

Meeting Minutes

MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 4:30 p.m.

Kline Foundation Boardroom

MEMBERS PRESENT

SCOTT COUNTY	WISE COUNTY	LEE COUNTY	NORTON	DICKENSON CTY
Rodney Baker	Kalen Hunter	Emily Kinser		
Adrienne Hood	Mike Abbott	Joyce Williams		
Freda Starnes	Roy Munsey	Kristi Taylor		
Keith Wilson	Betty Cornett	Scott Napier		
	Mike Hatfield			

MEMBERS ABSENT

Connie Stallard (Dickenson County)
Carol Caruso (City of Norton)

Others Attending:

Mr. Ron Vicars – Vice President, Financial and Administrative Services
Dr. Amy Greer – Vice President, Institutional Advancement
Dr. Bill Brownsberger – Vice President of Academic and Workforce Solutions
Mr. Jake Gilly – President of Faculty Senate
Peggy Gibson – Executive Assistant to the President
Special Guest - President's Institute Class -

- Adam Ramsey – Biology Professor
- Terri Lane – Computer Information Systems
- Phil Edwards – Computer Information Systems
- Christian Fraley – Great Expectations Coordinator
- Denise Collins – Administrative Assistant – Student Services

CALL TO ORDER

The Mountain Empire Community College Advisory Board met on Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 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 November 15, 2022, minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Betty Cornett and passed unanimously. **(Exhibit 1)**

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. Baker reported on the following information items:

- Mr. Baker reminded Board members that the 2023 Conflict of Interest must be completed by February 1, 2023.
- Mr. Baker welcomed the following new Board members recently appointed to the MECC Advisory Board:
 - Mr. Scott Napier – Representing Lee County.
 - Ms. Joyce Williams – Representing Lee County

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Enrollment

The Fall 2022 semester enrollment 1,215 compared to last year's 1,311: down (7) percent in total FTE. Total headcount is 1,928 compared to last year's 2,079; down (7) percent.

Other Updates

- Since there have been several new Board members appointed to the MECC Advisory Board, Dr. Westover shared a brief history of our college. (**Exhibit 2**) Highlights included:
 - MECC's Mission
 - Student demographics & population
 - Academic and community programs and offerings
 - Key economic development programs
- Legislative Update – Governor's proposed budget/HIRE Virginia
Dr. Westover reminded Council members that the HIRE Virginia is basically the VCCS's initiative to fill 75,000 open jobs across the Commonwealth with newly trained and qualified Virginia workers. She mentioned that there are right now approximately 291,128 unfilled jobs in Virginia as of January 5, 2023. After some research, it was determined that approximately 75,000 would need no credential; 150,000 would require a professional degree or beyond, the other 75,000 would require a 2-year degree or short term credential which is where the VCCS's HIRE Virginia initiative will be effective in meeting the needs of those 75,000 positions.
The original ask was around \$250M – in the Governor's Proposed Budget there was about \$25M. The Plan involves seven different priorities:
 - Remove tuition barriers for programs leading to employment in in-demand jobs
 - *COST:* Increase Workforce Credentials Grant Funding by \$18.6M per year to produce an additional 10,000 credentials per year.
 - Invest in modern labs, classrooms, and learning experiences
 - *COST:* \$100M for competitive grants to seed new program start-ups and modernized teaching environments. An employer match and engagement in program planning will be required.
 - Expand dual enrollment for high school graduates with credentialing for middle-skill jobs
 - *COST:* \$35M to enroll 12,500 high school students in on-campus CTE and FastForward Academics.
 - Provide more career services and connect qualified students and employers through an online job matching portal
 - *COST:* \$30M to staff *career placement services and develop a jobs portal.*
 - Increase advising capacity to support students from entry through completion
 - *COST:* \$40.4M to add 400 advisors.
 - Address students' mental health barriers
 - *COST:* \$7.2M for a three-year contract.

- Market HIRE Virginia through a dynamic and sustainable statewide campaign
 - \$18M to increase awareness of HIRE Virginia opportunities.

Governor’s Proposed Budget Amendments:
 (Priority Funding for the VCCS)

- \$15M to increase the availability of industry recognized credentials
- \$3M to promote awareness of G3 and FastForward
- \$3M to establish or expand career placement centers
- Language to increase the cap on FastForward from \$3,000 to \$4,000

In addition, Dr. Westover also mentioned a bill introduced by a Northern Virginia legislator, bill #HJR523, which is a bill that would require a JLARC study for all southwest Virginia colleges to provide free dual enrollment and fees to all Virginia students. More to come regarding this bill.

