

**Minutes of the
Gaston College
Board of Trustees Meeting
Myers Center Auditorium, Section C
January 22, 2024**

Members Present: Mr. Randy Vinson, Chair
Judge Jesse Caldwell
Mr. John Dancoff
Mr. Jonathan Fletcher
Dr. Shawnya Gore, Secretary
Mr. Steve Hall
Ms. Iris Hopper
Ms. Resa Hoyle
Mr. Steve Huffstetler
Mr. Tom Keigher
Ms. Janie Peak
Mr. Tim Smith
Ms. Julie Stroupe, Vice Chair
Ms. Taylor Rose, SGA President

Dr. John Hauser, President
Mr. Carl Stewart, College Attorney

Members Absent: Mr. Alan Cloninger

Others Present: Ms. Shelly Alman, Ms. Ja-riel Bailey, Mr. Todd Baney, Dr. Jeff Booker, Ms. Jasmine Cox-Wade, Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Ms. Guyann Howe, Ms. Meagan Lingerfelt, Ms. Terri Livingston, Ms. Andrea Lovelace, Mr. Rico Mcllwain, Mr. Mack Milen, Dr. Jennifer Nichols, Ms. Julie Ostrowski, Mr. Jeff Pruett, Mr. Stephen Sharp, Dr. Audrey Sherrill, Mr. Greg Smith, Ms. Bailey Standridge Mr. Luke Upchurch, and Dr. Heather Woodson

Chair Vinson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. A quorum was present for the meeting.

- **Invocation – Mr. Hall**
- **Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder**

Chair Vinson reminded Trustees of the ethics requirements of public servants and requested they identify any conflicts of interest or appearance of conflicts of interest present. No conflicts were identified.

A. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Vinson asked if there were any changes, additions, or corrections to the agenda. None were identified.

Ms. Hoyle moved to approve the agenda; Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion carried.

B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM:

1) September 25, 2023, BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Chair Vinson presented the Minutes of the September 25, 2023, Board of Trustees Meeting and asked if there were any additions or corrections. None were identified.

Ms. Peak moved to approve the Minutes of the September 25, 2023, Board of Trustees Meeting; Ms. Hoyle seconded the motion. The motion carried.

2) October 30, 2023, CALLED BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Chair Vinson presented the Minutes of the October 30, 2023, Called Board of Trustees Meeting and asked if there were any additions or corrections. None were identified.

Ms. Stroupe moved to approve the Minutes of the October 30, 2023, Called Board of Trustees Meeting; Mr. Huffstetler seconded the motion. The motion carried.

C. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

1. Welcome Guests

Dr. Hauser welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized Mr. Jeffrey Pruett, Faculty Senate President, and Ms. Bailey Standridge, Staff Senate President.

2. Statement of Economic Impact (SEI) Possible Conflicts of Interest

Chair Vinson relayed that by law the College has to tell the Board of Trustees about potential conflicts of interest from the SEI reports that are filed annually.

When this letter cites an actual or potential conflict of interest under N.C.G.S. § 138A-24(e), the conflict must be recorded in the minutes of the applicable board and brought to the membership's attention by the board's chair as often as necessary to remind all members of the conflict and to help ensure compliance with the Act. N.C.G.S. § 138A-15(c).

a) Mr. Alan Cloninger – The letter from the NC State Ethics Commission states:

We did not find an actual conflict of interest but found the potential for a conflict of interest. The potential conflict identified does not prohibit service on this entity.

Mr. Cloninger is an At Large member of the Board of Trustees. He is a retired sheriff. He has an ownership interest in various publicly traded companies and several closely held real estate companies, including DDH Investments, Advantage Investments, and TAP Investments, LLC, a real estate investment company, from which he derives business income. Because of TAP Investments or another company in which he has a financial interest could seek to do business with the College, Mr. Cloninger has the potential for a conflict of interest. Accordingly, he should exercise appropriate caution in which he has a financial interest come before the Board for official action.

b) Mr. Steve Huffstetler – The letter from the NC State Ethics Commission states:

We did not find an actual conflict of interest but found the potential for a conflict of interest. The potential conflict identified does not prohibit service on this entity.

Mr. Huffstetler is an At Large member of the Board of Trustees. He is a senior vice president at Alliance Bank and Trust, and his spouse is a real estate agent with Pro-Stead Realty. Because Alliance Bank and Trust or Pro-Stead Realty may seek to do business with the College, Mr. Huffstetler has the potential for a conflict of interest. Accordingly, he should exercise appropriate caution in the performance of his public duties should Alliance, Pro-Stead Realty, or an entity in which he has a financial interest come before the Board for official action.

c) Mr. Tim Smith – The letter from the NC State Ethics Commission states:

We did not find an actual conflict of interest but found the potential for a conflict of interest. The potential conflict identified does not prohibit service on this entity.

