

Meeting Minutes

MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, September 19, 2023, 4:30 p.m.,

Kline Foundation Boardroom

MEMBERS PRESENT

SCOTT COUNTY	WISE COUNTY	LEE COUNTY	DICKENSON CTY	NORTON
Rodney Baker	Mike Abbott	Emily Kinser	Carolyn Strouth	Carol Caruso
Adrienne Hood	Mike Hatfield	Scott Napier		
Keith Wilson		Kristi Taylor		

MEMBERS ABSENT

Freda Starnes (Scott)
Joyce Williams (Lee)
Roy Munsey (Wise)
Betty Cornett (Wise)

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 July 18, 2023, 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:

- 🚩 2023-2024 Committee Assignments **(Exhibit 2)**. The MECC Advisory Board Bylaws states the following:

“The Executive Committee shall consist of the chair of the College Board and five other members appointed by the chair such that there shall be no fewer than one member from each of the sponsoring political subdivisions.”

The Executive Committee met before today’s meeting and according to the above Bylaws, the Executive Committee recommended that a representative from the City of Norton be added to this Committee. Since there is only one representative from the City of Norton, Ms. Carol Caruso will be asked to serve on the Executive Committee. Currently, there are three members from Scott County serving on the Executive Committee. After some discussion, Mr. Keith Wilson volunteered to serve on the Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee starting in November. There is currently a vacant position that will be filled soon by the Wise County Board of Supervisors.

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

Enrollment

- The 2023 Preliminary Fall Semester enrollment point-in-time headcount is 778 compared to last year's headcount of 670: an increase of (16) percent. The College's FTE is 1,367 compared to last year's 1,198, reflecting an increase of (14) percent. In addition, Dr. Westover reported that the College's credit enrollment is still increasing. Other FTE enrollment reports are:
 - VCCS 3.89% increase
 - NOVA 2.93% increase
 - Wytheville 9.74% increase
 - Southwest 7.92% increase
 - VA Highlands 0.35% increase

Other Updates

- Dr. Westover reviewed with Board members her current community involvement that included a list of internal and external activities from July 18 – September 18, 2023. **(Exhibit 3)**.
 - She mentioned that George Mason University's president is planning to visit our Small Business Development Center tomorrow in Duffield, Va.
 - Dr. Westover shared that she and others from MECC, along with regional presidents, attended a tradesman workgroup meeting that included Senator Hackworth. The results of that meeting required Dr. Westover and Dr. Wright to follow up with our State Board member, who was also in attendance, letting him know that the businesses that spoke at that meeting did not represent our service area.
As a follow up from this meeting, another meeting has been scheduled for November that will include our local senators and delegates, along with the five southwest community colleges, to discuss the VCCS legislative priorities.
- Dr. Westover shared that the annual Mountain Music School was a success that ended with the Slemph Foundation creating an endowed scholarship to the Foundation. The scholarship will help fund students to attend MMS.
- Dr. Westover is planning to offer the FranklinCovey Trust & Inspire Leadership program to the President's Leadership Team this fall and will later be offered for MECC employees who might want to enroll in her Leadership class.
- Dr. Greear has been leading an Economic Impact Study for the College. The last one was completed in 2018.
- The VCCS is doing a lot of work right now around systemizing what should have been systemized years ago. The biggest thing they are looking at is IT structure, policies, planning and process as well as Enterprise Appalachia. Thankfully, we have one of the best CIO's, Ritchie Deel.
- Dr. Westover shared that she and Mr. Vicars have been working with Secure Solor Futures regarding a solar roofing restoration project on our campus for some time. There was a power purchase agreement and a contract that had gone through Shared Services that is getting revamped. If completed this month, we are a recipient of a \$100,000 Intuit grant to put solar on our buildings. We are currently working with the VCCS folks to try and make this happen. More updates to follow.

Strategic Plan Updates

- Dr. Westover reviewed with Board members the Legislative Priorities. She mentioned that this was the main focus of the recent Chancellor's Retreat. The three Strategic Priorities are:

- Increase Regional Capacity – working more as a region to share, report, look at workforce numbers and what we are turning out in terms of qualified individuals regionally. Dr. Westover mentioned the eight priorities under Regional Capacity
 - Build state-of-the art career and technical programs and laboratory spaces.
 - Scale outcomes-based funding to sustain high-value, high-demand programs.
 - Provide every high school student with a meaningful, post-secondary credential by graduation.
 - Expand FastForward to keep pace with industry demands.
 - Establish career placement centers to serve every college.
 - Expand access to online learning for adults and high school students creating faster high-quality. (Needs to be our brand and something that our students will connect with)
 - Invest in marketing efforts statewide to promote the affordable educational opportunities available.
 - Create career coach programs for all public high schools.
- Meaningful Credentials - The system's goal is to provide every high school student with a meaningful postsecondary credential before they graduate. In partnership with the Virginia Department of Education, our colleges are poised to equip Virginia's high school students with the skills and experiences they need to thrive in postsecondary education and to enter directly into the workforce.
- Fund What Works (FastForward and Workforce funding) Scale outcomes-based funding to sustain high value, high-demand programs. Pay for performance, models, incentivize colleges to further help students pursue high demand career fields and create pathways to the system, and staying in the program from start to finish. By scaling outcomes-based funding, the VCCS would be able to accelerate desirable outcomes and sustain, high-value, high demand programs that strengthen pathways to jobs across the commonwealth.

