

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 1, 2009
MINUTES**

Ms. Milliken called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. in the SCHEV main conference room, James Monroe building, 9th floor, Richmond, Virginia. Council members present: Bob Ashby, Gilbert Bland, Whittington Clement, Jim Dyke, Mimi Elrod, Mary Haddad, Susan Magill, Christine Milliken, G. Gilmer Minor, Katharine Webb, and Alan Wurtzel.

Council members absent: None

Staff members present: Jim Alessio, Tom Daley, Alan Edwards, Dan Hix, Daniel LaVista, Tod Massa, and Kirsten Nelson. Jake Belue from the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) was also present.

CHAIR'S OPENING COMMENTS

Ms. Milliken opened the session by thanking Council members for their participation in the morning meeting with members of the State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC), officials of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) office, and presidents of many of Virginia's 23 community colleges. She noted that the earlier meeting would be discussed during the agenda's Other Business. She also noted that no Public Comment Period was scheduled.

REVIEW OF LETTER TO GOVERNOR-ELECT MCDONNELL

Dr. LaVista distributed copies of a draft letter from the Council to Governor-elect McDonnell that shared the Council's concerns, recommendations, and progress toward advancing Virginia through higher education. He described the current draft as an educating, respectful communication of the Council's priorities and strengths, and he explained that his goal was to transmit the letter as soon as possible. Following discussion of potential revisions, the Council decided that members would sign the letter's signature page at the meeting and that any and all further revisions would be made in consultation with, and under the approval of, Ms. Milliken.

Dr. LaVista noted that Ms. Magill had been added to Governor-elect McDonnell's Higher Education Transition Team. Ms. Magill indicated that the team would include Heywood Fralin and Frank Atkinson.

In response to a question from Ms. Haddad on whether the P-16 Council would be continued by the McDonnell administration, Ms. Milliken responded that she was unsure but hoped it would be. In response to a suggestion from Mr. Wurtzel that the Council adopt a resolution in support of continuing the P-16 Council, discussion followed. A motion was moved and seconded directing staff to prepare a letter to

Governor-elect McDonnell in support of his continuation of the P-16 Council. The following resolution was unanimously adopted for inclusion in the letter:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia supports the continuation of the P-16 Education Council in recognition of its role in coordinating all segments of education.

REVIEW OF FINDINGS FROM SCHEV SURVEY OF STUDENTS (VA21) AND INSTITUTIONS REGARDING BUDGET CUT IMPACT

Dr. LaVista reviewed the findings from recent staff surveys of undergraduates and financial-affairs administrators regarding the impacts of state budget cuts. He noted that the findings centered on issues of course availability, operating hours, administrative changes, and student/family financial hardships. He also noted that the survey participants had been members of the Student Advisory Committee, the GEAR UP program, the Virginia21 political education group, and the Finance Advisory Committee.

Dr. LaVista indicated that student respondents reported fewer courses or course sections, reduced hours for libraries and other facilities or services, and higher costs. He said that administrative respondents reported decreased numbers of academic positions, shifts to more part-time academic and non-academic staff, spending contractions, fewer staff in financial aid offices serving more needy students, increased difficulty attracting faculty, less research productivity, and low morale. The Council discussed these findings and potential future uses, as well as limitations arising from the informal survey's small sample size.

Dr. LaVista then reminded the Council of staff's work in assembling packets of information to facilitate the orientation of the incoming Governor, Secretary of Education, and Policy Advisors. He requested that members share their thoughts and ideas with him at their convenience. Mr. Wurtzel suggested that information from the recent sampling of students be included in the initial letter to Governor-elect McDonnell in order to humanize and personalize the budget-cut issue. Ms. Webb suggested that the survey results be included in the list of reports that would be transmitted to the Governor-elect and his Transition Team.

Mr. Dyke noted that his schedule required his early departure, but that he wished to speak to the contributions of Mr. Wurtzel, given that Mr. Wurtzel had advised Governor Kaine that he would be stepping down from the Council as soon as a replacement could be found. Mr. Dyke praised Mr. Wurtzel's leadership in, and many contributions to, higher education, K-12 education, and Virginia in general.

OTHER BUSINESS

MEETING WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. Milliken revisited the topic of the morning meeting with representatives of the SBCC, VCCS, and individual community colleges. Regarding the issue of full-time faculty ratios, Council members asked for clarification of exactly what was being asked of SCHEV in light of staff's reminder that the Council's budget recommendation regarding an improvement in the VCCS full-time faculty ratio had not been approved four years earlier, and that current Appropriation Act language directs the VCCS to use any additional funds provided for base operating support to achieve this objective. Regarding the distance-education issue, Mr. Daley advised that, as he had noted at the Council's October meeting, significant progress had been made in modifying SCHEV's capital outlay guidelines but that finalization of the revisions was dependent on the availability of enrollment data that the institutions agreed would not be available until the end of the current reporting cycle (Fall 2010). Dr. LaVista advised that staff would follow-up with the VCCS regarding the issues of full-time faculty ratios and distance-education considerations in the capital-outlay funding model.

ACTION ON RECOGNITION OF DEPARTING COUNCIL MEMBER

Ms. Milliken advised that Mr. Wurtzel would be leaving the Council and that a resolution in recognition of him had been prepared. She called on Mr. Clement to speak to the resolution, which he read aloud. Upon being asked by Mr. Clement to provide remarks, Mr. Wurtzel received a standing ovation from the Council, SCHEV staff, and attendees for his two terms of service, including two years as chair.

Mr. Wurtzel remarked that serving on the Council had been one of the greatest privileges of his life, that the Council had achieved many great accomplishments, and that while he regretted leaving, he was particularly thankful for the great friendships that he had developed with Council members.

Ms. Milliken noted that the written resolution would be framed and presented to Mr. Wurtzel following its approval and signature. The following resolution was unanimously approved by the Council:

WHEREAS, Alan Wurtzel served as an exemplary member of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia from 2003 to 2009; and as Chair from July 2004 to September 2007; and

WHEREAS, he also served as an active committee member on all of the Council's committees at various times during his tenure, including the Academic Affairs, Resources, Outreach, Executive, and Strategic Planning committees; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wurtzel's role in the Institutional Performance Standards and Restructuring subcommittees provided strong leadership to the Council in shaping these important new initiatives; and

WHEREAS, his extensive business experience and acumen advanced the Council's work by providing valuable insight and a fair and equitable approach to higher education policy matters; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wurtzel demonstrated his steadfast support for assessment in student learning and efficiency through technology by assisting the Commonwealth to establish nationally recognized reform initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wurtzel's effective leadership has guided the Council's support for accessibility and affordability and played an integral role in the development of academic standards for all Virginia students; and

WHEREAS, he will continue to ensure that Virginia is advanced through higher education and to serve as a valued and knowledgeable advisor to the Council as it continues its important work; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to **Alan L. Wurtzel** for his commitment, distinguished service, and numerous contributions to higher education in Virginia, and extends to him best wishes for continued success in all future endeavors.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Gilbert T. Bland
Secretary

Alan F. Edwards, Jr.
Director of Policy Studies
(for Lee Ann Rung)