

Meeting Minutes

MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 4:30 p.m.,

Kline Foundation Boardroom

MEMBERS PRESENT

SCOTT COUNTY	WISE COUNTY	LEE COUNTY	DICKENSON CTY	NORTON
Rodney Baker Freda Starnes	Betty Cornett Teresa Adkins Mike Hatfield	Emily Kinser Joyce Williams Scott Napier		Carol Caruso

MEMBERS ABSENT

Adrienne Hood (Scott)
Keith Wilson (Scott)
Mike Abbott (Wise)
Roy Munsey (Wise)
Carolyn Strouth (Dickenson)
Kristi Taylor (Lee)

Others Attending:

Dr. Bill Brownsberger – Vice President, Academic Affairs and Workforce Solution
Dr. Kristen Westover - President
Peggy Gibson – Executive Assistant to the President
Mr. Phil Edwards – President, Faculty Senate

CALL TO ORDER



The Mountain Empire Community College Advisory Board met on Tuesday, March 19 at 4:30 p.m. in the Kline Foundation Boardroom. The meeting was called to order by vice chair, Mr. Rodney Baker.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Betty Cornett made a motion to accept the January 16, 2024, minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Freda Starnes and passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 1)**

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Baker reported on the following information items:

-  Celebration of People Friday, [May 3, 10:30 a.m.](#) Goodloe Center
 -  Board Meeting/Graduation Friday, [May 10, 4:30 p.m.](#) Dalton Cantrell Hall
- Graduation will begin at 6:00 pm/Dinner at the John Fox House at approximately 7:30 p.m.

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

Enrollment

- The 2024 Spring Semester Preliminary Enrollment report point-in-time headcount is 1,859 compared to last year's headcount of 1,772: an increase of (5) percent. The College's FTE is 1,187 compared to last year's 1,091, reflecting an increase of (9) percent. Students are taking more credit hours per student this semester. Students are taking approximately 9 ½ credits. **(Exhibit 2)**

ACOP Updates

- Dr. Westover shared that there has been a lot of discussion around the VCCS Free Speech & Intellectual Diversity Taskforce. She mentioned that Kristy Hall is serving as a member of this committee. Most colleges feel that the System Office needs to take the lead on this initiative since they have legal guidance where the colleges do not.

(ACOP Action Item College Categories) - Dr. Westover shared some information regarding college category classification which will most likely be approved by the State Board later this week.

There was a recent review of the VCCS' current classification of colleges to determine if the current college category classification is still relevant or should be updated to better align with today's marketplace and with national category models such as the Carnegie Classification Model. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education serves as the benchmark. Dr. Westover mentioned that ACOP voted to change VCCS College Categories from seven to four using the Carnegie model as guidance but adopting a final model using the current FTEs that represent the size of our colleges.

Recommended VCCS College Categories Based on Annual Credit FTES:

❖ Small	1999 and below
❖ Medium	2000-4999
❖ Large	5000-9999 (None)
❖ Very Large	10,000 and above (Tidewater and NOVA)

Currently, there are only two colleges in the very large category (Tidewater and NOVA) but most are in the small to medium category.

In addition, Dr. Westover mentioned that there was an additional policy action pertaining to presidents' salary scale. She mentioned that the salary scale will be comprised of four categories with a salary range for each category. Dr. Westover shared that there is a minimum salary and a maximum salary for each category. The VCCS will be looking at those categories and make any adjustments at the next ACOP meeting. VCCS policy states that VP and up salary ranges go by college categories. The colleges will be placed in one of four categories.

(ACOP Action Item) – Proposed Modification to Policy Section 4.3-Student Charges (Transcript Withholding, Bookstore charges, Past Due Payment Plans, Fraudulent Charges) – Dr. Westover mentioned that if the State Board approves this then we won't be able to withhold transcripts just because they owe funds to the college. We will need to make changes and/or adjustments based on the final State Board ruling.

