MINUTES OF THE
GASTON COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES RETREAT
Gaston Country Club
February 6, 2015

Members Present: Mr. Stephen Campbell
Ms. Jennifer Davis
Mr. John Dancoff
Mr. Ron Hovis
Mr. Brett Keeter
Mr. Tom Keigher
Mr. Jim Ragan
Ms. May Gray Robinson
Mr. James Smith, Chair
Mr. Randy Vinson
Dr. Jim Watson, Vice Chair
Ms. LaTonya Ross, SGA President
Dr. Patricia Skinner

Members Absent: Sheriff Alan Cloninger
Ms. Rhonda McLean
Ms. Patricia Rudisill, Secretary

Others Present: Ms. Julia Allen, Dr. Don Ammons, Mr. Todd Baney, Ms. Mary Ellen Dillon, Ms. Lynda Ellington, Mr. Travis Hogue, Dr. Joe Keith, Ms. Cynthia McCrory, Dr. Silvia Patricia Rios Husain, and Mr. Carl Stewart, College Attorney.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Board Chair James Smith called the Retreat to order at 9:15 a.m.

Chair Smith welcomed everyone to the Retreat. He then thanked the staff for their continued hard work and their diligence in preparations for the Retreat.

II. Preliminary Report on President’s Priorities for 2014-2015

The President’s Priorities are based on several benchmarks – the Strategic Plan, status of goals from the prior year, and goals the administration identifies to attain for the coming year. These goals are developed primarily by the Executive Council and other key staff at an
annual Executive Council Leadership Retreat. The priorities are then passed on to the Board for approval. The 2014-2015 priorities are currently in progress and should be concluded by June 30, 2015.

Dr. Skinner gave an update on each of the 2014-2015 priorities:

I. Implementation of student success initiatives (ATD, CbD, SuccessNC) aimed at student persistence, closing achievement gaps, and program/credential completion with a special emphasis on advising.

II. Execution of successful events and fundraising for the College’s 50th Anniversary Celebration.


IV. The management and execution of the renovation for the Pharr Trade and Industrial building and the development and execution of a successful capital fundraising effort for current institutional infrastructure priorities.

V. Implementation of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan for continued improvement.

VI. Establish a timeline and plan for review of all HR policies.

The President’s Preliminary Priorities Report on each of the above 2014-2015 priorities is filed with the minutes of the meeting.

Initiative I: A question was raised about the revised course pathways to completion for a certificate, diploma or associate degree. These pathways were streamlined in accordance with Achieving the Dream and Completion by Design guidelines. The new pathways are a more direct pathway to completion and offer more classes that are transferrable. The Gaston College catalog reflects the pathway changes and is currently available in print and online.

In an effort to update students to new and revised course pathways in a timelier manner, the College is moving toward having only an online catalog which would allow changes to courses to be posted immediately.

Resources are currently available for students through admissions that guide them in their selection of courses. Additionally, a required orientation lets students know what services are available for them; and an early alert program and studies of other analytics let staff know if a student is struggling so support can be offered.

Initiative II: Former mayor of Gastonia, Jennie Stultz, will be honored during Gaston College’s 50th Anniversary Speakers’ Alumni Series on March 11, 2015. Mr. Tracy Philbeck will be honored on April 14, 2015. Mr. Leonard Hamilton will be honored as the first
recipient of the College’s Distinguished Alumni Award at graduation on May 15, 2015. A 50th Anniversary Gala will be held May 16, 2015, at the Gaston Country Club as a culmination of Gaston College’s 50th Anniversary Year.

**Initiative III:** Dr. Skinner reviewed with the Board progress made within each of the 22 goals established in the 2014-19 Strategic Plan.

Since July 1 to December 2014, $278,189 has been raised through the Development Office. That does not include $90,109.22 raised through the radio station. Fundraising continues throughout the year.

**Initiative IV:** Phase I of the renovation of the Pharr Trade and Industrial building is well underway. The Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Pharr Phase II projects are running parallel at this time. Drawings for both have been submitted to the State and County, and their comments should be received soon. After that, bids will be going out for each project. A Capital Campaign is underway to obtain the necessary funding for equipment for each building.

**Initiative V:** Under the new Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, registration for semester classes is taking place earlier. This allows students more time to enroll, and the College has shown a better rate of student retention. It is hoped funding for summer classes from the state comes through this year as that, too, boosts enrollment.

**Initiative VI:** Work is continuing on the review of the College’s HR policies; however, with 148 policies to review it has taken time. Mr. Carl Stewart, the College’s attorney, will assist in this review as needed. The policies will be implemented January 2016.

Additionally, Dr. Skinner provided a list of initiatives and committees (national, state, regional, and College) with which she is currently involved. The handout also 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 policy, curriculum, and student success.