Status in Proposed Budget Amendments

Priority Amendments	Governor’s Budget Amendments	GA Member
Increase FastForward (funding & ceiling)	Included	More included
Start Up and Capacity Building	Not included	Included
Career Placement Services	Included	
Dual Enrollment Pathways	Included	More included
Advising Capacity	Not included	Included
Mental Health Services	Included	
Marketing	Included	More included

- \$10M ask for the CWIA building – stay tuned!

ACTION ITEM: None

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

- Dr. Brownsberger updated Board members regarding the following programs:
 - Project Weld – funded by GO Virginia. Currently, the first cohort of Project Weld at Camp 18 is finishing up and the 2nd cohort will begin in February. There are ten students in each cohort.
 - Project Amelioration - Project Amelioration is individuals who self-identify as being in recovering or referrals from the drug court. These individuals are taught marketable skills such as plumbing, masonry/carpentry, etc. Currently, that grant (INSPIRE) is up for renewal. The grant is from \$13M and MECC was previously a sub awardee from LENOWISCO with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Dr. Brownsberger shared that he and Dr. Westover recently had the opportunity to speak to Gayle Manchin, co-chair of ARC, regarding our Project Amelioration and are hoping that good things will come from that conversation. Application is due in February.
 - Dr. Brownsberger mentioned that he and Matt Rose has been working with the warden at Wallens Ridge State Prison regarding how we can partner with them through some of our programs such as our Criminal Justice program. However, he has just learned that the current warden just resigned but will continue to build relationships with that facility and its new warden.

- Dr. Brownsberger shared that several employees here at the College has been heavily involved in the Rural Educator Academy (REA) with the Community Colleges of Appalachia. Part of the tasks as participants in the program was to come up with a Capstone Project. Outcome of the meetings of what the Capstone should look like, it was decided to roll out the former KITE (Keeping in Touch Effectively) program as a pilot with limited basis. The KITE program was implemented several years ago to mentor new students. He mentioned that the pilot would involve self-selecting students matched with self-selecting faculty and staff. Employees will serve as a single point of contact for these students. The employees would be assigned to a self-selecting student and would follow them throughout the year to try to keep them on track. Both employees and students would be strictly on a volunteer basis. More details to follow.

ACTION ITEM(s): None

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

Budget update - Mr. Vicars shared that there is still a 5% compensation increase for state employees, however, there is also some news of an almost 8% increase in health insurance premiums (half of the cost will be shared by the State and half by employees). There is a \$1,500 bonus to be paid out in December along with some additional language regarding merit bonuses which is still being discussed.

Facilities update – Mr. Vicars mentioned that he was contacted last week by the VCCS regarding several projects that will be moving forward:

- Lot B – electrical and plumbing upgrade to accommodate events such as Home Craft Days, outdoor classrooms, SPARKY, etc.
- Pharmacy Tech Lab

Mr. Vicars reviewed with Board the following reports:

Local Funds Expenditure Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed with Board members the Local Funds Expenditure Report ending December 31, 2022. **(See Exhibit 3 with details)**

Personnel Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed the personnel report ending January 15, 2023. **(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 the following updates regarding her area:

- Dr. Greear provided the following information regarding the MECC Promise program. MECC's Promise program guarantees all high school graduates in all high school graduates in our service region tuition-free community college beginning with the Class of 2023.
As part of MECC's 50th-anniversary recognition, the MECC Advisory and Foundation Boards set a goal in 2022 to raise enough funding to support up to two -years of tuition coverage for high school graduates in Lee, Dickenson, Scott, Wise, and the city of Norton. The MECC Promise is intended to assist the students who have plans to enroll in community college post-high school, or those that go directly to employment.

In April 2022, the members of the Genan Foundation of Charlottesville, visited MECC to tour the campus and learn more about the college's workforce initiative. MECC staff requested Genan Foundation's support to raise educational attainment rates in southwest Virginia, which are about 20% below the state average.

In August 2022, the Genan Foundation announced a \$750,000 gift to kick off the MECC Promise program, citing MECC's commitment to building a skilled, trained workforce in the region. Dr. Greear shared that she and Dr. Westover had visited each local county's Board of Supervisors and the Norton City Council to request additional support to secure program funding beyond 2023.

