

Meeting Minutes

MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, May 9, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.,

Kline Foundation Boardroom

MEMBERS PRESENT

SCOTT COUNTY	WISE COUNTY	LEE COUNTY	DICKENSON CTY	NORTON
Rodney Baker	Teresa Adkins	Emily Kinser		Carol Caruso
Freda Starnes	Mike Abbott	Scott Napier		
Keith Wilson	Mike Hatfield	Kristi Taylor		
Adrienne Hood		Joyce Williams		

MEMBERS ABSENT

Betty Cornett (Wise)
Roy Munsey (Wise
Dana Cronkhite (Dickenson)

Others Attending:

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

CALL TO ORDER


The Mountain Empire Community College Advisory Board met on Friday, May 9, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Kline Foundation Boardroom. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mike Abbott, Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Rodney Baker to accept the March 18, 2025, minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keith Wilson and passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 1)**

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Abbott reported on the following information items:

-  Mr. Abbott shared with the Board members that he had attended the college's 21st Annual Celebration of People event. He mentioned that the event was well-attended and recognized employee accomplishments, including service awards, Employee of the Year, Emeriti, and others. He encouraged all who could attend next year's event.

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Enrollment

The Spring Semester 2025 Final Enrollment headcount is 1,883 compared to last year's headcount of 1,840: an increase of (2) percent. The College's FTE was 1,180 compared to last year's 1,174, reflecting an increase of (1) percent. (See Exhibit 2 with details)

VCCS Updates

- Dr. Westover reported that we have received the Accelerate Opportunity 2030 mid-year report and mentioned some challenges due to there not being a budget associated with it. She mentioned that there are five goals that we are focused on:
 - Cumulative degrees, diplomas, certificates and credentials - mid-year goal was 428 (399) Dr. Westover shared that our mid-year goal was probably a little high because most of our students graduate in May so we should met this goal by the end of the year.
 - Increase VCCS annual graduates in regionally high demand fields – mid-year goal was 156 (122) – should meet goal by end of graduation.
 - Increase graduates entering industries with the highest job growth – mid-year goal was 173 (233)
 - Increase cumulative enrollment in regionally aligned high-demand fields – mid-year goal is 299 (514)
 - Increase the annual number of students enrolled in FastForward – mid-year goal is 89 (98) – Dr. Westover mentioned that this is a challenging goal because it does not align with funding. We are being asked to increase the number of students by 20% but just found out yesterday that FastForward funding for the System will run out in October. She mentioned that the System has three scenarios of how they are going to distribute the remaining funds and are hoping they will choose the one where they do an average of our three past quarters because MECC has shown growth every quarter.
- Dual Enrollment Update—Dr. Westover discussed some of the challenges with dual enrollment. The VCCS is trying to honor the College & Career Ready Virginia (CCRV) legislation. Previous communication was that MECC will offer the Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS) to dual enrollment students at no cost to the student. Thirty-four percent of our enrollment is dual enrollment. She mentioned that within the last month communication handed down from the VCCS has changed. Therefore, we are waiting for written guidance from the VCCS before moving forward with any additional communication and are still determining the cost of dual enrollment courses that fall outside the UCGS pathway.
- Department of Ed changes (PELL) - A lot of our students are eligible for full PELL. Currently, full PELL is 12 credit hours in order to be considered a full-time student and percentages if you have less credit hours. There is discussion of moving to a model where you have to have 7 ½ credits before being eligible for any PELL and 15 credits for full PELL. Looking back, if you look at how our students have enrolled over the last three years, we stand to lose \$860,000 and \$1.1M in tuition. Dr. Westover mentioned that we can most likely mitigate some of this through advising and making sure students know that full-time is now 15 credit hours. Data shows that if students take more credits, then they graduate faster.
In addition, Dr. Westover mentioned that they have now added Workforce PELL, which means students might be eligible for Federal financial aid in shorter industry recognized credentials that they would not have been eligible for before. She suspects more updates will follow with these proposed changes.

