

Meeting Minutes

MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, May 11, 2021, 4:30 p.m.,

Meeting was also held via Zoom for those who did not want to attend in person

MEMBERS PRESENT

SCOTT COUNTY	WISE COUNTY	LEE COUNTY	NORTON	DICKENSON CTY
Rodney Baker	Bonnie Elosser	Gail Elliott	Tim Cassell	
Freda Starnes	Mike Abbott	Emily Kinser		
Keith Wilson	Vacant	Gary Perdue		
	Teresa Adkins			
	Betty Cornett			

MEMBERS ABSENT

Burl Mooney (Dickenson)

Others Attending:

Dr. Vickie Ratliff – Vice President, Academic Affairs and Workforce Solutions
Mr. Ron Vicars – Vice President, Financial and Administrative Services
Dr. Amy Greer – Vice President, Institutional Advancement
Ms. Sarah Gilliam – President, Faculty Senate
Dr. Kristen Westover - President
Peggy Gibson – Executive Assistant to the President

CALL TO ORDER

The Mountain Empire Community College Advisory Board met on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. in person or via zoom due to the ongoing situation with the coronavirus (COVID-19). The meeting was called to order by Mr. Rodney Baker, Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Keith Wilson to accept the March 16, 2021 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:

- MECC Virtual Graduation will be held at the Central Drive-in Theatre in Norton, VA. Graduation movie will begin at approximately 8:30 p.m. Board members were encouraged to attend.

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

Activities Report

- ❖ Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all travel has been cancelled and most meetings are held via Zoom.

Enrollment

The Spring Semester 2021 Final Enrollment is 1,971 compared to last year's headcount of 2,039; a decrease of (3) percent. The College's FTE is 1,233 compared to last years, 1,218 reflecting a decrease of (1) percent. Preliminary Summer enrollment headcount is 561 compared to last year's headcount of 587. FTE is 250 compared to last year's report of 284 at this time; a decrease of (12) percent; MMS enrollment has not been entered and will change the numbers for summer enrollment. Fall enrollment is running about the same as last year.

Updates

Coronavirus update:

Dr. Westover reported that there have been several vaccination events held on our campus in coordination with Virginia Department of Health. Employees have been encouraged to be vaccinated, but is not required for students or employees. The college created a return to campus plan several months ago and are in the process of reviewing and editing that document to fit with our current environment.

Currently, essential employees and those who have been vaccinated are allowed to return to campus and their office. We are tentatively planning to begin to phase back on to campus between July 4 and August 1. However, this depends on the loosening of the Governor's restrictions, but we do plan to have a much greater presence on campus in the fall.

Graduation:

Graduation will be held at the Central Drive-In Theater this Friday, May 14th around 8:30 p.m. We will be graduating the largest number of students in MECC's history. A total of 635 students are being recognized for earning a total of 872 academic degrees, certificates and career studies certificates, and another 72 have completed a total of 112 high-demand workforce credentials.

Nursing Pinning ceremony will be held this Thursday, May 13th at the Natural Tunnel State Park. Ceremony will begin at 6:00 p.m.

Other updates

The college is currently researching what worked well for students and employees during the pandemic. We have discovered that some students have been successful specifically because there was flexibility built into the last three semesters. Transportation was no longer an issue and finding childcare came less burdensome. Students could engage asynchronously at the times that worked best for them.

Summer will likely look much like the current spring semester in terms of hybrid and face-to-face offerings, and are hoping to be back to face to face with some virtual where it works best.

We've received nearly \$3.4 million in federal aid and distributed half of our CARES and CRSSA funds to students and are spending some on Information Technology improvements; WiFi expansions and upgrades, IT Flex classrooms, PPE, furniture recovering and health and safety improvements.

The American Rescue Plan Act is projected to provide 174% more in than we have received to date. This means we could receive up to \$5.7M more.

MECC's 50th Anniversary Planning

Dr. Westover provided the Board an update regarding the college's 50th Anniversary Planning which included:

- T-shirt design contest
- Logo creation which she shared with the Board
- 50th Anniversary Picnic (Friday, October 1, 2021) students, retirees, employees, Board, etc. will be invited
Video of former Presidents, employees and other key community members will be shown for 1st time
- Time capsule kickoff
- Public art events
- Recognition of those in memoriam
- 50th anniversary flags for towns
- Sundial, benches – some type of monument to recognize 50 years
- Final event will most likely be a concert under the graduation tent in 2022.

