



Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Board of Trustees Amended Minutes June 13, 2019

Explanation for Amendment

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees held on June 11, 2020, a motion was made by Steve Ahn to amend the minutes of the June 13, 2019, meeting of the full board to reflect that Maria Colobro had been in attendance telephonically. Her acknowledgement during roll call had been inaudible, apparently due to a technical issue. Mr. Ahn's motion was seconded by Brian Hemphill and unanimously affirmed. In all other aspects, the minutes of the June 13, 2019 meeting remain unaltered.

Call to Order

Chairman Bill Carrico welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Roll call was held. A quorum was present.

Board Members/Designees Present:

Steve Ahn (telephonically)
Senator Bill Carrico, Chairman
Cheryl Carrico
Senator Ben Chafin
Maria Colobro (telephonically)
Joseph Crook (SCHEV) (telephonically)
Lex Tartaglia (VCU) (telephonically)
Joshua Ely
Brian Hemphill (Radford University)
Alex Hernandez (UVa)
Donna Henry (UVa-Wise)
Delegate Joe Johnson (Emeritus)
Delegate Terry Kilgore
Bill Nuckols (ODU) (telephonically)
David Olive (Bluefield) (Ex-Officio)
Delegate Israel O'Quinn
Delegate Todd Pillion
Jake Schrum (Emory & Henry)
Sandy Ratliff
Susan Short (Virginia Tech)
Charlie White (VHCC)

Board Members/Designees Absent:

Hannah Ingram

Delegate Will Morefield

Keith Perrigan

Ron Proffitt (Virginia Community College System)

Others Present:

James Blevins

Theresa Burriss

Rebecca Carmack

Angela Cvetkovski

Rana Duncan-Daston

Tyler Henry

Debbie Hensley

Hannah Hietala

Kathy Hietala

Michael Johnson

Brenda Justus

Michael Keohane

Deb Love

David Matlock

Mary Matlock

Penny McCallum

Paula Moad

ABee Moseley

Mary Mullins

Nicky Rahley

Mike Robinson

Deborah Sproles

Adam Tolbert

Jeff Webb

Alicia Young

Remote Participation Policy

Deb Love, the Center's representative in the Office of the Attorney General, recommended that the board adopt a Remote Participation Policy. Even though the board has long had the ability to conduct meetings with some members participating at a different location, the strict rules governing that method of participation have been eased somewhat by the Freedom of Information Act and enhanced by better technology in the age of electronics and. As the result of some legislative changes, board members who have a

personal or medical reason preventing them from attending the meeting in person could participate by telephone as if fully present at the meeting, subject to certain criteria. Heretofore, members who unexpectedly could not attend the meeting in person could call in to the meeting and listen, but could not fully participate. Under the Remote Participation Policy, the requirement still exists to have a quorum of members physically present at one location that is open to the public; however, individuals wishing to participate remotely may inform the Chair on or before the day of the meeting that they are unable to attend in person due to a personal or medical reason. If a personal reason, it must be explained satisfactorily to the board. Less specificity is required for remote participation due to medical reasons. The board must be consistent in application of the policy, Love said.

The Remote Participation Policy was adopted upon a motion by Delegate Kilgore, seconded by Senator Chafin and unanimously approved.

Since several board members had called in to the current meeting, a second vote was required to approve their remote participation. **Delegate Kilgore made the motion; Jake Schrum seconded, and remote participation by those members calling in was unanimously approved.**

Approval of Minutes

The Chairman requested a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2018, board meeting. **The minutes were unanimously approved upon motion by Jake Schrum, seconded by Delegate Israel O'Quinn.**

Acknowledgement of Outgoing Board Members

Departing board members Steve Cochran, whose term ends June 30th, and Jake Schrum, retiring President of Emory and Henry College, were recognized and extended appreciation by the Chairman and Mr. Matlock for their service.

Introduction of New Board Members

The following new board members were introduced and welcomed to the board:

- Keith Perrigan, Citizen Member (School Superintendent)
- Hannah Ingram, Citizen Member (Tourism)
- Sandy Ratliff, Citizen Member (Business & Industry)

2019 Radford University Distinguished Alumni Award Winner

Mr. Matlock informed the board that over the past few years, the Center has begun creating a group of ambassadors from among the graduates of its academic partner institutions. Annually, each institution identifies a noteworthy graduate, and a dinner ceremony is held to recognize that year's group of distinguished alumni and celebrate with them and their families. He introduced Michael Keohane, Radford University's 2019 honoree, who is a member of the Center's third group of award winners.

