

**LOWCOUNTRY GRADUATE CENTER
SUPERVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

March 21, 2017

Supervisory Council Members Present:

Connie Book – Provost, The Citadel

Brian McGee – Provost, College of Charleston

Lisa Saladin – Interim Provost, Medical University of South Carolina

LGC Staff and Other Guests Present:

Chris Duncan – LGC Manager of Marketing and Media Relations

Godfrey Gibbison – Dean, School of Professional Studies, College of Charleston

Ashley Heffernan – Journalist, *Charleston Regional Business Journal*

Donna Johnson – Business Manager for the LGC and School of Professional Studies

Allison Dean Love (by teleconference) – Trustee, Board of Visitors, The Citadel;
Member, SC Commission on Higher Education; Former Member, LGC Board of
Directors

Nancy Muller – Director and Associate Dean of the Lowcountry Graduate Center

Terrye Seckinger - Member, SC Commission on Higher Education; Former Member,
LGC Board of Directors

Patricia Simpson – LGC Coordinator of Student Services

Welcome and Announcements:

At 4:05 p.m., acting in his former capacity as Chairman of the previously existing LGC Board of Directors, McGee called to order the inaugural meeting of the Supervisory Council established under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) enacted January 30, 2017, for the supervision and management of the LGC and superseding the former LGC Board of Directors. He duly noted that advanced public notice had been given of the meeting with its agenda, in accordance with the state's FOIA. He thanked all, including guests, for being present, welcoming Ashley Heffernan in particular from the *Charleston Regional Business Journal*. All guests were asked to introduce themselves.

Election of Chair - Supervisory Council Action:

Noting that the Council shall elect one of its members to serve as Chair of the Council for a term of one year and for no more than three consecutive terms, McGee asked for nominations. Saladin nominated McGee and Book seconded the motion. McGee agreed to be nominated, asking for a Vice-Chair, given the need for the College of Charleston to be "more cautious" given its relationship as fiscal agent of the LGC. Saladin agreed. The nominations were closed and McGee was elected Chair by acclamation. McGee then appointed Book as Vice-Chair.

McGee then appointed Muller to assume the secretarial role for purposes of preparing minutes as a record of meeting proceedings of the Supervisory Council.

Noting the necessity of holding at least two meetings a year, McGee asked that each of the three members of the Supervisory Council designate a permanent substitute to insure all future meetings can always occur as scheduled.

McGee noted that MOU expires on June 30, 2020, unless the state legislature “zeroes out” existence of the LGC before such date.

He further noted that the new agreement provides for funding for new or substantially revised and expanded graduate programs, expressly requested by MUSC.

McGee then asked former LGC board members who were present if they had questions about the new MOU. Seckinger responded that the former LGC board members were not invited to submit questions. Muller said that she was explicitly barred from discussing the agreement with former Board members and therefore had not solicited questions from them. McGee responded that communications would be covered later in the meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

McGee said that a successor board such as represented by the Supervisory Council lacks the authority to approve minutes of a prior Board’s meeting. However, the previously distributed minutes with addenda can be accepted as summary notes and attached to minutes of the day’s meeting, once the latter are approved by the Supervisory Council. Therefore, no action was taken.

Discussion of the MOU:

McGee said that we need to let others know there has been a change in the LGC organization. Other institutions and entities need to know that they will be served through the end of this fiscal year, so as not to disrupt operations. If over time, institutions wish to continue to operate at the LGC location on the College of Charleston’s North Campus, they need to transfer their agreements to the College of Charleston. There are already service agreements in place with the LGC and thus, this would call for such obligations to be transferred through a common, successor, and comparable agreement. There are others such as elected officials who need to be notified as well so they know how and whether they wish to continue to support the LGC as in the past. The Advisory Boards are needed for the LGC to continue to serve in a reporting capacity to the Supervisory Council. McGee has drafted such a letter and is making edits from Muller and Gibbison to add clarity. Thanking Muller for compiling details of a contact list, he said he shares her eagerness to be timely in these communications. The College of Charleston’s in-house legal counsel has been asked for advice in drafting a single, common service agreement that can replace the service agreements between the LGC and other entities, and who in turn may contact those respective university provosts directly. Muller urged that McGee’s letter precede any such contact by legal counsel directly to institutional provosts. She offered clerical help to issue the letter as soon as possible.

Separately, McGee applauded the entire LGC team who met individually and collectively with him in early February to discuss what was similar and different between the MOU and the former LGC Consortium Agreement.

McGee said that there remain details to be thrashed out. When asked if she had concerns, Muller said there may be branding concerns of other institutions by losing a neutral body like the LGC for communicating with prospective and enrolled students. The practicalities of logistics, such as safety and weather alerts, represent another, as we have not devised a suitable automated means of alerting students, faculty, and program directors of other institutions in the case of emergencies or other such notifications from the College of Charleston whose policies the LGC follows. McGee agreed, adding that these would need to be addressed.

