



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MINUTES

February 19, 2015

Lowcountry Graduate Center, Room 243

Board Members Present:

Cherry Daniel – Trustee, College of Charleston (*via conference call*)

Sam Hines – Provost, The Citadel

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

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

Allison Dean Love – Board of Visitors, The Citadel

John Sams – Board of Visitors, The Citadel

Michael Stavrinakis – Member, Board of Trustees, Medical University of South Carolina

Joe Thompson – Trustee, College of Charleston

Board Members Absent:

Barbara Johnson-Williams – Member, Board of Trustees, Medical University of South Carolina

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Nancy Muller – Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) Director and Associate Dean

Godfrey Gibbison – College of Charleston North Campus, Dean

Terrye Seckinger – Commission on Higher Education (CHE) Representative

Other Staff Present:

John Curtis – System Support Technician

Chris Duncan – LGC Marketing Coordinator

Cara Howley – Marketing Intern

Donna Johnson – Business Manager

Patricia Simpson – LGC Student Services Coordinator & LGC Board Secretary

Sue Sommer-Kresse – Consultant, College of Charleston

Guest:

Ashley Heffernan (Staff Reporter, *Charleston Regional Business Journal*)

Appropriate Notice was given and this organizational meeting was compliant with the statutes regarding public meeting laws. A quorum was present.

I. Welcome (Brian McGee)

At 10:05 a.m., Dr. Brian McGee called the meeting to order and welcomed the members of the Lowcountry Graduate Center Board (the “Board”). All in attendance were asked to introduce themselves.

II. Minutes

Board Action: The minutes for the October 22, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved.

Minutes for the Academic Affairs Committee Meeting for the January 16, 2015 were distributed in the subject Board meeting binder, for information only.

III. Director’s Report (Nancy Muller)

- Enrollment Data Chart – Academic Year 2014 - 2015 - shows a decrease in enrollment due to College of Charleston, with The Citadel, moving the Computer & Information Science program to its main campus downtown.
- Actual Total Facility Usage Chart – Academic Years 2011 -2012 through 2014-2015 - shows a decrease over a four year period.
- Total Facility Usage Chart includes the College of Charleston undergraduate students with an enrollment over 1,000. The enrollments have increased substantially over previous years. The Continuing Education line represents only the Continuing Ed courses (non-credit) taught on the North Campus. The Rental Usage line is growing substantially and is based on the capacity of the classrooms used. According to these figures, the LGC represents roughly 10% of the “traffic” in the facility.
- Estimated Tuition Generated Report summarizes the total amount of tuition generated for institutions with courses at the LGC. The last, full fiscal year 2013-2014 generated just over \$2.0 million. The current fiscal year 2014-2015 shown on the chart does not include the summer semester figures. The purpose of this chart is to show the amount of money that goes directly to the academic institutions.
- The Graduates of Programs Chart demonstrates that even in a weakened economy the students attending classes at the LGC were retained in their programs to reach graduation.

IV. Program Development & IT Support of Hybrid Instruction

(John Curtis and Nancy Muller)

1. Clemson University offers its MS in Mechanical Engineering at the LGC. The program is offered one night a week with the instructor at the LGC every third week and the course video-streamed to the Clemson University Campus or to LGC from Clemson. The classrooms and thus students in both locations are always connected visually and by voice, real time.

The students are given access to the remote server so they can watch or review the lecture at any time.

Clemson has a student chapter of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME), the only such student chapter in the State. The SME holds a monthly meeting at Clemson and video-streams the meetings to the LGC, as the LGC is now an affiliate of the Clemson chapter. The LGC is believed to be the first virtual SME Student Chapter in the world.

2. Other New Programs at the LGC:

From the 2014 marketing research “Workforce Strategic Study” provided by CAEL(Chicago) and Avalanche (Austin, TX) for the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, the LGC has identified three major sectors for program development:

- o Engineering/Software Development/High Tech Manufacturing – because of the high growth rates in new jobs
- o Education – K-12 Teachers and Staff Support – because of the population growth rates
- o Healthcare Services Management/Counseling/Community Health – because the region is already a medical mecca in which the greatest absolute number of new jobs is being added each year (950)

The Citadel is seeking approvals from CHE and SACS to begin offering three new non-thesis master’s degrees, in Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering, respectively, beginning the fall 2016.

