

**Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center  
Board of Trustees  
Minutes  
December 2, 2004**

**Board Members/Designees Present:** Chairman Senator Phillip Puckett, Vice-Chairman Delegate Joe Johnson, Senator William Wampler, Delegate Bill Carrico, Delegate David Nutter, Jackson Barker, Deborah Icenhour, Ron Jessee, Rebecca Scott, Lorraine Turner, Tom Daley (SCHEV), Marcia Gilliam (Virginia Community College System), Edie Barnett (ODU), Carole Seyfrit (Radford), Linda Phillips-Madson (UVA), Gil Blackburn (UVa-Wise), David Wilkin (VHCC), Michael Puglisi (VA Intermont), John Dooley (VT)

**Others Present:** Rachel Fowlkes, Scott Bevins, Paul Blaney, Gerald Blankenship, Deborah Bourne, Christine Fields, Blue Gotham, Kathy Hietala, Roy Jones, Penny McCallum, Mary Quillen, Cindy Reed, Eddie Sproles, Doug Viers, Jeff Webb, Janet Williams, Brenda Wilson

**Welcome and Introductions**

Delegate Joe Johnson, Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Members and guests in attendance introduced themselves.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes for the June 8, 2004 meeting were approved as written.

**Executive Director's Report**

Dr. Rachel Fowlkes began her report by describing legislation which had been sent to Richmond in draft form proposing that the Higher Education Center increase its Board by two citizen members from the fields of technology, tourism/hospitality and/or healthcare. It would be beneficial to the Center to acquire the guidance of such members in developing programming in those areas. The Board discussed the purpose and benefits of adding two additional members, after which it was moved by David Wilkin, seconded by Jackson Barker, and unanimously accepted that the proposed legislation be approved.

Next, Dr. Fowlkes discussed the critical need for space at the Center, and presented a proposal for expansion of the building. The proposed expansion would add 22,600 square feet to the east (Grand Hall) end of the building, enlarging the capacity of the Grand Hall and allowing the creation of second-floor classrooms as well as office space for faculty. She related that the HEC has included in its budget proposal a request for \$2.785 million to be added to its existing general obligation bond of \$1.6 million for the proposed expansion. As a side note, due to the lack of space in the building, she noted that the Center had also included in its budget proposal to Richmond a request for funds (\$35,000) to be used to rent classroom and/or office space

temporarily at the new business incubator located in close proximity to the Higher Ed Center. The Board discussed current space utilization and the need for expansion.

Rachel went on to mention an initiative between the HEC and Chmura Economics & Analytics, an economic development firm in Richmond. Chmura completed a study for the Tobacco Commission to determine the types of jobs that are likely to grow in Southwest Virginia over the next 10 years. The Higher Ed Center has asked Chmura to look at that data to determine which jobs require college degrees; i.e. bachelor's or higher, and in what fields the region's workforce needs to be prepared. This information will be invaluable to the college partners in planning the programs needed most by business and industry in this area. She hopes to have some feedback at the next Board meeting. The need for this type of information was exemplified by recent visits from Food City's Human Resources Department to discuss the critical need for pharmacists and a training program for store managers, and from TEDS/CBM Technologies to discuss their technology needs.

The next topic of discussion was George Hiller's recent recruiting trip to Mexico. Virginia Intermont's Craig Wesley, who accompanied George, described their visits to the Virginia Trade Commission and to the American Foundation School in Mexico City, where a college fair is held every October with about 100 U. S. colleges and universities represented. He said that the trip provided a great opportunity to recruit students to VI's culinary arts program, and a chance to talk to counselors from various secondary schools as well. Sondra Stallard cautioned everyone about the impact the Homeland Security Act is having on recruitment of students outside the country, and the new guidelines regulating international students.

Dr. Fowlkes told the Board about this year's tobacco workshops. The tobacco scholarship administrator, Nancy Breeding, developed the workshops around the themes of international business and globalization. Several students from around the region who have had study abroad experiences spoke at the workshops, providing valuable insight to the scholarship recipients in attendance.

At the conclusion of her report, Dr. Fowlkes informed the citizen members in attendance that they had been provided with manila envelopes containing information for the Conflict of Interest Training they must complete by the end of the year.

Following Dr. Fowlkes' report, the Board briefly discussed the expansion proposal and decided to lend its support. Sondra Stallard made the motion that the Board endorse the expansion proposal; the motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

#### **Report on Space Utilization**

Sonia Craig, Scheduling Coordinator for the Higher Ed Center, gave a presentation demonstrating the method by which she assigns classrooms and meeting spaces and conveying the need for

additional classrooms and space in order to better serve the needs of the region.

