

Minutes
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
Board of Trustees Meeting
December 10, 2002

Members Present: Delegate Joe Johnson, Senator William Wampler, Delegate Bill Carrico, Delegate David Nutter, Steve Kaplan (UVA-Wise), Sondra Stallard* (UVA), Tom Morris (E&H College), Steve Greiner (VA Intermont), Ralph Byers*(VT), Carole Seyfrit*(Radford Univ), David Wilkin (VA Highlands Community College), Lorraine Turner, Paul Grinstead, Ron Jessee, Jessie McClanahan, Debbie Kilgore, Edie Barnett*, Phyllis Palmerio, Senator Phillip Puckett, Rachel Fowlkes, Phyllis Palmerio

Others Present: Helen Napps, Rana Ducan-Daston, Sue Fulmer, Christine Fields, Deborah Bourne, Jeff Webb, Doug Viers, John Dooley

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Delegate Joe Johnson, Chairman, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. Ralph Byers of Virginia Tech introduced Dr. John Dooley, Associate Vice-Provost for Outreach.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Helen Napps, representative of the Advisory Committee for the Radford University Master's of Social Work Program, introduced members of the committee to the Board and distributed a one-page "fact sheet" to the board members. She reported that this program has enabled many people to obtain their master's degree in our region. Prior to the program at the Center, students had to drive to Radford or travel out-of-state to obtain a Master of Social Work degree.

Sue Fulmer, director of ETSU at Bristol, presented a copy of her dissertation to Rachel Fowlkes and the Center. Dr. Fulmer received her doctorate from ETSU in Educational Leadership in May 2002. She did a qualitative study on the development of higher education consortia and did a case study on the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center. She thanked the staff, board members, and partner institution staff for their time and assistance in conducting the study for her dissertation. Dr. Fowlkes thanked Dr. Fulmer for choosing the SVHEC for her dissertation study because her research has produced the only written history of the development of the Center.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes for the June 10, 2002 meeting were approved as written.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The nominating committee, (Senator Puckett, Debbie Kilgore and Dr. David Wilkin) presented a slate of officers for a two-year term beginning January 1, 2003. David Wilkin reported to the board that there were three seats to fill. The committee recommended Debbie Kilgore for Secretary, Delegate Joe Johnson for Vice-Chair, and Senator Phillip Puckett for Chair. Dr. Wilkin reported that all nominees agreed to serve if elected. Senator Wampler moved that the Board accept the recommendation from the Nominating Committee and elect the officers by acclimation. The Board voted, "Yes."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rachel Fowlkes reported on the college and university enrollments. She noted that the report compared Fall 2001 with Fall 2002. Dr. Fowlkes noted that Fall 2002 registrations were lower but the FTE's were the same as Fall 2001. She report that many of the programs offered are cohort programs and once the students graduate, that program goes to another off-campus site or the program is not repeated. That is a good thing, because it brings new programs to the Center.

Next, Dr. Fowlkes presented a report on the budget. She highlighted the approved budget for the 2002-2004 biennia. The Center received a 6.5% budget reduction for FY2003 and a 7.4% reduction for FY2004. The Center received additional base budget adjustments. She reported that the Center received an additional budget reduction of 14.8% or \$242,840 for FY2003 and 14.3% or \$229,159 for FY2004. To reduce the burden of the FY2003 reduction, the Center prepaid \$48,486 in FY2002. The revised general fund for FY2003 is \$1,434,587 and for FY2004 is \$1,319,211. Dr. Fowlkes also reported that the revised non-general fund revenue results in a decrease of \$47,394. Total budget reductions for FY2003 are \$241,748.

Dr. Fowlkes reported that to reduce the operating budget by \$241,000, the Center reduced budgeted items for expenditures in contractual services and fees, supplies and equipment, marketing support, building improvements and special projects, and elected not to fill two vacant positions. The Center was able to set aside a contingency fund of \$81,000. She reported that the Center could offset budget cuts by generating additional non-general fund revenue and implementing additional cost saving measures. Dr. Fowlkes encouraged the Board to share their ideas on how the Center could offset budget cuts.

