



**Dennis Griffin**  
President  
College of Western Idaho

Assessing a community's needs and creating programs to meet these needs are the cornerstones of every effective community college. Developing the College of Western Idaho into the best possible resource for the Treasure Valley requires an ongoing commitment to community outreach, combined with research of the best academic practices available.

Over the past few months, members of the College of Western Idaho's Board of Trustees and our leadership team have been connecting with community members at Rotary Clubs, chamber of commerce events and other speaking engagements across the Treasure Valley. These events were great opportunities to deliver updates on CWI's progress, and were extremely valuable to us because of the feedback we've received about how the College of Western Idaho can best support the needs of our community.

One resounding message we have heard over and over again has been how diverse the Treasure Valley is—from the variety of cultures represented within our population to the geography that spans the rural areas and the more urban core of Idaho's capital. Clearly, CWI needs to meet a wide range of needs to best serve our students, existing and prospective businesses, and other members of our community. We are aggressively taking steps to ensure we meet this challenge.

Late last month, our board and leadership team traveled to Rio Salado College in Tempe, Arizona. Rio Salado is one of the fastest growing community colleges in the nation and is part of the Maricopa County Community College System, which includes ten different community colleges across the Phoenix metropolitan area. Visiting Rio Salado enabled us to gain insight into the ways it serves a diverse, growing population with a variety of needs.

Rio Salado is a leading online education provider for the immediate community and beyond. More than 43 percent of its 60,000 students are served through online education channels with hundreds of on-line courses available, as well as certificate and degree programs. Students also have extensive online access to registration, technical and instructional help desks, an extensive library, tutoring, career counseling, financial aid, and other community college services. Rio Salado's online competencies are complemented by on-site and workforce training opportunities, reinforcing that there will always be a need to receive on-site, hands-on training, and academic transfer classes.

As we look ahead to developing the College of Western Idaho into a 21st century college, we see opportunities to build competencies similar to Rio Salado while remaining mindful that there will always be a need for classrooms and venues for hands-on technical training. CWI needs to offer a variety of education and training alternatives to best serve the needs of the Treasure Valley. We are committed to seeking community input and continually researching the best ways to deliver what our neighbors, friends, co-workers and local businesses need to achieve their full potential.

## Community Outreach

Are you interested in having someone from CWI speak to your group, business or organization? Please contact Shirl Boyce Jr. via phone at (208) 562-2113 or at [shirlboycejr@cwidaho.cc](mailto:shirlboycejr@cwidaho.cc).

## In The News

[CWI weighs benefits](#)  
Idaho Press Tribune

[New community college seeks aid in accreditation process](#)  
LocalNews8.com (Idaho Falls)

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