

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Monday, July 17, 2023 1:59:55 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: Iris.Stewart@dri.edu

Name: Iris Stewart

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Item 3. Appointment, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

The views and opinions expressed herein are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer. I am writing in support of the appointment of Keri Nikolajewski as Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents. I have worked with Keri for the last 8 years when my Institution hosts the Board for a quarterly meeting and on all of our institutional submissions to the Board of Regents. I have always found her to be professional, conscientious, and very hardworking.

When I first started at DRI, I was unfamiliar with the Board of Regents submission processes and Keri was extremely helpful and took the time to answer questions. Keri's guidance and in-depth knowledge of Board policy and procedures was welcomed and made our submissions more efficient. Keri works hard to make all Board meetings run smoothly and that starts with the submission of agenda items as well as the logistics of the meetings itself. Keri is truly an asset to NSHE.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Monday, July 17, 2023 2:32:18 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: deb.conrad@wnc.edu

Name: Deb Conrad

Representing someone other than yourself?: n/a

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Agenda Item 3: Appointment, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

I am writing to you today to support the appointment of Keri D. Nikolajewski to the Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents position. I have had the pleasure of working with Ms. Nikolajewski since I began at WNC in December of 2015 as the Assistant to the President. She is knowledgeable, professional, firm when needed, yet always fair. She is calm and collected even during challenging moments. She has been a dedicated NSHE employee for many, many years. From the outside looking in, she has proven to be an effective Chief of Staff to the Board during the time she has served in the role on an interim basis and there is no doubt in my mind that she will continue to exceed expectations in the position.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)



July 11, 2023

Dear Board of Regents,

The below listed members of the leadership team of Truckee Meadows Community College are in support of President Hilgersom's request to extend her contract. President Hilgersom has led the College during a very difficult time in our history. Despite those challenges, she achieved many of our long-term goals such as: HSI designation for TMCC, establishing our first Diversity Student Center (DISCO), elevating our CTE programs, expanding our veterans programs, exceling during the TMCC accreditation, and establishing the first TMCC Soccer Program. In addition, thanks to her leadership and involvement with the community, millions of dollars in private gifts have been raised that have resulted in transformative renovations and expansions throughout the College. These are only a few highlights under her leadership; moreover, her innovative and forward thinking has prepared TMCC and propelled us toward a sustainable campus for the future! TMCC is the first and currently the only 100% renewable energy powered college campus in Nevada. President Hilgersom is not only innovative but also passionate about the mission of community colleges and the diverse students that they serve. We have been very fortunate in the last seven years to have a leader who has worked tirelessly to promote TMCC and navigate an unprecedented time.

Extending President Hilgersom's contract is beneficial not only to TMCC but also the community and the NSHE system as a whole. In addition, this extension will provide stability as NSHE continues its permanent Chancellor search. Thank you for your consideration.

With much respect,

Dr. Jeffrey Alexander
Vice President of Academic Affairs

Estela Gutierrez
Vice President of Student Services and Diversity

Mike Peyerl
Vice President of Finance and
Government Relations

Gretchen Sawyer
Executive Director of Foundation and Grants

Dr. Ayodele Akinola
Executive Director of Facilities Operations and
Capital Planning

Melissa Olsen
Executive Assistant to the President

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 3:55:33 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: yallen@tmcc.edu

Name: YeVonne Allen

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: #9. ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT, TMCC
PRESIDENT KARIN M. HILGERSOM

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

Hello Board of Regents, Please consider this my public comment in support of Agenda Item #9. President Hilgersom has led TMCC since 2016, and has had a successful track-record for the college. President Hilgersom effectively navigated us through the pandemic, and provides TMCC the encouragement to be the best college for our students. Not only does President Hilgersom deserve her request of the one-year extension on her contract, it is also the right thing to do. I believe TMCC needs the consistency of retaining President Hilgersom with this extension. I also think NSHE will benefit from this consistency. Waiving the periodic evaluation and having an annual evaluation instead is aligned with NSHE policy. Thank you!

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 7:13:11 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: mindyreno@gmail.com

Name: Mindy Lokshin

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Agenda Item 9

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

Dear Board of Regents,

I am writing to you in full support of the 1 year extension of the contract for TMCC President Karin Hilgersom.

