

**ORANGEBURG-CALHOUN TECHNICAL COLLEGE
AREA COMMISSION MINUTES
ZOOM and OCtech Executive Board Room**

January 16, 2024

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

**Lawrence Weathers, Chair
Margaret Felder-Wilson
David Rickenbaker
Katie Hane
Leroy Morant**

OCtech PRESENT:

**Dr. Walt Tobin
Richard Murphy
Dr. Sandra Davis
Kim Huff
Marie Howell
Cindy Garrick, Secretary**

**Donna Bennett, Staff Council Chair
Tresa Milligan-Muller, Faculty Council Chair**

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 January 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 October 24, 2023.
*Commissioner Morant made a motion that the minutes of the October 24, 2023, meeting be approved as presented.
Commissioner Rickenbaker seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

COMMISSIONER REPORT

Commission Chairman Weathers reported that at the December 6, 2023, Commissioners meeting, they had a strategic planning session before the regular board meeting. He noted that Dr. Tony Robinson was the coordinator. The Board meeting commenced at 12 and went well. The auditor gave a clean report. He provided the commissioners with the legislative priorities for the coming year, the dates of the meetings for 2024, and advised them that there was discussion regarding the strategic plan.

Commissioner Chairman Weathers reminded them about the SCATCC Day of Learning on January 31, 2024. Four of the commissioners, as well as Dr. Tobin, will be attending the meeting.

Commissioner Weathers asked about the February Legislative luncheon. Dr. Tobin said it was more college-focused for House and Senate members to interact with a member of the faculty and a student presenting information on an OCtech program.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Dr. Walt Tobin

Dr. Tobin said the legislative session began last week. OCtech has three priorities that we have requested funding for:

- 1 - \$5M for K building renovations.
- 2 - \$17-18M to construct the Center for Advance Manufacturing & Battery Production.
We have \$8M so far, and Representative Cobb-Hunter will be working to get the funds to support this facility.
He noted that he and Richard Murphy had two Economic Development prospect meetings over the last two months. Two of the four projects are for battery production (general & electric).
- 3 - Operational funding for Health Science & Nursing programs to offset the costs to run the programs. Dr. Tobin said these are some of the most expensive programs to run due to faculty salaries and the limited number of students we can accept. These would be recurring funds.

He advised that at the President's Council meeting last week, they discussed the six performance indicators that allow colleges to receive funds. This represents about 5% of the colleges' total funding from the State. Some of the funds are allocated to the colleges for administrative tasks such as ensuring your audit is complete, reports are submitted on time, and there is transparency in reporting. The balance is based on student success indicators such as retention, first-time in-college retention, job placement, and licensure. One is focused on enrollment with the number of students that graduate from a course. The State Board decided to raise that amount from 5% to 10%, so effective for 2025-2026 (we skip a year), the Compliance Standards or Performance Indicators will represent 2%, the Student Success indicators will represent 8%. To increase the total percentage of funds allocated for performance you need to come up with this count. The other thing is, for those colleges that did not meet the performance indicators, rather than reallocating the funds to the ones who completed the indicators, the money is translated back into the enrollment funding formula and allocated.

We will focus on student success indicators in preparation for 2025-2026. Tim Hardy, System President, said this could be an additional \$5-600,000 in revenue coming to OCtech. In some cases, licensure, replacement, and first-time-in-college numbers were rarely looked at, and we have struggled with first-time-in-college persistence over some time. Still, we will focus on Student Success indicators in 2024 in preparation for 2025-2026. This works well for small colleges because there is more of an emphasis on performance if you meet the criteria, and for the most part, we have. Kim Huff said the funding formula is complex and created to smooth out the one-year blips you see, but with these performance indicators, you may see a little more drastic swing in funding from one year to the next, depending on how well you do with the indicators.

Dr. Tobin suggested working toward a three-year average to anticipate what will happen from one year to the next. Commissioner Rickenbaker confirmed with Dr. Tobin that he favored this process. Dr. Tobin requested that the commissioners who have not completed their board self-assessment please complete it and submit it for discussion in their working meeting in March 2024.

