

**ORANGEBURG-CALHOUN TECH AREA COMMISSION  
ZOOM and OCtech Executive Board Room**

**February 20, 2024**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**Lawrence Weathers, Chair  
Margaret Felder-Wilson  
David Rickenbaker  
Jackie Shaw  
John Shuler  
Leroy Morant**

**OCtech PRESENT:**

**Dr. Walt Tobin  
Richard Murphy  
Dr. Sandra Davis  
Kim Huff  
Faith McCurry  
Cindy Garrick, Secretary  
Donna Bennett, Staff Council Chair  
Wendy Alsup, Faculty Council Representative**

Commission Chairman Lawrence Weathers called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm. He advised Commission members that area media had appropriately been notified under the Freedom of Information Act and that the meeting notice was posted.

Commission Chairman Weathers asked if there was a motion to approve the February 20, 2024 agenda.  
*Commissioner Rickenbaker made the motion to approve the agenda.  
Commissioner Morant seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

Commission Chairman Weathers asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the January 16, 2024 meeting.  
*Commissioner Morant made a motion that the minutes of the January 16, 2024, meeting be approved as presented.  
Commissioner Rickenbaker seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

**COMMISSIONER REPORT**

Commission Chairman Weathers reported that four of the seven Area Commission members and Dr. Tobin attended the SCATCC luncheon on January 31, 2024. He noted that there would be a discussion regarding the SCATCC during the Executive Session.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Dr. Walt Tobin**

Dr. Tobin noted that line item number four (window replacement in the U building) is a contractual matter they will discuss in the Executive session. They will vote when they come out of the Executive session. He advised the commissioners that the Spring convocation was held on February 9, 2024, and our SCTEA educators of the year and peer group selections were announced. They are selected based on an objective measure; they rose to the occasion over time and significantly contributed to the college.

Dr. Tobin provided data on the success of our Fall transition to Seven-week terms. When the college was on a ten-week quarter, one Fall semester out of the nine years, the course success rate was below 80%. There were two semesters in the 32 years of a semester calendar where the course success rate was above 80% (Fall 2019 and Fall 2020). The data shows students are performing better in this format. He noted that from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023, the English increase was 6%, Bio was 8%, and overall a 4% increase in course success from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023. The data shows a greater success rate than the traditional format.

The five finalists for the Vice President of Academic Affairs position will be on campus this week and next. They will meet with Dr. Tobin, his staff, the Academic deans, and the Faculty council. Spring enrollment is up almost 8% compared to the other colleges in the system; we have had the second-highest percentage increase behind Trident Tech (16.5%).

Commissioner Rickenbaker asked what Dr. Tobin and his staff think has contributed to the increase. Dr. Davis said we had our inaugural Senior Acceptance Day last March. We invited all Orangeburg County and Calhoun County high school seniors to our campus and accepted them. She thinks there are more course offerings for the seven-week sessions, which are better offerings and more offerings than our late start and mini options. Richard Murphy said he agreed and that collaboration between Student Services, Academic Affairs Advisors, Deans, and Program coordinators reaching out to new students who moved to a student but were not registered or continuing students made a big difference. Dr. Tobin said they had created a team-based approach to help students through the enrollment/advisory/financial process. We visited our orientation day and organized the first week's experience activities throughout the term.

#### **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS – Richard Murphy**

We are closely watching our Seven Week grades but are encouraged by what we see. February 7 was when midterm pass rates were recorded for our first spring term, and looking at our success rate compared to our level one term, we still see some success in that area. We had a 6% increase in midterm overall course rate for Spring 1 compared to Fall 1. Some areas we are watching closely are Bio at about a 15% increase over our first seven-week term, Math at 19%, and English and Psychology at about 2 or 3%.

EAB is a system we implemented about a year and a half ago, and our next initiative will be an element they refer to as Progress Reports for Faculty. We tried that two or three weeks into our spring term. We will roll it out full scale for our Spring term and our midterm for Spring 2. This allows every faculty member to receive an email link that will take them to a course roster for every course they teach. They will see a list of every student enrolled in the course and can quickly determine whether that student is at risk by working with the student. They can generate an alert to students with kudos or to address an issue with a referral to tutoring, Financial Aid, or the Student Success Center. They can attach comments so the Tutoring or the Student Success Center receives the information related to the student and the reason for the referral. They can then initiate action to reach out to the student. Things like this will improve our students' success.

