

Meeting Minutes

MECC Local Advisory Board

Tuesday, May 12, 2020, 4:30 p.m.,

Meeting held via conference call due to Declared Emergency COVID-19 Pandemic

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	Alane Lovern	Gary Perdue		
	Teresa Adkins			
	Betty Cornett			

MEMBERS ABSENT

Burl Mooney (Dickenson)
Helen Chadwell (Lee)

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. Val Lee – President of Association of Classified Employees and Director of Human Resources
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 12, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. via conference call 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 Ms. Bonnie Elosser to accept the March 17, 2020 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:
No reports or updates

President's Report – Dr. Kristen Westover

Dr. Westover reported on the following items:

Activities Report

- ❖ Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all travel was cancelled and meetings were held via Zoom.

Enrollment

The Spring Semester 2020 Final Enrollment is 2,039 compared to last year's headcount of 2,274; a decrease of (10) percent. The College's FTE is 1,233 compared to last years, 1,319; reflecting a decrease of (7) percent. Preliminary Summer enrollment headcount is 587 compared to last year's headcount of 617. FTE is 284 compared to last year's report of 292 at this time; a decrease of (3) percent. Fall enrollment is showing a decrease at this time.

Updates

Dr. Westover expressed her appreciation and the amazing job of MECC employees in shifting to working virtually as well as online coursework shifts. She mentioned how detailed our Leadership has been in leading their teams through difficult decisions and challenging circumstances. The Information Technology (IT) department has worked tirelessly to assist employees in managing to work remotely along with faculty, buildings and grounds, switchboard, student services, career coaches and navigators, business office and HR. Without everyone working together this could not have been done. Below are the highlights from her report regarding how the college is dealing with the current virus situation and moving forward:

- The health and safety of our students, employees, and community are still our number one concern moving forward.
 - All but essential employees are working from home if the nature of their job will allow. Some employees were able to utilize the Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL) when needed.
 - As of today, there are no known coronavirus cases on our campus or within employee ranks.
 - All courses were able to shift to online after a one-week extension of spring break which was to allow faculty and students time to prepare for online learning. All face to face workforce programs that were not health care related were halted and finished up with their nurse aid cohort. Clinicals managed to finish in different ways.
 - An alternate grading scale (PWI) was offered to all students at the direction of the VCCS so that students were not harmed due to the current COVID-19 situation. Students were given the option of choosing the alternate scale or the traditional grading scale. The PWI scale is (P+, P-, W, WC, or an Incomplete). Communication was sent out to all students and students had to choose which grading scale they preferred.
 - Graduation has been postponed at this time. However, a Virtual Graduate Recognition Presentation will be available for viewing this Friday, May 15, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. The presentation will be viewable on MECC's Facebook, MECC website, MECC's YouTube channel and on the MECC Public Access television channel. The presentation will also be available for reviewing any time after the initial release.
 - Dr. Westover mentioned that she has been participating in calls with the Chancellor's new Task Force, "Beyond the Pandemic: Adapting to the New Normal" whose members include a broad representation from across the VCCS. The Task Force are working to provide us some preliminary recommendations for starting back up in the fall and extended recommendations for our "new normal". The VCCS recommendations for fall depend on the Governor's plan for reopening.
- ❖ Dr. Westover mentioned that three submissions have been sent to the VCCS to be included in the list of exceptions to the hiring freeze (Chief of Police, IT Manager, Education Support Specialist II in the Student Services area).
 - ❖ **CARES Act Funding:** Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act – Dr. Westover shared that the College was recently awarded \$1.4 million dollars in CARES Act funding from the federal government/ Department of Education. She shared that the funding was distributed to institutions using a formula based on student enrollment and of the amount allocated at least 50 percent, \$697,462, was reserved for students who

were directly impacted by the coronavirus and who were enrolled in the spring. Processes were run at the systems level and after some issues were worked out the process was as follows:

- ✚ Approximately 744 Pell eligible students will receive \$700 each - most likely by the end of this week.
- ✚ The remaining 25% of aid for students will be used for Emergency CARES Act Funds of which students were instructed they would need to apply in order to receive. Approximately 120 students have already applied at this time.

MECC is eligible for the second half of the CARES Act funding for institutes of Higher Ed, or the “institutional funds” portion of the nearly 1.4 million allocated to MECC. As mentioned above, the first \$697,000 has been dispersed to students or the Emergency CARES Fund, the second half may be used to support the organization or students. MECC is also eligible for an additional \$68,000 in Department of Education grant funds because it has a Title III strengthening institutions grant. These are two separate funds and will require 2 more applications.

