

**MINUTES OF THE
GASTON COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES RETREAT
Gaston Country Club
February 9, 2018**

Members Present: Mr. Stephen Campbell, Secretary
Judge Craig Collins
Mr. John Dancoff
Ms. Jennifer Davis
Mr. Brad Overcash
Mr. Tracy Philbeck
Dr. Jim Ragan, Vice Chair
Ms. Suzanne Riley
Mr. James Smith
Ms. Natalie Tindol
Mr. Randy Vinson
Dr. Jim Watson, Chair
Ms. Rachel Bellflowers, SGA President

Dr. Patricia Skinner

Members Absent: Sheriff Alan Cloninger
Mr. Ron Hovis

Others Present: Ms. Julia Allen, Mr. Todd Baney, Mr. Sam Buff, Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Ms. Mary Ellen Dillon, Ms. Lynda Ellington, Mr. Rocky Goins, Ms. Cynthia McCrory, Dr. Dennis McElhoe, Dr. Silvia Patricia Rios Husain, and Mr. Carl Stewart, College Attorney.

- **Chair Watson called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.**
- **Invocation – Judge Collins**
- **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.

- **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Watson asked if there were any changes, additions, or corrections to the agenda. None were identified. Mr. Vinson moved to approve the agenda; Ms. Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Watson welcomed everyone to the Retreat and thanked them for attending. Since there were a few new people present at the Retreat, he asked that attendees introduce themselves in a roundtable manner.

Chair Watson then took the opportunity to recognize Board Trustee Ms. Natalie Tindol as recipient of the 2017 Spirit of the Carolinas Award at the fifteenth Annual Salute to Business and Manufacturing Awards and Gala held in October. This award is designed to honor a business leader or manufacturer in Gaston County as a way to pay tribute to the individual behind the success of a company that has demonstrated one or more of the following attributes on a local, state, or national level: Commitment and success within the free enterprise system; Leadership within their particular industry; and Citizenship within their community. The Board congratulated Ms. Tindol.

Chair Watson also recognized Ms. Tindol as a 2017 recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine award. The Order of the Long Leaf Pine is awarded to persons for exemplary service above and beyond the call of duty to the State of North Carolina and their communities, and who have made a significant impact and strengthened North Carolina. Ms. Tindol is involved with numerous committees and clubs in Gaston County and beyond; Chair Watson stated that North Carolina's interest were very well covered by her commitment to our community and the State of North Carolina. The Board again extended its congratulations to her.

Chair Watson recognized Mr. Randy Vinson, who as Chairman of the NCACCT, provided the Board with an NCACCT update. Mr. Vinson provided some history associated with the NCACCT, detailed the general duties and actions of the NCACCT, and described the Association's ongoing efforts to lobby for better financial support in the legislature for North Carolina's community colleges. He informed the Board that Ms. Julie Woodson recently replaced Dr. Donny Hunter as the President/CEO of the NCACCT. She has put an advocacy plan together that includes working with the NCACCT's newly hired lobbyist, Mr. James A. Harrell, III. Mr. Harrell is ranked eighth out of 768 registered lobbyists in North Carolina; he works well with all legislators and has a direct personal connection to community colleges. It is the NCACCT's hope that with his influence and additional funds collected by the NCACCT, the NCACCT will have more influence in the legislature's distribution of funding for North Carolina's community colleges.

II. College Radio Station Update

Mr. Steve Campbell provided an update on the College's radio station, WSGE 91.7. He informed the Board that in September an unsolicited offer of \$2.4 Million had been received

by the College to purchase the radio station. The offer came with a response window of ten days. At that time, Dr. Watson, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Campbell and Dr. Skinner met to discuss the offer; however, with no real time to evaluate the merits of the offer versus the value of the radio station, it was rejected. This offer was substantially less than the previous offer of \$4.8 Million that had come six years earlier.