I have been a member of the TMCC Foundation Board since 2017 and have enjoyed working with Dr. Hilgersom over the 6 years. She has always been accessible, professional and appreciative of the work of the Foundation and Board.

The past 6 years have had significant challenges with budgetary issues and then the pandemic. Throughout it all, Dr. Hilgersom has been instrumental in moving TMCC into the forefront of education in our area. She has overseen tremendous growth in the nursing and robotics programs. In addition, she has poised TMCC to nimbly meet the needs of our local industries, coordinating with Tesla, Panasonic and others to create educational programs which strengthen the local work force.

I urge you to approve the 1 year extension of Dr. Hilgersom's contract.

Sincerely,
Mindy Lokshin, MD

Chair, TMCC Foundation Board

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 9:19:58 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: yhavez@tmcc.edu

Name: Yuli Chavez Camarena

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: 9. ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION AGREEMENT, TMCC PRESIDENT KARIN M. HILGERSOM

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

I am writing this letter to express my wholehearted support for the extension of President Karin Hilgersom's contract at Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC). Having had the privilege of working closely with President Hilgersom for the past seven years, I can confidently attest to her exceptional leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the success of our college and its students.

President Hilgersom is a leader who understands the value of fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. I have personally experienced multiple occasions where Dr. Hilgersom has gone above and beyond to make every team member feel seen, heard, and valued. Whether it's taking the time to learn our names, remembering important details about us, or opening her office and home to celebrate milestones, she consistently demonstrates her commitment to building meaningful relationships and fostering a sense of belonging.

Beyond her interpersonal skills, President Hilgersom is a visionary leader with clear goals for advancing TMCC and ensuring the success of its students. Even during the challenging times of the pandemic, she led with empathy and compassion while maintaining high expectations for our resilience and capabilities. Her unwavering support for diverse communities ensures that TMCC remains an inclusive institution that embraces students from all walks of life.

In light of the exceptional leadership that President Hilgersom has consistently demonstrated, I wholeheartedly support the extension of her contract. TMCC needs stability and consistency, and we require a strong advocate who is intimately familiar with our college, genuinely

supports our students, and tirelessly advocates for the well-being of our staff. President Hilgersom embodies all these qualities and more.

Thank you for considering my support for extending President Karin Hilgersom's contract. I firmly believe that her continued leadership will contribute to the ongoing success and growth of TMCC.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education (<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 9:26:59 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: ebullis@tmcc.edu

Name: Eric Bullis

Representing someone other than yourself?: TMCC Faculty Senate

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Item #9 – Dr. Hilgersom's request for extension

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

I support President Hilgersom's request for a 1 year extension of employment.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 1:01:58 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: syoung2@msn.com

Name: Scott Young

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Item 3

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

My name is Scott Young. From 2013 until 2015, I had the privilege of serving as Deputy Chief of Staff under Chief of Staff Scott Wasserman and, upon Scott's retirement in early 2015, as Acting Chief of Staff until Scott's successor, Dean Gould, was hired in the fall of 2015. Before retiring in January 2016, I helped Dean transition into his position as Chief of Staff and Special Counsel to the Board. Dean asked me for recommendations about my replacement. I told him it was not essential to hire another attorney for the Deputy Chief position since the Office of the NSHE General Counsel provides legal services to the Board. Instead, I highly recommended he promote Keri Nikolajewski. I am pleased Dean carried through with that recommendation.

I worked closely with Keri on a daily basis. I was impressed with her knowledge of all aspects of Board operations. In addition, she constantly demonstrated an outstanding attention to detail; this trait is crucially important when overseeing agendas and postings in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting law as well as changes to the Board of Regents Handbook and in carrying out the Board's directives.

Keri has a constantly pleasant disposition and treats everyone with respect and patience; even under stress, which is common in her position, she never fails to maintain her composure and cheerful attitude. It is also of inestimable value to have a leader possessed of a long institutional knowledge with the Board; someone who knows why policies were adopted, the discussions and debates leading to their adoption, which policies and actions have needed modification and why, can provide perspective to the Board that gives it an advantage as it

faces the multitude of issues constantly facing a dynamic institution like NSHE. There is no substitute for experience. Keri is that person. She is loyal, dedicated and trustworthy, a valuable asset to the Board, NHSE personnel and, most importantly, the students.