He acknowledged the need for contingency plans, given the uncertainties always existing prior to the final approval of the state's annual budget and appropriations. This is nothing new for the LGC, whose existence has been threatened in the past. Still, he added that employment continues of state employees even if the LGC goes away. Creation of a transition plan needs to be undertaken, and a continued conversation with auditors is needed. A brief discussion ensued as to what happens to the LGC's carryforward balance. Seckinger stated that such funds are "sunset" at the end of the fiscal year, if the LGC were to be unfunded by the state legislature. Muller read from September 28, 2016 minutes supplied in the meeting packet – and previously distributed to all former LGC board members - quoting both former board members Seckinger and Lowell re: carryover funds in the subject meeting:

"Seckinger said the carryover funds should be returned to the state. Lowell stated that the College of Charleston cannot absorb the LGC's fund balance."

Book suggested establishing annual timelines for each of the three objectives framed in Article 3.0 of the MOU. CRDA releases its annual "scorecard" report in October, and the LGC should develop a response to it as its annual report on the state of graduate education in the Lowcountry. Book offered to work on the item labeled (a) calling for an annual report. She added that the two new graduate certificates have just been approved, and The Citadel needs to have funds made available to develop and market them. There needs to be a process for requesting these funds of the LGC. Chris Duncan said that in the past the LGC had provided "opportunity funds" for such purposes when state appropriations were substantially higher. Simpson was asked to investigate in the files if there was a prescribed process and form for requesting "opportunity funds." Muller said the creation of such a template is in her personal work plan and goals for 2017. Saladin suggested that such a template be consistent with the framework used by CHE when new programs have to be justified. She agreed to assume responsibility for oversight of this task (c) for the provision of short-term start-up funding support for new or substantially revised and expanded graduate programs where a need for these programs in the Lowcountry is identified. McGee in turn agreed to assume

responsibility for insuring a practical timeline for item (b) pertaining to facility access in Metro Charleston.

Financials:

Book suggested no further action on the current FY2017 Budget.

Muller, with input from Gibbison, offered a preliminary 2018 Budget but it was not discussed. Saladin asked if it assumed a higher percentage loading factor for covering the state's pension shortfall. Muller said that without a final strategy decided and voted upon by the state legislators, she had not included speculative assumptions. It was agreed not to discuss a 2018 Budget until the state appropriations are fixed and the final state budget is known.

McGee reminded Council members that a motion was approved in September by the former LGC board of directors to undertake an independent financial audit of the LGC since the beginning of its existence, something that had never been done. He added that subsequent to that meeting, informal concerns had been raised with the potential cost of such an audit, as up to \$50,000 had been allotted in the motion that was passed. Muller said that she had been contacted by former LGC board member Harrington to help identify some of the years in question regarding past practices, and she gave him those years she had referenced in her report at the meeting, having unearthed approved board minutes in the files. The Citadel developed a RFP for firms bidding to undertake the audit. Brian asked if the Council could proceed with the audit or whether it should reduce the scope of the audit. Book suggested specific years be selected as "test points." Book said she will talk to Harrington in the coming two weeks to see if a reduced scope is possible. Book said there are minutes of the meeting that have been distributed, and a charge was raised. The C of C still has another layer of auditing that already exists. Brian said a different motion and vote is needed to change the scope. If such a vote is to be taken, it should occur before the end of the current fiscal year. Saladin said a random, sampling approach to searches seems reasonable. Former LGC board member Love then stated that we should proceed with the audit. Seckinger agreed.

Brian then passed out a written resolution to thank all former LGC board members for their service and read it aloud, after asking for a motion and second to enter the new item on the agenda. Unanimous consent was granted to amend the agenda to include the resolution. There was consensus among the three provosts on adoption of the resolution. Muller asked who is going to send out the resolution, and McGee said his office would do this. Muller then asked if it is being sent only to the most recent board members, suggesting that someone giving considerable years of service such as Bill Scarborough should also be thanked. Love agreed and asked that Sen. Arthur Ravenel, the visioning co-founder, also receive such a formal document of gratitude. Muller added that Sam Hines and Rosalie Crouch, who together drafted the original Consortium Agreement, should receive it as well, as nothing special had been done for Dr. Crouch. McGee said that he would cast a wider net to these individuals, including Dr. Crouch and Sen. Ravenel, neither of

whom had served on the LGC board. The resolution is attached as an addendum to these minutes for the files.

To schedule the next Supervisory Council meeting, McGee will examine the week of April 10 -17. It was agreed to schedule this as a meeting by telephone. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible after approval of the state budget, late May or early June. Muller and Gibbison recommended that the subsequent meeting be scheduled in late October or early November.

Love expressed sorrow in not being present at the meeting, adding that she had always been a “huge fan” of the LGC from the very beginning. She said she was encouraged by the leadership coming together to take the LGC to another level, offering her continued willingness to help. Seckinger made the point that the model of the LGC has been changed by the new MOU and therefore the Supervisory Council needs to look at the operating budget and vote on the budget. She said it had been a “joy and privilege” to serve on the LGC board of directors.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Muller
March 27 , 2017

Addendum – Resolution