# Lowcountry Graduate Center

# K-12 Teacher Education and Educational Leadership Advisory Board

# Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: Thursday, July 9, 2020

1. Call to order

Nancy Muller called to order the scheduled meeting in ZOOM of the K-12 Teacher Education and Educational Leadership Advisory Board at 3:00 PM. Muller shared the following recent changes affecting participants on the Advisory Board: Gwendolyn Bright has retired. Shelissa Bowman, Director of Elementary Education, has been appointed as her replacement on the Board for Dorchester #4. Juliet White has moved to Beaufort County but continues on the Board. She is replaced in Colleton County by Jessica Williams. Suzi Raiford (Metro Chamber) has taken a position with the State of SC. Elliot Smalley is returning to school leadership, leaving SC Charter Schools.

1. Introductions

The following persons were present, briefly introducing themselves:

Advisory Board Members in Attendance: Terri Nichols – CCSD, Sharon Snyder – BCSD, Kenneth Wilson – Dorchester #2, Shelissa Bowman – Dorchester #4, Juliet White – Beaufort County School District, Darlene Anderson – Northwood Academy

Guests: Tina Wirth and Robin Willis – Charleston Metro Chamber, Fran Welch - College of Charleston, Evan Ortlieb – The Citadel, Pat Manna – education consultant

Advisory Board Members Absent: Jessica Williams, Anne Weston, Patrick Finneran, Carmelina Livingston, David Ramey

1. Presentation – Career Academies

Wirth opened her remarks by saying she augmented the content of her presentation to preface her remarks about the Career Academy program by the Metro Charleston Chamber to share very recent feedback from area employers regarding the impact of the COVID-19 virus pandemic. It has certainly caused an employment disconnect but area employers have been unevenly affected. Some sectors are considered relatively stable, while other sectors are severely impacted, such as hospitality. Still others, such as IT services and engineering, are continuing to witness shortages in talent. Regardless, there has been widespread impact on individuals struggling with the balance of working remotely from home or working outside of the home with childcare needs due to school and daycare closures. The Chamber is therefore focusing on the more stable sectors as it plans the coming 6-18 months for its Career Academies.

The Chamber relies heavily on its Human Resources Professional Network (HRPN) to remain close to its members. It normally meets monthly. When it canvassed the group in April, it found that due to COVID-19:

* 50% are considering having its workforce work remotely on a permanent basis
* 100% are reconfiguring their physical workspace to accommodate social distancing and other safety measures to mitigate the spread of the virus
* 33% have witnessed no change in staffing
* 33% expect their enterprise to need 6-18 months to recover from the economic setback being experienced

When the group reconvened in early July, 30% of the HRPN reported they are hiring 10 or more employees, while 90% reported being in a “hiring mode” looking forward. Over half (55%) wish to hold a virtual job fair, a request made of the Chamber.

The Chamber serves on the CCSD K-12 Restarts Task Force, Willis noted. All effort is in alignment with federal, state, and other local authorities. Nichols commented that their classrooms are being transformed by COVID-19, upon the anticipation of restarting fall classes for K-12. She cited photos of classrooms with Plexiglas separation panels, as just one example. As a test district for online learning, Berkeley County School District was already 97% engaged with connectivity and therefore much more easily transitioned in March, whereas CCSD had a weekend to cutover to remote instruction.

Willis then shared a slide with data from the SC Department of Employment and Workforce downloaded July 8, 2020 illustrating that the Metro Charleston Area is fairing much better in terms of unemployment than other parts of the state. Myrtle Beach has twice as many individuals seeking employment than there are currently openings. The Upstate (Greenville-Spartanburg corridor) has 80,000 unemployed workers. Meanwhile, ratios of online job postings relative to the number of candidates actively seeking a position in a given occupation range widely, as of June 30, 2020. There are, for example, 3,650 openings for RNs for which there are only 404 candidates, and there are 30 openings for physicians for every medical doctor seeking a move. On a separate table by occupational groupings, there is essentially a 1:1 match between number of openings versus candidates for the category of healthcare practitioners and technicians as a whole. Others still in high demand are computer and mathematician occupations, with just one opening for every two candidates, and protective services occupations with a 1:3 ratio.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is only one opening for every eight seekers in legal service occupations, with a 1:5 ratio in office and administrative occupations and a 1:4 ratio in management occupations. Clearly, the number of positions in customer service has plummeted in recent months. In early August, the Chamber expects to have an updated labor analysis using real-time data.

