

**SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, October 25, 2021

Zoom/Live Streamed via STCC YouTube Channel
9:00 a.m.

Minutes of Meeting

Present: Marikate Murren, Chair
Jynai McDonald, Vice-Chair
Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito, Secretary
Maurice Lindsay, Alumni Trustee
Monique Selden-Riley, Student Trustee
Vicky Crouse, Trustee
Samalid Hogan, Trustee
William Johnson, Trustee
MacArthur Starks, Jr., Trustee

Unable to attend: Jeff Sattler, Trustee

Also Present: Dr. John B. Cook, President
Nanette Flores, Executive Assistant to the President & Board Clerk

I. Call to Order

Trustee Chair Marikate Murren called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

II. Roll Call

The following Trustees were present at roll call: Trustee Chair Marikate Murren, Vice Chair Jynai McDonald, Trustee Secretary Elizabeth Sposito, Alumni Trustee Maurice Lindsay, Student Trustee Monique Selden-Riley, Trustee Vicky Crouse, Trustee Samalid Hogan, Trustee William Johnson, Trustee Norman Roldan, and Trustee MacArthur Starks. Ten Trustees present, constituting a quorum.

III. Approval of Minutes – Annual Board of Trustees Retreat/Regular Meeting – held on Friday, September 24, 2021

Trustee Norman Roldan moved to approve the minutes from the September 24, 2021 Board of Trustees retreat/meeting, seconded by Trustee William Johnson and unanimously approved through roll call.

IV. Trustee Committee Reports

a) Audit Committee - October 14, 2021

Committee Chair MacArthur Starks referred to the committee report to inform the full Board that on October 14 the Audit Committee met for a required communication and presentations of STCC, Foundation, and STCC Assistant Corporation financial statements. Audit partners of O'Connor and Drew PC, Michael Cosgrove and Lisa DiGiusto provided highlights of the STCC and Foundation financial statements. Audit partner from CohnReznick, Karen Smith presented highlights of the STCC Assistant Corporation. No material weaknesses found; STCC receiving a “clean” audit.

A motion was moved recommending that the Committee on Ways and Means approve the FY2021 Financial Statements and Audit as presented.

Trustee Jynai McDonald moved to approve the minutes from the Audit Committee meeting held on October 14, 2021, seconded by Trustee Norman Roldan, and unanimously approved through roll call.

b) Committee on Ways and Means – October 14, 2021

Committee Chair MacArthur Starks discussed the October 14 Committee on Ways and Means meeting. Auditors Michael Cosgrove, Lisa DiGiusto and Karen Smith were also present at this meeting to provide a brief overview of the STCC, Foundation and STCC Assistance Corporation’s financial statements; followed by a unanimous approval of Motion FY2021 financial statements. Again, no material weaknesses identified; STCC receiving a “clean” audit.

Other topics discussed were the usual FY 2022 financial updates, including cash flow projections, fall enrollment update, and FY 2022 revenue & spending report though September 2021.

Trustee Maurice Lindsay moved to approve the minutes from the Committee on Ways and Means meeting held on October 14, 2021, seconded by Trustee Samalid Hogan, and unanimously approved through roll call.

V. Old Business

a) [Motion 2022-02] Comprehensive Presidential Five-Year Evaluation

Chair Marikate Murren provided background and process regarding the comprehensive five-year presidential evaluation. Chair Murren shared a draft letter prepared by the Executive Committee on behalf of STCC Trustees, and addressed to the Commissioner of Higher Education; contained in the summary of the evaluation was a review of the past year, key accomplishments over the past five years, and Chair Murren recapped the process with the ACCT consultant that included data gathering from individual Trustee interviews, as well as a survey to a cross-representative group of college stakeholders, both internal to STCC, and external with Springfield-area community leaders. Focal areas included COVID Leadership, facilities strategic planning, fiscal management and others.

Chair Murren opened the floor for a conversation with Trustees in regards to the letter to the Commissioner of Higher Education distributed to Trustees in advance. Trustee Starks appreciate the request for feedback. The letter concluded with a summary statement of support from President Cook, as well as support for a compensation increase.

Trustee William Johnson moved:

That the Springfield Technical Community College Board of Trustees approves the Comprehensive Five Year Presidential Evaluation as prepared by members of the Executive Committee, consistent with the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law (OML) requirements, M.G.L. c.30A, SS 18-25, and the Attorney General's regulations, educational materials and advisories.

Motion was seconded by Trustee Samalid Hogan and unanimously approved through roll call.

VI. New Business

Chair Murren would work with Trustees and Dr. Cook to establish goals for the upcoming year, including the need for STCC to develop the next college strategic plan.