### **Conference Services & Marketing Report**

Deborah Bourne presented the Conference Services & Marketing Report. Deborah began her report by highlighting the Center's recently updated website, a major accomplishment for Bob Martin, E-Commerce Director, and his department. She pointed out that it has a state-of-the-art look and feel, is fast-loading for all internet connection speeds, is easily navigated with an A-Z index and website search capability, and includes a cutting-edge virtual facility tour. Ms. Bourne commended Bob Martin and his department for their work on the website.

Beyond the region, Deborah explained that the Higher Ed Center has recently joined ConventionPlanet.com, a registry-free web portal for meeting planners which connects the buyers and the sellers. Additionally, the Center has a joint venture with the Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau, has placed some advertising in the *East Tennessee Meeting Planner's Guide*, *Convention South*, *Meeting South*, the *Virginia is for Lovers Travel Guide*, *Virginia Business*, and the *Virginia Society of Association Executives*. Regionally, the Center continues to work with the Chambers of Commerce, advertising in their membership directories and newcomers' guides. Twice a year, over 90,000 inserts are distributed in the *Bristol Herald Courier* and outlying county newspapers for the HEC's partner institutions. The Center works with *The Business Journal*, the Blue Ridge Travel Association, the Barter Theatre, *A Magazine*, and has recently placed some spots with WETS-FM.

For the six months since the last Board meeting, Deborah reported that it is projected that the Higher Ed Center will have hosted over 434 events involving over 28,000 people and 151 organizations. Of those 151 organizations, about ten are recent new customers. An average large event attracts about 5,000 participants to the Center. The Appalachian College Association Conference, a recent multi-day event, generated almost \$15,000 and is already scheduled for next year.

For the second consecutive year, the Higher Education Center was chosen as the site for the Appalachian Regional Commission's Annual Conference, which was attended by approximately 350 people from 13 states. Other events held at the Center during the past six months included the Virginia Highlands Festival fiber arts display, which attracted hundreds of people; Congressman Boucher's Tourism Conference; a book signing by Muriel Kagan Zager; a concert with Dr. Ralph Stanley; the Appalachian College Association Conference, attended by 350 people from 35 schools; and Mistletoe Market, which brought hundreds and hundreds of people into the building for several days. Art exhibits by John Edwards and George Chavatel graced the Center's art wall during that time.

Deborah recognized Brenda Wilson and Sonia Craig for their work in planning and coordinating these and numerous other events.

Deborah shared figures supplied by the Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau illustrating the positive impact events held at the Center have on the local economy.

Deborah recently attended the University of Virginia's Career Management Workshop on career transitions in order to gain information and insight that will be helpful in determining how to meet the needs of students who are experiencing a career transition. The workshop offered self-assessment tools, covered writing resumes' and cover letters, and networking skills. Statistics reflect that 99% of our population is in some form of work-related transition created by job loss, having reached a plateau in their career, the desire to enhance their career opportunities, retirement, or perhaps being a younger student. The information Deborah gained at the workshop will be beneficial in helping such students identify their job opportunities and goals.

Deborah highlighted several building upgrades since the June Board meeting. Grand Hall improvements in the last six months include lighting, painting, and electrical repairs; partitions have been cleaned; a custom-built cabinet was purchased for the sound system; and a new screen and projector have been installed.

Deborah closed by expressing appreciation to the staff for their dedication and hard work.

### **Financial Report**

Chris Fields presented the Financial Report, beginning with the year-end summary of FY 2004-2005. She reported an error in the 2004 Summary Year-End Budget Report figure; under Total Revenues, the percentage YTD was 98% instead of the 102% reflected in the report. Total Revenues at year-end were \$2.12 million; Total Personal Services for year-end was \$970,000; Non-Personal Services was \$1.1 million; Total Expenses for last fiscal year were \$2.057 million. She reported that the balance has been requested in carry-forward appropriation, with a response expected by the first of the year.

Chris moved on to the FY 2005-2006 budget, beginning with the revenues. She informed the Board that, to date, the Center had received 90% of its revenues, including the General Fund appropriation of \$1.5 million. Also, to date, the Center had generated 64% of its Non-General Fund Revenue, or \$376,000; the Total Revenue YTD (the end of November) is \$1.94 million. Ms. Fields explained that that figure included \$55,000 from the Education Equipment Trust Fund. Under the breakdown of Non-General Fund Revenues, Chris pointed out that the Center had received all but one of its partner payments, which aren't due until the end of the fiscal year. Five months into the fiscal year, 42% of NGF revenue had been collected.

FY 2005-2006 Expenditures to date are as follows: In the category of Personal Support Services (PSS), Chris reported that the Center was at 38%, which is 4% less than projected. This 4% savings is due to wage vacancies.