- ❖ The VCCS Chancellor recently sent out a letter to all high schools graduates across the Commonwealth reminding them of the value of a community college. A repository was also put together of all online courses offered by the VCCS called CollegeAnywhereVA.org which assigns students to a college according to their zip code when inquiring about a class.
- ❖ No decisions have been made at this time of how K12 and Universities plan to move forward.
- ❖ Dr. Westover mentioned that she has been participating in weekly calls with the Governor’s office, VCCS, and weekly agency reports.
- ❖ An all college virtual meeting is planned for Friday at 1:00 p.m.
- ❖ Summer courses will only be offered on-line.

Moving forward

- ❖ Dr. Westover shared with Board members some information from the Governor’s Forward Virginia Blueprint:

Phase I –

- Safer at home especially for all those who are vulnerable
- No social gatherings of more than 10 people
- Continued social distancing
- Continued teleworking
- Face coverings recommended in public
- Easing limits on business and faith communities (Phase I could last 2-4 weeks or longer)

Phase II –

- Stay-at-home for vulnerable populations
- No social gatherings of more than 50 individuals
- Continued social distancing
- Continued teleworking
- Face coverings recommended in public
- Further easing business limitations (Phase II could last 2-4 weeks or longer)

Phase III –

- Safer at home for vulnerable populations
- Remove ban on social gatherings
- Remove capacity limits in establishments
- Continue heightened cleaning and disinfection
- Possible other measures (Phase II could be 10-12 weeks away, or more)

Based on the Governor’s Blueprint, VCCS recommendations for fall semester are:

- Waive placement testing requirements for the Fall 2020 semester
- Implement and maximize online and phone registration and onboarding processes
- Determine delivery modalities for Fall 2020
- Provided course survey to help to identify which courses are suitable for online, hybrid, or on-campus delivery and how to prioritize performance-based classes and labs that cannot be delivered online for face-to-face instruction – based on demand, need, and space.
- Reinstate the standard VCCS grading policy for the Summer 2020 term and thereafter.
- Implement a survey of students' technology needs.
- Waive placement testing for students' dual enrolled in the 2020-2021 academic year and consider using a survey tool to collect information on Fall 2020 high school dual enrollment offerings – depends on how K12 move forward.

Dr. Westover mentioned that Dr. Ratliff has been working putting together teams in moving these suggestions forward.

ACTION ITEM(s): none

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

Dr. Ratliff reported on the following items:

Dr. Ratliff mentioned the exceptional work that our MECC employees have done in staying in contact with our students; many employees are working one on one with students.

Looking ahead, Dr. Ratliff mentioned that the summer schedule has already moved to online classes and are hoping to have some in person classes toward the end of summer but not certain that will happen given the current situation with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- ✚ Governor school has been changed to an online model. Some strands that students would have normally taken that could be changed to online classes are still available. However, instead of having those available that could go online we are now allowing students that are working toward a degree take classes that are being offered that will work in their program area. Students that are accepted in to the Governor School program, can choose six classes that will meet their needs according to what classes we have offered. Approximately 70-75 students are interested and are working with them individually in making sure they enroll in the right class.
- ✚ Summer camps that are normally held in the summer are either postponed or on hold at this time such as Mountain Music School, Talent Search Camp, and Trio activities.
- ✚ Dr. Ratliff also shared that Fall semester classes are still in the planning stages and are working on some ideas of how we can proceed given the current situation without having to change the Academic Calendar. Plans are being developed and further information will be forthcoming.
- ✚ Dr. Ratliff mentioned that as a result of the newly formed Beyond the Pandemic Task Force recommendations several workgroups have been identified as we develop and implement our plans for the fall semester. Workgroups mentioned are: Communications, Advising, Professional Development, Information Technology, Dual Enrollment, and Facilities.
- ✚ She also mentioned that we are currently working on Dual Enrollment classes taught in the High Schools which will require certain restrictions moving forward.

Action Item(s): None

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

Mr. Vicars reported on the following items:

Information Item(s):

- ❖ Mr. Vicars shared that the first half of the CARES Act funding payments for students should be mailed out by the end of the week – student payments should be approximately \$700 per student. Second half of the CARES Act funding, \$690,000, is designated for the Institutions and are just now being discussed. MECC continues to work with the VCCS to determine the best usage of these restricted funds. Mr. Vicars also shared that he has just learned that the VCCS along with other state agencies may be awarded some additional funds for reimbursement for costs and expenses due to telework or online instruction. This will be an agency by agency award; working with VCCS to file for these funds.
- ❖ Mr. Vicars reported that one of the two HaloMist units has arrived and is ready to go. The unit is a hydrogen peroxide defogger that can be moved to different areas for disinfectant purposes. He also mentioned the exceptional work of his Staff during the transition especially those in Housekeeping and Maintenance at the direction of Preston Layne.

Local Funds Expenditure Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed with Board members the Local Funds Expenditure Report ending April 30, 2020. **(See Exhibit 4 with details)** Mr. Vicars shared that the Parking Lot LED Lighting Project is ongoing. Campus Master Plan is complete.