Mr. Smith is an At Large member of the Board of Trustees. He is a certified public accountant and the controller for Ascend Nonprofit Solutions. He has an ownership interest in many closely held companies, including his CPA firm, Time Smith, CPA, a tax consultancy, Alotbetter, LLC, a real estate investment company, and Westlake Investors, Inc., a rental real estate company. Because Tim Smith, CPA or one of his real estate investment companies may seek to do business with the College, Mr. Smith has the potential for a conflict of interest. Accordingly, he should exercise appropriate caution in the performance of his public duties should his CPA practice or an entity in which he has a financial interest come before the Board for official action.

d) Ms. Stroupe – The letter from the NC State Ethics Commission states:

We did not find an actual conflict of interest but found the potential for a conflict of interest. The potential conflict identified does not prohibit service on this entity.

Ms. Stroupe is an At Large member of the Board of Trustees. She is employed by Truist Bank. Because Truist could seek to do business with the College, Ms. Stroupe has the potential for a conflict of interest. Accordingly, she should exercise appropriate caution in the performance of her public duties should Truist come before the Board for official action.

As requested, these are now recorded in the minutes of this Board of Trustees meeting as directed by the NC State Ethics Commission.

3. 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, Vision, Mission, and Values

Chair Vinson called on Dr. Dellinger and Ms. Tonia Broome for the presentation. Dr. Dellinger reminded the Board that the inception of the Strategic Plan was discussed at the November 14, 2022, Board meeting where Dr. Dellinger laid out a one-year timeline, beginning in 2023, for the College to develop a strategic plan rather than hiring a consulting firm. Dr. Dellinger asked Ms. Broome, Associate Vice President, of Institutional Effectiveness to present their recommendations.

Ms. Broome reviewed the five-phase process of the Strategic Plan which included:

- A Data Summit Strategic Planning Kickoff with all faculty and staff on January 6, 2023
- The Board of Trustees Retreat, February 10, 2023
- Faculty and Staff Survey
 - 238 participants (22.12%)
 - Full-Time Faculty 45.6%
 - Part-Time Faculty 15.2%
 - Full-Time Staff 22.4%
 - Part-Time Staff 8.9%
- Student Satisfaction Survey (68% Response Rate)
 - 45% High School Students
 - 55% Traditional Students
- Student Listening Sessions (4 sessions)
- Faculty/Staff Listening Sessions (5 sessions)
- Community Listening Sessions (3 sessions) with close to 50 community organizations/businesses represented
- Emails to key individuals who could not attend a community listening session
- Strategic Planning Committee presented draft to President's Cabinet in August 2023 and again for additional edits

The structure of the Plan involves (1) Strategic Priorities (categories of strategic focus), (2) Strategic Goals (What we want to achieve in three years), (3) Strategic Initiatives (What enables us to achieve our goal). The action items for strategic initiatives will be broken out into yearly unit plans with accomplishments being reviewed annually, and (4) Expected Outcomes (for each priority area to be met by the end of the 3-year strategic plan). A detailed report listing all of the priorities, goals, initiatives, and outcomes was provided in the meeting material.

After discussion of the Strategic Plan, Ms. Broome presented recommendations for the vision, mission, values, principles, and philosophy for Gaston College.

The Vision Statement is: To provide innovative student learning opportunities to create momentum for economic and social success.

The Mission Statement is: To educate and care for people.

Our Values include Integrity/Accountability, Student Success, Collaboration/Partnerships, Learning Excellence, Equity/Diversity, and Innovation.

Our Ethical Principles include Integrity, Competence, Equality and Acceptance, Honor and Trust, and Privacy.

Our Institutional Philosophy: Gaston College students, faculty, and staff share a committed responsibility to nurture a mentoring, collaborative, caring, and diverse culture of skilled lifelong learners who are empowered to succeed in an ever-changing world. Self-growth and empowerment are realized through many innovative processes, including an effective balance of assessment and evaluation, challenging ourselves and others to support a caring learner-centered environment.

Chair Vinson commended Dr. Dellinger and Ms. Broome for such an excellent working document. The Strategic Plan will serve as a tremendous tool for the College.

D. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In the interest of time, Chair Vinson referred the Board to the President's Report along with reports from the Executive Vice President for Academic/Student Affairs and Vice Presidents/Administrators for Administrative Services, Economic Workforce Development, Finance, Operations, & Facilities, Marketing, Textiles/Fiber Innovation Center, and the Foundation that were provided in their packet for them to review at their convenience.