The LGC remains devoted to helping USC College of Engineering to grow the student enrollment in its MS in Engineering Management program. The instructional format is an executive weekend with the courses meeting all day Friday and Saturday once a month. We are doing the same syncing and live video conferencing as we are doing with Clemson, although thus far it is only one-way lecturing from Columbia.

Sam Hines stated that what the LGC is undertaking demonstrates the opportunity for students to take programs from a variety of institutions. This helps the State with the cost of delivery. We will be seeing students from Clemson enrolled in a MS in Engineering program taking classes for credit at The Citadel, he said. There is a MOU that has not been finalized but that is well on its way to being executed. This collaboration will help contain costs.

In healthcare, The Citadel’s new graduate certificate in Child & Adolescent Wellness and Obesity Prevention is taking shape. It now includes an identified graduate course

taught by MUSC faculty in social and behavioral sciences from its Department of Public Health.

Progress is also being made by SC State University for its newly added track to its existing MBA program, with a focus on coursework in organization management.

Nancy Muller closed this discussion by pointing out that the LGC offers a welcoming, neutral ground for all students and all instructors in graduate education, aimed at meeting the region's workforce needs.

V. Marketing Communication (Chris Duncan)

Chris Duncan updated the LGC Board of Directors with handouts regarding the new website development and the timeline table. The new website is scheduled to launch April 20.

Dr. Hines expressed concern that the LGC represents a consortium of the three member institutions and that this needs to be made clear graphically in market communications: the CofC, The Citadel, and MUSC. Other institutions such as Clemson and USC, are those with whom the LGC collaborates, by definition of the Consortium Agreement. Hines suggested separating the two categories with a "tiered" approach. McGee commented that it's challenging to design graphics for multi-institutional stakeholders.

The Lowcountry Graduate Center has two graduate assistants from the College of Charleston: Cara Howley and Allison Lytle Smith. Allison has been working with the College of Charleston's Riley Institute in conducting a survey on employees in the workforce who may be interested in graduate education. Results of the survey are expected in March. Cara Howley is developing a written social media strategy for us the LGC to follow upon the launch of our new web site. Muller said the strategy document will include such metrics as trend data in contacts, interactions per post online, and quality of interaction. The LGC is expanding digital corridors for communications including LinkedIn, YouTube videos, and Google+Hangouts.

The LGC hosted an Open House on February 19th with representatives from Clemson, University of South Carolina, College of Charleston, and The Citadel. Radio, print, e-mails, and online advertising were used to promote the Open House.

VI. Finance Report (Nancy Muller)

Summary of the LGC's 2014-15 Fiscal Year-budget. The first column shows an operating deficit for a full year of \$4,000 which does not reflect the \$300K one-time money received from the State.

1. LGC Financial Statement FY 2014 – 2015

The LGC Financial Statement FY 2014 – 2015 was shared with the House Ways and Means Committee, as Muller was asked to present in early February.

Muller reported that the LGC budget will have a deficit of \$66,000 for 2014-15 based on 29% of all occupancy expenses for the new North Campus facility.

Projected FY 2015 – 2016

The Projected FY 2015-16 Budget includes an additional \$70,000 for marketing in support of new programs in the pipeline. Also, this budget assumes a line item of 29% of the total lease expense for the facility, an additional part-time librarian and graduate assistant. With these additions the projected operating deficit for 2015-16 is \$300,000. The LGC cannot operate on its current level of funding (\$785,099).

Spending of \$300,000 Non-Recurrent Appropriations Received FY 2014 – 2015

This chart shows the one-time \$300,000 received this year is allocated over a 5 year period to the design, production, and digital marketing support of the new website, committed through a RFP process. At this rate, within two years we will have completely used all but \$1,500 of the balance of the \$300K.