We have all of the deans and a group of faculty members who will be attending AI-related training, referred to as the AI Quick Study series. We have some of the faculty members who are interested in being part of this cohort. Some English faculty will enter this as a self-paced course, but we will lead it as a co-work instruction.

AI prompts leveraging AI to develop course resources, teaching with AI-inclusive and AI-resistant learning experiences, and then empowering students to use AI responsibly. EAB is our Student Success application, so it is related to communication. Students can log in to create appointments for advising. For faculty and staff, there is a lot of data related to students, and they can send a text or email to all of them. We are rolling it out in stages. We have been working on it for a year and a half but are making significant progress quickly.

### **STUDENT SERVICES– Dr. Sandra Davis**

We have made great progress with spring registration but are not finished yet. We have Spring 2 classes that will start on March 18, so we are still registering students and accepting applications. Spring break is the week before March 18 (March 11-14).

We will start registration for the Summer and Fall terms on March 25. We will continue in March and April with our first-year experience workshops and activities so students can participate in activities outside the classroom.

### **MARKETING/FOUNDATION-Faith McCurry**

Dr. Tobin may have mentioned in a previous meeting that as of January 1, we welcomed a new chair and vice chair. Dr. Bob Sabalis's two-year term as chair ended in 2023. Dr. John Ansley is our new board chair, and Ginny Williams is our vice-chair. They will serve two-year terms in these positions.

We revamped our committee structure at the beginning of the year and will now operate with three standing committees besides the Executive Committee. Melissa Cain continues as our Finance Chair, Martha Burleson is our Special Events Chair, and Todd McElhone chairs the Governance Committee. I think we have an excellent leadership team.

At our February meeting, we welcomed Reagan Blanchard and Brett Evans as new board members and David Rickenbaker to our group as the representative from the Area Commission.

Our Special Events Committee is focused on planning our annual Home & Garden Symposium. This year's event will again be held on campus and is planned for Wednesday, May 8. Our speaker this year is Bryce Lane, a celebrated 3-time Emmy award-winning host and producer of "In the Garden with Bryce Lane." Bryce is a semi-retired professor at N.C. State, with more than 34 years of experience in horticultural teaching. He will share two presentations with our guests – "Proper Care and Pruning of Shrubs and Trees" and "Container Gardening through the Seasons." Buck Ridge will again cater our brunch; as always, we will seek sponsors for the event. We would welcome your support as an event sponsor.

We'll continue efforts to build relationships with folks in the community who have shown an interest in knowing more about the college. Over the coming months, we'll have several lunch or breakfast gatherings and invite small groups to share information about an area of the college. Our first lunch event is planned for March 6 and will focus on the nursing division. This will not be a fundraising event – just an opportunity to share information with folks in the community. We will continue to host these over the next couple of months, so if you have suggestions for folks that you think would be good to include in these gatherings, I'd love to have you share your thoughts with me.

### **BUSINESS-Kim Huff**

In your packet is the Financial Report through the end of January. We are enjoying some nice increases in enrollment and tuition revenue. We are in good shape this current year.

A few things to point out: Continuing Education has revenue of around \$250,000 in January. They were at \$202,000 last year, so they are making improvements with more revenue this year than last year. As I pointed out at our previous meeting, one of the things that helped us with our budget this year is that we received more State appropriated dollars than we anticipated. We weren't sure how the State would calculate the state portion of the same mandated and salary increases. In the past, we've always had to fund a significant part of that, even though the State mandated it, and this year, they somehow funded more than we anticipated across the whole system.

On the expense side, expenses are tracking as expected. The contingency is \$631K, but we will approve some budget adjustments where some of the contingency has been used. I will explain what we did with those funds.

The following two pages are Grants and Contracts and our scholarship funds for our students. We've been fortunate to have a few grants that allowed us to hire some positions to help us, such as Retention Counselors and our Early College staff.

The next page is our plan expenses. The first seven months of the year, July through January 1, \$1.682 million in expenses. We receive \$884,000 from the counties, and tuition dollars cover that balance.