Mr. Keohane first conveyed his appreciation to Delegate Johnson and others who had the vision and tenacity to create this facility for people in the region, whose lives [including Keohane's] have been blessed because of the opportunities afforded by the Center. He went on to relate the story of his educational journey, explaining that as one of the children of a single mother with a lot of work to do, the emphasis on education was not a strong part of life. At seventeen, he had his mother sign him up for the military and served some time there beginning at age eighteen. Following his military service, he said he spent about four years just living life and, in that process, realized that he was just as smart as some of the folks he was either waiting on or working with, and decided to give college a try. He found that he enjoyed college and succeeded very well academically so, after having received an associate's degree at VHCC, he decided to continue on to Radford University. Having recently married, his wife was in Wise, VA, and he became a weekend husband for about 14 months. While he knew that he wanted to obtain a graduate degree in social work and knew that he had the determination to do it, he admitted that the weekly three-hour drive to Radford was very daunting. During the course of that time, he said he learned that Radford had a distance site at the Higher Education Center and was subsequently able to qualify and complete his graduate degree in Abingdon. Not only did the ability to attend school in Abingdon eliminate the long hours of travel and absence from his family, but it also provided many personal contacts and networking opportunities that have greatly enriched his life and livelihood.

Keohane went on to say that he was not sure whether people truly understand the resource they have in the Center. With eight or nine different schools to choose from, a wealth of educational options is available to residents of the southwest region. He said he is thankful for the pioneers who saw southwest Virginia as more than just a hayfield, possessing a "if you build it, they will come" philosophy that led to the creation of the Higher Education Center, which he said is instrumental for the area's culture. As

examples, he noted that his daughter has participated in band concerts held at the Center; his son participated in and won a history bowl conducted at the Center; even the same night he received his Distinguished Alumni Award, he said he went into the Grand Hall after the awards ceremony and listened to a concert being presented by Symphony of the Mountains. Highlands Community Services, where Keohane works, regularly holds meetings and professional events at the Center. He said that any time he needs to use a room and wants to impress people from outside the region who don't know anything about our area, he always tries to find one at the Higher Education Center because he wants them to feel the awe that he feels every time he walks through its doors. In closing, Mr. Keohane expressed his gratitude to the trustees for their desire and continued commitment to having their institutions represented at the Center, and his appreciation for the building and all the lives it has changed.

Mr. Matlock asked that Mr. Keohane explain what his job is. Keohane said that after receiving his master's degree, he went on to obtain his license and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner and a Certified Sex Offender Treatment Provider. He related that it was through someone he met at the Higher Education Center that he learned of the potential to expand his mind to work with those very difficult populations. Subsequently, he helped write a workbook and went on to co-author a textbook that he said is still being used. Keohane stated that the trajectory of his life changed, partly because of his experiences at the Higher Education Center, for which he is forever grateful.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director David Matlock's report included the following notable matters:

Referring to Michael Keohane's presentation, Mr. Matlock averred that all would agree that Keohane will be a wonderful ambassador for the Center. He went on to inform those trustees representing partner academic institutions that their site representatives at the Center are doing outstanding work, referring them to the College and University Reports section of their board folders for specific details.

Mr. Matlock reviewed several key performance indicators with respect to Non-General Fund Revenue. A comparison of the five-year average (FY14 compared to FY19 year-end) for each category revealed the following data:

- Resident Fees generated in FY14 were approximately \$287,000 compared to \$352,000 for year-end FY19. With \$425,000 projected for FY2020, he reported it is nearly double the FY14 revenue.
- Associate Partnership Fees skyrocketed from \$66,000 to \$187,000, a trend that is expected to continue but may temporarily stagnate as ETSU becomes a full partner, generating another \$58,000 in revenue that will be offset by the loss of their per credit hour fee as an associate partner.
- Conference Services revenue is significantly higher than the five-year average.
- Revenue is up, as illustrated by the five-year comparison. In FY14, Total NGF Revenue was \$658,000, while FY19 will end at about \$897,000. Pointing out that even though both the FY2014 and FY2019 figures include some carryforward funds, Mr. Matlock noted that the Center has experienced considerable growth in revenue over the five-year period.
- Expenses have increased by just over \$200,000 for the stated period. Matlock said that is mostly in the Other Than Personal Services category, and specifically Program Support Funds, as the Center works to strengthen program development.
- Personal Services has increased slightly over the five-year period, with only approximately \$20,000 difference. Contributing to the increase have been two state-mandated wage increases, and Mr. Matlock reported that the Center was also hit with an unexpected "hundred-thousand-dollar surprise" expense in the form of health insurance and retirement benefits it will now be directly responsible for paying after transitioning its HR oversight from UVA to DHRM.