Dr. Tobin noted that the Seven Week terms showed promise and at the Spring conference there will be a complete discussion with faculty and staff. Commissioner Rickenbaker asked which areas were opposed to the change. Dr. Tobin responded courses with heavy clinical hours, such as Nursing & RAD. He said many of the Career & Technology courses had already made the change, so that is how they arrived at that number. Some took the sixteen-week course and condensed it into seven weeks versus modifying the course. He said there was a decrease in complete withdrawals in FY23 vs FY22. We are making

headway in FTE for Spring, and courses started today. There is progress with licensure exams with our Nursing students, and LPN licensures have continued to produce progressive success.

Dr. Tobin, Kim Huff, and Marie Howell interviewed twelve candidates for the Vice President of Academic Affairs position. A committee of the Academic Deans, Dr. Tobin's staff, and the Faculty council will interview the finalists on campus.

Commission Chairman Weathers asked Dr. Tobin about the T&D article regarding OCtech, Clemson, and USC. Dr. Tobin said the colleges have standardized transfers statewide for transfer courses, translating into cost savings.

Dr. Tobin advised the commissioners that there will be a midyear review in February, and there will be policies for them to approve on the February agenda.

HUMAN RESOURCES – Marie Howell

There was not much activity in the last quarter of the year. As of December 31, 2023, we had 152 FTEs, including sixteen full-time Temporary Grant employees. Turnover for the quarter was 1%. We had five employees leave on December 31, 2023, with three of those being retirements. We only hired one, which was a reassignment for that person. Employees as of 12/31/2022 versus as of 12/31/2023, and we are at 87% retention versus a goal of 88%.

Marie noted that 71% of our FTE reside in Orangeburg or Calhoun. The average age is 50, and the average SC State service is 14 years, so the average employee has worked here for at least 14 years. She noted FTE vacancies: VP of Academic Affairs, Accounting Instructor, Biology Instructor, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Instructional Designer, Early College Director, Admissions Counselor, and Human Resources Coordinator.

They are currently conducting interviews for some of the positions. Marie noted that in the last couple of years, retirements have increased and that filling positions with the right people is harder.

She reviewed the new employees for TRIO, the Student Success Coach for Nursing students for the Race to the Finish Grant, IT, and the new EET/EIT instructor.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS – Richard Murphy

Richard reiterated Dr. Tobin's comments that our spring semester kicked off today, and our seven-week term preliminary results on success rates were encouraging. They will share the full results with Faculty & Staff at the Spring convocation in February. He noted that we traditionally struggle with the success rate of BIOs. He shared that overall, the BIO success rate increased by about 10% when looking at all the sections we offered in Fall '23 compared to Fall '22. He thinks that is encouraging and greatly supports our decisions in the seven-week terms. He also pointed out that a lot of work had gone into creating seven-week term coursework by faculty.

We provided a lot of professional development for faculty over the past year through an organization called ACUE. This helped faculty that may not have been teaching in a non-traditional format and had only taught face-to-face and traditional labs to create hybrid formats to move to a seven-week term scenario. We will continue to have a lot of faculty go through ACUE learning modules. We had at least 15 faculty members complete the full certification program, and we're pinpointing where our needs are so we can continue to offer those courses in professional development for faculty. Also, we have some grant funding that we can use for professional development and to support faculty with release time or overloads for course development. All the teams are looking at courses that need help because they've never been taught in a hybrid format. We have a lot of support in those areas as well.

We're working on finalizing the scheduling for Summer and Fall semesters. To do that, the teams looked at historical data over the past 3 to 5 years for Success Rates, Course Fill Rates, Cancellation Rates, and Average Enrollment of each section. He is currently working with the teams and has started to finalize the Fall and Summer semesters. Summer semester typically will be our traditional semester, the way we've always offered it, so we haven't necessarily gone to a shorter term in the summer semester. Our Teaching and Learning Assessment Office should be set up and running this year. This will offer additional support for faculty and course development.

STUDENT SERVICES– Dr. Sandra Davis

Dr. Davis reported they had planned the Spring Orientation for new students last Tuesday, but we had to close because of inclement weather. However, they have reached out to all of the students and let them know that they have put some things in place for them to still get somewhat of an orientation experience, even if online. They have been allowed to meet with their various program coordinators this week.

