

**Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
Board of Trustees
Minutes
December 10, 2009**

Board Members/Designees Present: Senator Phillip Puckett, Senator William Wampler, Delegate Bill Carrico, Delegate Joe Johnson, Ralph Byers (VT), Andy Casiello (ODU), Kevin Crutchfield, Susie Ellis, Marcia Gilliam (Virginia Community College System), Penelope Kyle (Radford), Sean McMurray, David Prior (UVA Wise), Rosalind Reichard (Emory & Henry), Chris Robinson, Lorraine Turner, David Wilkin (VHCC).

Board Members/Designees Absent: Delegate Terry Kilgore, Delegate Dave Nutter, Billy Cannaday (UVA), Dan LaVista (SCHEV), Rex McCarty, Terry Mullins, Michael Puglisi (VI).

Others Present: Rachel Fowlkes, Richard Alvarez, Shannon Blevins, Whitney Bonham, Joyce Brooks, Gerald Blankenship, Connie Estep, Christine Fields, Debbie Hensley, Kathy Hietala, George Hiller, Michael Karmis, Jacob King, Penny McCallum, Mark Musick, John Provo, Mary Quillen, Nicky Rahley, Nino Ripepi, Ann Risdon, Ed Rogers, Eddie Sproles, Kim Stewart, Sonia Vanhook, Jeff Webb, Janet Williams, Brenda Wilson, Alicia Young.

Call to Order

Delegate Johnson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

Ralph Byers introduced his visitor, Mark Musick with the Commission on Improving Higher Education.

Virginia Tech Research Initiatives

Virginia Tech faculty spoke about two possible projects for the new R & D Center. Michael Karmis, Stonie Barker Professor, Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering and Director, Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (VCCER), gave a presentation on the status of carbon sequestration research and implementation, and John Provo, Associate Director, Office of Economic Development, presented *Composite materials in SWVA: Industry center feasibility proposal*. Senator Wampler stated that the southwest delegation remains committed to helping in any way they

can, but said that the Tobacco Commission questions how many jobs would be created with these initiatives. Discussion was held.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Senator Puckett called for approval of the Minutes for the June 4, 2009 meeting; they were unanimously approved.

Approval of 2009 Agency Preparedness Assessment

Rachel Fowlkes, Center Director, requested approval of the 2009 Agency Preparedness Assessment. Delegate Johnson moved; Senator Wampler seconded; motion carried.

Nominating Committee

President Penelope Kyle moved that Senator Phillip Puckett, Delegate Joe Johnson, and VHCC President David Wilkin be appointed to serve as the nominating committee for the purpose of selecting officers of the Board of Trustees. Motion was seconded by David Wilkin and unanimously passed.

Financial Report

Christine Fields, Budget Director, gave the Financial Report.

Revenue Budget:

- Ms. Fields informed the board of changes since the last meeting, highlighting three items:
 - Budget cut was 10% (\$215,499); received additional cut; prepay of \$150,000.
 - \$150,000 Non-General Fund carry forward from FY2009.
 - World Classics Catering ended food service contract July 1, 2009.
- Total Revenue is \$2.9 million, excluding restricted State revenue in Equipment Trust Funds and Maintenance Reserve.

Operating Budget – Personal Services

- R&D Director's position is reflected in Personal Services budget.

Ms. Fields stated that the Center still has approximately 5.8% in its contingency fund that would assist in offsetting additional cuts in the FY10 budget. However, looking forward into FY11, the \$150,000 prepay will not be there, nor will the \$150,000 in Non-General Fund carry forward from FY09. Ms. Fields reiterated these points in order for the board to be aware of the budget challenges that the Center faces in FY11.

Ralph Byers questioned whether the Center had received any stimulus money, and Rachel Fowlkes replied that the Center had not been eligible for those funds.

Discussion was held regarding some of the possible solutions for dealing with the loss of funds, including carrying forward the remaining contingency fund if the Center is lucky enough not to receive additional budget cuts, as well as seeking permission from the Tobacco Commission to pay the salary and budget of the R & D Director from the \$750,000 grant from the Tobacco Commission for the R & D center. The latter would allow the Center to move approximately \$200,000 from its budget over to the grant; however, since it is a three-year grant, this would only be a short-term solution. The Center also plans to develop more in-house fee-generating events as a means of increasing revenues.