Dr. Westover shared that the total ask is \$621,000. The total amount around the strategic priorities in order to increase regional capacity is \$291,000. We are utilizing GO Virginia regions to regionalize SWVA community colleges' priorities.

Dr. Westover mentioned that the Region One top three priorities are:

- Expand and create programs designed to increase the number of healthcare practitioners and healthcare support occupations.
- Enhance and establish training programs in installation, maintenance, and repair occupations to help meet statewide demand.
- Expanding heavy equipment and tractor-trailer truck driver training in SWVA.

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

Dr. Brownsberger reported on the following items:

- Dr. Brownsberger was pleased to announce that there are a lot more students taking in-person classes and are seeing a lot more students on campus this semester.
- We are ready to move forward with our Keeping in Touch (KIT) mentoring program. There were 20-25 responses from faculty, staff and administrators who were interested in being a student mentor. However, there were only eleven responses from students. Since this is a pilot program, the team has decided to move forward with five mentors across the campus for the eleven student mentees. Kristi Taylor suggested the College look into the possibility of some on-line mentoring as part of the KIT initiative.
- Dr. Brownsberger shared some of the recent student activities and programs:
 - Constitution Day
 - Back to School Bash
 - Snow Cones

- The MECC Food Pantry has had a lot of activity and has also been expanded to the CWIA.
- Disabilities Services are available.
- We have had a lot of requests for financial assistance with things such as rent, utilities, textbooks, etc.
- Laptop loaner program – 60 laptops that have been loaned out to students and fifty more have been ordered.
- Great Expectations program - students who are aging out of foster care.
- The Transfer Fair is planned for November 7th.
- We are restarting our Student Diplomat program.
- The MECC Game Room has been revamped with new updated gaming tables.
- Early registration for Spring 2024 begins in October. Dr. Brownsberger mentioned that there has been a lot of cross training for our advisors so that each of our advisors are able to advise students no matter what program they are in. The College advisors are working hard implementing a “No Wrong Door” policy.
- Interviewing this week for two new positions – Workforce advisor to navigate the students.:
 - Workforce advisor – help students navigate through the process of a curriculum.
 - Career Advisory – help students with career placement.

Action Item(s): none

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

Mr. Vicars reported on the following items:

- Mr. Vicars shared that we have finally received budget amendments and mentioned that we will not know what the impact the majority of these will have on the College until later. We are currently operating under the two-year (biennial) budget which was passed in 2022.
Ron mentioned that the VCCS is expecting to receive approximately \$15M for a program that we are just now learning about called Tuition Funded/Generated Financial Aid. Also, we will be looking at additional funds for all state employees to be given a 2% compensation increase at the end of December.
- As a follow-up from the July meeting, Mr. Vicars shared that he had checked into the possibility of trash services through the Wise County PSA and found that it was definitely cheaper to stay with our current vendor due to the volume of refuse the College has.

Local Funds Expenditure Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed with Board members the Local Funds Expenditure Report ending August 31, 2023. (See Exhibit 4 with details)

Personnel Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed the personnel report through July 2023 (See Exhibit 5 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:

- Dr. Greear reported that we have been awarded a \$493,000 grant from the Appalachia Regional Commission (ARC) to continue and expand our Project Amelioration. 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.
- Dr. Greear shared that they are working to re-open our Slep Gallery in the MECC Wampler Library. The Gallery has not had an exhibit since COVID-19. We have a contract with a local Artisan that is scheduling exhibits throughout the year that will include a rotating quilt exhibit.

- The Slemp Foundation has started an endowed scholarship for Mountain Music School and expands on another scholarship that was started last year for folks attending MMS from outside our region. The \$2,000 scholarship is to pay for tuition and lodging.

Upcoming events:

Home Craft Days breakfast Saturday, October 21st at 9:00 a.m. in the Goodloe Center
A winter formal Gala Saturday, December 2nd in the Goodloe Center.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Executive Committee (closed session meeting)**
- **Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee –**
 - Dr. Brownsberger shared that the Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee voted unanimously to present for full Board approval the 2023/2024 Curriculum Advisory Committees, as written. After review, Mr. Mike Hatfield made the motion to approve the 2023/2024 Curriculum Advisory Committees as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keith Wilson and passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 4)**
Dr. Brownsberger added that the Precision Machining Curriculum Advisory Committee is in the process of being developed and will be brought for Board approval at a later date.
- **Finance and Facilities Committee: (did not meet)**

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Baker shared that Scott County is currently in the process of redoing the Comprehensive Plan for the county. He stated that the educational section in the Plan needs to be revamped and mentioned that he needed enrollment and educational attainment data related to education for the planning document. Dr. Greear agreed to work with Mr. Baker to provide this data/information.

OTHER COMMENTS

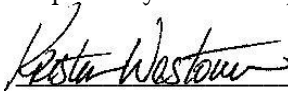
ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m. Next meeting date will be November 14, 2023.

Peggy Gibson, Recorder


MECC Advisory Board Chair

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:



Chair

11/14/23

Date