Dr. Hauser's activities since December 2023 included:

US Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen, Visit

On Thursday, November 30, we had the honor of hosting Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen for a brief tour and roundtable with some of our students and alumni. During her visit, she saw one of our welding shops and heard more about how we provide workers with the skills they need to enter the workforce quickly in this high-demand field. She also got a glimpse into our photovoltaic and renewable energy programs in our electrical systems classroom.

2023 Annual SACSCOC Meeting

Dr. Dewey Dellinger, Dr. Jeff Booker, Dr. Heather Woodson, Ms. Tonia Broome, Ms. Karen Duncan, and I attended the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC, our institutional accrediting body) 2023 Annual Meeting, December 2-5 in Orlando. Some of the sessions that were attended covered artificial intelligence in higher education, distance education, finance, student retention, and interpretation of standards, which continually evolve due to Department of Education requirements.

Holiday Luncheon

We loved seeing the faculty and staff showing off their holiday spirit at our Holiday Luncheon on December 7. Their creativity in outfits and table decorations was impressive.

First Pitch Dinner

The second annual First Pitch Dinner was held on Saturday, January 13, 2024, at Low Meadows Estate in Mt. Holly. It was a fun night celebrating the College's past, present, and future Rhino Baseball and Softball programs. The 2023 World Series Rings were presented and the guest speaker was Justin Haire, Campbell University head Baseball Coach.

NC Healthcare Association Meeting

On Wednesday, January 17, the College hosted the NC Healthcare Association Meeting on the Dallas Campus. I welcomed the group to the College and spoke about our role in developing the healthcare workforce. There were over 45 people from all over the state in attendance along with Senator Ted Alexander, Speaker Tim Moore, Representative Destin Hall, Representative Larry Potts, Representative John Torbett, Representative Donnie Loftis, Representative Kelly Hastings, and Representative Jason Saine.

Meetings attended/participated in since December 2023:

- NC State 2+2 Meeting – December 12, January 9
- Honduras/NC State Textile Meeting – December 7, 12, 13, 15, January 4, 8
- President's Cabinet Meeting – December 12, January 8
- Piedmont Lithium Check Presentation – December 11
- Meeting with Gastonia Sheet Metal – December 11
- Welding Program Meeting – December 13
- ApprenticeshipNC Council Meeting – December 14
- Healthcare Uniforms Meeting – December 14
- Substantive Changes Meeting – December 14
- Gaston County Budget Meeting – December 14
- Economic Development Commission Board Meeting – January 9, 2024
- Western President's Meeting – January 10
- Accreditation Discussion Meeting – January 12
- LEDA Board Retreat – January 17
- Equipment Allocation Meeting – January 10
- Textile Technology/FIC Meetings, December 6, 13, 14
- Gaston Business Association Annual Meeting – December 8
- Health and Wellness Planning Meeting/CaroMont/Belmont Abbey –
- Finance & Facilities Meeting – January 16
- Campus Affairs – January 22

E. SGA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Taylor Rose, SGA President, presented the SGA report on the SGA activities since the last Board of Trustees meeting with a total of 1,054 students who participated in all the events held.

- First-Generation College Student Celebration
- World Kindness Giveaway
- National Button Day – Make It and Take It Workshop
- National Day of Giving Pop-up
- Financial Literacy Workshop
- Stress Less Pop-up

- Inter-Club Council (ICC) Meeting
- Spring Welcome Event for Lincoln Campus
- Spring Welcome Event for Dallas Campus

First-Generation College Student Celebration

On November 9th, the SGA partnered with the TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) program to host a First-Generation College Student Celebration event in honor of National First-Generation College Student Day (November 8th). The SGA assisted in arranging a panel of speakers, who were all first-generation college students, including Steven Koons - a current Gaston College student, Jenny Lopez-Saldivar - an alumna Gaston College student, Dr. Patricia Williams of the Arts & Sciences Division - a Gaston College Faculty member, and Ms. Christian Raines of the TRiO Program - a Gaston College Staff member.

Red Cross Blood Drive

On November 29th, the SGA sponsored a Red Cross Blood Drive on the Dallas Campus in the Myers Center Multipurpose Auditorium. Through these efforts, the Red Cross was able to collect 25 units of blood during the event.

Christmas Parades

On November 26th, eight Gaston College students and two advisors participated in the Lincolnton Christmas Parade in downtown Lincolnton, NC. On December 3rd, ten Gaston College students and two advisors participated in the Gastonia Christmas Parade in downtown Gastonia, NC.

Chair Vinson thanked Ms. Rose for her report.