Respectfully submitted

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 1:20:27 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: kyle.kaalberg@unlv.edu

Name: Kyle Kaalberg

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: 3. Appointment, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

I work in the President's Office at UNLV and throughout my 12 years in this capacity, I have had a plethora of opportunities to interact and work with Keri – an individual who is dedicated to NSHE. She demonstrates the highest levels of professionalism and is a skilled leader. She provides clear vision, direction, and feedback, and she is attentive to details. In addition, Keri has been a pleasure to work with and is a trusted and valued colleague. I am in support of her appointment today as Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 2:02:06 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: dfsingleton78@gmail.com

Name: David Singleton

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: APPOINTMENT, CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

I am submitting this comment in full support of the appointment of Ms. Keri Nikolajewski as the Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents. In the five years that I have known Ms. Nikolajewski as a friend and a colleague, she has demonstrated nothing but utmost professionalism and class in her roles with the Board. She has served the Board well in an interim capacity multiple times, and has spent over 20 years with the Nevada System of Higher Education, working with nearly 50 regents in that period of time. That kind of commitment, and institutional history and longevity is hard to come by in this day and age. We need that. You, as a board, need that kind of stability behind the scenes.

There has been enough instability and turnover with NSHE as a whole over the last few years in general, and with the Board's Chief of Staff position in particular. There is a person, serving in an interim capacity who has not only demonstrated that she is capable of doing the work, but also wants to do the work. Who is in it for the long haul. The prudent thing to do—the right thing to do—is to remove the interim label and appoint her as the Chief of Staff so that you, as a Board, can focus on hiring a Special Counsel, and then focus on making sure that the Nevada System of Higher Education reaches its full potential.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 3:19:16 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: ccroysdill@tmcc.edu

Name: Connie Croysdill

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: President Hilgersom has asked for the employment extension to July 1, 2025 and waiver of the required annual evaluation.

In Favor / Opposed / Other: No Position stated – Concerned or Neutral

Comment:

Within TMCC, faculty members have voiced multiple concerns and comments to the NFA, some of which are listed below:

- 1) This diminishes confidence among the faculty that she is committed to her leadership role
- 2) Some faculty believe this demonstrates that she is not committed to the institution
- 3) Concern that this is taking place during the summer when faculty are largely unaware
- 4) The President should leave at the end of her current contract so the college can move on to the next chapter
- 5) Without the comprehensive periodic evaluation, the President will only be evaluated by a brand new interim chancellor or officer in charge without adequate background knowledge
- 6) The President hasn't actually announced her retirement and her request should not be approved before she makes that commitment.

Is she taking advantage of the currently approved COLA to increase her retirement pay and benefits prior to the end-of-employment contract? Is this a ploy to get her another 4-year-extension without having to complete the scheduled performance evaluation since she has not announced her retirement?

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 10:48:41 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: marclem.hernandez1@gmail.com

Name: Marclem Hernandez

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: 3

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

Keri Nikolajewski was a wonderful colleague and an extremely knowledgeable public servant. NSHE is very fortunate to have her as its BOR chief of staff.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 7:50:53 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: nicholas@vaskov.com

Name: Nicholas Vaskov

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Item #3 – Appointment of Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

It is my pleasure to offer public comment in support of the appointment of Keri Nikolajewski as Chief of Staff to the Board.

I have known Keri more than 10 years – dating back to when I first served as System Council. We worked closely almost daily on issues ranging from agenda preparation to Board governance. Keri’s knowledge of Board policy was second to none – and I always sought out, leaned on, and valued her opinion.

I know firsthand from working in the System Office that the position of Chief of Staff is a challenging one. The duties are diverse and include everything from agenda management to open meeting law compliance, to serving as corporate secretary, and even “travel agent” for members of the Board. But for several reasons, I am confident that no person is better prepared than Keri to serve and succeed as your Chief of Staff.

