

**Minutes of the Southeastern Community College Board of Trustees**  
**Monday, March 24, 2025, at 12:00pm**  
**T-Building, Rooms 120/122**

**Present:** Joe Hooks, Chair; Theresa Blanks, Vice Chair; Emma Shaw, Henry Edmund, Dr. Gary Lanier, Dr. Dan Strickland, Jack Hooks, Chandler Worley, and Al Leonard

**Others Present:** Dr. Chris English, President; Dr. Sylvia Cox, VP/Student Services; Ibreta Jackson, COO, VP/Administrative Services; Kaylie Simmons, Marketing Director; Terrie Priest, Foundation Director; Carol Ann Lydon, Dean of Research; Riley Benton, SGA President; Denise Young, Apprenticeship Director; Jennie Simmons, Executive Assistant; Ashton Williams and Erick Bautista, Tech Support; and Angie Ransom, Associate Vice President

**Not in Attendance:** Dr. Maudie Davis, Ricky Benton, and Dr. Danny McPherson

Dr. Dan Strickland said the blessing, and lunch was served at 12:00 pm.

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**Open Regular Board Meeting Session**

**Welcome:** Joe Hooks welcomed everyone and called the meeting into session at 12:30pm.

**Recognition of "Staff Person of the Year Award"**

Dr. English was thrilled to introduce Denise Young to the trustees as the North Carolina Community College System Staff Person of the Year. Considering the thousands of employees across all 58 community colleges in NC, this is an incredible honor. Denise has made a remarkable impact in apprenticeships, serving as Director of Apprenticeships and spearheading initiatives that build pathways for students into the workforce. This fall alone, she engaged 282 students in pre-apprenticeships and contributed to a 53% increase in work-based learning opportunities.

On April 3rd, we will celebrate this well-deserved recognition at a reception and awards ceremony at the Umstead Hotel in Raleigh.

Dr. English stated, "Denise, we are so proud of you and grateful for your dedication. Thank you for representing Southeastern Community College so well.

**Recognition of Dr. Sylvia Cox** ~ During a special moment, Dr. English and Chairman Joe Hooks called Dr. Sylvia Cox up to be recognized for her outstanding contributions to Southeastern Community College.

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Dr. English praised her phenomenal work over the past five years, highlighting her growth, leadership, and dedication. He shared his pride in her accomplishments and expressed excitement for her new opportunity at the state level.

Chairman Joe Hooks read a resolution dedicated to Dr. Sylvia Cox and requested that it be recorded in the official minutes. He then presented her with a framed copy of the resolution in appreciation of her service.

Dr. English expressed gratitude for Dr. Cox's dedication and exceptional leadership as Executive Vice President, wishing her success in her new role as President. As a token of appreciation, she was presented with a personalized watch from Dr. English and the Trustees.

Dr. Cox thanked everyone for their support and mentorship, recognizing their role in her EVP growth and preparing her for this exciting new chapter.

Dr. Cox thanked everyone for their role in her life, helping her grow as the Executive Vice President and preparing for her new presidency.

Chairman Hooks added that we are incredibly grateful for Dr. Cox's impact on SCC and wish her the best in this next chapter of her career.

**Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder:** Joe Hooks reviewed the Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Statement and asked for any trustee who has a conflict or the appearance of a conflict to recuse themselves from participating.

**Approval of Meeting Agenda:** Dr. Dan Strickland made a motion to approve the agenda, and Al Leonard seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:** There were no items that needed further discussion; the items were as follows:

- Regular Session Minutes - Monday, January 27, 2025
- New Employees and Personnel Update
- Report of Disposals
- Notice of tree trimming/removal from Duke Energy
- Strategic Plan Review and Alignment
- Policy Updates~ 2.07-Discrimination and Harassment
- Fee Approvals
- NC Office of the State Auditor Letter and Report-FY2024
- CCR&R Fiscal Monitoring Report

Al Leonard made a motion to approve the consent agenda, and Dr. Gary Lanier seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

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**Voting Items:**

**Perkins Grant Allotment & Statement of Assurance**

Natalie Hinson explained the **Perkins Grant Allotment Form** for the **2025-2026 fiscal year**.

- Section A: Requests the federal allotment for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Section B: Allows us to accept additional funds carried over from 2024-2025 if available.
- Section C: Authorizes Southeastern Community College to accept all Perkins-related funding.

The Statement of Assurance accompanies this form, outlining our commitment to compliance, reporting, and proper use of funds in alignment with Perkins grant requirements.

Though this is typically signed later in the year, we are bringing it forward now to ensure timely submission and compliance with deadlines. These funds are allocated based on FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) enrollment.

**Henry Edmund made a motion to accept the Perkins allotment assurances; Jack Hooks seconded the motion; all were in favor.**

**Information Items**

**Budget Update:** Ibreta Jackson referenced the state and county budget report through February 2025.

- **State Budget:** Trending below target at 62%, including operations and capital. We will utilize all available funds, and the \$900,000 high-cost healthcare funds will automatically carry forward to next year. We received an additional \$101,972 allocation for Enrollment Growth Reserve. This allocation resulted from an increase in FTE greater than 5% between Fall 2023 and Fall 2024. These funds do not revert and can carry forward indefinitely.
- **County Budget:** Currently, 73% is spent (operating at 82%), slightly exceeding the target of 67%. Some prepaid expenses contribute to this early-year increase, but spending is expected to level out.

