

EAST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Official Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting—May 16, 2024

EACC Boardroom 6:00PM

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Board of Trustees meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Mr. Brent Howton, Chairman. Mr. Howton thanked everyone for their attendance and opened the meeting in prayer.

II. ROLL CALL:

The following board members were in attendance: Mr. Alan Curtis, Mrs. Beverly Devazier, Mrs. Jan Haven, Mr. Rausch Hodges, Mr. Brent Howton, Judge Ann Hudson, Mr. Kevin Lewey, Mr. Al Miller, and Dr. Florine Milligan.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dr. Cathie Cline, Mr. Jack Hill, Mr. Jim Huff, Mr. Adam O’Neal, Mrs. Lindsay Midkiff, Mrs. Lindsi Huffaker, and Mr. Sam Harris. Minutes were recorded and transcribed by Anne Kelso.

MEDIA PRESENT:

Media representation included Mr. Brodie Johnson representing the Forrest City *Times-Herald* newspaper.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Mr. Howton asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the previous meetings held February 8, 2024 and February 28, 2024—Special Called. Mr. Hodges moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Curtis seconded the motion. Motion carried with no opposition.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Status of Campus Projects

Dr. Cline reported on new uses for the Welcome Center including the library resource center, and most recently, the addition of an e-sports lab for students. E-sports is a video game in which students can compete with each other, as well as online. Mr. O’Neal noted that some colleges have intramural teams and that may be down the road for us, but right now, we are at the club level. Our students expressed an interest in this and we pursued it. There are national competitions and scholarship opportunities for high school students tied to this activity. Mr. O’Neal noted that he is glad we started this, and we anticipate that it will be a great tool for recruitment.

Dr. Cline noted that we continue to seek donations for the community room, and we are in the process of working on Welcome Center donor plaques. Once plaques are

received, we will host a dedication ceremony for the building and named spaces, unveiling all the plaques at the same time.

We finally received some bids for the Connectivity Trail, with a low bid of approximately \$284,000. Originally planned to be an oval shape, long delays in approvals from ARDOT has led to an increase in cost. Therefore, the project is now a crescent shaped walkway. We plan to pave a small drive connecting the two areas for college vehicles only, such as trams, gators, and smaller vehicles. Some tree removal and minor landscaping will also be a part of the project. ARDOT grant funds will cover \$168,000 of the total cost.

We have replaced the roof on CB-6 and repaired 3 roofs (CEC, New Library, and CB-5). Repairs have been made to 20 HVAC units this year, including the unit serving Adult Education, which required multiple parts being replaced at a cost of \$9,000. This helps to avoid purchasing a new unit, which would cost over \$100,000 due to the unique nature of that particular system. This is a report and requires no action by the Board.

B. Campus Activities Report

Lindsay Midkiff, Lindsi Huffaker and Adam O’Neal discussed recent activities that have taken place on our campus. A slide presentation included many events such as the library open house, concurrent convocation, community open house/registration/FAFSA completion, Springfest activities, the solar eclipse watch party, an employee family picnic and impaired driver simulation, Honors trip, Student Leadership Conference at the capitol, TRIO academic achievement awards, EACC Awards day, Secondary Career Center awards, PTK induction ceremony, wellness activities, graduates’ luncheon, and commencement ceremonies. It was noted that Bill Mathes, Diesel Technology Instructor, received the Distinguished Teaching award, and Mark Wilson, Director of Campus Safety & Operations received the Outstanding Staff Award.

C. Strategic Priorities Report

Dr. Cline noted that the Board previously approved the College’s Strategic Priorities for 2022-2027. A condensed plan was included in the board packet. Each year, every division makes a list of goals to work toward the larger Strategic plan. She noted the attached update for what each division has done this year to work toward that plan, and which priorities these achievements advance. In addition, some of the points of pride could not easily be added to the goals list because of the nature of the accomplishment. Some of the areas submitted reports that I wanted to share with you in their own words, and those are attached as well. This is a report and requires no action by the Board.