(ACOP Action Item) – Proposed Modification to Policy Section 4.3 – Student Charges (Bookstore Provider Embedded Course Fee Option) – Some of the colleges have Follett as their bookstore provider which has a program called IncludedED where students basically pay a flat rate fee to access all their course work and books needed for that semester. Action was taken to be able to include the course fee as part of tuition that was eligible for financial aid, etc. which needed to be a policy change. This is a model that Follett uses and is very cost effective for students.

Other updates:

Dr. Westover shared a VCCS "Fact Sheet" with Board members and brought to their attention two main points and why we need more funding. The "Fact Sheet" states that our colleges are the lowest-funded higher education institutions in Virginia while continuing to be one of the most affordable options in higher education.

- \$0.57 on the Dollar - VCCS colleges receive fewer than .57 cents for every one dollar that goes to support a full-time equivalent student at a public Virginia University.
- 23rd Percentile on Spending – Looking at expenditures per full-time equivalent student, we are in the 23rd percentile in the nation, meaning 77% of community colleges spend more per student.

Legislative update:

The budget recommendations for the VCCS for the upcoming biennium contained in the conference report include the following:

- \$20 million over two years for affordable access, retention and degree production
- \$14.6 million added back to the VCCS's base that was separated and available only through performance requirements in the introduced budget. No performance tied to these funds.
- \$9.2 million for New Economy Workforce Credential Grants ("Fast Forward")
- \$24 million for workforce pipeline renovations for space conversion
- \$250,000 for per-planning for Southwest Virginia Community College's replacement of Buchanan and Tazewell Halls.
- Five new CIP (classification of instructional program) codes added for eligibility for G3 financial aid: Cooking and Culinary Arts, Elementary Education and Teaching, Secondary Education and Teaching, General Engineering, and Hospitality Administration and Management.

Dr. Westover shared that the original budget that the governor proposed had a 1% increase for state employees. Both the House and Senate came back and the conference report now contains a 3% salary increase for eligible faculty and employees in each of FY2025 and FY2026.

The General Assembly is due to return on Wednesday April 17 for the reconvened or "veto" session.

Vice President, Academic Affairs and Workforce Solutions – Dr. Bill Brownsberger

Dr. Brownsberger reported on the following items:

- Dr. Brownsberger mentioned that the college received some GO Virginia funding supporting our efforts at Camp 18. The funds funded 15 welding stations and would provide a variety of opportunities at this facility. However, the space that we utilized at that facility was too small. He mentioned that there had previously been some discussions of a bigger space/building at that location that had been paid for through Perkins funds, but the space was used for something different.
Dr. Brownsberger reported that since then, there has been a supervisory/warden change at the facility and that he and Matt Rose had met with the new warden who recognized that our welding program needs to be in the purposed built building with the purpose of expanding our educational offerings including HVAC.
- Dr. Brownsberger mentioned that they are in the process of filling several dean positions and have made an offer for the Business and Information Technology dean position. He also shared that they will be filling the history position vacated by Dr. Ted Booth who moved into the role of Dean of Arts and Sciences.
- Bill mentioned that the college has an opportunity for some free marketing through the Hodges Partnership. The Hodges Partnership is a PR agency with experts in media relations, public relations, social media, etc. and has contracted with the VCCS to promote the skills trade career and technical program. They are planning to be on our campus on April 16 to film activities on our campus in the skills/trade area. Some of the footage will be used for Fast Forward marketing.

Action Item(s): none

Interim Vice President, Financial and Administrative Services – Ms. Kristy Hall

Ms. Kristy Hall reported on the following items:

Project update:

Ms. Hall mentioned that a fire and safety renovation of Godwin Hall will begin soon. This will require the relocation of all employees and classes in that building. A plan is in place and construction should begin shortly after graduation with the hopes of being complete before the beginning of the fall semester.

- Local Funds Expenditure Report – Ms. Hall reviewed with Board members the Local Funds Expenditure Report ending February 29, 2024. **(See Exhibit 3 with details)** Ms. Hall added that we are currently moving in to end of year closeout and have already received approval for FY2025 budget and will be working on getting that together soon.
- Personnel Report – Ms. Hall reviewed the personnel report through March 2024 **(See Exhibit 4 with details)** She mentioned that there are quite a few changes due to retirements and resignations. She pointed out that we do have a bit of turnover and maintaining hires in the Buildings and Grounds/Facilities area.