Other Updates

- Dr. Westover reviewed her current community involvement with Board members, including a list of internal and external activities from March 18, 2025 – May 9, 2025. (Exhibit 3).
- We will know more about our FY26 budget for next year once we get final rules on what is going to happen with dual enrollment.

- MECC, Virginia Highlands, Wytheville, and SWVCC presented at our last VCCS State Board meeting which was held in Abingdon in April. The presentation was regarding our Health Science programs and how all four colleges collaborate. She also shared information about the impact of inflation to our college.
- Dr. Westover mentioned that she and several others had attended the New Horizons Conference in April. Several of the MECC faculty presented on shortened class sessions and how well students perform in their courses.
- MECC's annual Celebration of People event was held last Friday. The event was well attended.
- Dr. Westover shared that full-time employees would receive a 3% salary increase in June. She also mentioned a 1.5% bonus, including a lump sum bonus for adjunct and part-time employees.

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

Dr. Pinion reported on the following items:

- The Class of 2025 includes 573 graduates (all will not walk) who have earned 943 academic awards. He also shared that this year, we will award a total of 138 college credentials to students while they are still enrolled in high school. Forty-seven students in DE will earn an Associate of Arts and Science Degree in University/College Transfer.
- DOJ Title II Accessibility Compliance Framework – Dr. Pinion shared that the U.S. Department of Justice now requires all public colleges to ensure digital content and systems meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards by April 2026. This includes course materials, websites, forms, apps, and administrative platforms. Dr. Pinion shared that his area has developed a digital accessibility plan that includes surveying our faculty and staff best to understand their current utilization of digital content and systems. He mentioned that we will use this information to create training modules that will be implemented at our fall in-service. The college has identified four champions who will help with the training, and planned laboratory sessions will be held in October and March. Refresher training will be held in January during our Spring In-service.
- SACSCOC update:
 - Interim Report – Dr. Pinion shared that our Student Success committee members have worked diligently this academic year to draft their assigned sections of our SACSCOC interim report. Our internal reviewer has reviewed their sections and is addressing the requests received and comments. All sections will be submitted to a small team for review. Work will continue this summer to finalize the report, with a target submission date of August 11th, allowing for a one-month buffer before the actual due date in September.
 - SACSCOC Program Closure Reports – currently working on notifications to SACSCOC for the following closures:
 - Business Administration (AA&S)
 - Pre-Teacher Education (AA&S)
 - General Studies (AA&S)
 - Science (AA&S)
 - Engineering Specialization (AA&S)
- High School Visits – Dr. Pinion shared that our student and enrollment services staff and faculty have been visiting high schools over the past month to register graduating seniors for the fall. He mentioned that our efforts included visits to the ten traditional high schools in our service region, the three career and technical schools, and Christian schools.
- Dr. Pinion shared that our Fall In-service is scheduled for August 19th and 20th. The all-college meeting is scheduled for August 19th and invites Board members to attend.

Action Item(s): None

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

Ms. Hall reported on the following items:

Ms. Hall mentioned that she is working with the College's deans and supervisors to obtain budget information for the FY2026 budget year. A tuition increase of approximately 3.2% is expected, and we are still awaiting our validated funding model from the VCCS. She mentioned that we should know more after the VCCS State Board meeting in May. In addition, we are working on the year-end closeout for our current budget year FY2025.

Local Funds Expenditure Report – Ms. Hall reviewed the Local Funds Expenditure Report with Board members, covering the period ending April 30, 2025. (See Exhibit 4 with details)

Personnel Report – Ms. Hall reviewed the personnel report through April 2025 (See Exhibit 5 with details)

Facilities Update:

- Robb Hall Elevator is still ongoing.
- Phillips Taylor roof project – will be beginning construction after graduation and should not impact any occupation of the building.
- The Dalton Cantrell door lock replacement project is currently in the design phase.
- Sidewalk and step replacements are also in the design phase
- Solar Panel Project is under DEB review
- The 2nd phase of the Godwin Life Safety project will most likely begin this summer. This will involve setting up the new generator and updating the emergency lighting and should have minimal impact on the folks that occupy that building.
- Ms. Hall mentioned that a meeting was held on April 29th regarding the new amphitheater project. She shared that during that meeting they were able to make a site selection which is outside bottom floor of Phillips Taylor Hall located just outside the Goodloe Center. A schematic workshop is planned for July 16 which will be the next step for this project.
- Ms. Hall gave kudos to our Buildings and Grounds employees for all their hard working in making our campus beautiful for tonight's graduation.

