

Meeting Minutes

MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, September 21, 2021, 4:30 p.m.,

Kline Foundation Boardroom and via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT

SCOTT COUNTY	WISE COUNTY	LEE COUNTY	NORTON	DICKENSON CTY
Rodney Baker	Bonnie Elosser	Gail Elliott	Tim Cassell	Les Ritchie
Freda Starnes	Mike Abbott			
Adrienne Hood	Roy Munsey			
Keith Wilson	Mike Hatfield			
	Betty Cornett			

MEMBERS ABSENT

Gary Perdue (Lee)
Emily Kinser (Lee)
Elwanda Pillion (Lee)

Others Attending:

Dr. Ken Tucker – Professor of Sociology and Geography (Arts & Sciences)
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

CALL TO ORDER

The Mountain Empire Community College Advisory Board met on Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. in the Kline Foundation Boardroom. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Rodney Baker, Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr Roy Munsey to accept the July 20, 2021, minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bonnie Elosser and passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 1)**

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Baker reported on the following information items:

- Mr. Baker presented the 2021-2022 Board Committee Assignments **(Exhibit 2)**. A motion was made by Mr. Keith Wilson to accept the Committee Assignments as presented; seconded by Ms. Bonnie Elosser and passed unanimously.
- Mr. Baker welcomed Dr. Bill Brownsberger as the newly appointed Vice President of Academic Affairs and Workforce Solutions following the retirement of Dr. Vickie Ratliff. Dr. Brownsberger most recently served as

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas. He earned his doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 2001 and has taught in Italy, Texas, and rural Missouri. Dr. Brownsberger has over 20 years of higher education experience and 12 years of administration experience. Welcome Dr. Brownsberger!

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

Activities Report

- ❖ Most of Dr. Westover's meetings are still virtual except for a few including the Annual Meeting of the Boards and Chancellor's Retreat which took place in August. These meetings were also attended by Mr. Rodney Baker, Chair and Mr. Mike Abbott, Vice Chair.

Enrollment

The 2021 Fall Semester Preliminary Enrollment headcount is 2,053 compared to last year's 2,134: reflecting a decrease of (4) percent. The College's FTE is 1,278 compared to last years, 1,408 reflecting a decrease of (9) percent.

Dr. Westover mentioned that the biggest change remains fulltime vs. parttime.

COVID Update

Dr. Westover mentioned that our region is currently experiencing some high transmission rates. Test average is above 20 percent and a high rate of admissions. We are allowing employees to work up to 2 days virtually depending on their job function. Our campus remains open, but masks are required in all buildings. A lot of our Applied and Health Sciences classes are mostly face-to-face classes.

- No current employees reported with COVID
- Three students currently in quarantine who tested positive
- There were 17 students through the semester who tested positive or quarantined

Dr. Westover also expressed her appreciation of our faculty who have been very flexible in help our students be successful in working with our students through the COVID issues.

Other Updates

G3 – to date over 500 students have received \$917,395 in G3 funds this semester.

Dr. Westover mentioned that the college's 50th Anniversary picnic is scheduled for Friday, October 1st and encouraged everyone to attend.

Strategic Plan

Dr. Westover shared with Board members that the college's Strategic Plan was led by Dr. Ken Tucker and Dr, Bethany Arnold. Dr. Tucker, who was in attendance during today's Board meeting, presented for approval and discussion MECC's Strategic Plan 2021-2027.

The overarching strategic goal of this plan is:

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

Below are some highlights from Dr. Tucker's presentation:

MECC's Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

Mountain Empire Community College's mission is to provide our region with accessible, quality higher education, workforce training, and community programs to ensure an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

Vision

Mountain Empire Community College's vision is to be the leader in developing and educating our region's workforce.

Values

Mountain Empire Community College is committed to these values:

- Community and Cultural Preservation
- Creativity and Innovation
- Diversity and Equity
- Integrity and Trust
- Leadership and Service
- Student Success and Lifelong Learning
- Teamwork and Communication

The strategic goal will be achieved through strategies related to the below areas of focus:

Priority A: Equity and Communication

Priority B: Equity in the Classroom

Priority C: Student Supports to Foster Success

Priority D: Meaningful Credentials and the Future of Work

Priority E: Reimagining Funding and Finance

Summary of execution:

Yearly Implementation and Planning Cycle

Year 1

- Introduce the Strategic Plan to MECC Internal and External Stakeholders
- Meet with Units Responsible to ensure readiness for implementation
- Meet with Units Responsible at least once per semester to discuss status of implementation