### **Capital Projects Fund:**

- The moving of our Machine Tool Lab to our Transportation building. We think we have the contractors in place, and they should be moving in the next several months. The wait will only be for the equipment. There's a goal to be down in that space for the start of the Fall semester. Equipment procurement may cause some of the delays. We think some of that could take 4-6 months to procure.
- The work is on schedule in the Commons area downstairs (Building S). The contractor thinks they will be finished in May. We've requested furniture to arrive in June. By the end of June, that space will be completed with furniture and ready for use.
- The K building is still on hold. We requested some additional State funding to help that project. We'll do some renovations in K. Quotes came back much higher than we anticipated, and rather than cut the project, we felt it was the right time to do all the work we had in the documents. It would be better to go back and ask the State for additional funds, and we're hopefully getting additional state funds. That will help us do everything we want to do in that building. We will know in the summer (June or July) if we get those funds, and then we'll start working on the project in the fall. This is a reasonably large project, \$3-4M, which could be slightly higher than \$3-4M.

Commissioner Shaw asked about the timing of funds from Calhoun County. Kim said that we receive reimbursement every quarter from Orangeburg County. We receive reimbursement once per year (usually in March) from Calhoun County. Commissioner Chair Weathers said the report shows receiving zero with 7/12 anticipated; it should be 12/12 revenue, so how do they match up? Kim said they are showing seven months of expenses and seven months of revenue and how they match up even though we have not received it.

### **Action Item Policy Revisions – Kim Huff**

2.001 Externally Funded Contracts and Grants - Added a sentence to ensure a project director was assigned to each grant to carry out the work of the grant. We wanted to ensure that the policy stated the project director expends the funds and submits required reports.

7.006 Identity Theft Red Flag Program – Added the program name versus saying program in the wording. Took out reference to specific sections that required us to create the policy. We are just referring to the Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act.

8.002 Employment Practices - Changed to align with the system office policy.

*Commissioner Weathers asked for a motion to approve the policy revisions.*

*Commissioner Rickenbaker made the motion, and Commissioner Shaw seconded it.*

*Motion approved.*

### **Action Item Policy Revisions – Dr. Sandra Davis**

4.042 Withdrawal from Courses - Minor change in reference. We spelled it out (A student ...)

4.045 Cross Registration – Spelled out "Community Higher Education Council (CHEC)"

*Commission Chair Weathers asked for a motion to approve the policy revisions. Commissioner Rickenbaker made the motion to approve policy revisions. Commissioner Morant seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

Kim noted that every three years, we are reviewing our policies. We are not proposing any changes. All of these are reviews.

**Action Item Policy Reviews – Kim Huff**

5.002 Utilization of Buildings and Grounds

5.004 Property Control

6.003 Security Services

7.003 Annual Operating Budget

8.001 Faculty Workload, Overload, Administrative Supplement

8.003 College Employee Work Schedules

8.012 Background Investigations (Employment)

*Commissioner Weathers asked for a motion to approve all policies for review.*

*Commissioner Shuler made the motion, and Commissioner Morant seconded it.*

*Motion approved.*

**Action Item Policy Reviews – Dr. Sandra Davis**

4.040 Student Identification Cards

4.041 Academic Honors

*Commissioner Weathers asked for a motion to approve all policies for review.*

*Commissioner Morant made the motion, and Commissioner Shaw seconded it.*

*Motion approved.*

**2023-2024 Operating Budget Adjustments**

Kim noted that in June of the past year, Column 1 was approved as the budget for this year. In October of the past year, Columns 2 and 3 were presented to them, and they adjusted the budget based on more information regarding the state budget. The middle column is the budget they approved today, February 20, 2024. The next column is the adjustments that Kim is proposing that they approve. The new budget is reflected in the far right column. The adjustments reflect using \$400K of contingency for computer replacements and some for salary adjustments based on system averages in the State. The plan is to continue doing this over the next few years. This will take the contingency to \$223K; however, we still have additional tuition revenue not included, so the budget is still in very good shape for the current year. Kim requested for approval of the adjusted budget.

*Commission Chair Weathers asked for a motion to approve the budget adjustments.*

*Commissioner Shuler made the motion. Commissioner Morant seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

*Commission Chair Weathers asked for a motion to go into Executive Session.*

*Commissioner Rickenbaker made the motion. Commissioner Morant seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

**Executive Session**

Seek bids not to exceed \$300K for window replacement in U Building.

*Commissioner Rickenbaker made the motion. Commissioner Morant seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

*Commissioner Shaw made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Shuler seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

Respectfully Submitted,

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Lawrence Weathers, Chairman

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Cindy Garrick, Secretary