

MINUTES
Lowcountry Graduate Center
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
December 17, 2015
By Teleconference

Board Members Present:

Constance L. Book – Provost of The Citadel

Cherry Daniel – Trustee, College of Charleston

Barbara Johnson-Williams – Trustee, Medical University of South Carolina

Allison Dean Love – Member, Board of Visitors, The Citadel and Vice Chair

Brian McGee – Provost and Executive VP for Academic Affairs, College of Charleston

Nancy Muller (non-voting) – Director and Associate Dean, Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC)

Terrye Seckinger (non-voting) – Member, Board of Directors, Commission on Higher Education

Mark Sothmann – Provost and VP of Academic Affairs, Medical University of South Carolina

Joseph Thompson, Jr. – Member, Board of Trustees, College of Charleston

Board Members Absent:

Myron Harrington, Jr. – Member, Board of Visitors, The Citadel

Godfrey Gibbison (non-voting) – Dean, College of Charleston, School of Professional Studies (SPS)

LGC Staff and Guests Present:

Patricia Simpson – LGC Student Services Coordinator & LGC Board Secretary

Sue Sommer-Kresse – Consultant to the College of Charleston

Conference Call – Guests:

Lauren Edmonds, Senior Market Research Manager – EAB Strategic Research

Natalia Alvarez Diaz, Market Research Manager – EAB Strategic Research

Megan Adams, Market Research Associate – EAB Strategic Research

It was noted that appropriate notice was given and this organizational meeting was compliant with the statutes of the state regarding public meeting laws under the Freedom of Information Act. A quorum was confirmed present.

I. Welcome

(Allison Dean Love)

At 3:05 p.m., Vice Chair Love called the meeting to order and welcomed the members of the LGC Board (the “Board”). All in attendance were asked to briefly introduce themselves. It was noted that guests from EAB would join the call by 3:30 p.m.

II. Minutes

Board Action: Motion was made by Sothmann to approve the minutes, as previously distributed electronically, of the November 12, 2015 Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Johnson-Williams. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. Board Member Rankings of Functions by the LGC

(Brian McGee)

Upon joining the meeting, McGee asked Muller to summarize how Board Members had ranked functions that the LGC might perform. Muller explained that the list of eight functions was a compilation of key functions currently being performed by the LGC, recommendations by Consultant Ashton-Savage, and suggestions made by various Board Members during Savage’s presentation at the November meeting. Patty Simpson compiled the submissions, with Muller’s assistance. Top was the liaising function by the LGC between local industry and state institutions in higher education including technical education. Second highest rank function was building awareness of the location’s convenience and ease of access to the location. Third highest rank was the function of market research to help identify and quantify demand. Every function was ranked at least 4th or 5th by someone. But the lowest ranking function was the function of career counseling of high school students and others.

McGee asked for a one-page summary to be distributed. Daniels said that some of the functions reflect “mission creeping” because some duplicate what is already being done by the College of Charleston, such as continuing education. Other duplications, such as career counseling to high school and undergraduate students, are provided by the schools themselves. She added that there are several programs across the state to provide professional development education, such as to school superintendents. Muller commented that other Board Members agreed with Daniels because none of these three surfaced among the top three functional tasks. Seckinger said she would have ranked items differently if the LGC were to have a different structural model. McGee said that it’s easier and less expensive for public institutions to initiate non-credit bearing instruction to leverage brand. The “heavier lift” is starting a new graduate program, and yet graduate programs are at the core of the LGC’s mission. Daniels said the LGC has to be very careful not to step outside of graduate education because it then oversteps its mission. She believes there are opportunities to create new programs. McGee thanked Simpson and Muller for their effort and said it is helpful to view the range of input and reflect further.

Seckinger asked if the Consortium Agreement that had been extended this fall by the three member institutions is identical to the previously existing document. McGee confirmed that it indeed is identical.

Love said that recently the 10 college presidents of state institutions had spoken to the CHE board meeting, at which College of Charleston Glenn McConnell echoed repeatedly in his remarks the importance of collaboration among institutions across the state. Love said that, with this backdrop, she considers a key role for the LGC to play is that of a facilitator of dialogue between the business community and academia. She said she is interested in the LGC's communications strategy – and key message points - for speaking to Legislators. Sothmann added that when he looks at the top three rankings, a lot of physical space isn't required. We know we have a physical space issue when looking at the expense budget. We need to talk about facility needs and personnel needs in alignment with these top functional priorities. Muller commented that the space requirements of the LGC are not for office space but rather for classroom space. She didn't list teaching classes among the LGC's functions because it is the institutions who teach the classes, enroll the students, and collect the tuitions. Muller stated that the LGC is neither equipped nor charged with the responsibility to assess student learning outcomes or faculty performance. McGee added that the LGC needs to assess its actual classroom requirements.