Years 2-5

- Link fiscal resources to strategic priorities for the upcoming year (each spring for upcoming year)
- Conduct annual assessment of implementation each June; if necessary, make adjustments to the strategic plan
- Provide an update on Strategic Plan progress at each semester's faculty and staff in-service (August and January)
- Provide updates to College and Foundation Advisory Boards at least once per semester

Year 6

- Provide update on Strategic Plan progress at in-service for the final year
- Provide updates to the College and Foundation Advisory Board
- Prioritize needed strategies for final year
- Begin working on the next Strategic Plan: Collect data through focus groups and surveys, meet with diverse groups of stakeholders, revisit Mission, Vision, and Values Statements
- Complete final assessment of Strategic Plan goals and strategies

ACTION ITEM:

After review and discussion, Ms. Bonnie Elosser made the motion to approve the plan as presented; seconded by Mr. Keith Wilson, and passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 3)**

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

Project Amelioration:

- Dr. Brownsberger reported on the college's recent partnership with the 30th Judicial Circuit Adult Recovery Court, Southwest Legal Aid Society, and LENOWISCO, regarding Project Amelioration. Dr. Brownsberger shared that The Project is funded by the ARC INSPIRE Initiative and is to provide education training for recently incarcerated individuals and persons who are in recovery from substance abuse. Training will be offered in three different categories:
 - Basic Construction
 - Basic Masonry
 - Basic Plumbing

Currently there are only three students in the training as of right now.

Welding opportunity at Camp 18:

Dr. Brownsberger also shared with Board members that MECC is starting up a new welding program at Camp 18 (nonviolent offenders) located in Flatwoods, VA, offering welding training for those incarcerated individuals. Dr. Brownsberger mentioned that the college has some movable welding equipment that can be moved to that location while waiting for the hired instructor to go through the Department of Corrections training which is planned within the next couple of weeks. Dr. Brownsberger also mentioned that they are currently working on a GO VA grant to help provide funding for this initiative. More updates will follow as this initiative gets underway.

New Pharmacy Tech requirements:

Dr. Brownsberger brought to Board's attention a change in the requirements of the Virginia Board of Pharmacy for Pharmacy Techs. He shared that starting in July 2022 all students who want to complete the certification exam (which is required to get hired), will have to move from a 90-hour program to a 400-hour program. Also, they will be required to be in a program that has specialized accreditation through the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Dr. Brownsberger mentioned that if the college decides to move in this direction, the specialized accreditation requires that we have at least one full-time faculty member (just hired) and a pharmacy simulation lab, of which we are already putting in place.

ACTION ITEM(s): None

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

Mr. Vicars reported on the following items:

- Mr. Vicars reported that his area (Business Manager) has been busy finishing up financial statements that will be sent to the VCCS. Audited financial statements for FY20/21 have been received and will be completing other studies based upon those financial statement soon.
- Currently, Mr. Vicars shared that his area is working through a Hybrid telework schedule due to the high COVID numbers in our area but making sure there is office coverage 5 days a week.

- The college is undergoing some internal control testing which is done annually (ARMICS) and should be finished by the end of September.

Facilities update:

Mr. Vicars shared that Buildings and Grounds have been completing projects in preparation for the College's 50th Anniversary Kick-off Picnic as well as the upcoming Home Craft Days celebration

The HVAC Project in Phillips Taylor Hall as well as well as the Life Safety Project (sprinkler system) in Godwin Hall has been put on hold at this time but are hoping the projects will move forward possibly by year end.

Work continues on the LED lighting project in Lot A along with some IT and electrical upgrades to enhance the Home Craft Days activities, graduation and the 50th Anniversary celebration in May 2022.

Mr. Vicars brought to the Boards attention that IT has been moved under Administrative Services, not only at MECC but also the State level. He mentioned that Mr. Ritchie Deel, IT Director, and his staff have been working very hard over the last couple of months providing support to our faculty and staff who are teleworking. We continue to leverage CARES funding with their work by providing WiFi access outside and inside our buildings for our students who may not have WiFi or internet access at their homes as well as an upgraded internal and external camera system.

Local Funds Expenditure Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed with Board members the Local Funds Expenditure Report ending August 31, 2021. **(See Exhibit 3 with details)**

Personnel Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed the personnel report ending July 19, 2021. **(See Exhibit 4 with details)**

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

ACTION ITEM(s): None

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

Information Item(s):

Dr. Greear shared some additional information regarding Project Amelioration which is a partnership with the LENOWISCO Planning District. She mentioned that LENOWISCO was the applicant for the ARC grant and MECC was a sub-grantee. The goal is to make a positive difference in our local recovery population by providing training in our area in plumbing, electrical, and basic construction. An adjunct instructor has been hired specifically to work in this program.

