution would be Casper College. "Having a Fulbright Scholar on campus is an honor not all colleges have. The prestigious program is very competitive, bringing the world's brightest students and professors to the U.S.," said Eric Atkins, world languages Spanish instructor.

According to the Fulbright Program website, the Fulbright Program is the United States' flagship program of international educational and cultural exchange, offering passionate and accomplished students and scholars in more than 160 countries. For Casper College or any college or university in the country, hosting a Fulbright Scholar for a school year is a privilege. Atkins calls Cesmat's time at the college a "great opportunity" as it allows students learning French to be taught by a native speaker. "Learners get to hear correct pronunciation and learn colloquial phrases and fun, useful slang," noted Atkins.

Cesmat said the journey to becoming a Fulbright Scholar was "quite long, but worth it." In April 2024, she was asked to choose between five potential host institutions. Casper College was one of the five Cesmat could choose from. Interestingly enough, while a master's student at Sorbonne Université in Paris, she chose as her thesis project the buffalo's symbolism in the artmaking and customs of the Plains Indians.

"It was a challenging topic, but my thesis adviser was very supportive, and I really enjoyed working on it. Since the buffalo is the state symbol of Wyoming, I saw this opportunity as a sign to go there. Moreover, my thesis adviser advised me to go there. She wrote word for word, 'Casper could be particularly interesting for you given its roots in the American West, and the occasional weekend at Yellowstone — imagine that!'"

As a Fulbright Scholar, Cesmat took three classes during the fall semester at Casper College: American-Wyoming Government, Foundations of Education, and Modern Dance. "I particularly enjoyed these classes as the first offered insights into U.S. and Wyoming politics,



and the second was about effective teaching methods. I also enrolled in a modern dance class. I've been practicing contemporary dance for over 10 years in France. That class felt like a little piece of home," Cesmat said.

Educationally, Cesmat moved to Paris at 17 to attend Sorbonne University for an English undergraduate program, studying American and British literature, history, grammar, and linguistics. Her recently acquired master's degree was in anglophone studies, specializing in American history. The classes she took at Casper College helped her as a student "... to learn about the American education system, American culture, and improve (my) English skills." She is "... eager to connect with people and experience as much of Casper, the state of Wyoming, and the U.S. as (I) can during (my) time here."



2023-2024 End-of-Year Honorees Named at Casper College

Seven Casper College employees were recognized with 2023-2024 year-end honors during the college's annual retirement and recognition reception.



Tabitha Siemens, the Casper College School of Fine Arts and Humanities academic assistant, was recognized with the Robert O. Durst Classified Staff Award. The award is designed to recognize a classified staff member who demonstrates an outstanding service reputation in their job performance, knowledge, effectiveness, character, communication, cooperation, judgment, and interactions.



The Outstanding Administrator was **Mike McLemore**, digital learning audio-visual coordinator. The award was designed to recognize an administrator who demonstrates an outstanding service reputation in their job performance, knowledge, effectiveness, character, communication, cooperation, judgment, and interactions.



The Judith Bailey Scully Award recipient was **Patrick Amelotte**, English instructor. Established by Casper College Alumnus Marlan O. Scully in honor of his wife Judith, the award recognizes faculty who demonstrate academic excellence as characterized by Judith's outstanding accomplishments as a Casper College and University of Wyoming student.



Kendall Jacobs, mathematics instructor, was named the Phi Theta Kappa Terrific Learning Coach of the Year. The award recognizes the instructor who has made a difference in Casper College students' educational careers.

The Shanklin Award is named for longtime Casper College Emeritus psychology instructor Garth Shanklin. The award promotes recognition of a full-time Casper College teaching faculty who displays exceptional commitment to teaching and has made significant contributions to the college. The Shanklin Faculty Leadership Excellence Award winner was **Cassady Hoff**, occupational therapy assistant instructor.