Dr. Fowlkes reported that the Center has received \$4,044,452 in grant funding. The two largest grants are from the Virginia Tobacco Commission to provide scholarship funds to the two tobacco regions – southwest and southside. The total for the two programs is \$3.8 million. The Virginia Tobacco Commission also awarded the Center a grant for an Export Initiative Project. The amount of the grant is \$154,075.

Dr. Fowlkes reported that the general obligation bond passed and the Center will receive \$1.9 million for construction of an addition on the existing building. Phase I will be a renovation of the kitchen space. This space will house the new Virginia Intermont College Culinary Arts Program. Phase II will be an additional on the back of the building that was not funded in the original construction and renovation of storage space in to classroom space.

Dr. Fowlkes referred the Board Members to a letter in the board materials from the Southwest Virginia Education and Training Network stating that the Center had provided in-kind office space during fiscal year 2002 valued at \$50,044.

Dr. Fowlkes asked for questions or comments on her report. Jessie McClanahan commented that she was pleased to see that the SVHEC support the Arts Array Program at Virginia Highlands Community College. Dr. Steve Kaplan asked how the Center proposed to market the facility and programs if the marketing budget was being cut in half. She gave examples of marketing initiatives that are not costly. Examples include using the campus digital sign to market programs and events, providing the media with daily press releases on upcoming events, distributing course information to building users, and printing most marketing materials in-house.

Senator William Wampler inquired about tuition increases due to budget cuts. Rachel deferred the question to each of the college representatives because the Center does not collect tuition and fees from the students. He also asked that the college representative address the issue of the changes in credit hours on the Enrollment Report when giving their report. (Responses to Senator Wampler's question are included in the **College and University Reports**)

TOBACCO SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

Christine Fields reported on the \$3.8 million scholarship fund from the Virginia Tobacco Commission. She reported that the scholarship amount for Southside Virginia totaled \$2.8 million and included 24 localities. As of December 10, of the 700 eligible applicants, 440 had accepted the scholarship. Ms. Fields then reported on the Southwest Burley Scholarship fund of \$1 million. To date of the 626 eligible applicants, 548 had accepted the scholarship.

Chairman Joe Johnson wanted the record to note that the Center was instrumental in the scholarship funds being available to both localities and thanked the Center staff for handling the scholarship funds. Mr. Johnson thanked the members of the Tobacco Commission that are also members of the Center's Board for helping to fund the scholarships in southwest Virginia.

FACILITY REPORT

Eddie Sproles, Property Manager, reported that the replacement of the front window units was complete. He reported that a few of the windows over the entrances had lost their seal and will be replaced. Mr. Sproles reported that in August the Center was asked to submit water conservation plans to the State Secretary of Natural Resources. Several issues were addressed but the most challenging was the requirement to reduce water usage by 20% for the next year. Eddie reported that the Center had taken steps to reach the goal and at the present time had exceeded the goal by reaching a 35% reduction in water consumption.

Mr. Sproles also reported that the Center developed an energy management plan to reduce overall cost in utilities. He reported that in a three-month time frame, the Center has reduced electrical usage by 12,800 KW and water usage by 190,000 gallons. This was done by eliminating unnecessary lighting, reducing outdoor watering, and re-engineering the cooling tower to produce more operating efficiency.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND MARKETING REPORT

Debbie Bourne referred the Board to in-house produced marketing materials in their Board book. Ms. Bourne reported that the Center is working with WCYB and the Bristol Herald Courier to obtain free marketing and advertising. She showed a brief tape of a WCYB report of a photography display that was placed on the Art Wall upstairs at the Center.