F. CAMPUS AFFAIRS

Chair Vinson called on Chair Peak to provide the Campus Affairs items for review. Ms. Peak relayed that before the Board meeting the Campus Affairs Committee met and the ten Campus Affairs Action Items were fully vetted by the committee members.

1. Proposed 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, Vision, Mission, and Values

Chair Peak stated that the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, Vision, Mission, and Values that Ms. Broome and Dr. Dellinger just presented was masterfully crafted.

The College began the process of developing a new strategic plan in January 2023 with a Data Summit for all College employees at the spring convocation. Throughout the spring semester internal and external stakeholders' voices were heard through surveys, listening sessions, and email responses. Further refinement of the plan occurred through meetings with members of the President's Cabinet. All information gathered was used to determine the strategic priorities, goals, and expected outcomes for the newly proposed Gaston College Strategic Plan (2023-2026).

Implementation of the College's new strategic plan will take place at the individual unit level (academic affairs, student affairs, marketing, etc.). Current divisional/unit budgets

will be used to implement action items for each area of the strategic plan. As a result of this implementation, there is an expected outcome of increased enrollment, persistence, and retention. Therefore, we anticipate an impact of increased FTE generation over the life of the plan.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, Vision, Mission, and Values as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

2. Termination of Mechanical Engineering Technology Program

At this time, Gaston College is approved to offer an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Mechanical Engineering Technology. The College is also approved to offer a closely related degree, an AAS in Applied Engineering Technology. To streamline operations within the Career and Technical Education Division, the College proposes to terminate the AAS in Mechanical Engineering Technology. Current new student enrollment for Fall 2023 in the AAS in Mechanical Engineering Technology is eight (8) students. Faculty will work with these new students and all returning students (20 students who entered between 2020-2022, ten of whom are already co-enrolled in the Applied Engineering Technology program) to develop a plan for degree completion for the Mechanical Engineering Technology program. New and returning students will also be given the option of changing their program to Applied Engineering Technology due to the significant overlap in these programs. Course substitutions for courses completed by students as a part of the Mechanical Engineering Program will be made as allowable by the Applied Engineering Curriculum Standard to help students in this transition.

Full-time faculty will continue to teach relevant courses within the Applied Engineering program.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the termination of the Mechanical Engineering Technology Program as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

3. Termination of the Electronics Engineering Technology Program

At this time, Gaston College is approved to offer an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Electronics Engineering Technology. The College is also approved to offer a closely related degree, an AAS in Applied Engineering Technology. To streamline operations within the Career and Technical Education Division, the College proposes to terminate

the AAS in Electronics Engineering Technology. Current new student enrollment for Fall 2023 in the AAS in Electronics Engineering Technology is 11 students. Faculty will work with these new students and all returning students (six students who entered between 2020-2022) to develop a plan for degree completion for the Electronics Engineering Technology program. New and returning students will also be given the option of changing their program to Applied Engineering Technology due to the significant overlap in these programs. Course substitutions for courses completed by students as a part of the Electronics Engineering Program will be made as allowable by the Applied Engineering Curriculum Standard to help students in this transition.

Full-time faculty will continue to teach relevant courses within the Applied Engineering program.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the termination of the Electronics Engineering Technology program as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

4. Proposed Change to Policy 5-61, Safe Student Performance in Educational Programs

Gaston College Policy 5-61 was created in 2020 in order to provide direction for the College in providing a safe and secure learning environment within the College's courses, specifically labs, shop hours, and clinicals.

Part E of the policy reads,

"If in an instructor's professional judgment, a student's performance and/or conduct poses a risk to the student's personal safety and/or well-being, and/or the safety and/or well-being of others, the instructor may recommend that the student be dismissed or removed from the course or program of study." Examples of behaviors or conduct that could warrant this response are provided in the current policy. The Division of Academic Affairs is requesting the addition of one additional example, as follows:

Dismissal from clinical site or placement, work-based learning site, or other approved educational site. This addition is requested as the College cannot allow a student to continue in a course where a clinical or business partner will not allow the student to remain on their premises.

The Academic Affairs Division is also requesting the phrase Career and Technical Education be removed from this policy as courses outside of Career and Technical Education programs also may have labs (i.e., biology, chemistry, etc.).

There is no implication of the budget expected as a result of these wording changes.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed changes to Policy 5-61, Safe Student Performance in Educational Program as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

5. Proposed Change to Policy 3-35, Secondary Employment

The State of NC maintains a secondary employment policy, and the State Board of Community Colleges further requires that each community college adopt a policy consistent with the State of NC policy and rules.