Governor Northam visited the Center in January to learn from students in the Center's K-5 STEM Academy how to fly drones. Mr. Matlock said that in the past year, nearly 1,250 K-5 students have visited the Center to engage in some type of coding activity.

Mr. Matlock thanked Delegate Kilgore and Senator Chafin, who sponsored House Bill 2185 and Senate Bill 1495, respectively, to establish an apprenticeship program for IT modeled after Norfolk's Ship Building Apprenticeship Program. Matlock reported that he had been to the Governor's Office recently for the signing of legislation for the program, which the Center will oversee. With plans to get underway after the first of the year, the program will serve students in 22 counties and 5 municipalities from southwest Virginia to Danville in Southside. Matlock said the program is a big deal for the Commonwealth of Virginia and for the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

Conference Services reported approximately 30,000 attendees over the past five months, resulting from approximately 2,200 bookings by 142 organizations.

Drawings for the Center's expansion project are now complete. Mr. Matlock said that \$2.6 million in bonds is in place, and that the architect would be at the Center the following week for the final review. It is hoped that construction will be well under way by the December board meeting.

Last year, the General Assembly appropriated \$3.1 million to assist with the Center's HVAC issue. The engineers have been in and that work is well under way.

The STEM Gym project in the former Food City Kitchen will start concurrently with the building expansion project.

The Center is working on its policies and procedures. Mr. Matlock said that for years the Center has operated as if it is a division of UVA when in reality it is a stand-alone state agency. Although it does fall under many of the policies and procedures of UVA and follow those well, it also needs to develop more policies of its own in certain areas. While appreciative of the fiscal work the University of Virginia performs for the Center, it must also complete some internal work on policies and procedures.

Plans are being contemplated for a new website design.

The Executive Committee has already been briefed on updates to the Center's bylaws, and it is anticipated that the proposed revision will be ready to present to the full board in December.

Mr. Matlock said that, as many of the trustees know, the Tobacco Scholarship Loan Program is being transitioned into a talent attraction program. The Center has served as fiscal agent for the program for some time and the staff is now assisting with the transition.

Mr. Matlock expressed appreciation for the support of the southwest delegation and the Tobacco Commission for \$380,000 awarded to Radford University for the creation of a new Master's of Science degree in Counseling to be offered at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, and to Dr.

Hemphill for bringing that program back to the Center. He noted that Radford will be making a difference for people like Michael Keohane.

Upcoming events that Mr. Matlock asked everyone to put on their calendars included the Regional LEGO Robotics competition and the Annual STEM Workshops for Sixth-Grade Girls.

Mr. Matlock closed with a short video highlighting the diverse work of the Center's staff and the variety of projects and tasks they are engaged in daily. At the conclusion of his report, he invited questions; none were forthcoming.

Before moving on to the next agenda item, the Chairman noted that a vote was needed on the Center's proposed FY2020 budget contained in the Financial Report section of the board folders. He called for a motion to adopt the proposed budget. **Delegate Israel O'Quinn made the motion for adoption; the motion was seconded by Senator Ben Chafin, and the proposed FY2020 budget was unanimously adopted.**

HR/Administration Report

Adam Tolbert, Department Director, reported on the following administrative matters related to human resources, payroll, time and leave:

New/Departing Employees

Referring to the Personnel Activity Report contained in the HR/Administration section of the board folders, Mr. Tolbert reported that since the previous board meeting, the Center has hired two new part-time employees to replace existing positions, as well as several hourly/wage hires to fill departures.

Mr. Tolbert observed that when he came into his current position in January 2018, and during the transition from UVA HR into the state central HR system, it occurred to the Center's management that it had not been doing a good job of tracking work service or service recognition for full-time staff at the Center. He said it has been a top priority of his over the past several months to get that situation remedied, and was pleased to report that the trustees would find a Service Recognition list contained in the HR/Administration section of the board folders. Mr. Tolbert noted that several full-time Center employees had passed a service milestone of some type during the period May 1, 2018, to April 30, 2019. He explained that the service includes all salaried state service in any agency or branch of government in the Commonwealth of Virginia, but does not include any

hourly/wage employment, although some individuals on the list had worked at the Center (or in state government) as hourly-wage employees before becoming full-time Center staff. He recognized the following individuals who had reached service milestones:

- **Doug Viers:** 20 years
- **Jeff Webb:** 20 years
- **Kathy Hietala:** 15 years
- **Sherry Buskill:** 10 years
- **Sisa Damore:** 5 years
- **Josh Reynolds:** 5 years
- **Gertraud Turner:** 5 years
- **Sean Webb:** 5 years
- **Austin Dierks:** 3 years
- **Hannah Hietala:** 3 years
- **Patsy Rhoten:** 3 years
- **Eli Hietala:** 1 year
- **Joe Mitchell:** 1 year