To qualify, students must:

- Maintain a 2.0 for each semester and cumulative GPA and be continuously enrolled, full-time
- Meet Virginia in-state domicile requirements, reside in the service region, and able to provide proof of residency
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and submit all required documentation by August 1 annually. (May 1 for Summer enrollment)
- Complete the MECC Foundation Scholarship application by August 1 annually. (May 1 for Summer enrollment)
- Enroll by the Fall semester immediately after high school graduation.

This is a last-dollar scholarship for tuition only – federal and state aid and additional scholarships will be applied first.

- As of today, the MECC Foundation has a \$31M endowment.
- For the college's 50th Anniversary in 2022, the Foundation set a goal to raise \$2M dollars. The three main focus areas were (1) scholarships, (2) amphitheater, (3) unrestricted giving. Based on gifts beginning with July 2021, we have raised \$8.1M. Approximately \$5.6M of those funds is grant funding for various projects such as Project Weld. Approximately \$2.1M is gifts for the amphitheater project. The preliminary draft design for the amphitheater should be finalized within the next couple of weeks and includes a 1500 plus seating space to include some green areas for families. Plans are that some of the seats will have backs to them along with a covered area for a portion of the front seating area. More updates to come.
- The Blue Highway Festival this past year auctioned off a banjo that was donated by one of the artists. Half of the proceeds went to ETSU and half to MECC for Mountain Music School. This amounted to \$3,500 for scholarships to MMS. An additional \$4,000 was also gifted and received for MMS scholarships.
- The John Fox, Jr Festival is scheduled for March 15th and will feature Silas House. This will be an in-person event and will also be livestreamed.
- The Lonesome Pine Golf Tournament is scheduled for June 2nd.
- Lee County Golf Tournament is scheduled for July 14th.

ACTION ITEM(s): None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Executive Committee:

Action Item(s):

- *2023 Emeritus Nominee Recommendations:*

Mr. Rodney Baker mentioned that the Executive Committee met prior to this meeting and unanimously voted to present the following 2023 Professor, Administrative & Professional Faculty, and Support Staff Emeritus nominees for full Board approval. **(Exhibit 6 with details)**



Ms. Fran Doyle Tomlinson – Professor Emeritus

Dr. Vickie Ratliff – Administrative & Professional Faculty

Ms. Kathy Pierson – Support Staff Emeritus

A motion was made by Ms. Betty Cornett and seconded by Mr. Mike Hatfield to approve the recommendations. The motion passed unanimously.

These individuals will be asked to participate in the 2023 Graduation Ceremony.

- Finance and Facilities Committee: (Mr. Ron Vicars)

Mr. Vicars presented the following item(s) for Board approval:

- **2023 – 2024 Local Budget - Maintenance and Operation Budget**

The overall budget has not increased and is still at \$87,000. This is basically the same Budget that was approved last year:

○ Student Scholarships	\$30,000
○ College Board	\$5,000
○ President's Office	\$19,000
○ Fiscal Operations	\$3,000
○ Home Craft Days	\$15,000
○ Mountain Music School	\$12,000
○ Site Development	\$3,000

The budget is split among all of our localities and shows how each locality will be requested to fund the \$87,000. Mr. Vicars explained that the budget is basically divided up in a pro rata function as a number of seniors within that locality; Dickenson, Lee, City of Norton, Scott, and Wise Counties - (See attachment 7 for details.)

A recommendation was made by Mr. Roy Munsey, Chair, of the Finance and Facilities Committee to approve the 2023-2024 Maintenance and Operation Budget as presented; recommendation was seconded by Mr. Mike Hatfield and passed unanimously by the full Board.

- Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee – (Did not meet)

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Baker mentioned that as part of the President's Evaluation each year a survey will be sent out by MECC's Human Resources Director. Once the survey results are composed, the Executive Committee will review and bring a Recommendation Letter to the full Board for approval at May, 2023 meeting of the MECC Advisory Committee.

OTHER COMMENTS


Mr. Baker reported that he, Mr. Keith Wilson, Dr. Westover, and Dr. Greear traveled to Richmond, VA to attend the VCCS Legislative Reception.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m. Next meeting date will be March 21, 2023.

Peggy Gibson, Recorder

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:



Chair/Vice Chair of the Board

March 21, 2023

Date