Mr. Campbell provided background on the station's 40 year history covering its: staffing; music format; 8,000 Watt broadcasting power over ten counties; the tower lease/license; awards; academic relationship to the College; community partnerships; and uniqueness as a community-college radio station. Trustees had several questions, and with that in mind, Dr. Watson recommended a Board of Trustees WSGE Ad Hoc Committee be formed to study all aspects of WSGE to gauge its relationship to the College's Mission, financial worth, categorical worth to the College and the Community, and FCC regulations governing a sale of the station if an offer comes in the future. Later, Dr. Watson relayed to the Board that Mr. Campbell would Chair the Board of Trustees WSGE Ad Hoc Committee; Board members interested in being part of the committee were asked to contact Mr. Campbell.

III. Facilities Master Plan Update

Ms. McCrory provided two updates at the Board Retreat; the first was an update on the Veterinary Technology Building. State Construction had recently approved moving to the Construction Drawing phase, which required submittal of a formal cost estimate. She informed the Board that the cost estimate had risen recently from \$4.4 Million to \$5.2 Million and laid out how this additional cost would be covered. In that regard, Ms. Julia Allen is working with the Veterinary Technology faculty and staff to ascertain equipment needs and put a fundraising plan in place.

The second update concerned the 2016 Facilities Master Plan. Since the Plan was completed, several new Board members are now with the College and are not familiar with how this Facilities Master Plan was devised. With that in mind, Ms. McCrory provided some background about the Master Plan Process, which included selection of the Architectural firm (ADW) and the many surveys, meetings, economic factors, enrollment projections, regional economic factors, and growth programs that were either conducted or reviewed as part of the data-gathering process. She laid out the nine priorities ADW identified, and of those priorities, the five that would be included as part of this *Five-Year Facilities Master Plan*. Slides of the Dallas and Lincoln Campuses from ADW's Board presentation were shown for ease in identifying where those five priorities are located.

Ms. McCrory then covered the *Beyond Five Years Priorities* and the developments that have come up since inception of the Facilities Master Plan in March 2016. A recent topic of discussion was the structure-life and maintenance of the Burn Building. Adding an additional burn building in the future would extend the life of the current commercial structure by moving some training to a new building. The Burn Building is still viable for the near future.

IV. Board Self-Evaluation

The Board reviewed the results of the Gaston College Board of Trustees Survey and Self-evaluation questionnaire that were communicated through Survey Monkey. The survey had a 100% response from the Board members. Chair Watson distributed a copy of the survey results for the trustees to review. Overall, his impression of the survey regarding the work of the Board was very positive. He distributed a list of the seven survey questions to which all trustees totally agreed and reviewed each one with the trustees. Chair Watson commented on how work inside the Board Sub-committees was very important as it leads to efficient use of the Board's time when conducting meetings. He appreciated everyone's efforts to attend those meetings.

Next, Chair Watson distributed and reviewed with the trustees the seven survey questions that had received the lowest scores. He commented that although these questions received the lowest scores, they were not necessarily "low" scores as the lowest was 3.07 out of a possible 4.0. The question with the lowest score centered on Board members' meeting participation. Chair Watson commented that meeting participation was not a mandatory obligation and all trustees were welcome to join any discussion as they felt comfortable. The next lowest score concerned the Board's Advocacy Plan for trustees; however, Mr. Overcash indicated the Advocacy Plan established at last year's Board Retreat would be moving forward in the next few months as trustees would be asked to actively advocate for funding for Gaston College with the College's elected local and legislative officials during the upcoming legislative session.

Another question with a lower score concerned ways trustees could support the College's foundation. Chair Watson asked Ms. Julia Allen to relay the many options available for trustees to contribute. Some of these opportunities include the Student Emergency Assistance Fund, WSGE, scholarships, endowments, Giving Tuesday, the Community Foundation Run, and the equipping of the Veterinary Technology Building. Chair Watson encouraged all Board members to participate in support of the Foundation. Ms. Allen further commented that unrestricted giving is best.

In the "needs improvement" area of the survey, a comment was made regarding Board diversity. Four groups appoint members to Gaston College's Board of Trustees: the Gaston County Board of Commissioners, the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, the Gaston County Board of Education, and the Governor's Office. An effort will be made to let those appointing bodies know more diversity amongst appointees to Gaston College's Board of Trustees would be welcome. Ms. Allen commented that when applying for grants to private foundations, a question is sometimes asked about the diversity of Gaston Colleges' Board of Trustees.