First, Keri is easy to work with and is the consummate professional. She brings a team-first approach to her work, she manages and leads from a human level, and she promotes joy in the workplace. When others are cynical about the role of higher education in society or the ability of NSHE to accomplish important things – Keri is not.

Second, Keri has successfully performed the job for the past 2 and half years. I think it is fair

to say that the past few years have been a time of immense change and challenge for the System Office and the Board. Through it all, Keri has been a rock – and is a rare and valuable source of institutional knowledge. In addition, as Interim Chief of Staff, she assumed duties that in the past had been spread among several members of staff. Because of that, and in recognition of her loyalty and long service to this Board – I encourage you to offer Keri a salary that is more than the “minimum of the grade” established for the position. Doing so would send a strong signal to the entire NSHE staff (and women in particular) that this Board recognizes and rewards high performance.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 9:53:35 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: jon.carpineta@csn.edu

Name: Jon Carpineta

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Agenda Item 3 – Appointment, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

Appoint Interim Chief of Staff Keri D. Nikolajewski to serve as Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents at a level that is at least the current classification of a grade three (3) on the NSHE Executive Salary Schedule that corresponds to her level of education and experience. Thank you.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 10:27:07 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: jcovert@tmcc.edu

Name: Jody Covert DNP, MSN, RN

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Agenda Item 9- One Year Extension of Employment Agreement

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

I am writing to express my full support for the one year contract extension for TMCC President, Dr. Karin Hilgersom.

President Hilgersom has led TMCC since 2016 and has been a fervent advocate for the college, programs, faculty and staff. She is always professional, caring and accessible to the Nursing program. She has been our advocate since day one.

Dr. Hilgersom led the college through the pandemic allowing our mission to be fulfilled when so many other colleges simply shut their doors. She proved that she is always thinking about the students, her top priority. Her one year extension should be granted to ensure consistency within the college during the continued search for the new Chancellor.

I firmly believe that her continued leadership will contribute to the college's continued success.

Dr. Jody Covert

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)



OFFICE OF
CEDRIC CREAR
COUNCILMAN, WARD 5

July 21, 2023

To Board of Regents,

I am writing to express my support for Keri D. Nikolajewski as your next Regents Chief of Staff for NSHE.

Having served as a Regent for 12 years, I have seen Keri grow into the professional, knowledgeable, calm, and collected employee she is today.

She has served the Board for 21 years and has proven her abilities in the most challenging times. She is a valuable source of knowledge in Board operations, Open Meeting Law, policy, and procedure. She also treats everyone with respect and patience during the good and bad times.

Keri works collectively with the Regents, System Staff, Presidents, Institutional Staff, and students. She has provided leadership as the Interim Chief of Staff for the past 2 ½ years, and she deserves this opportunity.

It is my hope that Keri will receive the promotion to Chief of Staff for NSHE.

If you should require more information about my support for Keri, please contact me at 702.229.5443 or by email at ccrear@lasvegasnevada.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cedric Crear", is written over a horizontal line.

Cedric Crear
Las Vegas Councilman, Ward 5

CITY OF LAS VEGAS
495 S. MAIN ST.
LAS VEGAS, NV 89101
702.229.5443 | VOICE
702.464.2600 | FAX
711 | TTY
ccrear@lasvegasnevada.gov



cityoflasvegas
lasvegasnevada.gov

Public Comment from Scott Wasserman

Re: July 21, 2023, Board of Regents Meeting, In Favor of Agenda Item No. 3

I am providing testimony in support of item number 3 on the Board of Regent's July 21, 2023, agenda for the Board's consideration of the appointment of Interim Chief of Staff Keri Nikolajewski to serve as the Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents. To provide context to my remarks, I served as the Board's Secretary and then Chief Executive Officer and Special Counsel for a period of approximately ten years. I understand that the Board recently took action to move the Special Counsel duties back to the System Administration's Chief General Counsel's Office and is now considering the appointment of Keri Nikolajewski to serve as the Chief of Staff to the Board.