VII. President's Perspective

Dr. John B. Cook

Dr. Cook expressed his appreciation to Trustees for their support as part of the evaluation process, and discussed the year ahead, including development of a strategic plan, the Building 20/major capital project submission to DCAMM, and continued vigilance and navigation of COVID conditions. As the college defines a plan, included it is expected to include institutional goals for sustainability, equity, and operations management. Dr. Cook provided an update on vaccination requirements, and on ongoing communications initiatives.

a) Building 20 Relocation/Project Update

Dr. Cook proceeded to present an Update/Status of Building 20 relocation; working on submitting a revised proposal for the relocation of health programs located in Building 20. Next month we will be asking Trustees for support as part of the proposal submission. As noted in the presentation, the relocation plan includes moving programs to the Tech Park, and using other campus buildings (Building 27, Building 2) for some program moves, with the positioning of Building 13 as the new School of Health and Patient Simulation with 10+ programs. The presentation next month will include anticipated funding sources including a specific request from Trustee support. The final slide included dates of key next steps such as discussions of locations with faculty by 10/2021; approval of the use of Trustee reserves at the November 2021 Committee on Ways and Means and Full Board meetings. Ending with a proposal submission date of 12/23/2021

In preparation for the DCAMM submission, Chair Murren suggested inviting the full Board to the November 8 Ways and Means meeting. In addition, Dr. Cook asked that the video of the most recent Internal and External Committee meeting be shared with committee members of the Ways and Means upon request for further context regarding enrollment initiatives.

VIII. Chair's Report

Trustee Marikate Murren

a) Strategic Planning & Governance Review/Assessment

Chair Murren shared with Trustees the plan to hire consulting services to assist with a governance review. In regards to the Board assessment, which has also been discussed by Trustee in light of NECHE accreditation, there are existing tools that the Board may choose to adopt. Related to governance, Dr. Cook noted if and when Trustees contract with a consultant, asking for models and connecting with stakeholders will be an important part of the process. In regards to strategic planning, President Cook used the analogy of development of the NECHE Self Study as the parallel for how the college would the next Strategic Plan, which would therefore include Trustee perspective, and also include a final vote of endorsement by the Board (as well as the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education).

IX. Date of Next Meeting: Monday, November 22, 2021

X. Adjournment:

Board Chair Murren called to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Motion was moved by Trustee Norman Roldan, seconded by Trustee Jynai McDonald and unanimously approved through roll call.


Marikate Murren
Chair, STCC Board of Trustees


Elizabeth Oleksak-Sposito
Secretary, STCC Board of Trustees

TO: Dr. Carlos Santiago, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

FROM: STCC Board of Trustees Executive Committee
Marikate Murren, Chair
Jynai McDonald, Vice Chair
Betty Sposito, Secretary

DATE: October 25, 2021

CC: Board of Trustees
Dr. John B. Cook, STCC President

RE: 5th Year Comprehensive Presidential Evaluation

[Motion to submit the below Presidential Evaluation to Commissioner Santiago and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved by STCC Board of Trustees on October 25, 2021 at a publicly noticed meeting held in public session]

In accordance with Massachusetts Board of Higher Education presidential evaluation guidelines, a 5th Year Comprehensive Evaluation of STCC President, Dr. John B. Cook, was conducted in 2021. As part of this process, the STCC Board of Trustees contracted with the Association of Community Colleges Trustees (ACCT) to assist the Board with facilitating a comprehensive presidential assessment, and utilized a two-tiered method:

- a. A survey instrument was developed in consultation with the Executive Committee, and included focal areas of fiscal management, COVID leadership, and facilities/strategic planning. This survey was emailed to all Trustees (11; 7 responded), as well as 71 members (38 responded) of the STCC community, including an array of employees, as well as external/community partners and leaders. Total survey response rate was 55%.
- b. Interviews with Trustees were also conducted.

Findings & Summary

Survey Instrument:

The overall average of all survey questions was 3.37. The rating system for each question ranged from 1 (does not meet expectations) to 5 (significantly exceed expectations), with a 3 designated as “meets expectations.” The highest rated successes identified by Trustee responses were Academic and Student Affairs, Leadership, Crisis Management/Planning and Capital Development/Facilities. Other stakeholders identified Presidential Goals, Internal/External Relationships, and Capital Development/Facilities as the highest rated.

Opportunities for future focus by Trustees include an interest in more meaningful communication to the Board including but not limited to sharing rationale for conclusions on decisions that are impactful to the College and Community before moving forward, continued work to build an inclusive strategic planning process, and further enhancing relationships with community-based organization leaders. Other constituents identified an interest in further/enhanced communication and relationships with college staff, faculty and bargaining units, as well as promoting an inclusive decision-making environment.

