

**MINUTES OF THE
GASTON COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES RETREAT
Gaston Country Club
February 3, 2017**

Members Present: Mr. Stephen Campbell, Secretary
Sheriff Alan Cloninger
Judge Craig Collins
Mr. John Dancoff
Ms. Jennifer Davis
Mr. Brett Keeter
Mr. Brad Overcash
Dr. Jim Ragan, Vice Chair
Ms. May Gray Robinson
Mr. James Smith
Mr. Randy Vinson
Dr. Jim Watson, Chair
Ms. Madison Knowles, SGA President

Dr. Patricia Skinner

Members Absent: Mr. Ron Hovis, Mr. Tracy Philbeck

Others Present: Ms. Julia Allen, Mr. Todd Baney, Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Ms. Mary Ellen Dillon, Ms. Lynda Ellington, Mr. Rocky Goins, Mr. Travis Hogue, Dr. Joe Keith, Ms. Cynthia McCrory, Dr. Dennis McElhoe, and Dr. Silvia Patricia Rios Husain.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome

Board of Trustees Chair, Dr. Jim Watson, called the Retreat to order at 8:35 a.m. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He brought their attention to an article that was recently published in the *Gaston Gazette* highlighting Ms. Ashley Hagler, an instructor from Gaston College, as winner of the Excellence in Teaching Award for community colleges in the state of North Carolina. He requested Dr. Skinner bring Ms. Hagler to a future Board of Trustees Meeting so they could formally commend her for the tremendous honor she has brought to the College and the work she has done with the initiation of the SPARC³ (STEM Persistence and Retention via Curricula, Cohorts, and Centralization) program.

Chair Watson then called upon Mr. Randy Vinson as Mr. Vinson wanted to share information he had recently seen published in *Digging Deeper*, a Gaston County publication, concerning the College. The article, written by Ms. Julia Allen, touted the education available at community colleges in the manufacturing sector as not only an alternative for students, but a well-paying alternative, to students obtaining a four-year degree. The article stressed that today's manufacturing positions are not the industry positions of years ago, but they are "on the cutting edge of today's innovations in robotics, mechatronics, 3-D printing, automation and more."

Gaston College's role is to provide the education and training for this next generation of manufacturing jobs that will provide a better than sustainable living for citizens of Gaston and Lincoln counties and thereby bolster their economies. Relaying this information to parents of high school students is imperative, and Mr. Vinson felt the article by Ms. Allen stated that case very well.

Invocation – Mr. Dancoff

Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder

Chair Watson reminded Trustees of the ethics requirements of public servants and also requested they identify any conflicts of interest or appearance of conflicts of interest present. None were identified.

Introductions

Dr. Skinner formally introduced Dr. Dewey Dellinger as Vice President for Academic Affairs to the Board of Trustees. She relayed his academic credentials (which are listed below), his history of positions at Gaston College since 1990, and previous teaching history from 1988.

- Ph.D., Mathematics Education, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
- M.A., Adult Education/Certificate, Community College Instruction, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC
- M.A., Mathematics, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, NC
- B.S., Mathematics Education, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
- B.S., Mathematics, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Dr. Dellinger replaced Dr. Don Ammons who had recently retired. The Board warmly welcomed Dr. Dellinger to his new position. Dr. Dellinger thanked the Board for their confidence in him.

Introductions proceeded around the table as the trustees and staff introduced themselves to Dr. Dellinger.

II. Advocacy

Mr. Brett Keeter, Chair of the Board of Trustees Ad Hoc Committee on Advocacy, was introduced by Chair Watson to provide a presentation on Advocacy. The Committee on Advocacy was the brainchild of previous Board of Trustees Chair, Mr. James Smith, who had noted in the 2015-16 Board Self-evaluation results that an advocacy plan for trustees would be beneficial to the College. Dr. Watson wanted to expand that Committee on Advocacy and had named Mr. Keeter to be its Chairman and work to put an Advocacy Plan in place.

