

Minutes of the Southeastern Community College Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, November 27, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
A Building, Room 210

Present: Joe Hooks, Chair; Mrs. Theresa Blanks, Vice Chair; Jack Hooks, Mr. Henry Edmund, Britt, Mr. Bobby Ezzell, Dr. Timothy Lance, Dr. Gary Lanier, and Dr. Dan Strickland

Others Present: Dr. Chris English, President; Dr. Sylvia Cox, EVP/Chief Academic Officer; Ibreta Jackson, VP/COO; Terrie Priest, Foundation Director; Dr. Natalie Hinson, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness; Brad Wilder, SGA President; Jennie Simmons, Executive Assistant; Ian Callahan, HR Director; Kaylie Simmons, Marketing and Communication Director; Mr. Justin Smith, News Reporter; Karlyn Stephens, Head Softball Coach, and Tyler Cliff, Information Systems Specialist

Special Guests: Julie Strickland, Paul Starnes, Jenny Meckins, and Steve Smith

Not in attendance: Dr. Maudie Davis, Randy Britt, Emma Shaw, and Crystal Frink

Open Regular Board Meeting Session: Joe Hooks welcomed everyone and then called the meeting into session at 5:30 pm.

Recognition of Guest: Dr. English introduced Julie Strickland and complimented her on the fantastic work she has done for the county, her amazing partnership with the college, and her many accomplishments over the past years. On behalf of the faculty, staff, and trustees, she was presented with a plaque inscribed with a personalized message about her unceasing dedication; she was also given a customized SCC jersey.

Chairman Joe Hooks articulated how much the Board of Trustees and the people of Columbus County appreciate all she has done for the community. Karlyn Stephens spoke of their time together coaching and how Julie influenced her career and was instrumental in getting Karlyn to SCC as the softball coach.

Special Guest: Steve Smith attended the meeting to Promote the Arts and gave some background information on the start of the Southeastern Oratorio. He presented information regarding the benefits of vocal arts. He talked about the importance of music and how it creates well-rounded people. He asked the board to consider bringing the choral program or something similar back to SCC.

Game Changer Award: Dr. English presented the award to Paul Starnes and told of his tremendous work for economic and workforce development. Paul took the lead on the mobile welding lab and did an incredible job. He is a great mentor to these students, but not only to students; faculty members and instructional staff quickly learned that Paul is always willing to

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help. When SACSCOC came, they were blown away by his understanding of program learning outcomes and assessments; they commented they had never seen a welding instructor so articulate on SACSCOC. Joe Hooks said Paul has trouble graduating his students because they get jobs faster than they can finish; obviously, some excellent training is happening.

Ethics Statement: Joe Hooks reminded the board of the Ethics Statement and asked any board member who felt they had a conflict or possible conflict on a particular agenda item to please let him know and refrain from participating in the specific matter involved.

Approval of Meeting Agenda: A motion was made by Dr. Gary Lanier and seconded by Mr. Bobby Ezzell to approve the November 27, 2023, meeting agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Consent Agenda Items: Joe Hooks asked if any consent agenda items needed further review. There were no items for further discussion before the consent agenda vote. The items listed under the consent agenda were as follows:

- September 25, 2023, Regular Session Minutes
- New Employee and Personnel Update
- Annual Campus Safety and Security Report (Clery Act)
- Agribusiness Program Pricing
- Columbus County Schools and SCC Career & College Promise MOU

A motion was made by Jack Hooks to approve the consent agenda items. Mr. Henry Edmund seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Budget Update:

Ibreta Jackson reported on our approved state budget for 2024, explaining this is a baseline and will increase with special allocations for specific purposes as the year progresses. Our baseline budget is \$15,475,543. That includes our regular operating budget and capital, which is equipment. Four months into our fiscal year, we should be at 34% of the budget, but we are at 35%. That is a little high but is expected at the beginning of the fiscal year due to items paid in advance, like software subscriptions and purchases that will be used for the full year but paid for at the beginning of the year. It will average out as the year progresses.

Also, with our state budget on capital, we've spent about 23%. We have ordered many of our equipment items but have yet to receive them. You'll see that number increase as the year progresses.

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Our county budget remains the same for the full fiscal year; we received \$2,435,410; at four months out of 12, we should be around 34% of the budget spent. It looks high at 40%, but a lot of that is insurance that has been prepaid.