Board Interviews:

All eleven (11) trustees were interviewed by ACCT. Three indicated that they were new to the Board. General agreement from interviews found that President Cook did a good job managing through the unprecedented times of COVID; has worked to keep STCC going; has ensured a strong response to students needs (technology), and shifting to a remote/online environment quickly and efficiently.

Successfully leading the College through development of a comprehensive Self-Study, in conjunction with the accreditation process by NECHE (the New England Commission of Higher Education), was also noted as a key success.

There is also agreement that the college runs efficiently regarding financial matters, and the Board supports the President in that future funding for major capital expenditures remains a priority. The Board is also pleased with the hiring of new Cabinet members/senior administrators, and that effort was viewed as a positive step forward.

A continued opportunity expressed by some of the Trustees include enhanced, effective communication on important issues and understanding the rationale on decisions.

Related/Other:

While not formally part of the methodology used by ACCT, the following were identified in the NECHE Self-Study, or were part of past Trustee evaluations of President Cook, which represent an important list of successes from 2016 to present:

Successful project management (from ground-breaking to ribbon-cutting) of "Building 19" Rubenzahl Student Learning Commons, which when completed in early 2019 at \$50 million, represented the first major on-campus capital project in three decades.

Development of a comprehensive Campus Master Plan with broad engagement across college stakeholders, resulting in Trustee endorsement. Also created were the first 5-year IT Master Plan, formalization of a 5-year Facilities Plan and Academic Plan, as well as the first Major Gifts Campaign (\$2 million) done in partnership with the STCC Foundation.

Implementation of comprehensive Academic Program Review. A needed forum aligned to NECHE standards of academic quality, starting in 2018, a formalized process that enables faculty to consider their own programs and remain current with industry standards and needs.

A unique Health Science degree was launched in 2018, and was an explicit reference in the 2015-2020 College Strategic Plan. Aspects of this degree included connecting the STCC technical mission specific to healthcare with equity goals for students of color. Creation of the first college "Fact Book," and much deeper dives with Trustees about "carrying capacity" specific to costly programs, full-time personnel, and buildings/equipment

New positions not previously in existence (2016):

CIO/Assistant Vice President of Advancement; reports to the President
(Previous: Senior Director in IT reported to CFO)

Vice President of Advancement & External Affairs; reports to the President
(Previous: no explicit Chief Advancement Officer at STCC)

Assistant Vice President of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer; reports to the President (Previous: Senior Director of HR reported to CFO)

Previous "School" Structure had five divisions (2016):

Now there are three Schools (2021): one for STEM; one for Health; one for Liberal and Professional Studies (each with a Dean and Assistant Dean)

Previously (2016), STCC had zero NECHE-approved fully online programs, and zero instructional design positions:

Now there are three full-time instructional designers; numerous NECHE-approved online degrees; STCC was 80% online (not remote) over the past academic year; faculty were compensated ~\$900,000 for converting courses to online/during COVID

Despite being an ATD Leader Institution, the college (2016) previously looked to a "Student Success Council" as a forum to discuss strategic priorities like equity and student retention/graduation. Now, in addition to the process of academic program review, STCC leverages the Antiracism & Inclusion Alliance (AIA@STCC) to explicitly examine policies and practices, and has invested in an equity audit

Other equity investments include the first Innovation Fellowship that began July/2021, which in this first instance, will elevate a faculty member (Dr. Vanessa Hill) to facilitate true reform of developmental math

Previously, the STCC approach with area high schools was a passive Dual Enrollment outlook, whereas in 2021, the focus is on intentional Early College pathways (untethered to state funding), which also serves our equity goals. Early College Commerce (the high school across the street from STCC is 90% of color) now includes 20-credits from STCC.

As previously mentioned, accreditation through NECHE is a significant accomplishment, and the multi-year preparations by President Cook are key to note. The Self-Study (over 100 pages) is available for review.

Priorities Moving Forward

- Ensure creation of the next STCC Strategic Plan (2022 – 2025), using an inclusive process
- Pursue a long-standing solution for the School of Health/Building 20
- Work with Trustees to formalize an internal shared governance structure
- Continue to develop comprehensive, systemic changes, in support of equity and anti-racism
- Partner with Trustees to navigate enrollment and budget challenges, particularly as the COVID pandemic remains a significant consideration

Conclusion

Dr. Cook currently has the support of the Board to serve as President, we plan to continue to monitor performance and driving value for our Students, Campus and Community.

Dr. Cook has not had a compensation increase three years. As in the past, we support the Board of Higher Education/Commissioner of Higher Education, equity adjustment to Dr. Cook's salary, and fully support an increase in compensation. We request that the STCC president's salary be set at the average of the 15 Massachusetts community college presidents. We look forward to working with President Cook in the year ahead, and commit to partnering with him during these complex times.