Chair Watson asked Board members for any other comments or clarifications they would like to address; none were reported. In closing, 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.

Dr. Skinner added that a Board of Trustees Survey and Self-Evaluation is now a requirement of SACSCOC and noted that Gaston College's trustees have been conducting this type of survey during the tenure of the last four Board Chairs. This survey provides College trustees an opportunity to express their views concerning the workings of the Board in their efforts to promote the goals of the College. Recently, Ms. Julie Woodson, President/CEO of the NCACCT, asked for a copy of our Board survey as her team assists other community colleges in setting up their surveys. Dr. Skinner congratulated the Board for being a leader in this regard.

V. Preliminary Report on President's Priorities for 2017-2018

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. The 2017-2018 priorities are currently in progress and will conclude June 30, 2018.

Dr. Skinner gave an update on each of the 2017-2018 priorities:

- 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 complete President's Preliminary Priorities Report on each of the above 2017-2018 priorities is filed with the minutes of the meeting. Some of the highlights under each priority are mentioned below.

Initiative I: Under this initiative, Dr. Skinner highlighted that Gaston College's Veterinary Technology Facility is well under way. She pointed out, as Ms. McCrory had stated earlier, that a recent cost estimate projects the building cost at \$5.2 Million; \$4.4 Million has been earmarked from State bonds, with the remainder to be raised through private fundraising and public fund sources.

Initiative II: The SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim report was submitted in September 2017. A response from SACSCOC was recently received regarding our performance with no additional follow-up needed. The College's QEP also received outstanding results. Dr. Skinner commended Dr. Dellinger, his SACSCOC committees, and the entire campus for their exceptional work. SACS reporting is a very intrusive process and does include the Campus as a whole. A celebration will be held at the next Faculty/Staff Meeting to thank all those involved in this extensive process.

Ms. Davis was glad to hear Dr. Skinner's positive comments regarding the work and leadership of the staff as the Board realizes that everyone contributes to the success, quality, and reputation of Gaston College. She asked Dr. Skinner to share her grateful response about leadership and teamwork associated with the SACSCOC process with the staff. Dr. Skinner replied that at the next Board meeting the Faculty and Staff Senate Presidents will be attending and that might be a good time to relay that message.

Initiative III: The update and implementation of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan has been a priority for several years. Under this topic, Dr. Skinner highlighted the North Carolina Guided Pathways to Success program. Gaston College has submitted an application to participate in this new North Carolina Community College System initiative that assists colleges with implementation of guided pathways, including: program mapping and alignment, advising and student support redesign, development of effective transfer practices and partnerships, faculty professional development, review and revision of student learning outcomes, and data review and action.

Just recently, Gaston College was notified that it has been selected to participate in the first cohort of colleges in the NC Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) Network. The lessons and best practices that emerge from the NC GPS Network will provide essential leadership to advance, scale, and sustain institutional and System transformations. This important collaborative community college learning journey will lead to greater and more equitable student learning, success, and completion.

Initiative IV: Several strategies have been implemented to respond to the workforce development needs of the College's regional employers. EWD developed and launched a Building Certification program in spring 2017. Six of the original nine individuals enrolled successfully completed the pilot program. A second session began in January 2018 with ten individuals enrolled.

Duke Energy/Piedmont Natural Gas Apprenticeship Grant Program awarded Gaston College \$200,000 to assist participating companies with tuition costs in the Apprenticeship 321 program. This type of partnership/collaboration is noteworthy as it helps companies fill employment gaps, and students involved in Apprenticeship 321 get paid as they learn new skills.

Initiative V: The Website and e-Learning Accessibility plan outlines Gaston College's commitment to providing e-learning platforms and a website that are accessible to all audiences, regardless of technology or ability. Gaston College continues to execute its plan to

become compliant with the standards outlined in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA by the end of year five.