Eric Atkins, world languages instructor, was recognized with the Rosenthal Outstanding Educator Award. To be chosen for the award, the recipient must possess the qualities of an outstanding educator, document participation in professional organizations and/or activities, and take an active role in the community and/or out-of-school cultural activities.



Finally, the Kim Byrd Service to Students Award went to **Jerry Hawkes**, interim vice president of academic affairs at Casper College. The Casper College Student Senate created the monthly Service to Students Award to recognize the outstanding work Casper College nonfaculty employees do to support students and help them become successful. From that list of monthly winners, the student senate chooses a yearly winner.



Lady Thunderbirds' Head Coach Dwight Gunnare Announces Retirement

Women's basketball head **coach Dwight Gunnare** announced his retirement in December 2024, effective June 30, 2025.

Gunnare joined the Casper College program as head coach in 2008. He replaced outgoing head coach Angelo Hill, who resigned to move to New Zealand. Gunnare has been the head coach of the Casper College Lady Thunderbirds longer than anyone else. At the end of the 2023-2024 season, Gunnare's Lady T-Birds had won 425 wins and lost only 98, providing him with a .812 winning percentage rate as a coach. "I certainly couldn't have accomplished that win rate without the dedicated players who have played on this team over the years and the support from the administration and my assistant coach for the last eight seasons, Nate Macy," said Gunnare.

During Gunnare's time as head coach, the team averaged 26.6 wins per season. The team has played in the NJCAA National Tournament eight times, placing fourth in 2010 and ninth in 2011. Team records include the most total rebounds, 1520 during the 2018-19 season; the longest winning streak, 37 games from 2019-2021; and the first undefeated regular season in school history, 20-0 during the 2020-21 season. On November 26, 2022, he hit a historic milestone when he reached his 500th win as a college coach.

Gunnare wants his players to do well on the court and in the classroom. At Casper College, he has had 10 teams receive NJCAA All-Academic recognition and 54 individuals recognized as NJCAA All-Academics.

Before his time at Casper College, the Wagner, South Dakota, native spent 26 years coaching in eastern Montana following his graduation from Black Hills State University in 1982, where he was inducted into that school's Coaching Hall of Fame in 2015.

His coaching prowess and ability to recruit outstanding players grew with his move to Casper. In his first season, he was named the Wyoming Conference Coach of the Year and has been named Region 9 Coach of the Year 12 times, including each of the past seven years. At the end of the 2023-2024 season, the Lady T-Birds were No. 16 in the nation with a 28-5 record. The team also became four-time North Sub-Region

Championship winners and won the Region 9 Women's Basketball Tournament for the third straight year.

Over the 17 years at Casper, several events stand out in Gunnare's mind. The first would be when the team made it to the Final Four in the NJCAA National Tournament in 2010, and a contingent of employees from Casper College rode a bus for 12-plus hours to Salina, Kansas, to cheer the team on. "It felt great representing a place that was willing to organize a bus ride to come to support the coaches and team, which was extremely meaningful," said Gunnare.

The second memorable event came at last year's NJCAA National Tournament, held for the first time in Casper. The Lady Thunderbirds qualified to compete in the tournament thanks to another win as the Region 9 champions and ended the season ranked No. 14 in the country. "I just didn't realize how great of an experience that could be." After winning the first round against No. 19 Blinn College Buccaneers 72-61, the next night, the team played against No. 3 Northwest Florida State Raiders. The Birds lost 76-69, but the experience was like none other. Both nights, Gunnare noted that he felt the crowd's energy and that of the team. "At that last game, 4,000 fans filled the stands. Both nights were an experience a lot of the team had never had in their lifetime. Just to have our team be able to experience that much support was amazing," said Gunnare.

"I feel extremely fortunate for all the experiences that I've been able to have in my career, and I've had great experiences at every one of my stops. I don't think many people can say that they have zero regrets in their career, but I can. I have tremendous memories and feel very fortunate to be able to do this as long as I have. I have loved it, and it's never seemed like a job, said Gunnare."



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