Mr. Tolbert went on to say that in getting back on track with service recognitions, the Center plans to present the employees mentioned with an actual award, along with other employees who may already have passed service milestones not included in the current list. Those employees include:

- **Patricia Ball:** 11 years
- **Paul Farrar:** 11 years
- **Debbie Hensley:** 14 years
- **David Matlock:** 27 years
- **Nicky Rahley:** Almost 7 years
- **Elizabeth Tate:** Almost 7 years
- **Adam Tolbert:** Almost 13 years
- **Sonia Vanhook:** Almost 20 years
- **Alicia Young:** Just over 12 years

Mr. Tolbert said it is important to recognize the Center's employees for their service and hard work, and asked the trustees to join him in a round of applause.

Before inviting questions, Mr. Tolbert introduced Paula Moad, the Center's Testing Center Administrator, who would be presenting the Testing Center

Report. With no questions forthcoming for Mr. Tolbert, his report was concluded.

Testing Center Report

Paula Moad, Administrator, presented the Testing Center report, contained in the Other Reports section of the board folders.

Ms. Moad introduced the other two members of the Testing Center staff of proctors, Michael Johnson, and recently hired employee James Blevins. She shared the following data from her report:

- The Testing Center contracts with 8 professional testing companies, most of them international testing.
- A sampling of the different exams proctored through the Testing Center was included in the board folders.
- Nearly 1,500 individuals had taken tests through the month of May (1,500+ if the numbers for the first weeks of June were added).
- The Testing Center has been open to provide this service to the region since 2013 and has grown considerably during that time.
- 28 individuals have received their diplomas through the GED testing program, the highest GED number yet for the center.
- The Testing Center has taken in \$30,950 dollars this year and is on target to reach its \$31,000 goal.

In closing, she shared some photos of the Testing Center check-in/proctoring office, secure lockers for test takers' personal items, and the computer lab where tests are administered. Ms. Moad declared that it's a perfect job for a retired schoolteacher with 35 years of service to the state, because she gets to give exams but does not have to grade them!

IT Department Report

Nicky Rahley, IT Department Manager, delivered her department's report, including the following highlights:

Ms. Rahley said that she has two full-time and one part-time staff members. One of her full-time staff members serves in a dual capacity, also working in a supervisory role with Housekeeping.

For the fiscal year, her department has answered approximately 304 tickets. She explained that when Center staff or academic partners need assistance with computer issues, there is an automated system whereby they enter information about the type of issue they are having and request assistance

from the IT Department, who will respond within a given time, depending upon current workload and urgency of the problem.

The IT Department provides dedicated IT support to the Center's clients and college partners. Ms. Rahley said that the Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., as well as most Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to potentially midnight, and a dedicated IT staff member is on duty during those times. If clients need help, they can pick up the phone, dial zero, and IT will be there within five minutes to assist.

Ms. Rahley said that her department is very proud of the fact that they spec out, purchase and install all the audio/visual equipment throughout the building. Because they are able to perform the installation in-house, the Center is saved \$80-\$100 thousand dollars annually in contract labor.

Ms. Rahley's PowerPoint included a list of future projects, scheduled to commence on July 1st. She said the list would continue to be expanded as the year progresses, with plans to have most of the projects completed by September or October, although some items will be a year-long process. She said her department is always looking for ways to improve.

Ms. Rahley concluded her report with a humorous video capturing "a day in the life" of the Center's IT Department staff.

Foundation Report

Alicia Young, Grants Manager, updated the board on Foundation grants. Following up on the IT Department video, Ms. Young ventured that the trustees would find her grant report boring by comparison.

Foundation Grants

The three Tobacco Commission R&D grants managed by the Foundation (Excavation Alert, Wiretough and Micronics) are on track. Ms. Young explained that she works with Tobacco Commission staff located at the Center and in Richmond to make sure the companies stay on track with their projects and budgets. She reported that there are no issues, and all are currently working on research and development.

Ms. Young reported that the education grants listed on the report contained in the board folders are the same grants that were listed in the report for the previous board meeting, and that no new grants have been received.

Energy Center

The lease of the Energy Center by Dr. McGarry is now in its third year. Ms. Young said that Mr. Matlock reports to the Foundation board that Dr. McGarry is pleased with the building. She reported that maintenance and facility issues occasionally arise and are addressed by the Higher Ed Center's Facility Manager, Joe Mitchell, and the Foundation Board. She noted that any large building encounters periodic maintenance and facility issues, and that the Energy Center does not have any major problems.