Utility Costs are averaging 10% higher than last year. Despite this, we are in a better position than the previous year (72% vs. 77% last year).

We will review the final costs at our May meeting, but we are on track to close the year within budget.

In April, we should request a budget modification from the county to transfer capital funds to operations. The college has delayed the purchase of any capital expenditures to allow

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flexibility with the operating budget. We have spoken with Ricky and Eddie, so this won't be unexpected. By then, we'll have a clearer picture of what is needed.

**Enrollment Update:** Carol Ann presented a PowerPoint on Summer and Fall FTE and enrollment updates with 5-year comparisons. Enrollment has almost doubled from 2020 to 2024. We have had excellent growth every semester.

**Fall-to-Fall FTE and enrollment comparisons      Summer FTE and enrollment comparisons**

**2020** - 2,831 enrollment & 647 FTEs  
**2021** - 3,071 enrollment & 715.6 FTEs  
**2022** - 3,341 enrollment & 832 FTEs  
**2023** - 3,436 enrollment & 839.2 FTEs  
**2024** - 3,370 enrollment & 880.8 FTEs

**2020** - 1,521 enrollment & 220 FTEs  
**2021** - 2,090 enrollment & 264.3 FTEs  
**2022** - 2,235 enrollment & 384.6 FTEs  
**2023** - 2,323 enrollment & 374.6 FTEs  
**2024** - 2,383 enrollment & 414.2 FTEs

Our overall total for curriculum students enrolled is 1,450. She then pointed out the breakdown of full-time, part-time, programs of study, gender, employment, and age, which is similar to last year. Our Hispanic and African American populations are increasing, and our overall retention is 53.0 % from fall to fall.

**Enrollment Highlights of Fall 2024:**

- Increased Focus on Short-Term Workforce Development Programs, i.e., Truck Driver Training, Construction Trades, Welding, and Healthcare
- Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Pathways Early Successes
  - Fall 2023-Fall 2024 - 282 High School Students Enrolled in a Pre-Apprenticeship Pathway
- Selected for NC Reconnect Cohort 5 – Year One Focused on Adults Age 18-44 who have some SCC college credits (1500 Students)
- Total Grants Received in Summer and Fall 2024 = \$940,000

**Capital Project Updates:** Ibreta reported that we have \$34,941,276 allocated to capital projects. The roof project for T-building and Cartrette is almost complete. The Bell Pavillion is underway and expected to be completed in 2 months. They are putting the engraved pavers down now.

- **Transportation Technology** - Project is progressing on schedule. Barnhill (GC), McMillan Pazdan Smith (Architect), State Construction Office (SCO) and Southeastern CC met on February 25th to review and discuss PGMP contract and early package process.
- **Building M & T Renovations** – New lockers were installed March 6th. The renovation project for Building M is complete.

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- Building Access Controls – Quality Consulting Engineers (QCE) & SCC Team met February 13th to review final design draft for submission to State Construction Office (SCO). QCE submitted to SCO early March 2025
- Nesmith Building - Student Center Renovation - Awaiting feedback and approval from State Construction Office for acceptance of Design/Build delivery option.
- Roof Repair - Silicone roof coating has been placed on Cartrette and Building T. The color of Cartrette roof is now light tan versus the original green color. Contractor is scheduled to complete final walkthrough in Mid-March.
- Athletics Field Upgrade - Received design fee proposal from CHA Solutions. Upon approval from BOT, we will submit to State Construction Office to initiate a contract.
- Health Science Building-R Renovation and Addition - We solicited for designers (engineer firms) and received responses from twelve (12) firms—pending college review to select three firms for interview.
- Gazebo & Raise the Bell Project - Construction of Gazebo (Pavillion) is actively underway. Project is slated to complete in late Spring.

**Committee Reports**

**Joint Finance & Facilities Report** - Dr. Strickland and Henry Edmund chaired the joint meeting to review the 2025-2026 County Budget request. Dr. English said the presentation to the county was well received. No final decision has been made yet.

**Facilities Committee Report** – Dr. Dan Strickland advised the trustees of the facilities meeting and recommendations. He explained the CHA design fee for the Athletic Field Upgrade for the CHA design is 8% of our allocated funds. The subcommittee recommended that the full board approve the design fee. They also recommended the 3-1 form amendment, which is for additional cost on the remodel of M-building (floor, lockers, and asbestos removal from ceiling). This will move 60K from the R-building project to the M-building renovation. They are also asking for approval of the change order with Monteith.