We also spent almost \$100,000 on the electrical outlets at the high schools. We spent dollars early, but it will balance out as the year progresses. Once again, this is just a baseline budget; we are up about 1.2 million from last year's baseline, and that is due to higher enrollment.

Dr. English added they are currently working on the next county budget request. We should have some numbers ready in January. The next county presentation will be in February. We have had significant increases in insurance and utilities, so we need to make adjustments. We are taking a closer look and reassessing the insurances to see if we can combine or cut some.

Policy & Bylaw updates: Dr. English called on Carlton Williamson to help explain the upcoming changes. Adjustments will need to be made to our policy and our bylaws. The General Assembly delivered these initiatives, and one of the most significant changes is governance. The most significant change is eliminating the governor's appointees and county and city school board appointees. The legislators will have eight selections—your term continues until the expiration of your term. Brenden Jones and Bill Rabon will make the new selections based on conversations with us.

We have several issues to be addressed: whether to appoint the SGA president to the board and whether they are a non-voting member. We must have a policy that mandates and pays for parental leave. Specific statutes now prohibit colleges from compelling employees to engage in certain speech and providing training on specific diversity-related topics, and the K12 Parents Bill of Rights, which would affect our campus because of the Early College students. All of this is a work in progress. Dean Shatley with the System Office has developed a policy manual that about 20 colleges currently use for information or have adopted as their policies, and then they developed the procedures.

These policy and bylaw changes are effective January 1st; we will be ready at the January 22nd board meeting. There may still be some technical writing to finalize with policies, but the system office and the policy manual will help us navigate the changes.

Greenhouse Groundbreaking: We will have our groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, December 11th, at 2:00 behind the Cartrette building. All documentation has been finalized, and Chris Worley is working on completing the permits. The greenhouse is funded by the NC Tobacco Trust Commission. Chairman Joe Hooks, representing the Trustees, Tobacco Trusts

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representatives, and Representative Brenden Jones, will participate in the groundbreaking. The tobacco trust fund was set up by the General Assembly in 2001. We invite you all to be here.

Committee Reports:

Facilities Committee: Chairman Randy Britt could not attend, so Joe Hooks stood in as chair at the Facilities Committee meeting on November 6, 2023. Mr. Joe Hooks explained the discussion of the new appropriation of money for the athletic field. We must file a 3-1 for state board approval for state construction. That money will come from the appropriations from the state budget that we received in the latest budget. That will be 1.2 million from the 12.5 million we received. We are asking for your support for this tonight. The facilities committee recommends adding the 1.2 million to our athletic fields for renovations.

Joe Hooks recommended a motion for the full board to approve, and all were in favor.

Finance Committee: Finance Committee Chairman Henry Edmund updated the board of Trustees about the November 6, 2023 meeting. The trustees at that meeting were Dr. Lance, Dr. Strickland, Emma Shaw, and Henry Edmund. Minutes from the meeting can be found on BoardDocs. The committee reviewed the approved state budget as presented by COO Ibreta Jackson and Trustees were able to ask Ibreta and Dr. English questions. This does not include the county budget; we have yet to hear what those numbers will be.

The finance committee agreed and recommended to the full board that the state budget be approved. The recommendation was approved unanimously.

College Reports:

President's Report: Dr. English touched on the following points:

- He referenced the greenhouse groundbreaking planned for December 11th at 2:00 pm.
- SCC was recognized by the Aspen Institute as one of the top 150 schools out of over 1000 schools in the United States. It's the who's who of colleges, and you are at the top of your game when you receive this recognition. They look at six critical areas among community and technical colleges: **Teaching & Learning, Certificates in Group Degree Completion, Transfer & Bachelor's Containment, Workforce Success, Equitable access to college, and Equitable outcomes for students of color and low-income backgrounds.** We are achieving success in all those measures to be recognized. We are working on applying in December to compete for the top prize of \$1,000,000.

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- SCC was one of eighteen colleges selected to work with Project Vision with the National Science Foundation in a grant opportunity. This grant will allow us to partner with the National Science Foundation in advanced technologies. A grant focusing on hybrid electric vehicles and gaseous fuel vehicles has been submitted. We could receive \$1 million, which would be significant to the automotive program.
- Two weeks ago, we received notification from Hyundai that we have full access to their entire training program except for the actual hands-on lab with a vehicle.
- We have been working closely with the Presidents' Association and State Board of Community Colleges and understanding our governance.