Mr. Keeter, working with Ms. Julia Allen, Gaston College's Chief Development Officer and Executive Director of the Gaston College Foundation, added to the Committee by reaching out to include members of the Gaston College Foundation Board and additional Trustees. Membership today includes trustees Mr. Keeter, Mr. Dancoff, Mr. Hovis, Mr. Overcash, Mr. Smith, Mr. Vinson, and Dr. Watson in an Ex Officio capacity, and Foundation Board members Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Dalton, and Mr. Eger. Dr. Skinner and Ms. Allen round out the Committee to represent Gaston College.

Ms. Julia Allen relayed that to be strong advocates for the College, trustees would need to be informed liaisons. Three documents were distributed: Gaston College Quick Facts, Gaston College Programs of Study, and the 2017-19 North Carolina Community College System Budget Priorities. The Quick Facts sheet provided information on the student/faculty ratio, student enrollment per Gaston and Lincoln counties, ratio of full-time to part-time students, student ethnicity and age, and other important Gaston College information. The Programs of Study sheet listed all the degree, diploma and certificate programs available for students. The Budget Priorities sheet relayed goals to correct the loss of the proposed 2016, \$10 Million increase for salaries, provide an enrollment growth adjustment, invest in workforce training, fund additional Career Coaches, increase student completion, reward colleges for outcomes, and stabilize budgets impacted by enrollment changes. Although the numbers on the Budget Priorities sheet were System-wide numbers, numbers reflective of how they translate to Gaston College would be distributed as legislative sessions take place this spring.

Ms. Allen explained how a shift in enrollment from 60% to 24% for full-time students, and 40% to 76% for part-time students has affected the College's funding. It is imperative that the funding formula for community colleges be adjusted to allow for this happenstance. The numbers she presented translate to the fact that although the College's head count has risen 5%, since the rate of our funding is based on full-time equivalencies or FTEs, our funding allocation has decreased by 2-3.5%. With more students to serve and less funding to provide those services, the community colleges struggle. Ms. Allen encouraged trustees to ask for explanations about any of the various priorities brought forward so when it came time to relay the information to legislators or commissioners they would be able to sufficiently explain why they are important.

In an effort to provide trustees information, Ms. Allen spoke about the differing budget processes for Gaston and Lincoln counties. The Lincoln County budget for FY 2017-18 had already been reviewed by Gaston College's Board and submitted to the Lincoln County Manager Kelly Atkins. The Gaston County budget was still in the discussion phase with Gaston County Manager Earl Mathers. Those numbers would be presented to the Board at a future

meeting. When asked what other information would be helpful in discussions with commissioners or legislators, the trustees replied that information on the College's and Gaston and Lincoln counties' partnerships, workforce and/or customized training the College provides, and any other items that pertain to building a strong economy would be welcome. Including legislators and commissioners in the distribution of the Gaston College Alumni Newsletter would also be beneficial.

Mr. Randy Vinson then provided an update of the North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees' work regarding the budget for community colleges. He relayed that it has been a long-standing issue that the General Assembly reports they support community colleges, but they fall short when it comes time to provide adequate funding for them. Recently, the NCACCT brought the idea of hiring a lobbyist to promote funding of community colleges to legislators to the NCACCP. As a shared effort between the 58 NC community colleges, it would have cost each college approximately \$700-\$1600 depending on the size of the college. The idea was turned down.

Recently, Ms. Julie Woodson, who is an Executive Vice President for the NCACCT, put forth the idea of a Community College Coalition to assist in lobbying for additional funding. This idea received a favorable response, and it was recently announced from the House floor to garner input as to who might be interested in joining this Coalition.

Mr. Vinson encouraged the trustees to contribute to the Community College Political Action Committee (PAC). If each trustee statewide gave \$100 that would mean \$100,000 in funds available to hire a lobbyist to help garner legislative support for State community college funding. The PAC has been around for many years with the goal to increase lobbying efforts for community colleges to get better State funding results.