**President’s Proposed Priorities for 2015-2016**

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. The Proposed Priorities for 2015-2016 follow:

I. Continue to implement student success initiatives – Achieving the Dream (ATD) and Completion by Design (CbD) – with an emphasis on advising aimed at student persistence, closing achievement gaps, and program/credential completion.
II. Continue to manage and execute the construction and equipping of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) and renovation of the Pharr Trade and Industrial building.


IV. Complete the review and update of all HR policies.

V. Implement strategies to stabilize enrollment.

VI. Strengthen collaborative partnerships in the community, region, and state.

The Board reviewed each of the President’s Proposed Priorities for 2015-16 (July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016) and requested that each Priority list its correlation back to the Strategic Plan. The President’s Proposed Priorities for fiscal year 2015-2016 will be presented for approval at the Board of Trustees meeting of March 23, 2015.

III. Update of 2008-2013 Facilities Master Plan

Dr. Skinner and Ms. Cynthia McCrory provided an update on the 2008-2013 Facilities Master Plan. An informational handout that included a map of the Dallas Campus from 2008 was distributed at the meeting; a copy will be filed with the minutes. The map featured footprints of the three main projects within the 2008-2013 Facilities Master Plan. Those main projects were a new Student Services building, an Early College Facility, and the renovation of the Pharr Trade and Industrial building. The new Student Services building was to centralize all functions students would need; however, only portions of that have been completed. The Early College Facility was completed in 2012, and the renovation of the Pharr building is underway. The informational handout provided further details regarding each of these projects.

Other improvements realized from items discussed in Facilities Master Plan workshops include the following:

1. Expansion of Kimbrell Campus
2. Improve Connections to the Southern Portion of Campus
3. Renovation of the Kimbrell Campus Library and Bookstore
4. Fence Installation
5. Main Entrance Sign and Landscaping
6. Expansion of Lincoln Campus
7. New or Expanded Bookstore (Dallas Campus)
8. Katherine Harper Testing Center
9. Renovation of the Radio Station and Broadcasting and Production Technology
10. Firing Range Classroom Building
11. Boiler House Upgrade
12. ADA Improvements (Café Floor Leveling and Craig Building Elevator)
13. Campus Police and Security
14. Need for a Welcome Desk in Student Services
15. Re-using Myers Center Auditorium as Flexible Use Space
16. Improved Outdoor Lighting

Other improvements realized during this period, but not in the Master Plan, include the following:

1. Esthetics Program
2. Renovation of the Former Testing Center
3. Cosmetology Upfit

All of the above improvements were detailed in the handout provided at the meeting. A sincere thank you was extended from the Finance, Operations and Facilities Vice President, Ms. Cynthia McCrory, to the Gaston College Foundation and to the many individuals, such as Mr. Duke Kimbrell, who have made a lot of these projects possible.

Discussion of Proposed Process For Next Facilities Master Plan

Board of Trustees Facilities Chair, Dr. Jim Watson, discussed with the Board the need to begin the process for the next Facilities Master Plan. He asked the Board if they agreed that the College would send out an advertisement for architectural services with a request for qualifications related to master planning. A Selection Committee would be named to review the qualifications of the candidates and make determinations for interviews. Members of the Selection Committee would be made up of stakeholders in the community, various College department heads, and Board members.

Recommendations from the Selection Committee regarding an architectural firm to complete the new master plan would then be brought to the Board. The selected firm would issue questionnaires and hold listening sessions with stakeholders as outlined in their proposal of services. The best result would be a fluid plan to respond to input that also allowed for future vision. The process is expected to take 6-9 months with an estimated cost of $60,000-$70,000. It was proposed that the next Facilities Master Plan cover the years 2016-2021.

A grant of $25,000, through the NC Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Division, has been secured for this project. Gaston College collaborated with the Gaston County Grants Administrator, who submitted the grant on the College’s behalf in mid-December. The remaining balance for this project will be paid with county operating funds.

The Board agreed that the College would send out an advertisement for architectural services related to master planning.
IV. Board Self-Evaluation

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 13 of the 15 members.

Mr. Smith explained that the categories within the survey and the format of the survey had been revised from last year to make it more efficient.

A question was raised as to how the results of the survey could be used to reflect upon areas where answers were listed as “neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree”. Since interpretation of a question on the survey could vary widely per participant, determining where discussion might be needed would be very subjective. A suggestion was made to use the survey, or a similar document, as a guide during the next Board Retreat.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Smith asked for other comments or questions before adjourning.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Smith adjourned the Retreat at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Rudisill, Secretary

James C. Smith, Chair

Mary Ellen Dillon, Recording Secretary

(College Seal)