Each community college reserves the right to adopt its own secondary employment policy as long as it is consistent with the State policy. Gaston College's policy 3-35 Secondary Employment follows the State Board policy.

However, modifications were proposed and reviewed to further clarify that a request for secondary employment where the secondary employment would have an adverse effect on primary employment would not be approved, that the denial of secondary employment is considered final.

Mr. Keigher asked for an example of an adverse effect on secondary employment. Mr. Baney stated an employee with the college having two first-shift jobs would be conflicting, therefore with Gaston College being the primary employment, we would not be inclined to approve the secondary employment in this example.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed changes to Policy 3-35, Secondary Employment, as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

6. Proposed New Policy 3-88, Paid Parental Leave (PPL)

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed New Policy 3-88, Paid Parental Leave, as presented.

On May 23, 2019, Governor Cooper issued Executive Order 95 (EO) requiring paid parental leave for employees of State cabinet-level agencies for which he had oversight and encouraged other state and local agencies to implement similar policies. Part V of Session Law 2023-14 mandated that paid parental leave was applicable to "employees of State

agencies, departments, and institutions, including The University of North Carolina; to public school employees; and to community college employees.” This is the first State law requiring paid parental leave to state employees and community college employees. The General Assembly approved July 1, 2023, as the effective date for this new statute.

On June 30, 2023, the State Board of Community Colleges issued a temporary rule by adding a new section to the State Board Code, 1C SBCCC 200.100 – Paid Parental Leave. The SBCCC requires that the college adopt a Paid Parental Leave policy that is “substantially equivalent” to the State Human Resources Commission temporary rule on this same issue, which will be replaced with a permanent rule once the Commission completes rulemaking and implements a permanent rule. The temporary rule is effective on July 1, 2023, and will be effective until the permanent rule is adopted. Key aspects of the new paid parental leave policy include:

- Eight (8) weeks of paid parental leave to eligible employees who give birth, and four (4) weeks of paid parental leave to other eligible parents with a qualifying event (adoption, foster care, or other legal placement).
- The leave can be used only once in a rolling 12-month period.
- Twins or triplets produce only one award of paid parental leave.
- Both parents may receive leave if they are both eligible employees.
- The leave is not paid out on separation, is not counted toward retirement, and cannot be donated as shared leave.
- The leave must be reported separately from all other paid leave.
- Unused leave is forfeited after 12 months.
- The leave cannot be used before the birth, adoption, foster placement, or other qualifying event.
- The leave is available to employees regardless of whether they have exhausted Family and Medical Leave.
- Documentation may be required, and disciplinary action is allowed if an employee fraudulently requests or uses leave.
- Flexibility with regard to stillborn births is encouraged.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve Policy 3-88, Paid Parental Leave (PPL) as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

7. Proposed Change to Policy 5-34, Faculty Qualifications

Gaston College Policy 5-34 is to define that Gaston College will employ qualified full-time and/or part-time faculty for each educational program, regardless of location or mode of delivery, to support the mission and goals of the institution.

As written, the policy refers only to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) as the College’s authorized accreditor. However, due to the passage of NC

Senate Bill 680 (Revise Higher Ed Accreditation Processes) in Fall 2023, the language below is being proposed:

Per the guidelines set by the College's current U.S. Department of Education recognized college accreditor ((Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)), the College will primarily use faculty credentials to determine if faculty are qualified to teach curriculum courses or continuing education courses articulated for College credit.

Dr. Hauser explained the reason for the other college accreditors being added was due to the recent vote on Senate Bill 680. In the Bill, it states a community college shall not receive accreditation by an accrediting agency for consecutive accreditation cycles. Therefore, according to this bill, Gaston College will not be able to use SACSCOC as our accreditor.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed changes to Policy 5-34, Faculty Qualifications as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

8. Proposed Change to Policy 5-39, Responsibility for Program Coordination

Gaston College Policy 5-39 is to define program coordination responsibilities at the College. Changes to procedure are being proposed, as follows:

- A. As appropriate, the faculty/staff member assigned responsibility for program coordination will be the ~~Department Chair or Program Chair~~ department/program chair, program coordinator/director, lead faculty, or associate dean.
- B. ~~Department Chairs or Program Chairs will receive supplemental pay and/or release time according to the current formula or point system.~~ Those responsible for program coordination may be given release time and/or financial compensation to perform these duties.
- C. In cases where the Department Chair or Program Chair is not sufficiently qualified to perform the program coordination function in its entirety, a faculty member will be assigned areas of responsibility for program coordination that are not performed by the chair. Primarily, this responsibility will lie in the area of curriculum expertise and curriculum content revision. Such faculty who have this responsibility and who are not a Department Chair or Program Chair will be

identified as a lead faculty program instructor.