Having worked with Keri during my entire tenure in the Board Office, I am personally aware of Keri's dedication to the Board of Regents, her highly qualified skills for the position, her strong integrity and her unwavering work ethic. Keri is uniquely qualified to be successful in the position of Chief of Staff, as she understands the operations of the Board of Regents, as well as the role of the individual Regents, she thoroughly knows the operation of the Board Office, and the interaction of the Board Office with the System, the campuses, other public officials and the general public. Given her role in the Board Office for almost 20 years, Keri has a vast amount of experience and knowledge of the complex issues that the Board has and will continue to face.

As Regents, you are all well aware of and appreciate that the Board Office has a very limited staff and there are many demands on the staff to be able to perform all of the duties of the office in a timely manner. The Board's staff cannot perform these tasks without a leader who not only has the skills and knowledge to perform the position, but also the professionalism, work ethic and integrity to lead her colleagues. While I personally know from my tenure in the Board Office that Keri possess these qualities, I was incredibly impressed when I recently saw long serving members of Keri's staff testify under public comment in support of her earlier appointment as the Interim Chief of Staff. This testimony impressed on me the respect and esteem her own staff has in Keri, even as she led a staff that has many demands on them. It is vitally important to the Board's operation to have a cohesive and well working staff in the Board office and Keri has and will continue to provide that leadership.

I enjoyed my tenure at NSHE with the Board of Regents, and continue to hope for the best for the entire System. I know that appointing Keri Nikolajewski as the Chief of Staff will ensure a Board Office that is run smoothly, cohesively and efficiently. Most importantly, it will be run by a person who knows better than anyone, all of the operations of the Board Office.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments in support of the appointment of Keri Nikolajewski as the Board's Chief of Staff,

Scott Wasserman, Chief Executive Officer and Special Counsel-Emeritus to the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 2:09:06 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: bsummerhill@tmcc.edu

Name: Bradley Summerhill

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Item 11. Update on Dual Enrollment

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Opposition

Comment:

The information on "High School Instructor Qualifications" is disturbingly vague. It is clear that this policy is more about a money grab than offering disenfranchised students actual access to college level education. If it weren't a simple money grab, then NSHE would close the door definitively on the possibility that unqualified instructors will be teaching college level courses. By long established national standards, college instructors are required to have a master's degree in the discipline being taught. Every accredited institution in the nation holds this standard. NSHE is clearly planning to allow unqualified instructors to teach these courses. In some cases, the instructors may have a bachelor's degree in the discipline and in other cases, apparently, they may not even have a bachelor's degree. This is academic fraud. It is a sham. Empowering and enfranchising students does not and cannot involve such a baldy shameful policy that deprives Nevada's youth of a genuine and authentic college level course. As a community college professor, I wholeheartedly support valid dual enrollment initiatives. This is not one of them. And I challenge any chief academic officer of any institution to explain to me and to you, the Board, how these vague "aspirational" statements are sufficient to support such an important policy. My version of academia values truth, honesty, and integrity, so let's discuss "high school instructor qualifications" with openness, honesty, and integrity. I am truly curious how any chief academic officer, or faculty member, of any accredited institution could support this proposal in its current state.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 2:18:35 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: danijean@nvcbell.net

Name: Dani Chandler

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: #3

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

Hello to the Board of Regents, My name is Dani Chandler and I worked for NSHE/SCS for 31 years, 20 of those years, I worked with Keri Nikolajewski, and the majority of our work together was supporting BOR meetings and business needs. Keri has more knowledge of the Board of Regents intricate policies, procedures and the daily operations for the BOR than most, possibly even the majority of the Regents themselves. She is professional, knowledgeable, courteous, fair, honest and she works harder than most people I know. The Board would have a tough time finding someone more qualified as Keri to be their Chief of Staff. I have no doubt that Keri would be an asset to the Board and would truly be dedicated to doing an excellent job in her duties as Chief of Staff. Thank you for your time and consideration on this agenda item. Sincerely, Dani Chandler, NSHE Retiree

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 4:56:06 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: mytita2009@gmail.com

Name: TONI ODOM-MCNEIL

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: APPOINTMENT, CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

I have watched Keri Nikolajewski grow into the leader we see today. Think about this for just a moment — if the position description for Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents was posted, there would be quite a few applicants, but Ms. Nikolajewski would be the one applicant that checks every box. Keri possesses the education (check), she's a Nevada resident (check), she has experience working with a board (check), experience working with multiple supervisors (check), excellent verbal and writing skills (check), leadership skills (check), supervisory skills (check), technology skills (check), 21 years NSHE experience (check). If not Keri Nikolajewski, then who????