IV. EAB Proposal for Research and Strategic Recommendations

Muller reminded the Board that Book had suggested that EAB be given a “clean slate” when asking the consultants how they might design the LGC from the ground level up with the current level of annual state appropriations, noting that the EAB proposal arrived so soon after the November Board meeting that they might not have been asked to undertake a “white board exercise.” The proposal has two parts, the first is a 8-10 week project identifying 3-5 untapped program opportunities for the LGC to develop. This is not unlike some of the analysis provided by Avalanche in its Talent Gap analysis in 2014. The second part proposes recommending the LGC's structure, after examining models of other consortia and graduate centers across the country. Muller said she had responded to EAB's organizational alignment survey but admitted many of the questions were not relevant, as they pertain to tuition, types of degrees, etc. She referred to a recently completed national survey (n=35 out of 45 contacted) by the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of other similar such organizations, the report of which she had distributed earlier to LGC Board Members.

McGee asked if Phase One is really necessary. Book responded that Muller could be generating Phase One reports weekly by logging in directly to Burning Glass under the CofC's and The Citadel's memberships in EAB, and this should become standard practice. She is happy to forego Phase One and focus on Phase Two.

EAB representatives then joined the call and introduced Lauren Edmonds, Natalia Alvarez Diaz, and Megan Adams. Edmonds explained that the Phase One scan doesn't have to be distinct from Phase Two, but it provides EAB consultants a good baseline and understanding of the Charleston area. Book explained the desire to share the studies we already have so that EAB will take more

of a “white board” approach to functions the LGC should perform and how it should be structured. Megan Adams said that in order to make recommendations, the Organizational Alignment Survey data is valuable. It allows the EAB to apply its known best practices. Burning Glass analysis can add depth. Book says EAB needs the Greater Cincinnati report as a snapshot and a good summary of what’s happening around the country. Muller explained the LGC is more like the organizations represented by the Greater Cincinnati report than the member institutions of the EAB reflected in the organizational alignment survey.

Seckinger urged EAB to examine the structure of the Greenville University Center, as its model is akin to the direction being considered for the LGC. It is also right here in SC and funded by the state. Sommer-Kresse said they rent to private, for profit, and public institutions and are a not-for-profit themselves. McGee described the current structure of the LGC and outlined two alternative models that have been discussed by the Board, one that it become absorbed by a single state-owned institution and function as a center for program development. The other is that it be housed within CHE and work with any and all institutions in higher education across the state for the benefit of the Lowcountry region’s workforce. There may be other models or structures to be considered. Seckinger said that CHE is not currently in a position to take on the LGC. An alternative is the 501c3 structure. McGee then modified the two alternative models as 1) a center inside a single institution expressly for the purposes of program development; and 2) a 501c3 independent entity.

EAB asked about timeline for its work. McGee explained the fiscal year funding cycle, beginning July 1st. Over the course of the spring, the LGC will be asked by Legislators about how it’s operating and what funding it needs for future support. EAB will review reports and research already completed. It will present in late January its “baseline” findings and how it envisions taking the next step. EAB explained this work falls under existing memberships with the College of Charleston and The Citadel without additional fees to the LGC. Book urged EAB to be creative with its blank slate. Graduate education is changing in America, with much of it going online. It is a risky endeavor for any of us to roll out face-to-face programs here, she added. Megan Adams said that this is precisely what EAB is best at doing, assessing trends and best practices, adding in an additional layer of depth by looking at the local labor market. It is possible to revise the original scope of the project after the initial January synthesis. McGee summarized EAB’s agreement to think big, working more in two parallel tracks. EAB asked if the LGC could be identified as a client if EAB contacts any organization for input, and this was agreed to.

Sothmann stressed the importance of not duplicating in Phase I what we already know. He suggested reviewing the plan after EAB had completed the review of existing reports. Megan Adams said she would compile a 15-20 page report on what is already known. Burning Glass methodology focuses on employer ads for jobs and the kinds of skills identified. McGee said a 10-minute call with the Academic Affairs Committee can be organized in early January once EAB looks at the reports in hand but before spending more time on Phase I. Lauren Edmonds said she would organize this phonecall through Muller. Sommer-Kresse summarized that external variables will be looked at in Phase I. Phase II is needed to look more internally at how

to best utilize limited resources. Book asked if Ashton-Savage has generated a written report. This document should also be forwarded to EAB. McGee said this should be forthcoming in the next few days, and he will insure it is forwarded as well to all LGC Board members.

V. Additional Announcements

After EAB left the call, McGee reminded all Board Members of scheduled meetings as noted on the meeting agenda. Muller noted that there may be a need for the LGC to make a report and financial request to the Legislature. The Citadel is scheduled to make its presentation on January 20th. McGee said he would check with Steve Osborne regarding the designated date for the College of Charleston, as the LGC information would be part of this presentation. The Academic Affairs Committee needs to review the presentation slides in advance. Love asked if there are suggested message points from the Chairman. McGee suggested that we should all reinforce that we are hoping for continued state support for graduate education at the LGC to support jobs in our state. Seckinger asked if a vote was needed to approve proceeding with EAB as discussed. McGee said there is no vote needed since there is no financial transaction involved.

There being no further agenda items, there was unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

December 28, 2015