- D. In departments or programs that have designated chairpersons, lead program instructors faculty will not receive supplemental pay and/or release time. In situations where the role of lead program instructor faculty requires extensive mentoring of other faculty with assessment, or scheduling responsibilities, then release time or supplemental pay may be requested by the Divisional Dean. In cases in which extensive responsibilities are required, the Divisional Dean should consider whether or not the lead program instructor should be appointed as a Department Chair or Program Chair.
- E. In some areas, the lead faculty program instructor may be the only full-time instructor for a program area. In such cases, the role of lead faculty program instructor is considered to be a component of the faculty role and therefore does not warrant supplemental pay and/or release time.

These changes are proposed to better align with the College's faculty workload policy and new organizational structures within the academic divisions.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed changes to Policy 5-39, Responsibility for Program Coordination as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

9. Proposed Change to Policy 5-52, Distance Education

Gaston College Policy 5-52 is to define key factors for distance education courses at the College. As written, the policy refers only to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) as the College's authorized accreditor. However, due to the passage of NC Senate Bill 680 (Revise Higher Ed Accreditation Processes) in Fall 2023, the language below is being proposed for part A of this policy:

Gaston College will offer distance education opportunities as a formal educational process that is in compliance with the standards set forth by the College's approved U.S. Department of Education recognized College accreditor (Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)) and applicable state and/or federal requirements. Compliance with this policy and the principles of accreditation apply to distance education courses in degree, diploma, and certificate programs.

Additional changes are being requested to the procedural portion of the policy to comply

with changes to distance education including a new delivery method, HyFlex, and Department of Education rules for Regular, Substantive Interaction (RSI) in online courses.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed changes to Policy 5-52, Distance Education as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

10. EWD Accountability and Integrity Policy and Plan

In accordance with the North Carolina State Board of Community College Code (1D SBCCC 300.4), Gaston College's Policy 5-103, Economic and Workforce Development Accountability and Integrity, establishes and maintains an Accountability and Integrity Plan and an associated Internal Class Visitation Plan.

In sum, the proposed plans, which are to be reviewed every three years by the College's Board of Trustees, guide the delivery of courses and programs offered through the Economic and Workforce Development (EWD) division, establish a system of checks and balances to prevent and detect errors or irregularities when reporting hours for FTE purposes, and provide a framework for program quality and improvement.

The current plans have recently been reviewed by the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) Office's Division of Workforce Strategies and no changes were recommended.

Upon the recommendation of the Campus Affairs Committee, Ms. Peak moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the proposed changes EWD Accountability and Integrity Policy and Plan as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

G. FACILITIES

Facilities Committee Chair Smith also stated that the Facilities items had been vetted during their committee meeting on January 16, 2024.

1. Approval of Health Science Education and Simulation Center Capital Project

The Health Science Education and Simulation Center will be an expansion of the existing David Belk Cannon Health Institute on Gaston College's Dallas campus geared towards

providing training opportunities for new and existing healthcare personnel. Intended services through the new facility are to include:

- Advanced healthcare education and development
- High-quality continuing education with healthcare-specific certifications
- Certificates, diplomas, associate degree programs
- Workforce development programs (industry certifications)
- Apprenticeship opportunities in four health science programs
- Cutting-edge healthcare technology-driven simulation center

Currently working on Scope of Work agreement with the NC Office of State Budget and Management. Once approved, project will be submitted to NC State Construction Office for approval after which a request of qualifications (RFQ) for an architect will be solicited.

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|-------------------------|---------------------|---|
| <u>Source of Funds:</u> | \$15,000,000 | OSBM Directed SCIF Grant FY2024 |
| | <u>\$45,000,000</u> | OSBM Directed SCIF Grant FY2025 |
| | <u>\$60,000,000</u> | TOTAL (SCIF) State Capital and Infrastructure Funds Grant |

Upon the recommendation of The Facilities Committee, Mr. Smith moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the Health Science Education and Simulation Center to be funded via the State Capital Infrastructure Fund Grants as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

2. Approval of Preliminary Planning for Regional Emergency Services Training (RESTC)

The 5-year structural inspection of the Burn Tower for the Regional Emergency Services Training Center (RESTC) is due this year. We are contracting with the engineering company Elliott, LeBoeuf, and McElwain to inspect the structure and do concrete core samples. They will submit an evaluation report for suggested repairs.

The estimated cost is \$18,000 to be paid with County Capital Funds.