V. Financial Reports & Budget Adjustments:

Financial reports for periods ending February 29, 2024, March 31, 2024 and April 30, 2024 were presented to the Board by Mr. Huff, as well as the “Days of Cash on Hand” report. He further reported that no reportable budget adjustments have been made since the last meeting. Dr.

Cline asked that the financial reports be approved. Mr. Miller moved to accept the financial reports, and Judge Hudson seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

VI. New Business

A. Provisional Positions

Dr. Cline reported that the Board is required to approve, each year, the provisional positions that are normally associated with grants awarded to the college. These positions were outlined in a memorandum from Mrs. Lindsi Huffaker. Dr. Cline recommended the Board take action to approve the positions for the 2024-25 fiscal year and to give the administration blanket approval for additional provisional positions that may occur during the year. Judge Hudson moved to approve this recommendation. Dr. Milligan seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

B. Promotional Items

Dr. Cline reported that state law requires the governing board of an institution to approve funds expended for promotional items. Dr. Cline recommended the approval of up to the state authorized amount of \$50,000 for promotional items during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Mr. Curtis made a motion to approve funds for promotional item expenditures. Judge Hudson seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

C. UA System Membership Update & HLC Report

Dr. Cline reported that following the Higher Learning Commission conference in April, we were able to submit step 1 of a 9-step process, the Initial Interactions Submission. Subsequently, we have had a Microsoft Teams meeting with HLC attorneys, the HLC Vice President for Accreditation, and Mr. Michael Moore, UA System Vice President for Academic Affairs. During that meeting, HLC indicated our initial interactions submission was on point, and that we are ready to proceed with the next step, the full application. We have set a target date of July 1 to turn in that application.

Also included in the packet was an update on our Year 4 Assurance Argument from Mr. Jack Hill, Vice President for Academic Affairs/Accreditation Liaison Officer. This is a desk review updating the Assurance Argument submitted at the time of our 10-year reaccreditation. Dr. Cline noted her appreciation for all the hard work from the team that is putting together this argument. This is a report and no action is required by the Board.

D. Resignations/Terminations/Retirement

Dr. Cline reported the following individuals who are no longer employed at EACC: Briana Byers, Transfer/Career & Advising Specialist/Accounts Receivable/Student Accounts; Clarence McNeary, Maintenance Assistant; and Jackson Brock, Welding

Instructor. We wish them well in their future endeavors. This report is informational and requires no official action by the Board.

E. New Hires/Changes in Duties

Dr. Cline reported that the following employees have been hired or have had a change in duties at the College since the last board meeting: Mitchell Huffaker, Senior Maintenance Supervisor; Jerry Stegall, Director of Recruitment; Dylan Jackson, Student Accounts Coordinator; Tabitha Thomas, Recruiter/Student Activities Specialist; Marty Wages, Library Services Assistant/Archival Specialist; Erica Haynes, Career Coach/Brinkley, and Marquita Payeton, Fiscal Support Specialist. This report is informational only and requires no official action by the Board.

F. Receipt/Acceptance of Arkansas Division of Workforce Services Grants

Information was included on the following grants awarded by the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, Adult Education Section for the 2024-25 program year:

Adult Basic Education (ABE)	\$158,836.52
General Adult Education (GAE)	\$165,856.59
Adult Education Direct & Equitable (D&E)	\$ 62,580.13
Adult Education Special Projects Grant (SNAP)	\$ 23,500.00
Adult Education Literacy (D&E)	\$ 22,748.82
<u>Adult Education Special Projects (State)</u>	<u>\$ 58,333.64</u>
	\$491,855.70

Dr. Cline recommended that the Board approve these award notifications in the total amount of \$491,855.70 and to authorize the administration to make appropriate expenditures as outlined in the budget. Mr. Hodges moved to approve, and Mrs. Devazier seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

G. Receipt/Acceptance of Arkansas Career Coach Grant AY25

Dr. Cline reported that EACC received notification from the Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Career and Technical Education (ADE-DCTE) for funding in the amount of \$84,067.00 for the 2024-2025 academic year. This grant helps us provide college and career planning services to participating area high schools which include Brinkley, Lee, and Palestine-Wheatley. Dr. Cline asked the Board to approve these funds and to authorize the administration to make appropriate expenditures associated with this program. Dr. Milligan moved to approve, and Mr. Hodges seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

H. Receipt/Acceptance of the BRIDGE-AR Initiative Grant

Dr. Cline reported, the *Bridging Healthcare Workforce Shortages in Arkansas Initiative* (BRIDGE-AR) grant is a collaborative response to the ongoing healthcare workforce shortage in Arkansas. East Arkansas Community College has been awarded this four-

year grant in the total amount of \$702,238 for FY24-FY27 from the U.S. Department of Labor.

