

# Meeting Minutes

## MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, September 24, 2024, 4:30 p.m.,

Kline Foundation Boardroom

### MEMBERS PRESENT

| SCOTT COUNTY | WISE COUNTY  | LEE COUNTY                                     | DICKENSON CTY  | NORTON       |
|--------------|--|--|----------------|--------------|
| Keith Wilson | Mike Abbott<br>Mike Hatfield<br>Betty Cornett<br>Roy Munsey<br>Teresa Adkins | Emily Kinser<br>Scott Napier<br>Joyce Williams | Dana Cronkhite | Carol Caruso |

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Kristi Taylor (Lee)  
Freda Starnes (Scott)  
Rodney Baker (Scott)  
Adrienne Hood (Scott)

### Others Attending:

Dr. Clint Pinion – Vice President, Academic Affairs and Workforce Solutions  
Ms. Kristy Hall – Vice President, Financial and Administrative Services  
Dr. Amy Greear – Vice President of 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 Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. in the Kline Foundation Boardroom. The meeting was called to order by the chair, Mr. Mike Abbott.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Keith Wilson motioned to accept the July 16, 2024, minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mike Hatfield and passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 1)**

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Abbott reported on the following information items:

- Mr. Abbott welcomed newly appointed board member, Ms. Dana Cronkhite, representing Dickenson County. Ms. Cronkhite currently serves as the Economic Development Director of Dickenson County.
- Mr. Abbott reviewed the 2024-2025 Board Committee Assignments with Board members **(Exhibit 2)**. Mr. Mike Hatfield made a motion to accept the Assignments as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keith Wilson and passed unanimously.

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

### Enrollment

- The Fall 2024 Preliminary Enrollment headcount is 2,121 compared to last year's headcount of 2,048, an increase of (4) % and shared that we are trending down 4% in full-time headcount but an increase of 10% in part-time enrollment. This means that more students are attending but taking fewer hours, most likely due to work issues.

The College's FTE is 1,388 compared to 1,367 last year, reflecting an increase of (2) percent.

Our FastForward enrollment is up 24%, which is our non-credit enrollment and is the side of the house that has to fund itself.

### Other Updates

- Dr. Westover reviewed her current community involvement with Board members, including a list of internal and external activities from July 16 – September 23, 2024. **(Exhibit 3)**.

VCCS updates:

Dr. Westover shared with Board members the 2024-2025 State Board Goals and Priorities **(Exhibit 4)**. These goals were approved by the State Board last week. She mentioned that the State Board is our governing board and delegates authority to our local Boards to select and evaluate the Presidents, local programming, curriculum, local funds, and certain policies and procedures. Dr. Westover brought to the Board's attention the following as something our local board can do:

3. Advocate Strategically and Strengthen Partnerships
  - Approve and participate in the legislative strategic plan
  - Understand key issues affecting community colleges and funding
  - Support community colleges through board liaison programs and attending local events.

Dr. Westover shared that the VCCS Strategic Plan has been approved and is on the VCCS website. She mentioned that approximately 40 priorities/metrics have been added to the Supporting Goals. The Plan is designed to be completed in 2030, so goals are based on 2030. The System office and the State Board met to see what our priorities should be for this year. Dr. Westover shared our priorities and what we will be held accountable for this year:

#### Overarching goal:

To award \$300,000 cumulative meaningful credentials by 2030 across all regions through accelerated access and success for every student.

Dr. Westover mentioned that the ones that will be prioritized this year are around Goals 1 & 2.

- Objective 1.4 – Increase VCCS annual graduates in regionally high-demand employment fields:
  - The System goal is 4,460 by the end of the year; our goal is 160 graduates, and we are on track to meet this goal.
- Objective 1.5 – Increase graduates entering industries w/highest job growth to 40% by 2030:
  - Our goal is to have 202 graduates by the end of this year.
- Objective 2.1 – Increase cumulative enrollment in regionally aligned high-demand fields by 20,000 students by 2030:
  - Our goal is 494 students.
- Objective 2.2 – Increase the annual number of students enrolled in FastForward by 20% by 2030:
  - Our goal is 174 students. We are currently at 74 students, up 24% from where we were last year, and on track to meet this goal.
- Objective 2.4 – Increase the annual number of working-age adults (18 yrs. and older) enrolled by 14,000 by 2030:
  - Our goal is 852, and we are on track to meet this goal. The System goal is 60,077.