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 6:13:08 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: susan.enfield@washoeschools.net

Name: Dr. Susan Enfield

Representing someone other than yourself?: Washoe County School District

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Item 11 – Update on Dual Enrollment

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

At the Washoe County School District, we believe in doing whatever it takes to provide opportunities for our student to be successful academically and personally.

We are committed to being open to all avenues and to exploring all opportunities to provide our students with challenging and enriching experiences. As part of this commitment to our students, we have partnered with the University of Nevada, Reno to provide an opportunity for students to experience university level coursework and build confidence that they are prepared for success in a university environment.

Our partnership with UNR has given us the opportunity to build a concurrent enrollment program that is immediately scalable and has the potential to become available to students district-wide in the near future.

Along with this program meeting our needs in terms of scalability, we share a belief with our partners at UNR, that our highly qualified high school educators should be fairly compensated for their work in this space. UNR has demonstrated that they share this value and that our teachers are viewed and respected as true colleagues with their university counterparts.

Our concurrent enrollment partnership with UNR will start with five high schools for the 23/24 school year. Together, we are offering our students courses in English, Math, History,

Political Science, Spanish, Psychology, and Economics.

Again, we believe the result of this work and this partnership will provide opportunities for students to experience success in university level coursework as well as help to prepare them for whichever direction they may choose after graduation.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments today and also for allowing me to express our gratitude for our partnership with UNR to provide this opportunity for our students and teachers.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 8:21:18 PM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: lizcollins525@gmail.com

Name: Elizabeth Collins

Representing someone other than yourself?: n/a

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Item 3: Appointment, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

Keri Nikolajewski should be appointed Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents. She has the experience, knowledge, patience and professionalism for the job. As someone who works in higher education and who has known Keri for years I know that you are never going to find another person with the desire or ability to support the Board of Regents.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Friday, July 21, 2023 12:07:31 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: ljensen@tmcc.edu

Name: Lars Jensen

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: Agenda Item 9

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Opposition

Comment:

Based on President Hilgersom's performance over 7 years at the college, a performance that the President herself does not want to be evaluated on, I strongly oppose any extension of her contract.

President Hilgersom's request for an extension was not made at least 12 months prior to the end of contract (7/1/24), and hence the deadline for requests has been exceeded. To consider the request now would violate NSHE code. I hope the BOR will follow its own rules when considering this agenda item. Also a request like this should never be voted on at a special summer meeting where most faculty is off contract and hence unable to comment. The request could have been properly made before a Spring 2023 meeting and considered then, when faculty were on-contract. By placing this item on a summer meeting agenda, the BOR is sending the message that they don't care to hear what faculty thinks about the matter. Not listening to all involved parties violates the spirit of shared governance that is demanded in the NSHE handbook and TMCC Bylaws, and it prevents the BOR from making an informed decision. So please don't consider this untimely request. Rather, the BOR must conduct a periodical evaluation, as prescribed by its own code in Title 1, Section 4.c of the NSHE Handbook, before any decisions on changes or extensions to President Hilgersom's contract can be considered.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Friday, July 21, 2023 7:02:31 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: joe.sunbury@icloud.com

Name: Joe Sunbury

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: 3. APPOINTMENT, CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

Good morning- My viewpoints are my own and based largely on experiences in a previous role, which also reported directly to this Board.

I am submitting my support for a “Yes” vote on item #3, Appointment, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents. The Interim Chief of Staff has successfully served in this role for a lengthy period of time, and prior to that served in a Deputy Chief of Staff role holding many similar duties. With the Board’s decision in April 2023 to move in a direction that splits the position of Chief of Staff and Special Counsel into two separate roles, this appointment is an efficient and effective choice.