Upon the recommendation of The Facilities Committee, Mr. Smith moved that the Gaston College Board of Trustees approve the structural inspection and preliminary planning for refurbish/replacement of the Burn Tower for the Regional Emergency Services Training Center as presented.

As this motion comes from Committee, a second was not required. Chair Vinson asked if there were any discussions. There were none.

The motion carried.

3. Capital Reports

De-Escalation Center

C Design is in the design phase. The City of Gastonia approved the zoning application. The vendor "Action Target" has presented a proposal for the structure and target systems. We are working with North Carolina Purchasing and Contract Division to seek sole source purchasing authority. Once design is complete, will issue RFP for general contractor.

Fiber Innovation Center

The project is currently 95% complete. State Construction Office has inspected the building. Owner training has been completed. Construction punch lists have been submitted and corrective work is progressing. A tree and easement survey is underway for the City of Belmont with final building approval to follow.

Burn Prop

RESTC staff is installing wall and stairwell components. Concrete pads and ramps were installed on 12/21/23. The project is approximately 80% completed. The State Construction Office does not have oversight for the project since cost is less than \$500,000. Estimated completion is March 2024.

Cybersecurity Renovations

Room renovations are 95% complete. All raised floors are completed, and all electrical has been installed. Furniture installation is completed. All labs have data cabling, and computers are installed. Rack installation and software configuration is scheduled.

Sims Park Scoreboard

Ultravision notified the College that there were issues with the shipping date for needed components. We are awaiting an update. The conduit and fiber cable were installed from the press box to the scoreboard location the week of 12/18/23 as originally scheduled. Completion date is still not determined.

Steam Plant Renovation Project

Gaston County evaluated 5 engineering companies that responded to the RFQ for the project. AME Consulting Engineers was selected as the engineering firm. Initial evaluation meetings will be held later in January 2024.

This Item was presented for information purposes; no action was taken.

H. FINANCE

Finance Committee Chair Huffstetler asked Ms. Alman to provide the Finance items for review.

1. FY 2023-24 State Operating Budget Update

3. Enhancing Accountability in Government through Leadership and Education (EAGLE) Internal Control Program Review

Enhancing Accountability in Government through Leadership and Education (EAGLE) is the State's internal control program that was established by the Office of the State Controller (OSC) to meet the requirements of House Bill 1551, Chapter 143D "State Governmental Accountability and Internal Control Act."

Effective internal controls are the foundation for managing risk and creating a safe and sound operating environment.

The North Carolina statewide internal control program defines the vision of an effective system of internal controls for North Carolina State government.

The College uses the EAGLE program as the basis for its internal control program. The program is administered by college staff and submitted to the Office of the State Controller annually. By performing this annual self-assessment evaluation, the College can identify risks that reduce the possibility of material misstatements, misappropriations of assets, and noncompliance with governmental rules and regulations while also assist in recognizing opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness of business operations.

EAGLE program activities touch a number of areas within the College, including Accounting, Purchasing, Human Resources, and Financial Aid, plus IT general controls program.

Our internal control testing activities found no significant issues this year. In addition to internal control testing, the EAGLE program also provides a set of performance standards focused on Federal Grants, General Accounting, Procurement, and Student Financial Aid. The College met all of the performance standards.

This Item was presented for information purposes; no action was taken.

4. Update Mileage, Meal Per Diem & Lodging Rate

Effective January 1, 2024, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) established new travel mileage reimbursement rates. The business standard rate for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) increased to 67.0 cents per mile. Gaston College will increase the mileage rate from 65.5 cents per mile to the new rate of 67.0 cents per mile established by the IRS effective February 1, 2024.

If state employees use a personal vehicle for business travel, actual mileage is reimbursable. Mileage is measured from the duty station or point of departure—whichever is closer to the destination—to the destination (and return). In accordance with agency's policies, a state employee shall be reimbursed at a rate that does not exceed the business standard mileage rate set by the IRS (effective January 1 of each calendar year) when using their personal vehicle for state business. Unless otherwise specified, the Office of State Budget and Management adopts the IRS rate annually.

Effective July 1, 2023, and effective for the 2023-25 biennium, the maximum allowable statutory rates for meals and lodging (subsistence) are shown in the table below (reference OSBM Budget Manual 5.1 Travel Policies for State Employees.) The College did not implement the increases effective July 1, 2023, but plan to implement the rates effective February 1, 2024.