Other Than Personal Services (OTPS) was at 32%, which is 10% below normal for five months into the fiscal year. As shown in Chris' report, Total OTPS through the month of November was \$262,000, bringing Total Operating Expenses to \$764,000 for the year, which is 36% of the Operating Budget.

Following Ms. Fields' report, Dr. Fowlkes informed the Board members that Chris had been out on medical leave for seven weeks, having just returned to work three days prior to the Board meeting. She recognized Joyce Brooks, Kathy Hietala and Nancy Breeding for covering for Chris during her absence.

### **College Reports**

Blue Gotham, Director of the College for Older Adults (COA), reported an enrollment of 290 for the fall term. Dr. Fowlkes reminded the Board that the College for Older Adults is the Higher Ed Center's fastest-growing program.

Jack Roper, Emory & Henry College's representative, informed the Board that a grant received by Russell County Public Schools has made it possible to offer a Master's degree program in American History. Twenty-seven teachers from Russell and adjoining counties comprise the cohort. The No Child Left Behind Act is paying tuition for 25 of the 27 participants. Classes are taught in Lebanon at the School Board Office. Dr. Tom Biddle is the instructor through the spring semester, and Dr. Roper will take the courses in the summer. The students should receive their degrees in the summer of 2006.

Penny McCallum, Old Dominion University's site director, and Gerald Blankenship, Radford University's site director, deferred to their written reports in the Board books.

Dr. Fowlkes informed the Board that Virginia Commonwealth University's report would be a demonstration in the simulation lab at the end of the Board meeting. Students in the Master's in Nurse Anesthesia program would demonstrate the technology used to bridge the distance between the Higher Education Center and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond to teach the CRNA classes.

Craig Wesley, representing Virginia Intermont College, referred the Board members to VI's written report. As a new addition to Virginia Intermont's staff as of August, 2004, Craig stated that he was overwhelmed with this facility [the HEC] the first time he saw it. Most of his professional career has been spent in Michigan and Wisconsin, and he had not seen anything comparable to the Higher Education Center in either of those states. He commended the State of Virginia for its foresight in building it, and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to use it.

Roy Jones, new site director for Virginia Tech, introduced himself to the Board.

Dr. David Wilkin, President of Virginia Highlands Community College, informed the Board of activities taking place at the community college. Among them, he reported that the college is giving serious consideration to outsourcing the bookstore currently being operated by the college (located in the Higher Ed Center building). He said that it is one of the few bookstores in the state that is still operated by a college. Additionally, he called the Board's attention to the fact that the parking lot has been resurfaced and relined—a collaborative project of the HEC and VHCC, with some assistance from the Town of Abingdon. With the addition of a horticulture program at VHCC, Dr. Wilkin informed everyone present that they would be likely to see students and instructors around campus, planting trees and shrubs and bulbs. He reminded everyone that the new business incubator would be opening in a few weeks, and that VHCC's Small Business Development Center would be relocating to that facility. In closing, Dr. Wilkin had copies of VHCC's annual report for those present.

Sondra Stallard introduced Mary Quillen, UVA's and UVA-Wise's new interim site director. Mary's qualifications include a Ph.D in Curriculum Instruction from Virginia Tech, a M.Ed. in Curriculum Instruction with a Middle School Emphasis in Mathematics and Science from the University of Virginia, and a B.S. in Elementary Education from Clinch Valley College, where she graduated *cum laude*. Having won numerous awards, Mary is very well-known in the state for mathematics education. She will serve as interim director at least through August, 2005.

Mary Quillen referred the Board members to her reports included in the Board books, but added that three grants have allowed the implementation of three new programs, two for mathematics programs and one for Earth Science. All three programs will be offered at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

Sondra Stallard described a new program that is a collaborative effort between UVA and UVA-Wise. In response to the desperate need for librarians throughout the State of Virginia, UVA worked with UVA-Wise, which has a program in Library Science, to create a Library Media Specialist program. She said that this is one of the most unique programs in the state in that they are taking UVA-Wise out of Wise to northern Virginia, to Roanoke, and to other areas of the state, and is an opportunity to showcase UVA-Wise as a valuable resource. Although there are only about 8 students in the program at Wise, there are around 75 additional students throughout the state, with a waiting list in a number of areas.

#### **Other Business**

In other business, Dr. Wilkin made a motion to develop a long-range planning committee to oversee and assist in expediting

developments at the HEC. A brief discussion was held, after which Dr. Wilkin amended his motion to include that a long-range planning committee be appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned, and everyone moved to the simulation lab for a demonstration by Virginia Commonwealth University Master's in Nurse Anesthesia students. Following the demonstration, a reception was held in the upstairs lobby, with food and beverages prepared and served by Virginia Intermont College's Culinary Arts Department.