They have planned the first-year experience activities to provide students exposure to various workshops and other activities throughout the semester. They had Popcorn with the President today. They offer various modalities (basic and virtual) so all students can participate.

She has two vacancies in Student Services. One opening is the Early College Director, and the other is an Admissions Recruiter. She noted that since the last Area Commission meeting, Early College has transitioned to Student Services from Academic Affairs.

BUSINESS – Kim Huff

In your packet is the Financial Report through the end of December, Fall tuition was 9 to 10% above budget, which is between \$300,000-\$400,000 additional revenue. It is still early for the spring semester, but we are currently at that level or a little higher. Students can make schedule adjustments and changes, so it is a little early to tell, but it is encouraging that we are above budget for Spring. Continuing Ed through December has revenue of \$229K and expenses of \$198K, so they have a \$31K profit. Some billings have not yet been completed, so that it may be a little better than \$31K.

He said county funds are received at various points throughout the year. Orangeburg County has given us half of the funds already. We usually get Calhoun funds in February or March of each year. So, in the next month or two, we will request \$350K. The State has already given us the majority of the funds for the year (around 93%) through the State Tech office.

He noted that interest income is at \$48K. The calculations for some investments are usually done at the end of the year. We do not make those journal entries throughout the year; they post them at the end of the year. Currently, investments are paying in the range of 4% to 5.5%. He said we hope to exceed the \$400K investment income budget by June 30.

In evaluating expenses, we have some savings due to vacancies. We also show contingency funds of \$631K, but the true amount is less than that. We have used some of those funds and those adjustments will be brought to the meeting in the next month or two so they can see how funds have been shuffled. We had to purchase computers, and these were purchased out of excess operating funds. We have adjusted some salaries as well.

Kim noted an error on the report. It shows expenses spent of \$375K of Life Scholarship with a budget of \$181K. He said the \$181K is incorrect; we have not spent 200% of the budget. The budget is incorrect and will be adjusted.

In Plant Operations, we've spent \$1.4M for half a year. The county's support prorated for half a year is \$757K. The balance is made up by tuition and fees.

There has not been a lot of expense over the last six months in capital projects. But that will change soon. The college has paid approximately \$189K for work done in the transportation building for the Machine Tool program. This was Phase 1 work. We are about to start Phase 2 work and aim to finish that project by summer. There is a lot of equipment as part of that project, and the renovations in the building, primarily electrical and mechanical, to prepare it for the equipment.

Building S renovation is to be completed in June, but the contractor thinks it may be completed in May. We have furniture to order. In the next month, we can send them pictures of what the area will look like. Commissioner Rickenbaker asked what we were turning the area into. Kim said this would be a comfortable, well-lit area with areas for students to study. We are installing flooring to soften the noise and more comfortable student seating. Kim said they had gone to York Tech to see this scheme.

The kitchen is being converted into a Student Success Center where students can get assistance. This service is currently in the library, and we think putting it downstairs will make it more accessible and visible to students.

Commissioner Rickenbaker said they had discussed food, and he asked about vending machines around campus to get pre-packaged sandwiches. Kim said there are vending machines with drinks and snacks around campus. There are sandwiches, snacks, and beverages in the bookstore. We have also had food trucks on campus. Kim said the biggest issue with the food trucks is the cost. Commissioner Felder-Wilson confirmed with Kim what was available in each area. Commissioner Weathers asked if we knew what percentage of students are dropped off versus the percentage that drives. Dr. Davis said most of them drive, but a small percentage of students are dropped off in the morning and are here all day. She said we encourage students not to walk across the highway due to the heavy traffic.

Commissioner Weathers noted that there were no action items. There was a discussion on the meetings' starting time, which we moved to 3 pm from 4:30 pm. Commissioner Hane and Commissioner Rickenbaker noted there would be times when they would need to use Zoom to participate in the meeting due to their work schedules.

With no further discussion, Commission Chair Weathers adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lawrence Weathers, Chairman

Cindy Garrick, Secretary