

Meeting Minutes

MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, July 15, 2025, 4:30 p.m.,

Kline Foundation Boardroom

MEMBERS PRESENT

SCOTT COUNTY	WISE COUNTY	LEE COUNTY	DICKENSON CTY	NORTON
Adrienne Hood	Teresa Adkins	Scott Napier		
Keith Wilson		Emily Kinser		
Rodney Baker				Carol Caruso

MEMBERS ABSENT

Joyce Williams (Lee)
Dana Cronkhite (Dickenson)
Kristi Taylor (Lee)
Freda Starnes (Scott)
Mike Hatfield (Wise)

Others Attending:

Dr. Clint Pinion – Vice President, Academic Affairs and Workforce Solutions
Ms. Kristy Hall – Vice President, Financial and Administrative Services
Dr. Kristen Westover – President
Peggy Gibson – Executive Assistant to the President

CALL TO ORDER

The Mountain Empire Community College Advisory Board met on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Kline Foundation Boardroom. The meeting was called to order by the chair, Mr. Keith Wilson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Due to a lack of quorum, the meeting minutes for May 9, 2025, were approved via email. (**Exhibit 1**)

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Wilson reported on the following information items:

- Please let Peggy Gibson know your Committee Preference at the end of this meeting or via email before our next meeting date. (Exhibit 2)
- The Fall College picnic is scheduled for August 19th at noon in the Goodloe Center. All Advisory Board members are invited to attend

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

Enrollment

- The Summer Semester 2025 point-in-time headcount enrollment is 719 compared to last year's headcount of 682: an increase of 5 percent. The College's FTE is 336 compared to the previous year's report of 312 at this time reflecting an 8 percent increase.
- The Preliminary Fall 2025 point-in-time headcount enrollment is 1,412 compared to last year's headcount of 1,308, an increase of 8 percent. Fall FTE is 907 compared to the previous year's report of 867; an increase of 5 percent. Fulltime enrollment is 12 credit hour.

Other Updates

- Internal/External Activities - Dr. Westover reviewed with Board members her current community involvement, which included a list of internal and external activities from May 19 to July 15, 2025. (**Exhibit 3**).
- Dual Enrollment update - MECC will continue with Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) pathway courses, taught by high school or college faculty, at no cost. Non-UCGS courses will continue to be charged 20% of full tuition. The College Career Ready Virginia (CCRV) applies to juniors and seniors in dual enrollment only. Any exceptional freshman or sophomore must pay full tuition until they are eligible for no cost under the CCRV. Dr. Westover shared that this has the potential to impact our budget by approximately \$550,000 and is working to determine how to balance our budget internally with this loss. She mentioned that the college will be monitoring this closely throughout the year and will make necessary cuts if needed. Unfilled or open positions will be discussed and filled only if necessary. Dr. Westover shared that Dr. Pinion, and our dual enrollment coordinator, Angie Lester, have been working hard building the pathways and the programs and making sure we have the classes online and in the high schools that students can access.
Dr. Westover and some of her Leadership Team will be meeting with local school superintendents on August 1 and 4 to share these updates.
- Pell update: Dr. Westover shared some recent changes to Pell as outlined in a bill that recently passed in Congress. The bill removed the Workforce Pell, so that is currently not an option. However, Dr. Westover mentioned that the bill maintained the Pell thresholds, so instead of increasing to 15 credit hours for full-time and 7.5 for part-time, they remained at 12 and 6, which should not impact our students. What will impact our students is that the maximum amount will decrease.
Dr. Westover also mentioned the recent talk about dismantling the Department of Education and what this would mean for us. She shared that this discussion would have a significant impact on K-12. Our impact would be more evident in programs such as Pell, TRIO grants, Talent Search, Upward Bound, and Gear Up, among others. We currently have two of these programs on our campus, TRIO/Student Support Services, which was recently funded for another five years, and Talent Search, whose grant doesn't come due until next year. Dr. Westover shared that the groups most at risk are likely those participating in Gear Up and Upward Bound, which we do not have on our campus.
- Dr. Westover reported that the college has met all our goals for Accelerate 2030. She mentioned that there was one metric related to earned credentials that we had not met, as it only looked at the first half of the year. She reported that we ended the year last year with 587 graduates and 880 credentials. This year, 2025, we had 573 graduates with 943 earned credentials. Our half-year goal was 428, and the full-year goal was 856 credentials, which we surpassed by almost 100. Dr. Westover mentioned that the college has met all of its goals for Accelerate 2030 for last year.