EACC is part of a consortium of two-year minority-serving institutions including the University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College, as the lead college, Southeast Arkansas College, Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas, Arkansas State University Mid-South, and Northwest Arkansas Community College.

The expected outcomes of this initiative are improved program enrollment, improved program persistence and completion rates, and improved attainment of licensing leading to employment. The grant will cover two new positions in allied health, a grant administrator/data coordinator and a nursing/EMT curriculum coordinator/success navigator.

We are proud to be a part of this initiative, and I recommend that the Board of Trustees accept this four-year grant in the amount of \$702,238 and authorize the administration to expend the funds in the approved manner as outlined in the attached budget. Judge Hudson moved to approve this request, and Mrs. Haven seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

I. Approval of 2024-2025 Budget and Salary Schedule

A copy of the proposed East Arkansas Community College budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 (FY 25) was included in the packet for review. Dr. Cline reported the Unrestricted Education and General Income fund is budgeted at \$14,364,406, a slight decrease (\$85,541; 0.5%) from last year's unrestricted income of \$14,449,947, but still higher than FY23 budgeted revenues of \$13,913,308. This decrease is due to a variety of factors throughout the revenue portion of the budget, but generally speaking, is a result of our being conservative in our revenue estimates.

Restricted grants, contracts, and gifts included in the budget have a projected revenue of \$4,691,308, an increase over last year's \$4,354,692 of 7.17%. Auxiliary enterprises are projected to generate \$783,350, resulting in total projected revenues of \$19,839,064. This is an increase of \$241,075, or 1.2%, over the \$19,597,989 in budgeted revenues last year.

For the 2024-2025 (FY25) fiscal year, the proposed budget includes a modest \$2 per-credit-hour (PCH) increase in in-district tuition; a \$3 PCH increase in out-of-district tuition, and a \$4 PCH increase in out-of-state tuition. It also includes a technology fee increase of \$1 per credit hour (from \$11 to \$12). Tuition and fee schedules are included in your packet for your review.

Two new positions are included in the budget: an additional security officer and a grants administrator.

The faculty salary schedule included in your packet adds \$1,100 to the schedule, with a focus on increasing instructor salaries, especially at the entry level, to remain competitive with public schools and Arkansas community colleges. Each instructor will also increase to the next step on the salary schedule. The proposed faculty salary increases range from 3% to 14.39%, depending on schedule placement, degree, and length of instructional term. This results in an overall projected average salary increase of \$1,983, with the average faculty salary projected to be \$55,033.

The average salary for 9-month faculty in the proposed budget is projected to be \$52,493. This 9-month average salary exceeds the Arkansas community colleges 9-month average salary of \$48,634 by \$3,859, or nearly 8%. For 12-month faculty, the average salary in the proposed budget increases from \$55,979 to \$58,271, or 4.09%. This is slightly below the Arkansas community colleges average 12-month faculty salary of \$59,881. Hopefully, next year we can remedy that situation. However, it must be understood that much depends on how long an employee has been at an institution, and some institutions may have employees who have been employed longer than some of our 12-month faculty who may be newer.

For comparison purposes, the LEARNS Act set a minimum salary for 9-month public school teachers at \$50,000, who work 190 days in the school year, for an average per-day salary of \$263.16. In contrast, EACC's 9-month faculty work 180 days, which equates to \$291.62 per day, or 9.76% higher.

With the removal of one position, the total annual budgeted faculty salary investment included in this budget would increase from \$2.66 million to \$2.69 million, an increase of 1.16%.