Strategic Planning

Dr. Westover reported that the college's Strategic Planning and Implementation team (led by Dr. Ken Tucker and Dr. Bethany Arnold) has met once and will meet again in June to discuss the goals, metrics, and budget for MECC's 2027 strategic plan.

One overarching Goal:

Mountain Empire Community College will achieve equity in access and success for students from every race, gender, and socioeconomic group.

The plan is structured around four priorities:

- Equity and Communication
- Equity in the classroom
- Student supports to foster success
- Meaningful credentials and the future of work
- Reimagining funding and finance

G3 and funding

Dr. Westover reported that we have been learning how to implement and award G3 (Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back) funding. We are not sure at this time if there will be a third component (Give Back). We have identified our eligible programs and are determining how best to communicate to students. MECC will get two additional advisers with the additional \$5M of System funding.

G3 was fully funded at \$36M (\$1.5 million for marketing and outreach) operational budget was provided \$15M to maintain affordable access and another \$10.4M to address unavoidable cost increases and required spending. Funding will be in place July 1st for both advisors and to fund student programs in certain high demand occupations and fields if the students meet a certain threshold. Right now, the college is trying to plan on how best to market this message to students due to the restrictions and certain programs that are eligible for. A lot of transfer pathways are not eligible for this funding. Right now there is a link for students to inquire about G3 and may be fall before we receive funds and see enrollment in the Spring of 2022 based on the new initiative.

ACTION ITEM: none

Vice President, Academic Affairs and Workforce Solutions – Dr. Vickie Ratliff

Dr. Ratliff reported on the following items:

- Graduation production has been a month or more in design and development. Dr. Ratliff mentioned that it has been a huge team effort and big shout out to Jason “T-bone” Kilgore, Alan Maggard, Dr. Amy Greear, and so many others who has worked tirelessly on the production.
- Work continues and have been quite involved in developing plans to support the G3 initiative, and what will be needed to ensure we package the financial aid awards based on the different criteria for a variety of funding sources.
- We have been heavily involved with companies in the region who are trying to find employees to fill open positions. This has been a challenge.
- We have worked on several economic development projects. Dr. Ratliff mentioned that she is amazed that our Small Business Development Center (SBCD) has 24 new businesses in the works for business plans and funding assistance, so things are looking good on the economic front for the area. She also mentioned that she will be participating in another meeting later this week with a large employer considering this area for a new location which looks promising as well.
- Plans for Summer and Fall continue to evolve as we learn more about what will be allowed in-person with the possibility of making any adjustments we need to make due to repairs for Phillips Taylor Hall. Additionally, the college has been trying to make contingency plans for “what if” so we can be ready for several possible scenarios.
- We have received 110 applicants for our Summer Governor’s School program, which is amazing. Some of these students are taking 6 credits and many have chosen just to take 3.
- Plans for Mountain Music School are moving forward with a lot of interest. The college plans to host MMS at the Center for Workforce and Innovation in Appalachia (CWIA) this year because of the larger available spaces. There will be an end of school performance but not sure exactly what it will be right now.
- Home Craft Days preparations are still underway with a large number of vendors registered.

Workforce Update:

- Dr. Ratliff reported that we are now receiving weekly updates on our workforce enrollment from the System’s Office that allow us to see how we are doing in comparison to last year, as well as to each of the other VCCS Colleges. She was happy to report that MECC leads the System in the percentage of growth in our Fast Forward programs over this time last year with a 93% increase! No other college is even close to that growth with many losing enrollments over what they were doing last year. Dr. Ratliff gave kudos to our folks who have worked so hard! MECC continues to grow the programs and opportunities at the Center and encouraged Board members to visit the CWIA anytime.

Action Item(s): None

Vice President, Financial and Administrative Services – Mr. Ron Vicars

Mr. Vicars reported on the following items:

- Mr. Vicars reported that work continues with the development of the FY2022 budget and that information has been slow coming from the State. We are just now starting to get information regarding our revenue projection and will be developing those within the next month or so.
- Most recently, he mentioned that his area has been working with the minimum wage increase that took effect this month and preparing for the 5% employee wage increase that will take effect July 1.
- Mr. Vicars shared that the one bid that was received for the HVAC renovation in Phillips Taylor Hall was over budget and that the VCCS is working on the project to get it under the required funding. We are also applying back to the State for additional funding in order for the project to move forward. Bidder has been informed that the Slemp/Commons area and the Goodloe Center should be made available this Fall for MECC's 50th Anniversary kickoff as well as HCD.