Initiative VI: Launched in 2015, the Gaston Links program is a partnership between Gaston College and Gaston County Schools to serve the educational needs of developmentally disabled students. The program is a minimum of two years, with a third year career path option if students meet skills criteria. The third year students are currently taking courses that will lead to a Health and Public Services Assistant certificate, and all are expected to graduate in spring 2018.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded \$1.2 million over five years to implement the Upward Bound Program at Bessemer City and Hunter Huss High Schools. The program will serve up to 60 students and will provide supportive service to promote high school completion and postsecondary enrollment.

Report on President's Leadership Roles

Dr. Skinner provided a mid-year update on her Leadership Roles: National, State, Regional, 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.

President's Proposed Priorities for 2018-2019

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 Executive Council Leadership Team in December, Dr. Skinner reviewed past plans and priorities and considered new institutional priorities. This resulted in a draft of Proposed President's Priorities for the coming year that were presented for review to the trustees at the Board Retreat. There are many other projects and initiatives also taking place that, although they may not be a main focus of the current year, still complement the Strategic Plan.

The President's Proposed Priorities for 2018-2019 follow:

- I.** Manage and facilitate the funding and construction of the new Veterinary Technology Facility with anticipated completion in late 2019.
- II.** Review and update College policies in preparation for the SACSCOC decennial review.
- III.** Continue responding to regional workforce development needs through the launch of a pre-apprenticeship program in collaboration with Gaston and Lincoln County Schools, the expansion of Apprenticeship 321, and the establishment of the Gaston College Center for Workforce Excellence.
- IV.** Continue efforts to support student persistence and completion, including: increasing the accessibility of learning environments, implementing guided

pathways, and maintaining involvement in statewide and national initiatives that address equity gaps.

- V.** Continue enrollment stabilization and growth strategies through partnerships and collaboration with local high schools; and increase opportunities for adult learners and student retention, completion, and success.
- VI.** Broaden targeted outreach efforts with College constituents to raise awareness of and increase support for College priorities.
- VII.** Execute a strategic planning effort to guide institutional priorities for a five-year period beyond the conclusion of the current plan.

The Board reviewed each of the President's Proposed Priorities for 2018-19 (July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019). The President's Proposed Priorities for fiscal year 2018-2019 will be presented for approval at the Board of Trustees meeting on March 26, 2018.

Mr. Smith commented that over the years the process for establishing the President's Priorities, the reporting on the progress of those priorities, and clear statements as to how the priorities are directly tied to the College's Strategic Plan speaks volumes for our Strategic Plan and Dr. Skinner's and her staff's commitment to the Mission of the College. Dr. Skinner added that the NCCCS is currently working on its Strategic Plan, and Gaston College will take the goals set by the System Office into consideration for its next Strategic Plan in an effort to be consistent with the State.

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

VI. Chairman's Report

Chair Watson brought forward several items of interest to the trustees:

- The NCACCT Law/Legislative Seminar will take place in Raleigh, at the Crabtree Valley Marriott, on April 11-13, 2018. Registration will be coming out soon, and Dr. Watson encouraged all the trustees to attend. Ms. Dillon will contact trustees individually whose Ethics Education Requirement is due.
- It is a State requirement that trustees complete a Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) annually; this will need to be completed by April 15, 2018. A link to the North Carolina Ethics Commissions' website will be emailed to trustees.
- The next Board Finance/Facilities Committees meeting is scheduled for March 19; the next Board of Trustees Meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2018.
- A Board of Trustees Contact Sheet was included in each trustees' packet; Dr. Watson asked trustees to please tell Ms. Dillon if any of their information needed to be updated.

- Chair Watson encouraged the trustees to take advantage of the opportunities to support the College through the Gaston College Foundation and the NCACCT.

In conclusion, Chair Watson thanked the trustees for attending the Retreat. He commented that a lot of information and exchange had taken place and that being an informed Board was vital as they are the College's ambassadors in the community. He encouraged Board members to frequently and openly share with their church, community, and civic groups all the good things that are happening at the College. In a final gesture, Chair Watson asked all the Board members to stand and in light of all the good accomplishments heard at the meeting, he asked them to give the staff a round of applause. The Board complied.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Watson adjourned the Retreat at 11:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Campbell, Secretary

Dr. Jim Watson, Chair

Mary Ellen Dillon, Recording Secretary

(College Seal)