

**What is the Cheyenne Herald? It is a bi-weekly publication that I hesitate to refer to as a "newspaper" but calling it only an "Opinion/Commentary" publication does not adequately describe it either. While much of what appears on these pages is opinion, commentary, and/or essay, much of it is breaking news. When we disclosed that former Cheyenne Police Chief Bob Fecht had purchased, with public money, a master's degree in criminal justice from an unaccredited diploma mill in Mississippi (a for-profit business that was never authorized to issue degrees), that was not an opinion. That was not commentary. That was fact. That was news. On the other side of the coin, when I opine that the latest city attorney isn't up to the job yet, that is my opinion. Because I write virtually everything presented on these pages, bylines are not used. They're not necessary. An article written by someone else will have a byline. The Cheyenne Herald is not a member of the Wyoming Press Association. What is presented here is original. Space is not filled with wire service fodder, comics or crossword puzzles. The Cheyenne Herald is Wyoming's only investigative publication and that distinction is taken seriously.**

*Dave Featherly*

# LCCC prez - No confidence!

Results of a recent survey of 329 LCCC "benefitted employees" have been made public. Or at least the results have been publicly circulated to some extent.

Unlike Alan Simpson, the Cheyenne Herald *does* receive material "over the transom" and the thirteen (13) pages of these survey results and a cover letter are among them.

The findings in this survey are startling. It is obvious that the Laramie County Community College Board of Trustees must take decisive action in the next several weeks. To continue to do nothing is not an option.

As the Introduction indicates, there were two previous surveys, which, when melded into this one, confirm the troubling and continuing problems present at LCCC.

Reference is made to a January 2009 *Learning College Survey* and an August 2009 *Campus Climate Survey*.

A college president described by the Cheyenne Herald as paranoid is just not up to task. He has surrounded himself with headnodders who are not taking the college forward in spite of state funding that has required Wyoming high school graduates to attend community colleges or the sole four-year university in the state. Instead of riding the crest of that forced enrollment, LCCC appears to be being torn apart from within.

The *LCCC Leading and Communicating Action Team* members are named on the materials available on the Cheyenne Herald website. Prompted by the two earlier surveys, a third survey was conducted, beginning on January 19, 2010. The Team focused on three areas of concern shown in the earlier survey(s): Communication, leadership, and trust and respect.

This *Leading and Communicating Survey* was launched in a web-based format but was also made available in paper version for employees who preferred that format. Some may have feared identification from a web-based survey and felt safer responding on paper.

*This story first appeared on the Cheyenne Herald website on March 3, 2010 - Survey results are posted on the Cheyenne Herald website*

Three hundred twenty-nine (329) benefitted employees (employed at the December 2009 payroll and still employed as of January 19, 2010) were invited to participate. Reminders were sent during a ten day window encouraging participation. By the close of the survey period, 218 surveys were submitted - 66.3%, a remarkable response. Responses were tabulated and analyzed.

Conclusions from the survey include:

***There is a perceived climate of fear and distrust.***

Percentages approaching 50% and exceeding 50% Agree or Strongly Agree to: "I am fearful about my job at LCCC," "I am fearful about speaking my mind at LCCC," and "I would be afraid to file a complaint or grievance."

***Respondents were perceived to be unclear about the functions of the President's Cabinet.***

In addition to negative responses about the performance of the President's Cabinet, a high percentage of responses (up to 47.20%) were "Don't Know." Any subset of management wherein those affected don't know what they a management group does or how it affects employees is ineffective and not worth continuing. A survey question that did garner a high percentage of "Agree or Strongly Agree" was "Members of President's Cabinet are too busy to spend meaningful time with employees," which produced a response of 39.40% in agreement.

A very telling inquiry was: "If members of President's Cabinet make mistakes, they will admit to them." Only 7.80% agreed with that statement. 86.70% disagreed or did not know.

***There is perceived dissatisfaction with communication from members of President's Cabinet, as well as accessibility of the members.***

Nearly three-quarters of respondents did not agree that "Communications from President's Cabinet are adequate for me to know what is going on in the organization."

This *L&C Survey* describes rudderless leadership

*There are perceived breakdowns in communication among departments.*

Within LCCC, survey respondents (less than one in five) think, "There is good communication among departments," yet two in five think "there is good communication between my department and the administration."

***Employees perceive that policies and procedures are not enforced equitably or in a timely manner.***

Only about one in four believe they are. Three-fourths believe they are *not*.

***There is a perceived lack of confidence and trust in president's leadership.***

Consistently in this survey, half or more either believe Darrel Hammon is doing a poor job or have no response.

In response to "The president is truthful," 64.20% either said "Disagree or Strongly Disagree" (42.20%) or "Don't Know" (22.00%).

Over two-thirds do not have confidence in his decisions or did not know (56.40%, 11.50%). The highest levels of dissatisfaction came with the questions: "I have confidence in the leadership of the president" (58.30% disagreed or strongly disagreed) and "I am comfortable raising any concerns of issues with the president (58.70%). Fewer than one in five responded that the president will own up to mistakes he makes (19.80%).

There is another level of bureaucracy between these survey results and the Board of Trustees. The Action Team has requested the Quality Council to present these findings to the LCCC Board of Trustees. They also ask that this survey be an annual offering. Should this president survive until next January, this survey will never again be offered. Count on that. Paranoia does not allow criticism without retribution.

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## The Jessica Venable Compassion Fund

Several readers of the Cheyenne Herald have asked me to let them know when they could contribute funds to help Jessica Venable buy the necessities she otherwise would have to do without while she's confined. To provide money for her personal account in the Lusk Women's Center, one has to be on her approved visitor's list. I have been approved and have three times forwarded money donated by Cheyenne Herald readers and my wife and myself to her. If you want to help, please send a check to the Cheyenne Herald at the address below. I will convert donations to the necessary money order to send up there in her name. She is assured of having adequate money to at least buy the basic things she's had to do without - through the generosity and concern of Herald readers to date - but if you also want to be involved, you can now do so. You can also send her a card or note. Contact me for her mailing address. And, on behalf of Jessica, I thank you.