With this backdrop, Willis and Wirth turned to the Chamber’s Career Academies, whose pilot was started in five schools in the 2013/2014 school year. In the most recent 2019/2020 school year, there were 60 such academies thriving in 22 high schools with 100 partner businesses supporting them. They spanned advanced manufacturing and computer services to healthcare and hospitality, among the seven sectors covered. Willis commended MUSC for its enriching “Discover” Days exposing several hundred high school students to a wide variety of medical services jobs and thus careers. She was also complimentary of Heritage Trust’s student-operated credit unions. Both represent huge commitments in terms of resources to these experiences for young people.

Looking to the year 2020/2021, plans are somewhat in a state of flux due to the pandemic. The Chamber still plans to have meetings of its advisory boards but there will far fewer, only 3 general, combined meetings in September, January, and April. The Bridge Walk will be conducted virtually. The Hackathon will go online. TEALS will be taught only online in five high schools. Blackbaud employees provide the volunteer instruction for TEALS, a national program under the auspices and with support of Microsoft. Rather than focusing on occupations per se, the Chamber intends in the future to emphasize skills, e.g., service skills, performance skills, transferable skills, etc. Some Academy groupings may merge, yet discussion is underway to create a new Academy for biomedical science.

The Chamber has two valuable resources on its web site for students and teachers: 1) CAEL “Mapping Your Path” including a discussion of the advantage of credentials and degrees in specific fields and occupations; and 2) a brand new Regional College & Career Guide for the Tri-Counties.

Concern was expressed by the Chamber representatives about concerns over a possible decline in higher education enrollments due to unemployment, business failures, and a weak economy in recession. Willis pointed out that the shortages and talent gaps in fields such as computer science and engineering still persists. Welch shared that the College of Charleston has added a new undergraduate degree in systems engineering, for which Fall 2020 enrollment is 45 rather than the expected 15 students, largely filled with female students of color. She added the College of Charleston has signed an MOU with The Citadel to work together so as not to duplicate what the other is doing. They will together add in Fall 2021 a new degree in electrical engineering. These programs of study fit with the Career Academy pathways.

Muller asked about internships and what the Chamber might do to promote the creation of internship opportunities for students in higher education as a pathway to secure a paying job upon graduation. Willis said its new guide for employers to virtual internships is just the template that businesses can use. Here’s the link to it:

<https://www.charlestonchamber.org/news/career/employers-guide-to-virtual-internships/>

Dean Ortlieb (Zucker Family School of Education – The Citadel) shared the fact his institution has launched a new program of study in curriculum design that takes a systems approach in its learning objectives for students. It is ideally suited to an internship opportunity with a school district.

Welch mentioned a meeting next week of all public institutions of higher education with the State Department of Education in Columbia to discuss much of what was covered in today’s meeting. She added that the presidents of all public colleges are conferring through the Commission on Higher Education on changes induced by the COVID-19 virus pandemic. She queried the group as to how schools might be more supportive of alumni of the state’s colleges, i.e., those who are already teachers. Nichols stated that it is important for student teachers to experience virtual internships, something that previously has not existed.

Wirth asked if there are any areas of legislation that the Chamber should get behind or support on behalf of those present. Muller shared there is a national petition being signed by academicians in higher education protesting the Trump Administration’s newly released regulation that all foreign students must return home if they are enrolled only in online courses. This affects as many as 100,000 in the U.S. They represent a significant source of revenue to institutions of higher education because they pay full tuition.

The presentation ended with a slide depicting June 2020 data from a Strata poll of 8,000 respondents nationally in which 62% of workers prefer non-degree and skills training over degrees. Less than half of all American workers represented by those responding feel they have access to the training and education they want, especially to make a career transition as many do.

Muller thanked Wirth and Willis for an informative and very relevant presentation and thanked all present for participating in the discussion. There will be follow-up correspondence from the LGC in the Fall with a date/time for the next K-12 Advisory Board meeting. The meeting ended at approximately 3:55 p.m.

Nancy Muller

July 10, 2020