

**Minutes of the  
Gaston College Called  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Myers Center Board Room  
April 30, 2018**

**Members Present:** Mr. Stephen Campbell, Secretary  
Judge Craig Collins  
Mr. John Dancoff  
Ms. Jennifer Davis  
Mr. Brad Overcash  
Dr. Jim Ragan, Vice Chair  
Mr. James Smith  
Ms. Natalie Tindol  
Dr. Jim Watson, Chair

Dr. Patricia Skinner, President

**Members Absent:** Mr. Ron Hovis  
Sheriff Alan Cloninger  
Mr. Tracy Philbeck  
Ms. Suzanne Riley  
Mr. Randy Vinson  
Ms. Rachel Bellflowers, SGA President

**Others Present:** Ms. Julia Allen, Mr. Todd Baney, Mr. Sam Buff, Ms. Sherri Chavis, Mr. Bruce Cole, Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Ms. Mary Ellen Dillon, Ms. Lynda Ellington, Mr. Rocky Goins, Mr. Don Hager, Ms. Cynthia McCrory, Dr. Dennis McElhoe, Ms. Stephanie Michael-Pickett, Dr. Silvia Patricia Rios Husain and Dr. Jon Rust; and Mr. Carl Stewart, College Attorney.

- **Chair Watson called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and declared a quorum present.**
- **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.

## **A. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Chair Watson asked if there were any changes, additions, or corrections to the agenda. None were identified. Dr. Ragan moved to approve the agenda; Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

Dr. Watson thanked the Board for attending the Called Board of Trustees Meeting. He wanted the Board to have an opportunity for information gathering, which would lead to better understanding and knowledge concerning the North Carolina State University Proposal to establish the North Carolina Textile Discovery & Innovation Center. He explained that background information about the proposal would be shared, and Trustees would be welcome to ask questions. He commented further that no action was expected to be taken by the Board, and that the College would continue to dig deeper to understand all the ramifications of the Proposal.

## **B. Textile Technology Center Historical Summary – Dr. Patricia Skinner**

Dr. Skinner thanked the Trustees for attending. She introduced Mr. Don Hager, Chair of the Textile Technology Advisory Board and Vice President of Manufacturing High Performance Yarns at Pharr Yarns; Dr. Jon Rust, Interim Dean for Academic Programs at NCSU College of Textiles; and Mr. Sam Buff, Director of the Gaston College Textile Technology Center (TTC). Dr. Rust was filling in for NCSU's Dean of the College of Textiles, Dr. David Hinks, who was on a business trip and could not attend. Dr. Skinner referred to information sent to the Board, which contained a Historical Summary of the TTC from 2005 to the present, a listing of the members of the TTC Advisory Board, and a copy of the latest Proposal from NCSU regarding establishment of the North Carolina Textiles Discovery & Innovation Center.

Dr. Skinner reviewed with the Board how the textile industry had changed during the years, which included a shift from primarily providing vocational training to current endeavors of product development, sample production, and laboratory testing. She touched on the strategic support and investments of the College, its Foundation, and industry partners that led to the TTC's continued growth over the years.

She relayed that recently Gaston College had received a proposal from Dean David Hinks to combine under one leadership Catawba Valley Community College's Manufacturing Solutions Center, Gaston College's Textile Technology Center, and the NCSU College of Textiles Zeis Textiles Extension into the North Carolina Textile Discovery & Innovation Center. Dr. Jon Rust was in attendance at the meeting to provide information and insight into the proposal from NCSU. A copy of Dr. Skinner's presentation will be maintained with the meeting minutes.

## **C. Proposal for the Development of the North Carolina Textiles Discovery and Innovation Center**

Dr. Jon Rust provided a PowerPoint presentation for the Board he hoped would bring a greater understanding of NCSU's proposal for establishment of the NC Textile Discovery & Innovation Center. He relayed textiles statistics through charts and/or graphs related to top foreign direct

investment dollars in North Carolina (NC), numerous innovations in the College of Textiles, commercialization agreements by the various Colleges, recent textiles economic development in NC, the greatest barriers to the textile and apparel industries, and the number of NCSU graduates that are supporting the resurgence of the textile industry nationwide.