Ms. Bourne reported that there are over 75,000 people that visit the SVHEC annually and over 1200 events. She reported that she had been doing business visits to recruit new customers to use the conference facilities. It was reported that the Center had been successful in recruiting new customers like King Pharmaceuticals, Bristol Broadcasting, Abingdon Bible Church, and Virginia Highlands Community College Career Fair.

Ms. Bourne reviewed statistics on conferences. For July 2002 – September 2002 there were 298 events, approximately 14,000 participants, and 163 organizations. Projected through December 2002 will be 315 events, approximately 16,000 participants and 177 organizations.

She reviewed a comparison of events from 2000 – 2002. There were 784 events in 2000, almost 1000 in 2001 and 1300 event for 2002 and projections of approximately 1300 events for 2003.

Dr. David Wilkin asked what the maximum capacity of events would be in a quarter. Debbie said that March – May is the busiest and close to capacity, but there are times when the grand hall is not in use. Dr. Fowlkes reported that the potential for increased activity is in the classrooms between 8 AM and 4 PM. She reported that classrooms are full after 5 pm. The Center is working to increase room usage during business hours.

Mr. Bourne asked the Board to note the variety of events held at the Center. From training seminars, retirement parties, Christmas dinners, fundraisers, tradeshow, and shopping markets, to the Miss Virginia Pageant, the diversity illustrates multiple constituencies who use the Center. She reported that an average of 150 to 175 classes are held a week, about 70% of those classes require technology. Monday and Tuesday nights are the busiest; Friday night is the slowest night.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY REPORTS

Elizabeth Lowe, Site Director for UVA's College at Wise, reported that UVA Wise had 115 students enrolled in 37 courses, 288 registrations, totaling 846 credit hours, and 56 FTEs. She highlighted the library media licensure program that is being offered through interactive television in Tazewell. Ms. Lowe addressed Senator Wampler's question about students and financial aid. She said that when UVA Wise calculates tuition for a three credit hour course, they are within \$15 dollars of what they charged four or five year ago. Financial aid is important and she feels that their student's financial needs are currently being met. Elizabeth thanked the SVHEC for sponsoring Michele Bentley in the Leadership Bristol Program this year.

Sondra Stallard, Dean of Continuing and Professional Studies, University of Virginia, responded to Senator Wampler's question regarding financial aid. Budget cuts have made it increasingly difficult to offer off-campus programs/courses for all colleges. Dr. Stallard reported that she spoke with Chancellor Steve Kaplan regarding possible partnerships at the Center and how they could collaborate to help offset the budget cuts. She reported that a year ago Elizabeth Lowe had given her notice to leave the University of Virginia's College at Wise. Because of this and the current vacancy of the UVA site director's position, UVA and UVA @Wise have decided to create a new position titled the Southwest Director of Academic Programs at the SVHEC. Dr. Stallard distributed the job description to the Board. Ms. Lowe has agreed to stay on until the new position is filled. Sondra reported that UVA & UVA Wise feel that they can at least hold the programs at the current levels but not likely increase programs offered in Abingdon until the budget crisis passes. She reported the she and Chancellor Kaplan are committed to keeping the University presence in Abingdon and will work diligently to ensure that they can survive the budget crisis.

Senator Wampler made an observation that he did not doubt or take to task any of the institutions on the impact of the financial decisions that the Executive and the General Assembly has placed on them. If you take UVA Wise and UVA that it accounts for approximately 25% of the 01 versus 02 registrations. He stated that his concern was not on an institution specifically but rather the lack of programs that will be offered to potential students. Senator Wampler suggested that the Board should have a small group to evaluate

the number of programs and the type of programs offered at the Center. When Senator Puckett becomes chair at the next meeting, Senator Wampler suggests that a task force should develop a plan on how the Center will address these issues to keep from losing ground on the programs offered and the number of students enrolled. Sondra Stallard stated that even though they will be down one staff person, their goal is not to have a decline in enrollment. Chairman Johnson asked Senator Puckett to appoint a committee at the next meeting when he becomes chairman of the Board.