Grant Funding Resolution

Ms. Fields introduced a resolution that had previously been emailed to the board members for review. The blanket resolution would allow the Center's Executive Director/Agency Head to execute grant applications on behalf of the Center, thereby eliminating the necessity of having such applications and related documents signed by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, since logistics and time frames sometimes hinder that process. Delegate Johnson moved for the adoption of the resolution; Marcia Gilliam seconded the motion; adoption of the resolution was unanimously approved.

Executive Director's Report

- **Capital Project:** Rachel Fowlkes welcomed everyone to the new addition. She pointed out that the room in which the Board was meeting is equipped with light tubes, so that the room is illuminated by sunlight rather than electricity. The amount of light in the room is controlled by shades over the light tubes that can be opened and

closed fully or partially to brighten or dim the room. Dr. Fowlkes noted the light tubes as part of the green building design of the new addition. The September 2009 completion of construction on the addition is the culmination of a capital project that was approved in the 2002 General Obligation Bond. Dr. Fowlkes said that the addition, with its corridor and additional bathrooms, has greatly improved circulation back and forth from the Grand Hall, and that the patio on the back of the addition has already been utilized for receptions and other events during the fall season.

Dr. Fowlkes informed the board that the new addition had achieved LEED Gold certification, the criteria for which had been included in board members' folders, and she encouraged them to review some of the interesting requirements of the U. S. Green Building Council to reach that status.

Other items of note about the new addition and renovation to the existing building:

- New entrance, with semicircular driveway and covered drop-off area, which is particular beneficial for elderly and handicapped guests, as well as vendors and others who have materials to unload.
- Skylights down the corridor eliminate the need for electric lights during daylight hours.
- Light sensors in classrooms that automatically turn the lights on when someone enters the room and turn them off after a period of inactivity.
- Heat sensors that detect when the room needs to be cooler or warmer.
- New landscaping with drought tolerant native plants that do not require a lot of water or maintenance.

Dr. Fowlkes said that the LEED Gold addition will serve as a model demonstration site for state facilities, public schools and businesses that are seeking way to reduce energy costs.

- **Appointment of Trustees:** Dr. Fowlkes congratulated Susie Ellis and Sean McMurray on their reappointments to the Board of Trustees for a second term, and expressed the Center's gratitude for their service.

- **R & D Project Updates:**

- Dr. Fowlkes introduced Ed Rogers, who was selected as the Director of the planned Research and Development Center.
- Preliminary plans for the R&D building were presented. Dr. Fowlkes said that the center will be a standalone facility located on the west side of the HEC.
- It will be a hi-tech energy demonstration facility. Its exterior will capture sunlight which will supply energy to the Center; one section of the roof will be a "green" roof; deep-well geothermal will provide heating and cooling; wind turbines may be constructed on the property, as well as other energy innovations. The interior corridor of the building will have a glass wall allowing visitors to look into the labs and classroom space; a large display will demonstrate the amount of energy being consumed in the building at any given time, as well how much energy is net back to the grid.
- Two engineering classrooms
- Groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled in April.
- Burwil was selected as the construction management firm.

Dr. Wilkin expressed the community college's appreciation for the planned center, which will be built on land provided by the VHCC and will also afford the opportunity for a productive partnership between the college and the R & D Center. VHCC students in its new energy technology program will be able to use the laboratory in the R&D facility.

- **First LEGO League:**

One of the most exciting events that Center staff produced in the fall was First LEGO League, with 21 teams competing on the regional level at the Higher Ed Center on November 14. Competition consisted of two divisions; Division I team members were 9-11 year-olds, and Division II was for 12-14 year-olds. Higher Ed Center staff members Sonia Vanhook and Alicia Young each coached a team, while Jeff Webb, Christine Fields, and Deborah Hensley spearheaded the organization of the regional competition. Bill and Susan Duggins from Virginia Tech assisted the HEC staff plan and execute every detail of the event. Dr. Fowlkes expressed the Center's gratitude for their invaluable assistance. She related how fascinating it was to observe the young students with LEGO robots, programming them to go through the competition drills.