Nominating Committee Report – Office of Chair

Senator Carrico explained that the election of a new chairman was taking place in June rather than December as would normally be the case due to the circumstances and timing by which he became Chairman. He related that he became the chairman in 2015 when he was elected to fulfill a one-year term succeeding Kevin Crutchfield, who was then the interim board chair. Carrico had then been elected to an initial full two-year term in June 2016 and was subsequently re-elected to a second two-year term in June 2018. The board's current bylaws state that "An officer is eligible to serve two consecutive terms" and that "The Board of Trustees shall elect the officers from its membership for two-year terms." The Center's prior legal counsel, Elizabeth Griffin, with the Office of the Attorney General, advised that the bylaws could be interpreted to mean that Carrico will have served two consecutive terms by the end of June 2019. Ms. Griffin had suggested that an election for Chairman be held at the current meeting. He reminded the board that he had appointed a Nominating Committee at the December 2018 board meeting consisting of Todd Pillion, Keith Perrigan and Brian Hemphill, to present a candidate for Chairman at the current meeting. The Chairman called on President Hemphill for the Nominating Committee's motion.

Election of Board Chair

President Brian Hemphill reported that the Nominating Committee had a good meeting per the Chairman's charge at the December 2018 meeting. Based upon the committee's deliberations, considering the best leadership moving forward, **President Hemphill said he was happy to make a motion nominating Delegate O'Quinn to be the next Chairman of the Board. Delegate Pillion seconded the motion, and by a unanimous vote of the board, Delegate Israel O'Quinn was elected Chairman.**

Chairman Carrico noted that O'Quinn is the current Vice-Chair, so his election to Chairman will leave a vacancy in that position. He asked if anyone

would like to make a nomination for that office. **Delegate Kilgore nominated Delegate Pillion; President Hemphill seconded the motion, and the board voted unanimously to elect Delegate Todd Pillion as Vice-Chair.**

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Closing Remarks

In closing, Senator Carrico said it had been an honor to serve as Chairman for the past four years. He recalled being appointed to the Board of Trustees as a young Delegate and observing former chairmen like William Wampler, Joe Johnson and Phillip Puckett. He said that as he listened to the stories of how the Center was conceived and how much work went into that, he had not envied them having all that pressure on their shoulders. As it turned out, when former Chairman Kevin Crutchfield's term of service ultimately came to an end, he did become the Chairman! He said his election came at a time of substantial change—when the original Director, Rachel Fowlkes, was retiring, a search had been conducted, and the Selection Committee was going through the process of choosing a new director. He said he was reminded of the Proverbs verse that states, "Where there is no vision, the people will perish." As the Center navigated that transition, he said one of the main goals he had as Chairman was assuring that the original vision and purpose for the Center would not be lost. After the search committee selected David Matlock as the Center's next Executive Director and Agency Head, he was pleased to see Mr. Matlock come onboard with the vigor and the vision to see the facility grow, and believes that is what the board has seen happen in the last four years. Carrico has been impressed by all the activities going on at the Center, and said working with the staff, sitting down to talk with them, and hearing their excitement about everything happening at the facility is amazing. He realizes that it has come with some challenges and feels certain there have been times when the new Director has questioned his decision to apply for the job, but noted that anytime transition and change take place, there are challenges. He commended Mr. Matlock for meeting the challenges head-on, and doing a phenomenal job of keeping the Chairman and members of the board informed of transpiring events. Senator Carrico said he believes the growing pains have served to teach an important lesson on what must be done in order to keep that vision growing and to ensure that the vision remains central to what the Center does to serve the people of this region. He said that is what the dreamers who originally created the Center had envisioned, and that he is proud to have been a part of it. Noting

that as of January, he will no longer be a member of the board, he said that having been a part of it for the past 18 years has been a highlight of his career and that he has appreciated the opportunity to serve as Chairman.

Remarking that he became the Executive Director at the time Senator Carrico became the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Matlock observed that the two had experienced a lot together since that time. He said not only does it take a great staff to provide the kind of numbers he had reported, but that it takes great leadership from the Chairman. Mr. Matlock said that Senator Carrico has always been a phone call away, many times well past nine o'clock at night. He told Carrico that he had been a great Chairman, and thanked him on behalf of the board and all the students, such as Michael Keohane, for his 18 years of service, calling Carrico a difference-maker. He said it is because of Senator Carrico, Delegate Johnson, and everyone around the table that the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center is a great place doing great things for a great region.

Chairman Carrico reminded everyone to note the date for the next meeting of the board, **December 12, 2019**, and declared the meeting adjourned.