

**SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING – PROGRAMS DISCONTINUATIONS

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Zoom/Live Streamed in STCC YouTube Channel

5:00 p.m.

Minutes of Meeting

Present at Roll Call: Vicky Crouse, Committee Co-Chair, Trustee
Jynai McDonald, Trustee, Committee Co-Chair, Trustee
Elizabeth Sposito - Trustee
Eric Hagopian - Trustee
Bill Johnson, Trustee
Maurice Lindsay, Alumni Trustee
Jeffrey Sattler, Trustee
MacArthur Starks, Jr, Trustee

Also Present: Dr. John B. Cook, President, and President’s Cabinet Members

I. Call to Order

At 5:01 p.m., Co-Chair Vicky Crouse called for a motion to open the meeting. Trustee Eric Hagopian called a motion to call the meeting to order, seconded by Trustee Mac Starks.

II. Roll Call

Eight out of eight Committee members present, constituting a quorum.

III. President’s Presentation – Dr. John B. Cook

Co-Chair Vicky Crouse informed the Committee that Trustee Jynai McDonald stepped in to Co-Chair this meeting.

President Cook prepared a presentation per the Committee request. Along with the presentation itself, Dr. Cook noted that a number of documents, materials and supporting information was provided to Committee members in advance (all documents are available in BoardPaq).

Dr. Cook also noted there were other administrators available for comments, questions and perspectives if needed. Trustees were also reminded of the supporting documents and communications previously shared by faculty, All Unit Congress members, as well as MCCC leadership (also available in BoardPaq).

Dr. Cook walked the Committee through the process and analysis utilized for decision-making specific to discontinued programs. In particular, the process considered the regional labor blueprint priority areas (health and manufacturing), workforce outlooks, the STCC Master Plan, and the significance of deferred maintenance and facility's needs. Dr. Cook outlined key analysis drivers such as budget concerns, budget deficits, lessons learned from Value Streaming, substantial facility needs, efficacy on focusing on smaller programs, and COVID dynamics, including difficulty delivering lab or clinical-heavy programs during a public health pandemic. There is also a reference to academic programs review, as well as program margins and carrying costs. Collective bargaining was also discussed, including timing that sought to avoid mid-semester/mid-year disruptions.

Further descriptions included the STCC enrollment cliff from FY 2013 – FY 2020 where the college lost the equivalent of \$10 million in operating revenue based on a loss of 43,050 credits (30%). The decline continued Fall Semester 2020 (down 15%), and has it is difficult to absorb such losses without having to make difficult decisions. Trustee Eric Hagopian asked about FTE/employee declines relative to enrollment/credit declines. Also noted was that the STCC enrollment cliff is not unique, and affects institutions nationwide and in Massachusetts. Since the pool of traditional students is shrinking, adult learners are an opportunity for emphasis. Historically, when the economy declines, enrollment in Community Colleges increases, but the fact that during COVID we cannot meet in person limits the value proposition; studies are indicating that students who would otherwise attend community college are not attending college at all this Fall.

The presentation included specific program detail, including enrollments and student demographics, but also which area vocational/technical schools are offering programs such as landscape, automotive, and cosmetology (and their ability to now offer those programs in the evening to adults). One of the particularly challenge items discussed was the \$315+ million in campus deferred maintenance, including \$6 million for Building 25, which houses Automotive.

President Cook also discussed factors that included limited or no evening options for a number of the programs, program reviews prepared by faculty/Department Chairs [provided in-full, in advance, to the Committee], and estimated teach out expenses, which, excluding tuition/ fees or any full-time faculty expenses, was noted to be \$193,000 for the total of 40 students needing to complete by June of 2022.

Another point of information included on the presentation is program enrollment lost in relation to true savings, which noted that for every \$1 in revenue (tuition / fees) lost in enrollment, STCC has saved \$1.52 in expenses in FY 2021, for a total expense reduction of approximately \$1.1 million. Also included is the capital investment needed for reinstatement by program, and the potential use of reserves given facilities/IT/capital needs.

To conclude, an excerpt from a 2007 report prepared for the STCC Trustee Ways & Means Committee was referenced. Issued by Stephen H. Keller, Vice President of Academic Affairs at that time, the report concludes that it is commonly known that STCC is an expensive institution to operate, and “...the college needs to increase enrollment and increase fees, while advocating for greater support from the Commonwealth.” The challenged in 2020 however, is that enrollment has in fact decline significantly, increasing student fees substantially is untenable, and support from the commonwealth is uncertain, particularly with capital project needs. Even if state appropriation support is maintained at current rates, the functional question is how STCC absorbs enrollment losses, and addresses significant facilities and IT capital needs, all while working within existing operational confines.

Following the presentation, Trustees offered comments, and asked questions. Trustee Crouse for example, noted that President Cook provided the requested information and data sought by the Committee. Trustee Vicki Crouse and Trustee Eric Hagopian also pointed out that with additional information, and with help from Trustees, there is still the question as to whether programs could have been saved. Trustee Starks offered that as opposed to looking backwards, looking ahead to the question of what can be done to reinstate programs is where he wants to invest, and Trustee Hagopian agreed, that bringing programs back is a different conversation. Trustee Bill Johnson applauded the decision by the President to act proactively during such a difficult time. The common questions amongst some committee members is “What should we do about keeping or not keeping these programs?”

Dr. Cook offered that if it were possible, he would indeed like to reinstate all the programs, and the college had been active in seeking to support program investments. Recent examples including \$56,000 to repair the Landscape greenhouse, and two-plus years in seeking to establish an off-campus evening certificate option for Automotive.

Committee Co-Chair, Vicky Crouse called a motion to hold another meeting of this Committee [Ad Hoc – Programs Discontinuations] on Tuesday, November 17, at 5:00 p.m. with the specific request to:

“... ask Dr. Cook to bring his recommendations and information on what it would take to bring the programs back.”

The motion was moved by Trustee Starks; seconded by Trustee Sattler and unanimously approved through roll call.

Trusty Crouse also shared that Dr. Renae Gorman, Professor of Physical Therapy Assistant and Chapter President of the STCC-Professional Association (MCCC union), had asked to speak to the Committee. Upon discussion by the Committee, Trustee Crouse will invite Professor Gorman to the next Committee meeting where her commentary will be welcomed.

IV. Other Business

V. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 17, at 5:00 p.m.

VI. Adjournment: At 6:31 p.m. Trustee Maurice Lindsay called a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Jeff Sattler, and unanimously approved through roll call.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nanette Flores