Previous interactions with the Interim Chief of Staff usually revolved around submission of materials for Board and Committee meetings. Expectations were always communicated clearly and professionally. Procedural or policy questions were always addressed, often in the middle of a busy day, or an evening or weekend. Based on my observations and interactions, it is apparent that the Interim Chief of Staff takes her commitment to this Board very seriously, and takes pride in serving you well.

I recall a presentation given to the Board in a January 2023 orientation, where the Board Office touted its primary objectives, which included ensuring the business of the Board is transparent and accessible to the public—to my knowledge, the current Interim Chief of Staff

and her team have served admirably in those important and critical efforts.

That same presentation offered a “by the numbers” for the previous year, which was quite eye-opening given the size of the team. Supporting dozens of public meetings, compiling 1,000’s of pages of reference material, codifying dozens of policies, and handling 100’s of administrative support duties for 13 Regents as they perform their important business in the state.

I know very few people who have served the Board with as much dedication as the Interim Chief of Staff. She will continue to serve you well.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education (<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Friday, July 21, 2023 8:01:06 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: hammettreno@gmail.com

Name: Julia Hammett

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR POSSIBLE ACTION AGREEMENT, TMCC PRESIDENT KARIN M. HILGERSOM

In Favor / Opposed / Other: No Position stated – Concerned or Neutral

Comment:

I apologize for not getting comments to you sooner, but I'm running a summer field course and I'm in the field with students most days. The great majority of TMCC faculty are off contract, and I suspect most are unaware of this proposal being considered to extend Dr. Hilgersom's contract, possibly without an evaluation. Frankly I think we all find the timing of this proposal remarkable because just a few months ago, when we were all still on contract, faculty leadership was given assurances by Dr. Hilgersom and the Chancellor that the evaluation process for Dr. Hilgersom was most definitely happening.

It appears NSHE has been provided a choice for her departure date. I agree with those advocating for a process that leads to a 2-year departure for Dr. Hilgersom, because 2 is less than 5. I also believe that the evaluation process is very important and is legally required by the NSHE Code. Everyone should be accountable through a regular evaluation process. Another strong rationale for her evaluation is the comprehensive Climate Survey that was recently done by the Nevada Faculty Alliance for all the NSHE institutions. The Climate Survey results made it abundantly clear that TMCC has a serious morale problem, and that the great majority of employees attribute a big part of it to the administrative leadership.

To summarize, I think that the evaluation is important and is required, however, I don't believe the evaluation should become a deal breaker and should not impact the date of her

departure. She has expressed a desire to leave the college and we fully support her in this matter, sooner rather than later.

Thank you for considering my views.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education
(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

From: [WordPress](#)
To: [Keri Nikolajewski](#); [Angela Palmer](#); [Winter Lipson](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023
Date: Friday, July 21, 2023 8:26:26 AM

Public comment submitted through NSHE Online form

Public Comment for Board of Regents Special Meeting, July 21, 2023

Email: lauraobe@gmail.com

Name: Laura Obrist

Representing someone other than yourself?:

Meeting: Board of Regents Special Meeting

Meeting Date: July 21, 2023

Agenda Item: APPOINTMENT, CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

In Favor / Opposed / Other: In Favor

Comment:

I would like to express my full support of the appointment of Keri Nikolajewski as the Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents. I have had the pleasure of working with Keri at System Administration for four years, and I have always been incredibly impressed with her unwavering dedication to her work, as well as her unparalleled professionalism and compassion for her colleagues. Keri truly cares about her job, and I cannot imagine anyone else doing it better. Keri has worked for the Nevada System of Higher Education for over 20 years, dutifully serving every Regent who has served on the Board throughout her long tenure. She has also successfully served as Chief of Staff in an interim capacity, multiple times, demonstrating how committed and uniquely qualified she is for the role. The Chief of Staff position, which has experienced a great deal of instability over the years, would greatly benefit from Keri's extensive experience, dedication, and expertise. Keri has shown us that she very much can and wants to do the job, for the duration of her career. So, appointing her as the Chief of Staff undoubtedly feels like the wise choice. It would honor and reward Keri's many years of hard work and dedication to the NSHE mission, and it would provide us with the stability and competence that we need from that role.