III. Board Survey and Self-evaluation Results

The Board reviewed the results of the Gaston College Board of Trustees Survey and Self-evaluation questionnaire that was communicated through Survey Monkey. The survey had a response of 12 of the 15 Board members. Chair Watson distributed a copy of the results of the survey for the trustees to review. Overall, his impression of the survey regarding the work of the Board was positive. He distributed a list of the six survey questions to which all trustees totally agreed and reviewed each one with the trustees.

Next, Chair Watson distributed and reviewed with the trustees the six survey questions which had received the lowest scores. These revealed differing points of view among the trustees and/or possible areas where improvement could be made. The question with the lowest score centered on lack of an Advocacy Plan for trustees, but that was now in process. Another question concerned ways trustees could support the College's foundation. Ms. Julia Allen relayed several options for trustees including the Student Emergency Assistance Fund, WSGE, scholarships, endowments, Giving Tuesday, Run for the Money with the Community Foundation, the equipping of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing, and a new fundraising effort for the Veterinary Technology Facility. A Gaston College Foundation information session will be considered for a future Board meeting.

With regard to the other Survey responses, Chair Watson encouraged all the trustees to be active and informed participants at Board of Trustees' meetings, attend Board subcommittee meetings, and to attend, when possible, College and community functions as an advocate for the College.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Chair Watson thanked the trustees for participating in the survey as he felt sharing points of view can be a step toward new solutions and/or ways to improve.

IV. Preliminary Report on President's Priorities for 2016-2017

Process for Development of President's Priorities

Dr. Skinner outlined for the Board the process for developing/recommending the Presidents' Priorities which generally follows expectations of the SACSCOC who require a college Facilities Master Plan and a Strategic Plan. The Facilities Master Plan, which was approved in March, 2016, has a general timeframe of five years; the Strategic Plan, which was approved in March, 2014, has a general timeframe of five years.

The entire campus is involved in reporting Strategic Plan goal accomplishments on an annual basis and submitting new unit goals annually. At a retreat with her Leadership Team in December, Dr. Skinner reviews past plans and priorities and considers new institutional priorities. This results in a draft of President's Priorities for the next year which is presented to trustees at the Board Retreat.

Dr. Skinner noted, however, that even though priorities are developed and approved, sometimes events happen that are not part of the priorities that require immediate attention and become part of our process, for example, the NC Connect bond referendum last year. She was tasked to find time and resources, and build that into her priorities for the year.

Report on President's Leadership Roles

Dr. Skinner provided a mid-year update on her Leadership Roles: National, Regional, State, and College Initiatives. Additionally, the report provided names of specific events the College has hosted and strategic events that she has attended to keep the College abreast of current trends, concerns, and new possibilities with regard to policies, curricula, and student success.

Report of President's Priorities for 2016-17

The President's Priorities for 2016-17 are listed below:

- I.** Continue to manage and execute the construction and equipping of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CAM).
- II.** Prepare for SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report and Compliance Certification due September 15, 2017.

- III.** Implement momentum-based strategies designed to improve student completion and increase FTE.
- IV.** Conduct analysis among regional business and industry to determine what additional training is needed to address workforce preparedness needs.
- V.** Continue to focus on accessibility of learning environments that serve the community.
- VI.** Continue proactive efforts to maintain a secure campus environment.

The President's Preliminary Priorities Report on each of the above 2016-17 priorities is filed with the minutes of the meeting. Some of the highlights for each Priority are mentioned below.

Initiative I: The Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) is expected to open for limited classes in summer 2017 and be fully operational by fall 2017. The building of the CAM has been a three-year project supervised by Ms. Cynthia McCrory, Vice President for Finance, Operations, and Facilities. Capital funding for equipment is still being sought.

Initiative II: In Dr. Skinner's report, a table listed the deadlines set in the review process for all the documentation due to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for Gaston College's Fifth-Year Interim Report and Compliance Certification. This report is due September 15, with notification as to whether the College meets SACSCOC requirements expected in December 2017.