Dr. Westover mentioned that other goals in this plan only require presidential support.

#### Accelerate Opportunity 2024-2025 Goals

##### Goal 5:

- 5.2 – Seek additional FastForward funding investments from the Commonwealth to address the ongoing annual growth of the programs by 2030
- 5.3 – Seek additional annual funding for capacity-building efforts in regionally identified high-demand programs.
- 5.7 – Review current student fee structures and identify modification opportunities by 2030.

#### One System 2024-2025 Goals:

Dr. Westover discussed with Board members one of the goals within the One System Goals:

- Create a single student Code of Conduct – Dr. Westover shared that one of the things that is delegated to our board is the Student Code of Conduct. Typically, if the college were going to change the Student Conduct policy, it would go through a process where the President and the President’s Leadership Team internally reviewed the policy and then presented it to the MECC Advisory Board for approval. However, as we were getting ready to follow these procedures, there were some challenges in the policy requesting that students must notify the college if they have ever been arrested, regardless of their conviction. The Chancellor is working with our State Board to remove this piece.  
Dr. Westover shared that the Student Code of Conduct came about due to last year’s encampments on college campuses and the use of tents on college properties. She mentioned that we have had to build a tent usage policy because we have tents on our campus for other uses such as Home Craft Days.  
The Student Code of Conduct would have been brought to our Board today for approval, however, last week the State Board rescinded the delegated authority of local boards basically saying that if we are going to be one system then we only need one Code of Conduct and was willing to approve the Code of Conduct for all 23 colleges. The policy is in place and is on our website.
- Define a unified vision, objectives, and strategy for delivering dual enrollment in a manner that best addresses Virginia’s need:  
Dr. Westover shared the difference between dual enrollment and concurrent dual enrollment on our campus and what they mean. She mentioned that last year, a house bill passed that basically said dual enrollment should and will be free starting in the fall of 2025 and that a committee should be formed to figure out how to fund it and what it needs to look like. The System office came together and said there was a difference between dual enrollment and concurrent dual enrollment:
  - In Virginia, dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment definitions may differ from other states. In Virginia, dual enrollment is when a high school student is taking the college class at the high school and taught by a high school instructor who is credentialed to teach it for the college.
  - Concurrent enrollment is when the high school student either comes to the campus or is taking the class on-line or in their high school taught by a college full-time instructor or adjunct instructor that is not their high school instructor.

Dr. Westover mentioned that there is a difference in the cost of the college as well. When students take dual enrollment, the high schools pay for the instruction. When a high school student comes to our campus, it is just as expensive to teach them as it is for any other student, so we cannot discount that in the same way. The VCCS has clarified that the funding mechanism is not the same.

- Implement system level support for accreditation/reaffirmation – Dr. Westover shared that the college will undergo its 5-year review process in 2025. Currently, every college is on their own for SACSCOC compliance narratives. She mentioned that with only one governing board, all our narratives should look the same, and colleges have requested support from the VCCS so that the twenty-three colleges are not doing this on their own. In doing so, the VCCS has created a goal in support of accreditation and reaffirmation to have some at the VCCS to help with this data.
- Providing professional development to leverage best practices of foundation boards

#### Legislative Priorities:

- Expanding high cost in high-demand programs
- Funding dual enrollment
- Laying the groundwork for developing a sustainable funding formula

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

Dr. Pinion reported on the following items:

- **SACS-COC Update:** Dr. Pinion reported that MECC has begun working on the interim report due to SACS-COC in September of 2025. The Student Success Committee has been assigned their writing tasks due on March 3, 2025.
- **Policy Manual Review:** Dr. Pinion reported that MECC is currently reviewing their policy manual in preparation for writing and submitting the interim report to SACS-COC. Academic Affairs, Student Services, and Workforce Solutions will submit their reviews by November 1, 2024. Final changes to the policy manual must be submitted by January 31, 2025.
- **Instruction and Curriculum Committee Update:** Dr. Pinion reported that the I&C committee has met two times to review programmatic changes. No new programs have been requested to date. Still, he anticipates two career studies certificates (i.e., Machine Operator I and Machine Operator II) to be submitted in October in preparation for the College Advisory Board's review in November.
- **Strategic Planning:** Dr. Pinion noted that his area (i.e., Academic Affairs, Student Services, and Workforce Solutions) will begin a strategic planning effort in October, with Deans soliciting specific input from their departments and divisions. His executive leadership team will then meet on January 3rd for an off-campus retreat to review input from faculty and staff and select viable strategies to meet the metrics of VCCS' strategic plan for 20230 (i.e., Accelerate Opportunity).
- **EO Career Commons:** Dr. Pinion announced that MECC, in collaboration with NRCC, WCC, SWCC, and VHCC, will host a permanent career exploration space at the EO Career Commons in Abingdon, VA. The Career Commons will invite 3rd, 7th, and 10th-grade students from MECC's service region to explore careers in southwest Virginia and to learn about available academic and workforce programs at MECC.

Action Item(s): none

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

Ms. Hall reported on the following items:

Facilities:

- Ms. Hall mentioned that the Life Safety Project in Godwin Hall is ongoing, and the area is currently closed. The project includes removing all the ceiling tile in that building in order to upgrade the sprinkler system, install emergency lighting and a new generator. All employees and classes held in that building have been moved to a new location. The goal is to reopen by January 2025. The parking lot for that building will be open for HCD but the building itself will remain closed during that time.
- The Robb Hall elevator project should be completed this week.
- The Solar Roof project will begin soon.
- Ms. Hall mentioned that at the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester, MECC was one of four schools in the VCCS to launch a new online bookstore, Akademos. She mentioned that there have been some challenges, but we continue to work through the issues. The MECC Bookstore is now closed.

Local Funds Expenditure Report – Ms. Hall reviewed with Board members the Local Funds Expenditure Report ending August 31, 2024. (See Exhibit 5 for details) She mentioned that, to date, there have not been a lot of expenses.

Personnel Report – Ms. Hall reviewed the personnel report through September 2024 (See Exhibit 6 with details)

There were no questions or comments regarding the reports.

Dr. Greear provided the following updates on behalf of the Foundation:

- The MECC Foundation awarded over \$429,205 in scholarships to 332 students for the Fall 2024 semester. The Foundation has also approved more than \$1M in awards for 2024-2025.
  - Of that, \$47,824 awarded in Promise Scholarships
    - \$7,847 Dickenson County
    - \$5,007 Lee County
    - \$8,345 Scott County
    - \$26,624 Wise County
- Dr. Greear, Dr. Westover, Dr. Pinion, and members of our workforce and industrial tech administration recently met with Komatsu regarding updates to our machining program grant and have also met with Scott County Telephone Co-Operative to begin implementing our fiber optic installation program grant.
- Dr. Greear also shared that they plan to meet with Eastman Chemical representatives tomorrow regarding partnership opportunities.
- Dr. Pinion and Dr. Greear are reviewing several potential grant applications for workforce training.
- Dr. Greer mentioned that the college is currently negotiating a contract to begin the initial environmental feasibility study for our proposed amphitheater project, with the MECC Foundation contributing \$330,000 in funds to complete the initial study and design process.
- The Home Craft Days breakfast event for donors and community supporters will be held on Saturday, October 19. Board members were sent an invitation and encouraged to RSVP if they plan to attend. Dr. Greear also mentioned that HCD items, such as t-shirts, etc., can be preordered through the college's website.
- The Foundation's Winter Gala is scheduled for Saturday, December 7. Additional information will be forthcoming.

#### 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 - None

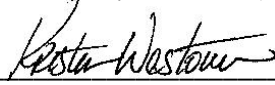
#### OTHER COMMENTS - None

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m. without further discussion. The next meeting date is November 19, 2024.

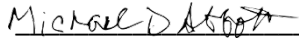
Peggy Gibson, Recorder

Respectfully Submitted,



\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
November 19, 2024