The following schedule (effective July 1, 2023) shall be used for reporting allowable subsistence expenses incurred while traveling on official state business:

| Expense | In-State | Out of State |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Breakfast | \$10.10 | \$10.10 |
| Lunch | \$13.30 | \$13.30 |
| Dinner | \$23.10 | \$26.30 |
| Lodging (actual, up to) | \$89.10 | \$105.20 |
| Maximum Allowed Daily Subsistence | \$135.60 | \$154.90 |

At the August 16, 2021, Finance & Facilities meeting, the Board approved allowing the College to change travel mileage, meals, and lodging rates to agree with the established IRS rates as appropriate but requested that the Board be notified when changes are made. Rates would never exceed IRS standard rates.

This Item was presented for information purposes; no action was taken.

5. Pension Spiking Agency Report

During the 2014 General Assembly session, contribution-based benefit cap (CBBC) legislation was enacted effective Jan. 1, 2015 to control the practice of "pension spiking" in which a retirement system member's compensation substantially increases, resulting in a monthly retirement benefit that is significantly greater than the member and employer contributions would fund. As part of this calculation, a minimum average final compensation (AFC) amount is established before the calculation would apply, which is indexed for inflation each year. The current AFC threshold is \$126,956.05. This rule as established will only impact a few members of the retirement system. The legislation requires the member's last employer to pay the additional contribution required to fund the member's benefit in excess of the cap.

The State Treasurer's office reports monthly to each employer a list of those members for whom the employer might be required to make an additional contribution. The chief financial officer of the agency is required to provide a copy of the report to the chief executive and the governing body, so that all are aware of the potential future liability.

Gaston College receives monthly reports from the State Treasurer's office identifying members who are close to the AFC threshold. The members identified may or may not actually reach the CBBC at the time of their actual retirement.

As of December, 2023, the report from the NC Department of State Treasurer identifies 6 members' who may be eligible to retire in the next 13 months whose estimated monthly retirement benefit exceeds the CBBC. There is 1 member whose salary exceeds the AFC threshold creating the potential for a required additional retirement contribution of \$15,420 should that member retire in 2024. We will continue to monitor the calculation in the future.

This Item was presented for information purposes; no action was taken.

6. Financial Reports

A summary of expenditures for month-end November 2023 for State, Gaston, and Lincoln operating budgets and proprietary accounts in comparison to the previous year were provided for the Board's review and information.

Ms. Alman did note that Longevity pay is not included in the budget presented and reminded the Board that the Categorical accounts are very restricted on how they can be spent. Ms. Alman also emphasized that the reason the Gaston County budget is balancing and not showing a negative balance is that Finance moved line items that were traditionally paid through the county to the state budget (i.e., part-time security) due to the shortfall in funds from Gaston County.

This Item was presented for information purposes; no action was taken.

I. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT / ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Chair Vinson asked the Trustees who attended the ACCT in October 2023, for a brief update on their experiences. Ms. Stroupe, Mr. Huffstetler, Mr. Dancoff, and Mr. Vinson shared topics/sessions they discussed while there such as the importance of advocacy, apprenticeship programs, athletic programs, workforce development, funding and how to gain additional funding, the Texas formula change, and president evaluation processes. All agreed that networking with other colleges was enjoyable and enlightening. They all concurred that the other colleges in attendance share most of the same challenges.
- Chair Vinson shared a recognition from the Relay for Life of Lincoln and Gaston Counties and a thank you note from the Family of Jeremy Huffstetler.
- A revised Quick Facts sheet was provided as a reference, noting the second page addition with "Tag, You're In" and Textile Technology Center Info.
- Board Self-Evaluation Surveys were completed early this year with the results provided to each Trustee. Chair Vinson asked the Trustees to review the results before the Board Retreat on February 9 where they will be discussed.

- The NCACCT Law Legislative Seminar will be held March 13-15 at the Raleigh Marriott City Center. Please let Ms. Howe know if you are plan on attending.

J. EXECUTIVE SESSION

In accordance with provisions of GS § 143-318.11(a)(6), Judge Caldwell moved, seconded by Mr. Smith to enter the Board into a closed session.

The motion carried.

Chair Vinson entertained a motion by Mr. Fletcher seconded by Ms. Stroupe to close the Executive Session and return the Board to regular session.

The motion carried.

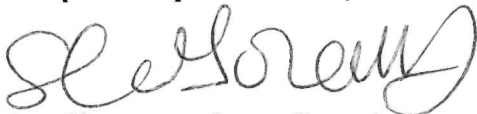
K. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Vinson asked if there was any further business to come before the Board.

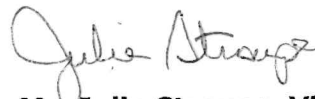
Ms. Hopper moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Vinson adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Shawnya Gore, Secretary



Ms. Julie Stroupe, Vice Chair

Guyann Howe, Recording Secretary

(College Seal)