Initiative III: All areas of the College work to implement measures that will increase student completion and boost FTEs. Academic Affairs has encouraged its divisions to refine and streamline the student retention program (Student Persistence and Success Plan-SPSP) by utilizing data to reach students struggling. Student Affairs is reaching out to students who do not attend the first class meeting or submit online sections and this has reduced No Shows. Administrative Services has collaborated with NorthStar Marketing to develop various marketing and advertising that would effectively reach students. Economic and Workforce Development continues to revise and rework its programs to be relevant to today's job-seekers. The Development Office/Foundation funded \$20,000 for 2016-17 to assist student with tuition, books, and academic Supplies. The Finance, Operations, and Facilities division is setting up ways and means so students can easily view and pay their bills, and monitor their Financial Aid benefits.

Additionally, Dr. Skinner relayed she is chair for the North Carolina Student Success Center Advisory Board. There are 14 Centers nationwide, and Dr. Skinner had recently attended a meeting in Seattle, WA, where the Executive Directors of those Centers met to discuss ways to take policies into implementation as far as building career pathways and guided pathways for underrepresented students. This opportunity to learn from others was very valuable.

Initiative IV: Under this initiative, Dr. Skinner mentioned several areas where work continues to address workforce training needs: Apprenticeship 321, the Greater Gaston Development Corporation to promote GIGworks Technology, the customized training delivered for both Gaston and Lincoln counties' manufacturing companies, courses offered at the Gaston Correctional Center, and the Senior Service Grant program which provides training and employment opportunities for those 55 year or over who are under-employed and unemployed.

Initiative V: The College has a five-year Website and e-Learning Accessibility plan to become compliant with the standards outlined in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA. Implementation of this plan has been undertaken by a College cross-functional committee to ensure an online compliance platform that is usable and accessible for all students at Gaston College.

Initiative VI: The College's efforts to maintain a secure campus environment are always a priority. A fulltime police officer has been added to the Lincoln Campus, refurbished police cars are now present on all three campuses, and various response trainings and exercises continue for faculty's and staff's safety.

Chair Watson thanked Dr. Skinner for her thorough report which highlighted the many significant programs, processes, and initiatives currently in progress at the College.

President's Proposed Priorities for 2017-2018

The President's Priorities, for any given year, are some of the more specific items that the Board assigns and can be linked back to the Strategic Plan. There are many other projects and initiatives also taking place that, although they may not be a main focus of this year, still complement the Strategic Plan. Dr. Skinner presented to the Board the Proposed President's Priorities for 2017-2018:

- I.** Manage and execute the construction and equipping of the new Veterinary Technology Facility.
- II.** Complete and submit the SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report.
- III.** Update the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan in efforts to increase FTEs and improve student retention, success, and completion.
- IV.** Continue responding to the workforce development needs of regional employers through the expansion of existing programs such as Apprenticeship 321 and the development of new programs including pre-apprenticeships and additional workforce certifications.
- V.** Continue to focus on accessibility of learning environments.

- VI.** Expand and strengthen partnerships in the community, region, and state with strategic emphasis on K-12 initiatives, focusing particularly on Gaston and Lincoln county schools.

The Board reviewed each of the President's Proposed Priorities for 2017-18 (July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018). No changes were recommended at this time. The President's Proposed Priorities for fiscal year 2017-2018 will be presented for approval at the Board of Trustees meeting on March 27, 2017.

In closing the Retreat, Chair Watson thanked the trustees for their participation and the presenters for the valuable information they had brought forward. He noted that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Advocacy would continue and trustees would be asked to align themselves to various commissioners and legislators in an informational/advocacy aspect to promote Gaston College. He felt the discussion that had taken place would reap benefits in the future.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Watson adjourned the Retreat at 12:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Campbell, Secretary

Dr. Jim R. Watson, Chair

Mary Ellen Dillon, Recording Secretary

(College Seal)