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Until new college gets accreditation, CSI insignia will be on diploma

Graduates from CWI will get their diplomas from CSI

Until the College of Western Idaho becomes an accredited institution, its graduates will receive diplomas that include the College of Southern Idaho insignia.

At Monday night's board meeting, CSI trustees and administration officials discussed the process of CWI functioning on its own. Jeff Fox, CSI's chief academic officer, said that won't happen until at least fall 2013 or possibly a year later.

"Have we discussed putting our name small and 'College of Western Idaho' big on the diplomas, just for parents who have paid for their kids to attend CWI?" asked LeRoy Craig, chairman of the CSI Board of Trustees.

President Jerry Beck said it's been considered but no plans have been formed to change fonts or type size. "CWI is a fine institution, and they'll be just fine," Beck said. "At the same time, we will be really happy in 2013 or 2014 when they become accredited."

Mike Mason, CSI vice president of administration, expounded Tuesday on how the partnership between the two community colleges works.

"I don't think it has affected student enrollment at all. We're up 14 percent this year, but they (CWI) aren't accredited, so we have to do a certain amount of administrative work. They can't give out financial aid, for example," Mason said.

Fox talked about the process of functioning as the oversight institution until CWI has accreditation, emphasizing that it's far more detailed and complex than it appears.

"In order for CWI to get accredited, it has to go through a multiyear series of processes as prescribed by the NWCCU (Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities). Though CWI may be operating as a school, it does not 'officially' exist as an accredited institution," Fox said. "At the outset, CSI agreed to be the accrediting oversight institution for the time leading up to CWI's final approval by the NWCCU. Therefore, CWI operates under CSI's accreditation."

What that means, Fox said, is that CWI has to continue its operations according to CSI's accreditation requirements for at least the first five years of operations — CWI began instruction in 2008 — until it can establish its own rules.

"CWI has a very experienced staff. They understand accreditation very well," Mason said.