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

Dr. Greear reported on the following items:

- Dr Greear reported that the Foundation's fundraising total to date this year is \$475,000, as compared to \$319,000 from the same time period in 2024, which also included grant proceeds.
- During the last quarter, the MECC Foundation assisted in the application for \$2.5M in grants, which included a VCEDA workforce training grant for \$200,000 that supports certifications and testing costs.
- Dr. Greear reported that the Foundation Board just approved their 2025-2026 Administrative Budget. The budget included the following:
 - \$415,000 in Foundation operations funding, which includes salary and operational expenses.
 - \$535,000 for endowed scholarships, \$125,000 in supplemental scholarships provided by unrestricted funding, and \$375,281 in annual scholarship funding, for a total of \$1,035,781 in scholarship awards for 2025-2026, a slight increase of \$5,000 from our 2024 scholarship budget.
 - \$56,000 in emergency aid support, which includes a new line item for Snap 50/50 recipients. She mentioned that this is an excellent resource that will enable us to cover many more student emergency requests this year.
 - \$11,000 for MECC Faculty and Staff Professional Development. This funding is provided by restricted gifts for professional development.

- \$266,882 for student programming and support, which provides funding for Governor's School for dual enrollment students, our career navigator program, and tutoring for students.
- \$32,845 budgeted for cultural and humanities programming, which supports programs to include the John Fox Jr. Festival, Mountain Music School, and Home Craft Days.

The total proposed budget for 2025-206 is \$1,817,780.78, an increase of almost \$60,000 from 2024. Dr. Greear also shared that in addition, they have appropriated the following:

- ✓ \$559,000 in unrestricted funding from their endowment
- ✓ \$513,000 for infrastructure needs
- ✓ \$20,000 in support for continued marketing
- ✓ \$20,000 match in funding for the Honors Program should be funded by our grant request.
- ✓ \$7,488.62 for the President's discretionary fund

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee (Mr. Mike Abbott, Chair)

Action Item(s):

1. Presidential Item

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Ms. Freda Starnes and seconded by Mr. Rodney Baker that:

“The MECC Local Advisory Board go into Executive Session to discuss *Presidential Item: Letter of Recommendation to the Chancellor*, 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 Mr. Rodney Baker and seconded by Ms. Freda Starnes to return to the open session. The motion passed unanimously.

The Executive Committee made a motion on behalf of the MECC Advisory Board to submit the letter, as presented, to the Virginia Community College System Chancellor, Dr. David Doré, confirming their collective high vote of confidence in the leadership of Dr. Kristen Westover. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mike Hatfield and passed unanimously.

After returning from the 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.

- Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee – (did not meet)
- Finance and Facilities Committee: (did not meet)
- Report from the Nominating Committee: (Ms. Freda Starnes, Ms. Carol Caruso, and Mr. Scott Napier)

Ms. Freda Starnes reported that the Nominating Committee met on Monday, April 21, 2025, via conference call to discuss recommendations for the chair and vice chair for the 2025-2026 term. After the discussion, the Committee recommended that Mr. Keith Wilson serve as chair and Mr. Rodney Baker continue to serve as vice chair.

Mr. Mike Hatfield recommended accepting the nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Teresa Adkins seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

The MECC Advisory Board thanked Mr. Mike Abbott for his eight years of service. Mr. Abbott's term ends on July 1, 2025.

OTHER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Due to the MECC Commencement this afternoon at 6:00 p.m., no further business was discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m. The next meeting date is scheduled for July 15, 2025.

Peggy Gibson, Recorder

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:

Keith Wilson
Chairman of the Board

July 15, 2025