Executive VP Report: Dr. Cox highlighted a few events from the past two months and said we have been very busy participating in parades, festivals, and fairs. We have had excellent representation, and it has been exciting to be a part of things happening in the community and here on our campus. We had three great partnerships on Halloween, with over 3,000 people attending the Trunk or Treat event. We partnered with the Hearts Foundation and Columbus County Parks and Recreation. We had our 3rd annual Chris Wilcox Turkey Giveaway. The SGA president and baseball and softball players helped. If you want to know what's happening at SCC, look on Instagram or Facebook. Also, we can offer classes at every high school on their campus because of the mobile units.

Administrative Services Report: Ibreta reported that Administrative Services has dispersed additional scholarships over the past two months in collaboration with the foundation. We distributed \$1.7 million in scholarships and financial aid awards to students.

The state budget this year was a legislative salary increase. All full and part-time staff and faculty are receiving a 4% salary increase. The 4% was for this fiscal year from July through October; we had to go back and do retro pay, which will be in the November paychecks.

She then introduced our new Director of Human Resources, Ian Callahan. He came to us on October 30th from UNCW, focusing on classification, compensation, organizational restructuring, and salary surveys. Ian has been married to his wife, Crystal, for 18 years. They have two children, Ayden, age one, and Avery, age four.

Foundation Report:

Terrie Priest reported about the opening reception for the Doug Sasser Photography Show on November 14th. Doug decided that 100% of everything sold would go to the SCC Foundation. When you leave tonight, check out the incredible photography prints for sale.

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Another thing is that The Embers are coming back, so get your tickets early because they're going fast.

We are planning a groundbreaking on February 6th, the anniversary of Southeastern. We are continuing to sell bricks and will place an order soon.

Student Government Association (SGA) Report – SGA President Brad Wilder reviewed the activities report and elaborated on events since September, such as the university transfer, which has been going on since 2015 with large turnouts, Trunk or Treat with the HEARTS Foundation and Columbus County Parks and Recreations, the Advisory Council, and the Chris Wilcox Turkey Giveaway event.

On December 6th, they will have a pre-exam party for students to help get them in the right mindset for exams.

Joe Hooks said we appreciate you being here and bringing that information to us; we thank you for your role with the SGA.

Chairman's Comments: Joe thanked the faculty and staff for the continued growth happening at the college.

Joe Hooks presented the voting outcome from the board meeting time change. He reminded everyone of the voting poll that was emailed out and told them of the total votes cast. Joe asked if there was any other discussion or comments. Everyone agreed to conduct board meetings at noon, with lunch served starting January 22, 2024.

Joe asked if the Trustees could see a timeline of the projects with so many facility projects coming up. The facilities committee hears about projects, but we want the whole board to know what is on the horizon. It was decided that we would add a new agenda item titled "Project Updates" to the Board Meeting and have a spreadsheet with updates.

Dr. English explained that they may need to come out and do a soft dig to verify that the utilities are where they think they are. Once completed, the engineering firm and Barnhill will work on their estimates. They are hoping to have estimates back in 2 to 3 weeks. We plan to have a joint facilities and finance meeting with MPS to discuss the numbers. We may have to trim back because most projects are higher than initially estimated. This job was priced at \$14 million, but we have had a year and a half of inflation. Some delay occurred when we tried locating the utilities to save costs. It would have cost us \$100,000 for someone to come and discover the existing utilities. Dr. English found the blueprints, which saved us a lot of money; we also had to do more surveys than anticipated and worked with the Army Corps of Engineers. We are now ready to move forward.

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Old Business: None

New Business: None

Reminders: Joe Hooks referred to the upcoming events and told everyone they could be found on BoardDocs.

Request of Closed Session:

A motion to go into closed session to discuss a private matter was requested by Joe Hooks. Dan Strickland made a motion to go into closed session in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) Attorney-Client Privilege, which was seconded by Bobby Ezzell and unanimously approved.

"Closed Session"

The motion was made by Jack Hooks to return to open session. Henry Edmund seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

There was no further business to discuss; Joe Hooks dismissed the Trustees at 7:15 pm. All were in favor.



Dr. Chris English, President



Joe Hooks, Chairman
Board of Trustees