His presentation then focused on NCSU's many unique industry partners and NC community college partners, their vision and the value proposition for the new North Carolina Discovery & Innovation Center, and the proposed positive results of establishing the Center. Dr. Rust went on to explain the monetary support that would be needed from the legislature to bring the Center to fruition. He closed his presentation with a slide that relayed how the North Carolina Textiles Discovery & Innovation Center would be unmatched in the world and would directly support NC textiles, enable entrepreneurs and start-up companies, enable technology transfer, and create a greater demand for industry talent development. A copy of the presentation will be maintained with the meeting minutes.

#### **D. Questions / Comments from the Board of Trustees**

After Dr. Rust's presentation, Dr. Watson opened the floor for questions and/or comments. Some of those questions/comments are below:

1. Since the Legislative Short Session begins May 16 and is expected to be a very short session, what is the urgency to push this through?
2. Which legislators are behind this proposal? Who has been spoken to about the proposal? Gaston College's Trustees could not identify any local senators or one of the Appropriations co-Chairs who were aware of it.
3. Why were our legislators not approached first and in the loop from day one?
4. A question was asked about county economic tiers. Tiers are based on the affluence (average income) of the citizens within the county.
5. Has any legislator stated there is funding available for this? What has been the communication from the legislature?
6. What is "the ask" that you want from Gaston College's Board? And when would you like us to do it?
7. NCSU said that industry leaders are driving this, but the TTC is growing all by itself. It does not look like industry is uncomfortable with any of the TTC's growth. So why is this dramatic change needed. Local industries had not heard any need for this.
8. More funding is needed for textile education and better equipment, why couldn't a proposal be done through the legislature just for Gaston County, Lincoln County and Gaston College. Why can't we keep local control here?
9. Why not propose this in long session when there is more time to truly evaluate advantages and disadvantages?
10. Does a merger need to occur to get services for companies done?
11. How does the Proposal help with capacity if we are already full? How will NCSU be able to grow? Will things be taken away from us, moved? Has a budget been figured out as of yet?

Dr. Rust answered several questions, but others he could not and deferred to Dr. Hinks who would be meeting with Dr. Skinner, Dr. Ragan and Mr. Stewart the following morning. He

assured the Board that NCSU was not interested in taking anything away from the TTC, but rather, hoped to increase its services, add to its personnel, and build additional industry partnerships. Mr. Buff relayed that since 2005, when he was one of the five original TTC employees, the TTC has grown tremendously; however, it does currently have challenges associated with, equipment and staffing. He relayed that adding an additional shift of workers would enhance current operations greatly. He felt the NCSU proposal would enhance collaboration amongst the textile centers and bring an influx of funding which would promote the resurgence of the textile industry.

Dr. Skinner added that a lot of time and effort from College administration and funding over the years has helped the TTC succeed. Likewise, it had taken time to research the NCSU proposal to see what benefits and/or disadvantages supporting the proposal would bring. Obtaining the funding from the legislature seems to be the main point of contention. If the funding for the NCSU proposal is not there, the proposal will likely fall through. Gaston College will continue to research aspects of the proposal with our local textile partners to gain their insight about what is best for the textile industry and Gaston College.

Dr. Watson thanked Dr. Rust for attending the meeting and providing additional information about NCSU's proposal. He acknowledged some of the Board member's concerns about losing local control over the TTC and what those changes might mean to Gaston County. He also acknowledged their concern regarding insufficient time to properly vet the proposal. Dr. Watson concluded that unless there was a motion to stop this process, seeking information would continue. He reiterated to the Board that they were not being asked for any approval or any action at this point, and this meeting was just an opportunity to gain some common ground to obtain some understanding, information, and knowledge. He stated that Dr. Skinner, after her meeting with Dean Hinks and some of Gaston County's local textile industry leaders, would bring back additional information at the next Board meeting on May 7. At that time, the Board could again discuss the proposal.

#### **E. AJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Stephen D. Campbell, Secretary**

**Dr. Jim Watson, Chair**

**Mary Ellen Dillon, Recording Secretary**

**(College Seal)**