Personnel Report – Mr. Vicars reviewed the personnel report ending May 10, 2020. **(See Exhibit 5 with details)**

Action Item(s): None

Vice President of Institutional Advancement – Dr. Amy Greear

Information Item(s):

Dr. Greear shared that the Foundation is primarily responsible for supporting scholarships on campus and our operations and scholarship funding are impacted by economic conditions. She mentioned that at one point, the Foundation had lost about 5M in our endowed accounts, but right now are down a couple million. Because our scholarship funding is based on a three-year average of returns, our scholarship funding was decided based on the year ending December 2019, in which at that time the market was doing great. She further explained that if the market continues to see declines in 2020, this could impact our scholarship funding for essentially the next three years beginning in 2021.

All special events have been cancelled throughout March-July. However, the Lee County golf tournament is still scheduled but are waiting on our major sponsor to confirm. The August Scott County fundraiser has also been cancelled, but may hold a picnic for donors and board members in July if COVID-19 guidelines allow us to do so at that time.

With special events either being postponed or cancelled, the Foundation has shifted to alternative fundraising and examining how we can “friend” raise.

Giving Tuesday Now campaign was launched online to support MECC’s Student Emergency Assistance Fund in which approximately \$3,000 was raised in one day and are still receiving donations for that program. These Funds are used to support students who have emergency financial needs beyond tuition to help with transportation, books, and housing cost.

Dr. Greear mentioned that she has been helping to develop the virtual graduation recognition, COVID-19 response pages, Live Chat feature for the website, and CARES ACT funding communication. She also mentioned that work continues on a communication plan for fall classes in the next few days. We're continuing to market enrollment for summer and fall. Dr. Greear brought to Boards attention the MECC CARES billboard that are running on the Duffield digital billboard featuring employees as well as on social media. In addition, she also mentioned that she is working on a joint television advertising campaign with Virginia Highlands and Southwest Community College. She mentioned the exceptional work that our media assistant, Jason Kilgore, has done in highlighting our students who have received honors and awards this year. The college has done an exceptional job of transitioning in person recognition events to public recognition with the help of social media channels.

Grant applications:

Submitted:

- ✚ \$900,000 Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Recover SWVA for incarcerated individuals to receive workforce training — partnering with Regional Jail, Adult Ed & Ballard Health.
- ✚ \$500,000 in Tobacco Commission (TRRC) grants for tuition reimbursement in expansion of the Power Lineman, CDL, and Dental Assistant programs.

In development:

- ✚ Two VCCS grants: RSVP workforce grant for \$250,000 and the RVHI grant supporting Career Coaches was reduced to \$78,000; a reduction of approximately \$40,000 and are looking at ways to realign our Career Coach program in response to this reduction.
- ✚ US Department of Labor National Farmworker Jobs Program Grant for more than \$1.2M

Action Item(s): None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee – Did not meet

Finance and Facilities Committee – Did not meet

Report from the Nominating Committee (Ms. Gail Elliott, Ms. Emily Kinser, and Mr. Keith Wilson)

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

Ms. Gail Elliott reported that the Nominating Committee met via conference call on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. Recommendations for chair and vice chair for 2020-2021 are:

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

Action Item: A motion was made by Ms. Betty Cornett to accept the recommendation and was passed unanimously by the Board.

Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee – Dr. Vickie Ratliff

(See Exhibit 7)

Dr. Ratliff shared with the MECC Advisory Board that the Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee had met via conference call earlier this afternoon to consider a recommendation from MECC Instruction and Curriculum Committee for a new program in Software Development II. However, Dr. Ratliff shared that this is not actually a new program but further explained that in 2006 the college developed two particular Software Development Career Studies Certificates in response to an initiative by Virginia's Governor for Southwest Virginia in bringing two particular companies to Lebanon. What was learned is that once it was submitted to the VCCS in 2006 only one program number was assigned and as a result we are having to resubmit the Software Development II in order to correct documentation and be assigned the appropriate program code.

Action Item: As Chair of the Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee, Mr. Tim Cassell made the motion for full Board approval of the new curriculum, Software Development II, as presented. Ms. Bonnie Elosser seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Action Item: Resolution for outgoing Board member, Ms. Alane Short Lovern was 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 Ms. Lovern's eight years of service to the MECC Advisory Board.

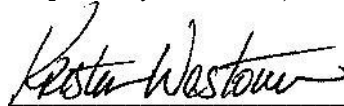
OTHER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the conference call meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m. Next meeting date will be July 21, 2020.

Peggy Gibson, Recorder

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristen Westover, President & Secretary to the Board

APPROVED:



Chair/Vice Chair of the Board

7/21/2020

Date