➤ Chancellor's Goals for AY2026 – Dr. Westover shared an update on the Chancellor's Goals:

- Overarching goal: Award 300,000 cumulative meaningful credentials by 2030 across all regions through accelerated access and success for every student. (Target TBD)
Dr. Westover mentioned that each college will be responsible for meeting their target in the overall credentials.
- 1.2 – Increase the percentage of FastForward completers to 95% by 2030. (Target TBD)
- 2.4 – Increase the annual number of working-age adults enrolled by 14,000 by 2030 (Target TBD)
- 3.1 – Increase the number of full-time faculty engaged in professional development opportunities to broaden understanding of relevant emerging topics for student success by 50% by 2030. (Target TBD)
- 3.3 – All courses required by the Passport and UCGS will be available online asynchronously every semester by 2030 (Target TBD)

Accelerate Opportunity 2025-2026 Goals

- 4.3 All front-line support staff will participate in at least one professional development opportunity on financial resources to equip them to be able to respond accurately to most student inquiries by 2030. (Target TBD)

System Goals:

- Culture of Care: Create a consistent student dual enrollment experience by aligning pricing for dual enrollment programs beyond those covered by CCRV legislation (executed in 2025, making select courses available at no cost) and execute by the fall of 2026. Assess college-level services and support for dual enrollment learners with the intention of creating greater consistency. (TBD)
- Culture of Care: Create a consistent adult learner experience by professional developing faculty on andragogy and assessing college-level services and supports for adult learners with the intention of creating greater consistency. (TBD)
- Enhanced financial management: Provide a single budgeting system for the VCCS to allow for better decision-making, greater transparency, and improved efficiency by identifying systemwide requirements, issuing a request for proposals, and evaluating solutions. (TBD)
- Establish a consistent systemwide approach to campus safety and emergency preparedness by evaluating prior adult recommendations, aligning with best practices, and documenting decision-making. (TBD)

- Cyber Security Grant – Dr. Westover shared that she and Mr. Ritchie Deel had attended a Community Colleges of Appalachia (CCA) conference recently for the kickoff for \$250,000 grant to be distributed over the next five years, and have recently received our first installment of \$80,000. This will offset the expenses of some of our teaching faculty. The grant was to enhance what we already have or to build something.
- AI Grant and Taskforce Kickoff – Dr. Westover shared that she just sent an all-college email out yesterday to all our employees regarding an opportunity for individuals to serve on the MECC AI Task Force. The email included the detailed mission and purpose, membership composition, explanations of the faculty and administrative pilot program, timeline for deliverables, and evaluation framework. There will be two groups of people working on two different projects throughout the college. One will focus on instruction and how to utilize AI in the classroom, while the other will concentrate on day-to-day administrative functions.
She also mentioned a \$2,000 grant opportunity through VCCS ITEC.
- Dr. Westover shared that the college recently had a visit from Dr. Felicia Ganther, VCCS's Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Workforce Services. Dr. Ganther's visit went very well and Dr. Ganther mentioned that the college has a "familial environment".
- Dr. Westover gave kudos to Dr. Clint Pinion and his team as our SACSCOC Liaison, and has done a great job of leading this group. The plan is to submit our Interim Report in August, which is one month ahead of schedule.

Vice President, Academic Affairs and Workforce Solutions – Dr. Clint Pinion

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

- Dr. Pinion reported that we have applied for and were awarded \$1M from the Anne & Gene Worrell Foundation. The funds are \$200,000 per year over 5 years. Dr. Pinion mentioned that the funds will support the launch of our MECC Honors Program, international student travel, student scholarships, and the establishment of a research symposium. The faculty will serve as mentors for the students in the Honors Program and will also receive a stipend. Part of these funds will be used to hire a retention specialist for the MECC Promise Program.

- Dr. Pinion shared that the System Office is doing what they call the Caring Campus Initiative. As part of our Pell Boost grant initiative, we have branded ours “Welcome Home”. Several of our Student Support Services staff members have been working on identifying five key metrics. The five metrics are:

- Welcome Week – already been doing – branded with the Welcome Home material. Dr. Pinion mentioned that we will have a sign-up for faculty and staff participation.
- Name Tags – ensuring that everyone has a name tag – there is some budget for this through the Pell Boost grant if anyone needs a name tag.
- 10 Foot Rule – if you see someone 10 feet away, say hi and welcome them to campus.
- Warm handoff – call ahead and let the person know you are bringing a student to their office so that the person can be prepared to help the student.
- Directory – making sure that employees update their directory picture.

The kickoff for this initiative will take place during the Fall In-service, and we hope for 100% employee participation in all five metrics. He mentioned that there will be a way to self-report collecting charms for all five metrics.

- Dr. Pinion reviewed with Board members some of the activities planned for our Fall In-service scheduled for August 19th and invited Board members to attend.
- SACSCOC Interim Report – Dr. Pinion reported that they are currently transitioning items from Teams into Google for formatting and linking. Dr. Pinion gave kudos to our team, who have worked hard in entering all the data, as well as to Dr. Arnold, our reviewer. The plan is to submit by August 11th, which is one month earlier than the due date.

Upcoming events:

- Fall In-service (August 18-20)
- Mountain Music School (July 21-25)
- Komatsu Open House (July 25) from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. – Dean, Matt Rose, along with advisor Pauline Davis and a financial aid person, are planning to attend.