**Dr. Strickland, chairman of the facilities subcommittee, made a recommendation from the committee to approve the 3-1 amendments and the change order for Monteith. The full board agreed with the recommendations. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**Curriculum Committee Report** – Chairman Dr. Gary Lanier reported that the curriculum met last week and was provided information on program changes and modifications with the CCP Career & College Ready Pathway, PN-ADN transition program, MLT lab assistant certificate, and public safety administration program. There were 3 items for discussion and voting: the Audio-Video Production Technology Program at Columbus Correctional

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Institution, the Agribusiness Technology Program at Thomas Academy, and the Air Conditioning, Heating, & Refrigeration Technology Program at West Columbus High School.

**A recommendation from the Curriculum Subcommittee was presented to the full board to move forward with State Board approval to seek NC State Board of Community Colleges/NC System Office approval to offer the Audio & Video Production Technology program at this off-site location, Columbus Correctional Institution. The full board unanimously approved the recommendation.**

**The Curriculum Subcommittee made a recommendation to seek approval from SACSCOC to add this location as an off-campus instructional site (OCIS) at Columbus Correctional Institution. The full board approved the recommendation.**

**The Curriculum Subcommittee made a recommendation to seek approval from SACSCOC to offer 50-100% of the Associate of Applied Science-Agribusiness Technology program at Thomas Academy as an off-campus instructional site (OCIS). The full board unanimously agreed with the recommendation.**

**The Curriculum Subcommittee made a recommendation to seek approval from SACSCOC to offer 50-100% of the Air Conditioning, Heating, & Refrigeration Technology program at West Columbus High School. All were in favor of the recommendation.**

**College Reports**

**President's Report:**

- Dr. English reported on the Statewide Joint Superintendents/Presidents meeting in Greensboro in February, which he attended, as well as Eddie Beck and Jonathan Williams.
- He and Chairman Hooks attended the Law Legislative Seminar last week in Raleigh.
- NC Reconnect event on campus
- EVP search is in the works; we hope to have someone by July 1st
- Thom Tillis' office sent word that we did not get the funds for the driving pad. They will resubmit the request.
- We received the first section of our policy review from Dean Shatley. We will review it at President's Council and then send it to the trustees.

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**Executive VP report:**

- Dr. Sylvia Cox said we have had our mobile units at all middle schools
- Summer camp options are on our website
- April 4<sup>th</sup>, we will have every senior in Columbus County on our campus, along with 80 industry partners.
- We received the bridge program \$500,000 from NCCCS for a success coach.
- Kudos to our marketing department, NC Reconnect has praised their work.
- Mrs. Mary Hooks was instrumental in helping us with a UNC grant -for a Pharmacy School for the next 3 years through the UNC System.

**Administrative Services Report:** Mrs. Ibreta Jackson gave an update on administrative services.

- They have completed their final audit for 23/24 FY with a clean audit.
- A-210 is nearing completion; wall units will be installed soon
- New signage will be posted outside of the Beth Israel Synagogue Community Room. It will be the model for what we are working towards with our signage.

**Foundation Report:** Terrie Priest touched on a few highlights from the foundation's main events over the last two months.

- Spring Mini-Grants awarded
  - Campus-wide Sustainability Education Project
  - Support for HVAC & Cosmetology Students
  - Electrical Lineman Program support
  - Transitional Studies Graduation support
  - Sheep Production
  - Earth Day
  - IMPACT Summer Bridge Program Transportation
  - Small Business Center Recognition Ceremony
  - Manicuring Students Cap & Gown support
- Processed 213 passports since July 1st, raising \$12,215 for unrestricted funds
- Mardi Gras Masquerade President's Ball tickets are available.

**SGA Report:** Dr. English announced this will be Riley Benton's last board meeting because he will graduate in May and then will be joining the US Marine Corps. Dr. English expressed his appreciation for Riley attending the meetings and representing the SGA.

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Riley highlighted the SGA activities for January and February. A few of the events included the Club Fair, Black History Month Celebration, Fred Mason's Memorial, Blood Connection Blood Drive, Pre-Wellness event, SGA Elections, and SGA Conference. He also mentioned a few upcoming events.

**Chairman's Comments**

**Ethics Training reminder:** Chairman Hooks emphasized the importance of completing ethics training. He was pleased to announce that everyone is currently up to date on their required training.

**Statement of Economic Intent:** Joe Hooks reminded the board of their obligation to fill out and submit the SEI form by April 15th.

**Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation:** Joe Hooks explained the need to complete the online survey regarding the Self-Evaluation by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Evaluation of President Dr. English:** Joe Hooks asked that the president's online evaluation survey be completed by May 9th. Joe encouraged all trustees to complete them as soon as possible. Jennie Simmons sent the link out in mid-February.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Reminders:** Joe Hooks pointed out the reminders and asked the trustees to read over them.

**Request of Closed Session:**

A motion to go into closed session to discuss personnel issues was made by Al Leonard, seconded by Jack Hooks, and unanimously approved.

**"Closed Session"**

Al Leonard made a motion to return to open session seconded by Dr. Dan Strickland. All were in favor.



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There was no further business to discuss; Dr. Gary Lanier motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:30 pm, and Jack Hooks seconded the motion; all were in favor.



Joe Hooks, Chairman  
SCC Board of Trustees



Dr. Chris English, President  
Southeastern Community College