There were no questions or comments regarding the reports.

Vice President of Institutional Advancement/Foundation – Dr. Amy Greear

Dr. Greear reported on the following items:

2023 Recap for the Foundation:

- Launched the MECC Promise Program in 2023 which was for 2023 high school graduates in our service region. She shared that she and Dr. Westover have visited most of the localities in our area providing updates regarding their contributions. Dr. Greear shared that out of the \$145,000 that was provided for this program, we have probably spent less than \$30,000. The reason being was that those that most had applied and received federal financial aid so we did not have to use as much of the funds. The program has been very well received.
- The Foundation raised \$1.3M in 2023 thanks to private gifts, events and grant awards.
- Endowment Reached a Record \$36.5M. She mentioned that our scholarships are based on a 3-year average of returns.
- Raised \$1.3M in 2023 thanks to private gifts, events, and grant awards
- MECC Foundation will fund more than \$892,200 in scholarships in 2023-2024.
- \$50,000 in Governor School Tuition Support
- \$12,000 in support for Dual Enrollment students
- \$75,000 Support for Career Coach Program
- \$20,000 Support for Student Emergency Needs
- \$25,000 for Parallel Tutoring Program

Grant Updates:

- \$50,000 Solar Training Grant – contract is in place and project is moving forward.
- \$200,000 VCEDA Workforce Training Grant
- \$92,705 Virginia Tobacco Commission Heavy Equipment Operator Grant
- AMLER grant for the renovation of the CWIA is in the RFP stage for project engineering services.
- Recently applied for two grants:
 - Fiber optic grant through VCEDA in the amount of \$183,000 to start fiber optic installation.
 - \$250,000 Virginia Tobacco Commission grant for the Amphitheater.
 - Received 2 gifts from Old Dominion Power/Kentucky Utilities for our Home Craft Days event and our Power Lineman Program.

Dr Greear also mentioned that the College is currently working on a rebranding and logo design. A logo and rebranding committee were formed some time ago and included employees and students. An announcement will be made soon with the new logo.

Upcoming Events

- John Fox Jr. Festival: April 17, 2024, featuring Adriana Trigiani and Barbara Kingsolver. Luncheon at the Fox House is sold out.
- Employee Giving Campaign begins April 8-12, 2024.
- Golf Tournaments scheduled for May 31 (Lonesome Pine in Big Stone Gap) and July 12 (Cedar Ridge in Lee County)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee (Mr. Rodney Baker, Vice Chair)

Action Item(s):

1. Presidential Item

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Ms. Freda Starnes and seconded by Ms. Carol Caruso that:

“The MECC Local Advisory Board go into Executive Session to discuss *Presidential Item: Discussion of Presidential Survey*, Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711, sub-section A, sub-section 1 of the Code of Virginia.”

A vote was taken to confirm the request, and each member concurred.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

A motion was made by Ms. Carol Caruso and seconded by Ms. Freda Starnes to return to open session. The motion passed unanimously.

After returning from executive session, each member was asked individually to respond to the following questions:

- Do you affirm that during executive session, you discussed only public business matters lawfully exempted from statutory open meeting requirements, and
- Public business matters identified in the called motion to convene the executive session?

A vote was taken to confirm, and each member concurred.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Action Item – 2024 Nominating Committee

The following Board members volunteered to serve on the 2024 Nominating Committee: Keith Wilson, Scott Napier, and Carol Caruso. The Nominating Committee will recommend a Chair and Vice Chair at our next meeting.

Mr. Baker requested that Peggy Gibson schedule a zoom meeting with these individuals within the next couple of weeks for discussion.

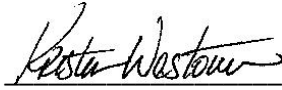
OTHER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m. Next meeting date will be May 10, 2024.

Peggy Gibson, Recorder
MECC Advisory Board Chair

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:



May 10, 2024