



**Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
Board of Trustees
Minutes
December 10, 2015**

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:

Senator Bill Carrico, Chairman
Huda Aden (UVA-Wise)
Peter Blake (SCHEV)
Cheryl Carrico, new Member
Senator Ben Chafin
Danny Dixon, new Member
Steve Cochran (telephonically)
Christine Fields (VHCC)
Aviva Shapiro Frye, new Member
Lisa Hall (ODU) (telephonically)
Saul Hernandez
Delegate Joe Johnson (Emeritus)
Delegate Terry Kilgore
Steve Laymon (UVa) (telephonically)
Delegate Israel O'Quinn
Susan Short (Virginia Tech)

Board Members/Designees Absent:

Marcia Gilliam (Virginia Community College System)
Christine Kinser
Penelope Kyle (Radford University)
Delegate Will Morefield
David Olive (Ex-Officio)
Jake Schrum (Emory & Henry)
Lindy White
Delegate Joseph Yost

Others Present:

Suzanne Boothe
Duffy Carmack
Courtney Conner
Angela Cvetkovski
Elizabeth Griffin (telephonically)
Debbie Hensley
Kathy Hietala
Brenda Justus
David Matlock
Penny McCallum
Ed Rogers (telephonically)
Deborah Sproles
Eddie Sproles
Adam Tolbert
Sonia Vanhook
Josh Williams
Alicia Young

Approval of Minutes

The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes for the June 11, 2015, meeting. **They were unanimously approved upon motion by Delegate Kilgore, seconded by Susan Short.**

Executive Director's Report

David Matlock, the Center's new Executive Director, expressed his appreciation to the Board, site directors, and Center staff for the gracious welcome he has received in his new position.

Notable matters reported by Matlock included:

- A brief biographical statement;
- An overview of things he has learned about the Center since he began work on November 2;
- Conference Services events (the recent Mistletoe Market);
- Meetings with Site Directors;
- Academic initiatives (King University's forthcoming Nurse Practitioner program, the recent LEGO tournament and STEM workshops).

Matlock presented the Board with a draft of his transition plan, setting forth goals both short- and long-term, including:

- Building a strong leadership team;
- Meeting one-on-one with Board members, and developing a strong working relationship with the Board;
- Meeting with business and industry leaders;
- Meeting with educational partners;
- Determining collectively the path to the future of the Higher Education Center;
- Increasing academic offerings;
- Expanding Conference Services events;
- Conducting a comprehensive SWOT analysis in anticipation of reworking the Center's strategic plan;
- Developing a comprehensive marketing plan;
- Securing a primary tenant for the R&D Center;
- Creation of several community advisory boards to work in the Center's behalf (i.e., Business and Industry Council, Health Care Council; Community Ambassador Program).

In closing, Mr. Matlock sought the Board's friendship and guidance.

Financial Reports

Duffy Carmack, Chief Financial Officer, presented the financial reports, pointing out the following noteworthy items:

- Midway through the fiscal year, the Center is financially solid.
- A line item of \$303,571 represents the Center's combined maintenance reserve funds for FY 2014, '15 and '16, earmarked for a portion of the cost of a new roof for the building, which has just been given the go ahead by DPB and the General Assembly. Currently, the roof is in the process of being put out to bid and exterior work is anticipated to commence late March to early April. Total project cost is expected to be \$600-700K.
- The previous year, the Center submitted a capital request to the state for the construction of a storage unit at the back of the Grand Hall, due to a critical lack of storage space. For some time, the Center has relied on ever-increasing numbers of wooden storage sheds that are impractical and occupy valuable space in the rear parking area, where they are also in various stages of deterioration and unsightly. Although

approved, the project has not yet been funded. It is hoped there will be funds to support this capital project within the next two fiscal years.

- The HEC is under budget in all categories. Carmack noted that the Center's Testing Center is actually exceeding its projected income, and is a growing service offered at the Higher Education Center.

R&D Report

Mr. Carmack reviewed the budget for the R&D Center with the Board, noting the following:

- A multitude of grants have been approved by the Tobacco Commission for the R&D program, \$34,000,000 of which has been awarded, and \$14,000,000 unspent—that is, the grants remain active but have not yet paid anything out.
- The Tobacco Commission is currently restructuring the process and criteria for applying for R&D grants, thereby placing the Center temporarily on hold in respect to said grants.
- He and Alicia Young, the HEC's Grants Administrator, have worked with the R&D companies over the past year to ensure they are on target with the projects they were awarded money for, and are very proud of the projects.

The complete financial reports were available in each member's Board folder.

