

# Meeting Minutes

## MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 4:30 p.m.,

Kline Foundation Boardroom

### MEMBERS PRESENT

SCOTT COUNTY	WISE COUNTY	LEE COUNTY	DICKENSON CTY	NORTON
Adrienne Hood Keith Wilson	Mike Abbott Mike Hatfield Betty Cornett Teresa Adkins	Emily Kinser Joyce Williams		Carol Caruso

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Rodney Baker (Scott)  
Freda Starnes (Scott)  
Scott Napier (Lee)  
Kristi Taylor (Lee)  
Roy Munsey (Wise)  
Carolyn Strouth (Dickenson)

### Others Attending:

Dr. Bill Brownsberger – Vice President, Academic Affairs and Workforce Solutions  
Mr. Ron Vicars – Vice President, Financial and Administrative Services  
Dr. Amy Greer – Vice President, Institutional Advancement  
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, September 19, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. in the Kline Foundation Boardroom. The meeting was called to order by chair, Mr. Mike Abbott.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Mike Hatfield made a motion to accept the September 19, 2023, minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Betty Cornett and passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 1)**

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Abbott reported on the following information items:

- Mr. Abbott reminded Board members that the MECC Christmas Luncheon is scheduled for Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> in the Goodloe Center.
- Mr. Abbott welcomed the following new Board member recently appointed to the MECC Advisory Board:
  - Ms. Teresa Adkins – Representing Wise County. Ms. Adkins previously served two terms on the MECC Advisory Board from 2013-2021.

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

### Enrollment

- The 2023 Fall Semester point-in-time headcount is 2,018 compared to last year's headcount of 1,928: an increase of (5.4) percent. The College's FTE is 1,340 compared to last year's 1,216, reflecting an increase of (10.15) percent. **(Exhibit 2)**. Other FTE enrollment reports across the VCCS are:
  - ✓ Wytheville 10.18% increase
  - ✓ Southwest 6.82% increase
  - ✓ VA Highlands -1.45% increase
  - ✓ VCCS 3.46% increase
  - ✓ NOVA 3.05% increase

### Other Updates

- Dr. Westover reviewed with Board members her current community involvement that included a list of internal and external activities from September 18 – November 14, 2023. **(Exhibit 3)**.
- The President of George Mason University visited the Pioneer Center in Duffield. The purpose of the visit was to discuss opportunities for our students to transfer.
- MECC's Back to School Bash was a big hit with students, faculty, and staff.
- Dr. Westover recently attended the annual VCCA Conference in Richmond in September. She was a part of the President's panel session of the Conference. Ten staff members from MECC also attended.
- VCCS State Board member, Biff Johnson from Lynchburg, visited the MECC campus on October 3.
- Dr. Westover recently visited L.E. Fletcher Community and Technical College in Alabama as a member of the on-site visit for their SACSCOC reaccreditation and was a great opportunity to see how other colleges meet those standards.
- The VCCS Chancellor, Dr. David Dorè, visited MECC during its Home Craft Days event, attending the HCD breakfast. Dr. Westover and Dr. Dorè later participated in an interview with Cardinal News.
- Dr. Westover shared that for over two years, MECC has been working with the VCCS regarding a solar project on our campus. She was happy to announce that they have just signed a contract to put almost a megawatt of solar panels on our roofs with roof restoration over the next 20 years. MECC was the first institution within the VCCS to go through the power purchase agreement process. Dr. Westover mentioned that she is proud to be able to move forward with some alternative energy displaying on our campus and giving students a hands-on opportunity to participate in this kind of work here on our campus. Kickoff will most likely be this summer. More details to follow.
- As part of a legislative action that included several million dollars to go toward nursing, the VCCS decided to award every nursing faculty/administrator a 5% increase. This increase did not include Health Sciences such as respiratory - only nursing faculty and administrators.
- MECC is part of an ARC INSPIRE multi-state grant application to increase awareness/marketing of studies in advanced manufacturing and industrial technologies. MECC will be the lead for Virginia on this grant.
- Dr. Westover plans to attend a Healthcare Summit at Brightpoint Community College in Richmond, VA. The goal of that meeting is to share best practices and to hear from other colleges regarding what they are doing in terms of clinical rotations, models used, etc. Several of our healthcare faculty and administrators are planning to attend the event.
- Dr. Westover mentioned an issue that is especially important to the southwest Virginia nursing programs. She shared that the Virginia Board of Nursing has a requirement that 80% of clinical rotations have to be done within the state. They also have a requirement that students are allowed to travel within 50 miles of their location to

attend a clinical. These two are in direct opposition to each other in southwest Virginia since if our students travel within 50 miles they are out of the state. She shared that there is a group of southwest colleges that are making a case asking to remove the 80% requirement. They are hoping that Senator Hackworth will take forth the language to change this rule.

- Dr. Westover mentioned that she was part of a bus tour which took place last week to several Tennessee Community colleges (Pellissippi State and Northeast State.) Senator Hackworth and a representative from Senator Pillions office also participated in the tour. The point was to show the investment that Tennessee has made in their workforce development programs and their community colleges. Tennessee has invested a lot of money toward apprenticeships in which this model does not exist in Virginia. The purpose was also to create awareness of the discrepancies between Tennessee and Virginia funding.
- Dr. Westover will be visiting with area legislators on Thursday about the VCCS and MECC Legislative priorities. Dr. Westover reminded Board members of the three legislative priorities that were discussed in depth during the September Advisory Board meeting:
  - Increase Capacity Regionally
  - Meaningful Credentials - providing every high school student with a meaningful postsecondary credential.
  - Fund What Works (FastForward and Workforce funding)

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

Dr. Brownsberger reported on the following items:

- Dr. Brownsberger mentioned that Ms. Angie Lester was recently hired to fill the role of Dual Enrollment Coordinator. He mentioned that this role is especially important since approximately 33% of our credits are dual enrollment.
- Dr. Brownsberger shared that the College has begun its search for two new dean positions: Arts & Sciences and Business Information Technology. Interviews for the six finalists for Business Information Technology are scheduled for later this week. Dr. Brownsberger mentioned that we are a little behind in the search for the Dean of Arts & Sciences and may even go over into the spring. The current interim Dean is willing to remain in this role for the spring.
- Dr. Brownsberger shared that human trafficking is one of the things that the VCCS is wanting us to talk to our students about. The VCCS has requested that we add a trauma-informed approach to human trafficking either in our orientations or other course work. Human trafficking includes forced labor, domestic servitude, and sexual trafficking. Since this is an on-going issue in the United States, he mentioned that we need to draw our student's attention to this issue. MECC is currently working on training modules to make sure all our students are made aware of trafficking issues and have the skills and training for prevention.
- Dr. Brownsberger shared that he just received notice that we are the recipients of a REACH Deep grant in the amount of \$28,500 from the Lumina Foundation. This is an additional part of a grant that we have received before. He mentioned that one of the uses of these funds would be in our prison education programs such as Project Weld at our Camp 18 facility. He reported that the program is going well, and is hoping to expand the programs beyond welding.

Action Item(s): none

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

Mr. Vicars reported on the following items:

- Local Funds Expenditure Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed with Board members the Local Funds Expenditure Report ending October 31, 2023. (See Exhibit 5 with details)

- Personnel Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed the personnel report through October 2023 (See Exhibit 6 with details)

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:

#### Grant updates:

- Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority Workforce Training Grant (VCEDA) - \$200,000 grant for scholarships for certification and tuition costs for students in all areas. This is a continuation of a grant that was received in 2018.
- Appalachian Regional Commission Grant (ARC) - \$439,669 Project Amelioration Expansion. This program is for individuals who identify as being in recovery from opioid addiction and offers them training in basic carpentry/construction, plumbing, masonry, welding, and electrical. The program has been expanded to include Dickenson, Lee, Wise, Scott and City of Norton. So far, the program has been very successful.
- Virginia Tobacco Commission - \$95,000 for Heavy Equipment Operator II Program. This is a new program expanding on the Heavy Equipment I program. This is an employer high-demand field in our region.
- Dr. Greear reported that they have been working on an Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) grant for approximately two years to support renovations at our Center for Workforce and Innovation at Appalachia (CWIA). It has taken a year to go through the vetting process with the federal government but have finally gotten approval to move forward with an RFP for at least the preliminary environmental and engineering study for that building. Once complete, which may take at least 6 months, then we can potentially begin construction.
- Dr. Greear shared that the Foundation has been raising funds for an outdoor Amphitheater for the last two years and have finally gotten approval from the VCCS State Board to proceed with engineering and environmental study for this project as well. So far, the College has raised a little over \$2M for this project but will need approximately \$6M to be able to do all the things that we would like to do.

#### Upcoming events:

- A winter formal Gala is planned for Saturday, December 2, in the Goodloe Center. Proceeds will be used for a Wise County Endowed Scholarship.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Executive Committee (did not meet)**
- **Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee –**  
Dr. Brownsberger shared that it has been requested by the VCCS to discontinue the six Associate of Arts & Sciences degrees. In their place, the VCCS ask that we create seven Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees. Dr. Brownsberger shared that the Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee met prior to this meeting to discuss the following items:
  - Mr. Keith Wilson, member of the Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee shared that MECC proposes the discontinuance of all six (6) of its Associate of Arts and Sciences (AA&S) degrees. In place of these, the College seeks to establish seven (7) Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees. Mr. Wilson explained that they are not eliminating any programs but are adding one by splitting the General Studies into Liberal Arts and Science. These changes would keep MECC apace with the degree framework adopted by its sister institutions in the VCCS and align the College with transfer agreement to four-year institutions across the Commonwealth. These changes will result in no gap of service to the College's students and no significant curricular changes in the programs. AA&S degrees would not be available after

Summer of 2024. Students currently working toward this degree would be retracked to the corresponding AA or AS degree. Mr. Keith Wilson made the motion to discontinue and replace the following programs:

- Discontinue: Software Engineering AA&S (CIP 24.0101)  
Replaced with: Software Engineering Pathway of Engineering AS (CIP 14.0101)
  - Discontinue: Engineering Specialization AA&S degree program (CIP 24.0101)  
Replace with: Engineering AS (CIP 14.0101)
  - Discontinue: General Studies AA&S degree program (CIP 24.0101)  
Replace with: General Studies AS (CIP 24.0102) and Liberal Arts AA (CIP 24.0103)
  - Discontinue: Science AA&S (CIP 24.0101)  
Replace with: Science AS (CIP 30.0101)
  - Discontinue: Pre-Teacher Education AA&S (CIP 24.0101)  
Replace with: Education AS (CIP 13.0101)
  - Discontinue: Business Administration AA&S (CIP 24.0101)  
Replace with: Business Administration AS (CIP 52.0201)
- After review and discussion, Mr. Mike Hatfield made the motion to approve these changes as presented and the motion passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 7)**
- **Finance and Facilities Committee: (did not meet)**

## OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Chair, Mike Abbott, mentioned that he would like for members of the MECC Advisory Board to be included in the distribution of news releases regarding the College. Dr. Greear agreed and will see that publications are sent out to Board members.

## OTHER COMMENTS

## ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m. Next meeting date will be January 16, 2023.

Peggy Gibson, Recorder

MECC Advisory Board Chair

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:

Michael Abbott  
Chair

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01/26/24  
Date

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