Tools will be provided for the program and students will receive their own set of tools if they complete the program.

Cancelled Events:

- Scott County event has been postponed until April 23, 2022
- Dickenson County event postponed at artists' request
- Foundation Gala – canceled at recipient's request
- Home Craft Days breakfast has also been cancelled
- Home Craft Days concert reception - Dr. Greear mentioned that instead of hosting an indoor reception for the HCD Friday night concert, she has been working with two local vendors to supply fresh specialty donuts, coffee,

hot chocolate, and kettle corn at no cost, and a paid dinner option for guests that would like to have a meal before the concert.

Foundation update:

- As of today, MECC Foundation has a \$32.5M endowment which has grown over the last 5 years by \$10M.
- Thus far, MECC Foundation will distribute more than \$700,000 in scholarships for summer/fall/spring 2021-2022.
- The Foundation just secured \$60,000 in matching grants from Slemp Foundation for future fundraising (Lee County and Buccaneer Scholarships) and have just met our 2020 \$60,000 match.
- The Foundation secured support from Columbus Phipps Foundation to provide free dual enrollment classes at Ridgeview High School which is a wonderful asset for those students. Pays for student portion of those classes.
- There are two Public Art installations planned for Fall 2021 in Celebration of Home Craft Days and the college's 50th anniversary. (glass art by Ray Moore and a life size metal sculpture of HCD's butter churn and banjo made by MECC's welding students).
- The Foundation has provided \$25,000 in 2021 for MECC's 50th Anniversary events/celebration
- Secured a \$5,000 annual sponsorship from Kentucky Utilities for HCD and Eastman Credit Union sponsorship for Mountain Music School

MECC's 50th Anniversary Concert – May 2022

Darrell Scott – headliner
If Birds Could Fly – local group

Dr. Greear mentioned that as part of MECC's Master Facilities Plan there had been some discussion regarding the need for an outdoor amphitheater on our campus outside of the Goodloe Center. Dr. Greear mentioned that she had made a presentation to the Slemp Foundation and announced a \$1.5M gift from the Slemp Foundation for the construction of an outdoor amphitheater on campus. A \$500,000 challenge match is required.

Additionally, Dr. Greear also shared that they have applied for a \$750,000 Humanities grant to support the construction of the amphitheater. Dr. Greear shared that the project will cost between \$1.5M and \$5M and is hoping to raise at least \$3M.

A preliminary goal has been set to raise \$2M by December 2022 in honor of the college's 50th Anniversary. Dr Greear reported that thus far there has been \$110,000 in pledges from the Foundation board toward our scholarship goal and is hoping to have 100% participation from both boards and ask the Advisory Board to please consider giving. Gifts can be received via, ACH debits, payroll deduction, check/online gifts www.meccfoundation.org/give

ACTION ITEM(s): None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee:

- **Resolution for Free Community College:**

Members of the Executive Committee met this afternoon at 4:00 p.m. to discuss a Resolution for Free Community College (**See attached Resolution for full details**). The Resolution was approved and presented to the full Board for approval.

Currently there are 17 different states and a number of cities that have found a way to make community colleges tuition free to their students. Those states include, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky. There was some discussion that the primary benefit in doing so is to raise the expectation level of students. A high school diploma should not be considered the end of their educational journey and in order to achieve the standard of living that most aspire to, they will have to obtain at least technical certification in some field or an associates degree. The emphasizes was that the resolution was not proposing free college, just tuition. Students will still be faced with costs to attend school such as books and transportation.

Mr. Keith Wilson mentioned that the Resolution is the first step in taking action in filling the gap for free community college and is also a part of the college's strategic plan.

After discussion, the Board unanimously approved the Resolution for Free Community College.

- Finance and Facilities Committee – (did not meet)
- Curriculum & Student Affairs Committee (did not meet)

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

OTHER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m. Next meeting date will be November 16, 2021.

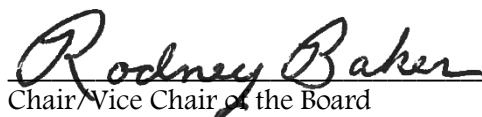
Peggy Gibson, Recorder

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:


Chair/Vice Chair of the Board

11/9/21
Date