Although the Academic Affairs Committee agreed to request additional recurrent appropriations from the House Ways and Means, it was subsequently thought by the College of Charleston that with substantial carryover funds available, the House Ways and Means SubCommittee would not respond favorably. Thus, it advised that a projection of FY 2015-2016 should include spending a portion of the carryover funds.

Some members of the Ways and Means SubCommittee are not supportive of spending on advertising, however expressed interest in video conferencing, leveraging of assets and utilization of classroom technology. They expressed concern about operating deficits.

Sam Hines stated the Legislature needs to understand that the three founding member institutions are advocates for the LGC. To represent this, Hines suggested that our strategy should be to have senior leaders of the three institutions accompany Muller when she goes before the House or Senate.

Terrye Seckinger suggested that Muller gets herself on the agenda for the full Board of the Commission on Higher Education, to explain goals and programs at the LGC.

Mark Sothmann requested that Muller prepare a fiscal forecast of revenue for the next 3 or 4 years, based on projected enrollments from all of the program directors involved with the LGC from the various institutions.

A “Plan B” should also be prepared that includes budget reductions should the revenue not materialize or a reduction occur in state funding.

Dr. Sothmann commended the LGC staff for their efforts to address the financial issues.

2015 Campaign with Political Leaders

Muller concluded the discussion with excerpts from her First Quarter Workplan, indicating that she has accomplished the goals outlined for early 2015. She asked for the Board's assistance to communicate with Legislators regarding the LGC's mission and strengths.

VII. New Business

Brian McGee updated the LGC Board regarding the current status of negotiations with the CofC Management Team. When the LGC was located at the International Blvd. location, the lease payment was 43% of the total with the CofC responsible for 57%. The move to a new facility increased the total lease payment; however, the specific split between the LGC and CofC was not formally determined.

The CofC Management Team and its Board assumed that 43% would be used in the future.

The Revised Consortium Agreement (signed March 2, 2012. Bottom of page 7 and top of page 8 (a) (3)) states that the LGC will provide a proportionate share of overhead for the Fiscal Agent's facilities' space that is being utilized by the Director and other LGC staff and for such space being used by other Member and non-member Institutions to provide Courses and Programs of instruction at the facilities of the Fiscal Agent, provided that, such proportionate share is not any greater than the allocation that the Fiscal Agent would charge its own operating units.

Proportion and Share has not been determined.

Sam Hines was asked to represent the LGC Board in the negotiations with the fiscal agent, as Chair McGee, as the CofC Provost, has an inherent conflict of interest. CofC's management team has not determined the appropriate lease fee percentage. They are interested in developing a longer term agreement such that all involved can budget appropriately. The goal is for members of the LGC Board and the Fiscal Agent to negotiate a rate that is acceptable to each and to create more budget stability.

Terrye Seckinger made the following motion.

Motion: To create an ad hoc subcommittee of the LGC Board, chaired by Director Love, with voting members Directors Stavrinakis and Hines and ex-officio members Chairman McGee and LGC Director Muller, The charge of the ad hoc subcommittee is to negotiate a multi-year lease agreement with the Fiscal Agent, College of Charleston, to be completed by April 30, 2015. Such agreement is to be presented to the full board at its next meeting.

Motion seconded by John Sams.

Call to question.

The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Board Governance and Planning (Announcements)

If agreeable with the Board, Board materials will be sent electronically and no longer printed for board meetings. All materials used during the meeting will be shown on screens. All present consented to the “go green” procedures for future board meetings.

Next Board meeting: June 24, 2015 with a start time of 10:00 a.m.

IX. Adjournment

(Brian McGee)

Dr. McGee noted the next Board meeting is June 24, 2015 at the LGC facility. There being no further business, Allison Dean Love made the motion to adjourn, and Cherry Daniel seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Future LGC Board Meetings:

June 24, 2015	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
October 29, 2015	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
March 2, 2016	2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
June 29, 2016	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Academic Affairs Meetings:

May 12, 2015	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
September 15, 2015	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
February 2, 2016	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
May 24, 2016	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.