VCU Clinical Lab Sciences Program

Josh Williams, Director of VCU's Clinical Lab Sciences program at the Higher Education Center, gave an overview of the program and explained its significance for this region. Dr. Williams noted these key points about the program:

- The CLS program trains students who will be employed in laboratories in the healthcare sector, running tests on blood that has been drawn at doctors' offices and hospitals. A very diverse field, it includes CBCs, blood sugar, microbiology work, etc.
- It is a bachelor's degree program. Though numerous associate's degree training programs are available throughout the country, they do not allow their students to necessarily rise up through the ranks, be leaders in their field, and advance through the career ladder as a bachelor's degree does. In this respect, the program will have a definite economic impact in the region, enabling students who complete the

program to have well-paying careers through which they will be able to advance.

- Envisioned as a 2+2 partnership, whereby students could graduate from high school, obtain an associate's degree from one of the local community colleges, and then go to the Higher Ed Center for bachelor's degree completion.
- Utilizes synchronous technology to offer the same degree program in Abingdon that VCU offers in Richmond, with students at the Center having their lectures and live interaction with faculty simultaneously with students on campus in Richmond, while receiving onsite technical training from Williams in the lab facility at the Higher Education Center. The unique form of delivery is necessitated by all the technical demands related to the career training.
- Funding from the Tobacco Commission enabled VCU to set up laboratory and classroom space at the Center and offer a really top-notch CLS program in southwest Virginia. This aspect of the program is important, since most of the students want to stay in the area; they have deep roots here, their families are here, they work here. Additionally, it is much more affordable to be able to complete the program here than to relocate to a larger, more expensive city.
- One of the strongest aspects of the CLS program is that it is not just a degree—not just a piece of paper—it is a job training program. Students spend an entire fall semester of their senior year training at a local hospital, putting the skills they have learned into practice, and doing the job they will be doing once they graduate and pass their licensing test.
- Graduates of the program are ready to work immediately upon passing the licensing test, can do everything with the CLS degree that can be done with a general biology degree, and have already had on-the-job training. This is a huge benefit to healthcare facilities and physicians.
- Nationwide, the average age of laboratory staff is somewhere in the mid to upper 50s, which means that there will be a lot of turnover in the next 10 years with retirements, in turn creating a demand for well-trained employees to fill those vacancies. The CLS program will be mutually beneficial for local students, local healthcare providers, and the local economy in this aspect.
- Most notably, students can obtain a world-class education at the Higher Education Center and walk into a job that is in demand not only in this region, but nationwide.

In closing, Dr. Williams expressed gratitude to the Center and the Tobacco Commission for their support, and introduced his student, Suzanne Boothe, to speak about her experience with the program.

Ms. Boothe, a junior CLS student, related that she is a resident of Abingdon, and a nontraditional student who is older, married, has a child, and has worked in the healthcare field for 16 years. Boothe said that when it became necessary for her to change careers, she was fortunate to meet Dr. Williams and learn about the CLS program, and even more fortunate to be accepted into the program. Key features of the program that made it appealing for Boothe included the ability to remain at home and not disrupt her family life, since her daughter is in school here, and her husband has a small business here. Access to the program in Abingdon has allowed her to obtain a high-quality education from a great school and still be a wife and mother, roles that are very important to her. Although the program is challenging, Boothe said that the faculty has been awesome—if she has a question, she can call or email them, and they are very supportive of the program. In closing, she praised the HEC laboratory, and encouraged Board members to visit the classroom if they had not had an opportunity to do so.

Peter Blake, Executive Director of SCHEV, thanked Ms. Boothe for her presence at the meeting, and inquired how the CLS program would change her life. Ms. Boothe responded that it will change her career, thereby changing her life. When she graduates, she knows she will have the skills that employers are looking for here, and will be able to remain in this area. Her previous job was eliminated, and in looking for a comparable position, discovered that the closest she could find in that career was in Richmond, and she did not want to uproot her family and relocate to Richmond.

Appointment of Officer Nominating Committee

Chairman Carrico announced the appointment of the following members to serve as the Officer Nominating Committee:

- Gene Couch
- Danny Dixon
- Israel O'Quinn

Public Comments

Peter Blake commented on the new GO Virginia initiative, and remarked as to how it seems that the Center, given its mission and experience managing grants as a fiscal agent, could be well-positioned to explore some opportunities that would benefit the region. Senator Carrico agreed that the Center could play an important part in the exciting new venture.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Carrico expressed appreciation for everyone's patience throughout the hiring process of the new Director, and excitement to have David Matlock on board. He thanked the staff for their patience and the work they have done to hold everything together during the search process, and thanked Duffy Carmack for his leadership as the Interim Director.

The Chairman noted that the next meeting of the Board is planned for Thursday, June 9, 2016. **Upon motion by Senator Chafin, seconded by Delegate Kilgore, and unanimously approved, June 9, 2016 was fixed as the date for the next board meeting.**

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, Chairman Carrico called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Upon motion by Peter Blake, seconded by Aviva Frye, the meeting was adjourned.**