As the Board will recall, last year's budget focused on giving the largest increases to the lowest paid staff, with more highly compensated staff receiving only a 1% COLA and merit increase. This year, we propose an across-the-board 3.95% merit increase for all full-time staff earning a satisfactory or better on their evaluation, yielding an average merit raise of 3.58%. Those earning a 2, needs development, are proposed to receive a 1.9% increase. By policy, salary increases may only be given to those employed by October 1. The proposed budget would yield an average institutionally funded staff salary increase of \$1,650 based on merit, as compared to the average faculty salary increase of \$1,983. The proposed budget also includes provisional positions, whose salaries are paid by grant funds.

The total proposed budgeted investment of institutional funds in staff salaries is \$3.31 million, compared to \$3.25 million budgeted last year. Due to deleting some positions, the proposed salary increase would increase the total for institutionally funded staff salaries by \$62,027, or 1.91%. Last year, we were able to decrease the budget for institutionally funded staff salaries by -2.95% due to a reduction in the number of staff

positions and controlling for salary increases for the more highly compensated employees.

Following notes and highlights of the budget from Mr. Huff, Dr. Cline recommend the Board approve the FY25 budget, tuition and fee schedules, and salary schedules as presented. Mr. Hodges moved to approve the budget, and Mr. Lewey seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

J. Summer Schedule

Dr. Cline reported that for the past two years, EACC has followed a four-day schedule during the summer. If approved again by the Board, the summer schedule will begin Monday, May 20 and end Friday, August 9. The official College hours of operation will be 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Thursday, with offices closed on Fridays. Employees will have a half-hour lunch period. Classes or events scheduled for Fridays, in the evening, or on the weekend will continue. Departments with special needs will continue to work as best suits those special job responsibilities. Dr. Milligan moved to approve the summer schedule and Mr. Hodges seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

K. Board Policy Review Committee Recommendations

Mr. Howton noted that the Board Policy Review Committee [Brent Howton, Ann Hudson, and Florine Milligan] met at 5:45 pm to review and discuss a proposed change to Board Policy 6-6 in order to make a recommendation to the full Board.

A summary of the requested policy change was included in the board packet for review and Mr. Huff noted that the additional wording [*“Time Deposits such as CDs may be placed at other depository institutions based on highest and best use of College funds at the discretion of College administration”*] will allow College administration the flexibility to take advantage of higher rates for time deposits at other financial institutions when they become available.

Dr. Milligan recommended that the full-Board approve the recommendation and made a motion to that effect, and Judge Hudson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously by the full Board.

L. Discuss/Approve Slate of Foundation Board of Directors

An updated memo was distributed. Mr. Howton reported that the nominating committee recommends the following slate of directors for the EACC Foundation Board for 2024-2025:

Ann Hudson
Margie Cannon
Leroy Dangeau
Anna Howton

Larry Freeman
Megan O’Neal
Steve Hollowell
Michelle Wilson

Susan DeRossitt
Pierre Evans
Jan Haven
Beverly Devazier

Joe Perry
Chris Morledge
Brice Fletcher

Ex-Officio Members:

Brent Howton, Chairman-Board of Trustees
Cathie Cline, President
Niki Jones, Director of Development

Dr. Cline noted, upon approval, these directors will serve a one-year term beginning July 1, 2024 and will hold their first meeting in July to elect officers. Mr. Miller made a motion to approve this slate of officers, and Mr. Hodges seconded the motion. The motion carried with no opposition.

VI. President's Report

Dr. Cline noted that we were fortunate to be asked to host the Arkansas Travel and Tourism Meeting on our campus yesterday. They toured our Fine Arts Center and the Welcome Center. Niki Jones and Adam O'Neal showcased our campus well with our cultural events and all we do for our students and the community. We served a meal to the group at my house that evening.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Howton called for an Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter at 6:57^{PM}. The board meeting reconvened at 7:06^{PM}. Mr. Curtis moved to extend Dr. Cline's contract for an additional year on the existing term. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, and the motion passed with no opposition.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Curtis moved to adjourn. Mrs. Devazier seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:07^{PM}.

Approved:

Brent Howton, Chair
EACC Board of Trustees

Date