Dr. Fowlkes said that the Higher Education Center works to support and participate in events such as First LEGO League as part of its effort to promote science, math and technology interests among young students. She said that if there is one message that she would like for the college presidents to hear before they return home after the meeting, it is that more math, science and technology courses are greatly needed at the HEC. The Center has an array of courses in the soft sciences, but most industries in southwest Virginia are seeking employees with backgrounds in engineering, technology (computer or program software), or healthcare, all of which require science.

- **Conference Services:**

Dr. Fowlkes referred board members to the Conference Services reports contained in their board folders. She reported that the Center had steady activity in the fall despite the current poor economy, anticipating approximately \$110,000 in revenue by the end of December.

Not including classes, the greatest percentage of use of the Center is attributed to Higher Ed, followed by Corporate, Non-Profit, K-12, State Agencies, and Local & Federal Government. Alpha Natural Resources has been the top corporate client. Johnston Memorial Hospital is also a regular client; its Emergency Department just recently held its Christmas party in the new room in which the board meeting is being held.

Fundraising events recently held at the Center included the William King Arts Center's annual Mistletoe Market, which had its largest year ever; a March of Dimes fundraiser; a breast cancer awareness fundraiser sponsored by Range Resources; and Friends of the Library featuring Barbara Kingsolver.

The Center offers a number of strong academic programs, including Virginia Commonwealth University's Nurse Anesthesia program. Dr. Fowlkes announced that 10 students would receive Master's degrees at VCU graduation ceremonies in Richmond just two days hence. She explained that the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia (CRNA) program is a hi-tech, 28-month fulltime program requiring extensive clinical experience in hospitals across the region. CRNA graduates fill

high-paying jobs in SW Virginia, east Tennessee, and eastern Kentucky.

Another program that continues to grow at the Center is the College for Older Adults, which had an enrollment of 410 for the 2009 fall term.

Dr. Fowlkes said that academic programs also saw a slight overall increase in fall enrollment. Many of the Center's college partners are struggling with budget cuts which require faculty to teach more on-campus thereby limiting their ability to teach off-campus. She applauded those who are able to provide classes via distance learning. Using technology, faculty can teach students in northern Virginia, Tidewater and Richmond, while providing opportunities to students in southwest Virginia.

At the conclusion of the Executive Director's report, Chris Robinson inquired if the new energy center would be a LEED facility. Dr. Fowlkes responded that the architects are designing a LEED Platinum building. However, the criteria for the R & D building are more stringent than those for the addition to the Higher Ed Center. Achieving the highest level of certification will be challenging. For example, the Center could not earn credits in categories such as access to public transportation and use of brown fields.

Special Presentation

In a moving presentation, Dr. David Wilkin read a resolution proposing to name the Grand Hall of the Higher Education Center in honor of Delegate Joseph P. Johnson, Jr. in grateful recognition for his unwavering support for the Center and educational opportunities in the region. Delegate Carrico moved that the resolution be passed; several board members seconded, and the motion carried, with Delegate Johnson abstaining from the vote.

Members of Delegate Johnson's family joined the gathering for the special presentation. Delegate Johnson expressed his appreciation for the honor. Senator Puckett recognized Delegate Johnson's family, who have been such an integral part of the delegate's life and his service to the community and the Commonwealth, and extended appreciation to them for being present to share the special occasion. Senator Puckett concluded by saying that it was one of the most deserving things in which he had ever participated.

Board member Susie Ellis expressed her appreciation to Dr. Fowlkes for having invited Ms. Ellis' business, the General Francis Marion Hotel, to cater the reception for the board meeting. Ms. Ellis said that the hotel is celebrating its fourth year of operation, has recently added Marcus Blackstone as Executive Chef, and they are excited to continue to grow and expand.

The meeting was adjourned.