Pauline "Blue" Gotham, Director of College for Older Adults, reported that the program continues to grow. Of the 211 students in the Fall 2002 term, 82 were new students. There were 430 course registrations and 66 volunteer faculty. She reported that 92 people had already registered for the Winter Term. Blue reported that the COA is going to offer a course titled "Nascar – Up Close and Personal". Guest speakers will be Jeff Byrd, Mike Helton, Ed McClure, Steve Smith and Lori Worley. She welcomed the Board to sign up for classes for the next term.

Patricia Foutz, Director of Southwest Programs for Virginia Tech, reported that Virginia Tech has awarded 144 Master degrees or higher since the Center opened in 1998. She reported that 32 students had graduated since the last meeting in June 2002. Ms. Foutz responded to Senator Wampler's question by informing the Board that the tuition increase for full time graduate students is only \$400 at Virginia Tech. Most of Virginia Tech's students are employed full time and have some type of employer tuition program. She reported that the students had not complained about the increase in tuition. As a final note, Ms. Foutz announced that due to budget cuts she would take early retirement from Virginia Tech effective January 1, 2003. Dr. John Dooley, informed the Board that Virginia Tech was committed to sustaining their operations in Abingdon. He announced that Dr. Doug Strickland, Director at the Roanoke Higher Education Center, would assume the role of interim director. In the long term, Dr. Dooley said that Tech is committed to working with the Board and the Center to enhance program offerings off-campus.

Dr. Jack Roper, Emory & Henry College, reported that they are in their third year of teaching graduate courses to teachers. The courses will be offered at the SVHEC in the summer. These students are seeking a Master's degree in English. Dr. Roper referred the Board to his written report.

Penny McCallum, Old Dominion University, reported that for Fall 2002 there were 117 students enrolled, 124 courses offered, 244 registrations and 250 credit hours. She thanked the Board members who helped to secure the Tobacco Scholarships for ODU students. Ms. McCallum introduced Rita Colley, an ODU student, who was named the 2002 Academic Honors Student from the Education Department. Rita is working at the Washington County Department of Social Services. She will be recognized at a ceremony on the main campus in Norfolk. Ms. McCallum referred the Board to her written report for more detailed information on ODU activities since the last meeting.

Dr. Carole Seyfrit, Dean of Graduate and Extended Education at Radford University, reported that enrollments have increased from Fall 2001. She reported that Jill Smeltzer resigned as the Site Director. Radford decided the director's position in Abingdon would go to a part time position due to budget constraints. Dr. Seyfrit informed the Board that they would continue to offer the same number of program and tries to increase the number of students.

Dr. Steve Greiner, President of Virginia Intermont College, began by thanking the Board and legislators for their support in make VI a partner of the Higher Education Center. Dr. Greiner reported that one course was offered during fall semester with 17 students in the new Culinary Arts Program. HE reported that VI would offer junior and senior level courses in Organizational Management and Social Work beginning Spring 2003. Steve thanked the legislators for the Tobacco Scholarships. VI had 33 students who received the scholarship this year.

Dr. David Wilkin, President of Virginia Highlands Community College, referred the Board to the report in the Board book. He reported that last year VHCC attracted 72 percent of local high school graduates. This is important to the Center because virtually every student that comes to the Center has had course work from the community college. As VHCC enrollment grows, enrollment at the Center will grow.

COMMENTS

Chairman Joe Johnson wanted to thank everyone and say that it had been an honor and pleasure to serve as Chairman of the Board. He thanked all the colleges and their staff and the Center and its staff for all their dedication and hard work. Delegate Johnson introduced Senator Phillip Puckett as the new chairman and turned over the gavel to him. For the record, Chairman Johnson wanted to note that there was a quorum when the meeting began and that there was still a quorum at the end of the meeting. Senator Puckett thanked Delegate Johnson for his leadership as Chairman.

Meeting was adjourned.