Agreed that all the information above is true and accurate: Yes

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Nevada System of Higher Education

(<https://nshe.nevada.edu>)

Good morning. Angela Palmer, P A L M E R, and I will speak on Agenda Item 3, Appointment, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents.

Keri D. Nikolajewski has worked admirably and tirelessly for this Board for 21 years in several positions and the past 2 ½ as your Interim Chief of Staff. This position has a daunting amount of responsibility, but Keri's attention to detail in Board operations, policy and procedure, and the Open Meeting Law are unparalleled. Keri is willing, ready, and able to serve this Board with the highest quality of professionalism. I support this appointment 100% and look forward to helping her provide the highest quality of service to this Board.

I thought it was important to highlight comments from Scott Wasserman.

He said, "Having worked with Keri during my entire tenure in the Board Office, I am personally aware of Keri's dedication to the Board of Regents, her highly qualified skills for the position, her strong integrity and her unwavering work ethic. Keri is uniquely qualified to be successful in the position of Chief of Staff, as she understands the operations of the Board of Regents, as well as the role of the individual Regents, she thoroughly knows the operation of the Board Office, and the interaction of the Board Office with the System, the campuses, other public officials and the general public. Given her role in the Board Office for almost 20 years, Keri has a vast amount of experience and knowledge of the complex issues that the Board has and will continue to face."

I encourage the Board to review the 13 public comment submissions supporting this nomination; past and present leadership, coworkers, and friends all support this appointment because they know Keri is the right person for this job. I also want to note that many current employees hesitated to provide public comment, but I promise you Keri has an army standing with her, ready to help her succeed in this position.

Thank you.

July 21, 2023, BOR Special Meeting – Public Comment, Item 3 – Appointment, Chief of Staff to the BOR
(Winter Lipson – In Favor)

Good morning, Regents. My name is Winter Lipson, L-I-P-S-O-N. I stand before you to voice my support for my boss, Keri Nikolajewski, to be permanently appointed as Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents. In August 2020, Keri assumed the Chief of Staff duties while still employed as the Deputy Chief of Staff. In January 2021, she was officially appointed as Interim Chief of Staff and has been serving as interim for over two years. At this year's April 21, special meeting, the Board voted to split the Chief of Staff and Special Counsel position. Now it is time to rally around Keri, support and reward her dedication and leadership as that would only continue to benefit and strengthen the Board and the System. With that, I would like to take this time to highlight some comments submitted by Keri's current and former colleagues.

Former Acting Chief of Staff Scott Young wrote: "I worked closely with Keri daily. I was impressed with her knowledge of all aspects of Board operations. It is also of inestimable value to have a leader possessed of a long institutional knowledge with the Board. There is no substitute for experience. Keri is that person."

A 12-year executive at UNLV shared: "She demonstrates the highest levels of professionalism and is a skilled leader. She provides clear vision, direction, and feedback, and she is attentive to details."

A colleague in the System office said: "She has served the Board well in an interim capacity multiple times and has spent over 20 years with the Nevada System of Higher Education, working with nearly 50 regents in that period of time. That kind of commitment, and institutional history and longevity is hard to come by in this day and age. You, as a board, need that kind of stability behind the scenes."

Former NSHE General Counsel and Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs Nick Vaskov stated: "Keri's knowledge of Board policy was second to none – and I always sought out, leaned on, and valued her opinion. I know firsthand from working in the System Office that the position of Chief of Staff is a challenging one. I am confident that no person is better prepared than Keri to serve and succeed as your Chief of Staff. When others are cynical about the role of higher education in society or the ability of NSHE to accomplish important things – Keri is not."

That last statement is an important note to leave off on because it's true. At times being a public servant is not easy and when the going gets tough, one can start to lose faith in this line of work. Keri is the person I turn to when I feel downtrodden in my job. No matter how challenging things become, and we have had some very difficult times over the past few years, Keri's faith in the Board and the System has never wavered. Allow Keri the opportunity to own this job and lead our department within a permanent capacity. Let's move forward with this so we can be successful in supporting you as you support NSHE and the state of Nevada.