Action Item(s): none

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

Ms. Hall reported on the following items:

Facilities update:

- Ms. Hall reported that currently, there are approximately 14 projects going on around campus:
 - Replacing a condenser unit and a heat exchanger on our heat recovery chiller (emergency project) and will also have to replace our 100-ton chiller, which is currently in DEB review.
 - We are in the design phase for our sidewalk and steps repair project around campus.
 - The Godwin Life Safety Project is now in phase two – concrete has been poured for a new generator, which will be on the back side of Godwin Hall near our Student Services area. They are also updating the electrical lines and panels.
 - We are also in the design phase of the Amphitheater project funded by the Foundation. A Schematic Design Workshop is planned for tomorrow.
 - The Robb elevator project is still a work in progress. Ms. Hall reported that we have had to switch to a different vendor to complete this project and are currently awaiting a quote from the new vendor.
 - The Solar Roof Project, which is to add solar panels to our campus, is also under DEB review.

- The HVAC project for Phillips/Taylor Hall is in the design phase with the anticipation that that project will likely begin in the summer of 2026. This will be a challenge and will require us to relocate everyone in that building for an extended period of time.

Local Funds Expenditure Report – Ms. Hall reviewed the Local Funds Expenditure Report with Board members, covering the period ending June 30, 2025. Ms. Hall mentioned that the Business Office is currently undergoing year-end processing and that several of our systems are locked down, preventing the running of specific reports such as Auxiliary Fees, Activities Fees, and expenditures. **(See Exhibit 6 with details)**

Personnel Report – Ms. Hall reviewed the personnel report through July 2025 **(See Exhibit 7 with details)**

There were no questions or comments regarding the reports.

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

Dr. Greear was unable to attend this afternoon's meeting. Dr. Westover provided the following Foundation update on behalf of Dr. Greear:

- Created a new endowed scholarship – Susi Cassell Memorial Endowed Scholarship

Grant updates: (2.3M total in grants)

- \$1M ARC project Soar – extension of the Project Amelioration for 2 years.
- \$1M Anne & Gene Worrell – supporting our Honors Program
- \$240,000 – Virginia Tobacco Commission – part of the Machining program
- \$75,000 – Rapha Foundation - \$10,000 was for a Coding Camp for middle school students this summer, \$15,000 was for nursing well-being study, the remaining funds are being used for SimX Virtual Reality software for Health sciences and nursing.
- Lowes – did not get
- Slemp – did not get

- The Foundation has held several successful events in the last month, including the Lonesome Pine and Ballad Health golf tournaments. These tournaments have raised funds for student scholarships.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – no reports

- Executive Committee (did not meet)
- Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee – (did not meet)
- Finance and Facilities Committee: (did not meet)

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Wilson shared with the MECC Advisory Board some key elements of the Charter for the Virginia Community College Advisory Board (**See Attachment for full details**). Below are some highlights of Mr. Wilson's discussion:

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) governs the charters for local advisory boards of its 23 community colleges. These boards serve as advisory bodies, not governing entities, and operate under the authority of the State Board for Community Colleges. Their primary role is to ensure that each college responds to the specific educational and workforce needs of its service region while adhering to statewide policies.

1. Purpose and Role:
 - Local advisory boards act as a liaison between the college, the State Board for Community Colleges, the VCCS administration, and the local community
 - They advise on matters such as state and local budgets, long-range planning, curriculum development, and student conduct regulations.
 - They help identify and address local educational and workforce needs, ensuring alignment with community demands and statewide standards.
2. Composition:
 - Members are appointed by the governing bodies (e.g., Boards of Supervisors or City Councils) of the jurisdictions within the college's service region.
 - Representatives vary by region. Each jurisdiction appoints one member. Members serve four-year terms, with a maximum of two terms, unless appointed to an unexpired term.
3. Responsibilities:
 - Advise on budget recommendations for state and local funds.
 - Provide input on long-range planning and curriculum to meet regional needs.
 - Appoint members to curriculum advisory committees.
 - Establish regulations for student conduct.
 - Enlist community involvement to support the college's mission.

Mr. Wilson also discussed with the Board some of the issues regarding funding and how Virginia Community Colleges rank in terms of state funding versus similar states. Per student funding in the Virginia Community College System receives \$6,672 per full-time equivalent (FTE), compared with the national average of \$10,488 per FTE. In fact, Virginia Community Colleges only receive .57 cents for every dollar allocated to an FTE student at a four-year institution. On a percentile basis, Virginia Community College expenditures, per FTE, rank in the 23rd percentile nationally. That means that 77 percent of the state's funds go to their community colleges at a higher level than Virginia, and as you might surmise, we are woefully behind all of the states we compete with. The conclusion is that Virginia Community Colleges rank poorly in state funding compared to similar states. Facts show that what Virginia does not fund well is K-12 and Community Colleges. Virginia's focus on where they are spending their money has been that they spend significantly more than other states on economic development and business incentives. In comparison to their peers, they overspend in North Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee, and South Carolina; Virginia overspends and is ranked number one in the nation for being business-friendly. Statistics indicate that there are currently 250,000 unfilled high-skilled jobs in the state of Virginia, and our own institutions are not fulfilling these positions.

Mr. Wilson suggested that the MECC Advisory Board host a reception to share with our Board of Supervisors not only the College's goals but also some of its challenges and how they can help share the truth about where we stand as a state in terms of our investment in education.

OTHER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m. The next meeting date is scheduled for September 16, 2025.

Peggy Gibson, Recorder

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:



September 16, 2025