Local Funds Expenditure Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed with Board members the Local Funds Expenditure Report ending April 30, 2021. **(See Exhibit 4 with details)**

Personnel Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed the personnel report ending May 10, 2021. **(See Exhibit 5 with details)**

There was no discussion or questions from the Board regarding these reports.

Action Item(s): None

Vice President of Institutional Advancement – Dr. Amy Greear

Information Item(s):

- Dr. Greear reported that all audit materials have been submitted to *Blackburn, Childers and Stegall* and are hoping to finish up the audit within the next few weeks. This is the earliest the audit has been completed in several years.
- The migration to the new Blackbaud Raiser's Edge software, which will take the place of Foundations current donor database and online payment system will be complete by end of May. The Foundation staff has spent hours in training for this transition and are excited about the new product, it's collection of donor information and donor notifications and reporting features.
- The Foundation plans to recognize graduates as members of its alumni and send out alumni sign up information following the ceremony.

Grant updates:

- Currently MECC is applying for several major grants – a \$100,000 VCEDA grant and a \$750,000 NEH grant to support the construction of an amphitheater on campus. These grants are both due by end of week.

Upcoming events:

- The Foundation is in the middle of planning three major events:
 - The Auto World Golf Classic on June 4,
 - Cedar Hill Golf tournament benefitting the Lee County scholarships in July,
 - Scott county endowed scholarship in August.

Other updates:

- The college is working on a public art project and we are also coordinating with our local garden clubs to assist with some landscaping and beautification efforts on campus.
- Dr. Greear mentioned that she is very excited to have been selected to participate in the 2021 Lead Virginia Class. Lead Virginia is the leadership program for the state of Virginia and there are 50 participants in the 2021

class. Class meetings take place throughout the state and introduce participants to each region, our common challenges and opportunities. The first in-person session will be held in June 2021 in Hampton Roads.

- The Foundation has received several equipment and instrument donations in the last few months that have been turned over to the college but are worth noting:
- Pike Electric has donated a bucket truck for the Power Lineman Program valued at least \$40,000
- Appalachian Electric Power (AEP) donated a line truck valued at \$70,000 plus some additional equipment.
- Buchanan County PSA donated a ditch witch valued at \$10-\$15,000
- Several instruments have been donated to the Mountain Music School program, including an upright bass.

Dr. Greear shared with Board members that following Norton Police Chief's injury in the line of duty Friday, the Foundation was asked to collect funds to assist Lane's family. Lane is an MECC graduate, a member of our Police Science advisory board, and has served as a mentor and internship coordinator for many MECC students. So far, the Foundation has raised approximately \$450 internally for Chief Lane. Donations can be made to the Foundation on behalf of Chief Lane.

Action Item(s): None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Action Item(s):

1. Presidential Item

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Ms. Freda Starnes and seconded by Mr. Keith Wilson 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. Mike Abbott and seconded by Ms. Gail Elliott to return to open session. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Keith Wilson made the motion on behalf of the MECC Advisory Board to submit the letter, as presented, to the Virginia Community College System Chancellor, Dr. Glenn DuBois, confirming their collective high vote of confidence in the leadership of Dr. Kristen Westover. The motion was seconded by Ms. Freda Starnes and passed unanimously.

Finance and Facilities Committee - did not meet

Curriculum & Student Affairs Committee – did not meet

Report from the Nominating Committee: (Mr. Keith Wilson, Ms. Emily Kinser, and Ms. Betty Cornett)

(see **Exhibit 6** with details).

Mr. Keith Wilson reported that the Nominating Committee met on Wednesday, May 5, 2021, via Zoom. Recommendations for chair and vice chair for 2021-2022 are:

- ✚ Mr. Rodney Baker – Chair
- ✚ Mr. Mike Abbott – Vice Chair

Action Item: A motion was made by Mr. Gary Perdue to accept the recommendation and was passed unanimously by the Board.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Action Item: Resolutions for outgoing Board member, Ms. Teresa Adkins and Mr. Burl Mooney were read into the minutes by Mr. Rodney Baker (**attached herewith and becomes a part of the minutes**). Ms. Betty Cornett made the motion to approve the resolutions as presented. A second was made by Mr. Mike Abbott and was passed unanimously.

Members of the MECC Advisory Board expressed their appreciation of these two individuals' eight years of service to the MECC Advisory Board.

OTHER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the conference call meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m. Next meeting date will be July 20, 2021.

Peggy Gibson, Recorder

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:



Chair/Vice Chair of the Board

7/20/21

Date