

MINUTES: April 20, 2021

MEETING: NORTH FLORIDA COLLEGE  
MADISON, FLORIDA

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Mr. Ricky Lyons, Chair  
Mr. Billy Washington, Vice Chair  
Mrs. Sharon Benoit  
Mr. J. Travis Coker  
Mrs. Sandra Haas  
Mr. David Howell  
Mr. Al Williams  
Mr. Mike Williams  
Mr. Gary Wright

STAFF PRESENT: President John Grosskopf  
Larry Akers  
Denise Bell  
Tyler Coody  
Rick Davis  
Kay Hogan  
Dr. Jamie Holland  
Judy Lundell  
Jennifer Page  
Micah Rodgers  
Connor Starling, Audio/Visual Technician  
Kristin Summers  
Michelle Wheeler, Recording Secretary  
  
Rob Sniffen, Board Attorney

VISITORS PRESENT: Lisa Arwood, Taylor Gymnastics  
Tonya Benzinger, Dance Instructor for Aucilla Christian Academy  
Isaac Goyette, Madison County School Board

The Board meeting was called to order at 5:29 p.m. by Chair Ricky Lyons who asked Mr. Al Williams to open with prayer followed by the pledge of allegiance.

**MOTION:** (M. Williams/Washington) That the District Board of Trustees adopts the Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** (M. Williams/Howell) That the District Board of Trustees adopts the minutes for the February 16, 2021 regular meeting and the March 16, 2021 record of no meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Chair Lyons asked for public input and the President stated that no requests were submitted.

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

**Career and Workforce Education**

Mr. Rick Davis presented the River Oak agreement for approval.

**MOTION:** (Haas/Washington) That the District Board of Trustees approves the attached Suwannee County School Board Facility Rental User Agreement between North Florida College and River Oak Technical College Pharm Tech Training Classroom. This classroom will be used for the North Florida College EMT Program. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Jamie Holland presented Allied Health contracts for approval.

**MOTION:** (Howell/A. Williams) That the District Board of Trustees approves the agreements between North Florida College and the following agencies:

- Madison Creative Arts Academy – Renewal
- Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare – New contract
- Lake Park of Madison Nursing and Rehabilitation Center – Renewal
- Suwannee County Health Department – Renewal

This recommendation will ensure that the Allied Health Department of North Florida College will have adequate clinical locations to provide clinical experience to students as required. The motion carried unanimously.

**ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT SERVICES**

Dean Hogan presented the Academic Calendar and a Database agreement for approval.

**MOTION:** (A. Williams/Haas) That the District Board of Trustees approves the 2021-2022 academic calendar for North Florida College. This recommendation will allow NFC to submit the calendar to the State for approval. The motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** (Haas/A. Williams) That the District Board of Trustees approves the Mango Languages Institution Editions Terms of Service. This database allows users access to different language modules such as Spanish, French, Italian, and more. This supports the curriculum by providing language learning support regardless of proficiency and supports foreign language learning support not offered by any other electronic library resource. The motion carried unanimously.

Dean Hogan discussed the upcoming in-person commencement ceremonies as an informational item. There will be three small ceremonies held on Friday, May 7, 2021 at 10am, 2pm, and 5pm. She and President Grosskopf provided the details of the plans for these micro-ceremonies with

limited access to comply with CDC guidelines for COVID-19 safety and social distancing. All graduates going back to the beginning of the pandemic have been invited to participate if they desire to enjoy this rite of passage. Trustees who wish to attend the ceremonies may contact Michelle Wheeler so seating arrangements can be made with proper spacing. There will be approximately 50 graduates at each of the three ceremonies with 2 tickets per student for a total of 100 guests in the audience. These individuals along with staff will total about 200 people in the auditorium. Masks are required and distancing guidelines will be followed. Mr. Howell inquired about the graduates and what programs they are graduating from. Dean Hogan stated that she would follow-up with that information.

### **EMPLOYEE SERVICES**

Tyler Coody presented the following items for approval:

**MOTION:** (Haas/Wright) That the District Board of Trustees approves the personnel recommendation as outlined in the attached memorandum. This will fill the vacant position and complete the hiring process. The motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** (M. Williams/Washington) That the District Board of Trustees approves the annual equity report. This will permit the routine award of contracts to individuals and facilitates the growth, development, and improvement of NFC. The motion carried unanimously.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

Micah Rodgers presented the following items:

**MOTION:** (Coker /A. Williams) That the District Board of Trustees approves the Warrant Lists for February and March of 2021 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

The Statement of Account was presented as an informational item as was the Current Funds Unrestricted Revenue and Expenditure Report.

**MOTION:** (M. Williams/Wright) That the District Board of Trustees approves the Financial Audit for the 2019-20 fiscal year. After a brief overview of the audit containing no material weaknesses and no non-compliance findings, the motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** (Haas/A. Williams) That the District Board of Trustees approves the Federal Awards Audit for the 2019-20 fiscal year. An excerpt of the audit report is included within the Board Packet. In addition, the audit report may be obtained from the President's Office, or online at [https://flauditor.gov/pages/pdf\\_files/2021-182.pdf](https://flauditor.gov/pages/pdf_files/2021-182.pdf). Dean Rodgers noted that on page 116, there were audit findings regarding the reporting requirements of changes in enrollment status in the student loan database. The problem has been isolated and clarified so this finding will not be repeated in future years. The motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** (M. Williams/Benoit) That the District Board of Trustees approves the contract for Payment Plan services for students. This would allow us to offer Payment Plan Services to

students and guarantee payment to the college even if the student defaults on their payments. The vast majority of the colleges in our system are using this vendor, Nelnet. The cost to the student is virtually the same as our current fee structure for this convenience, the difference is that Nelnet will process and bear the liability and risk. The motion carried unanimously.

Dean Rodgers summarized an informational item regarding Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA). In July of 2020 CARES Act funds (approx. \$357,000) were distributed to the students (50%) and used for costs related to COVID-19 (50%) as required by the act. In January of 2021, a new group funds called CRRSSAA in the amount of \$1.5 Million was awarded to NFC. These funds have been placed in the G5 account and are available to be pulled down as we have expenses related to COVID-19. The Act states that a portion of these funds must go directly to the students in the amount of approximately \$350,000. These funds are being distributed to the students beginning next week. They specify that we are to prioritize students with exceptional need, possibly based on Pell eligibility and family contribution calculations. So, for the first round of disbursements, we are limiting them to Pell recipients for the Spring term or anyone else who can provide documentation of exceptional need. The remaining \$1.2 million can be used to defray expenses related to coronavirus with examples of what that might entail. Lost revenue due to the coronavirus is one of the expenses that can be defrayed, so staff is looking into that area as a possibility for use of these funds. Other potential ways to launch the College forward by using these funds are being examined.

Mr. Coker inquired about the use of the CARES Act funds to date. Dean Rodgers noted that more than the required amount (50%) went directly to students (+/- \$370k) and the rest was used primarily on technology to assist students with connectivity during the shutdowns when distance learning was our only modality. Other items purchased with these funds were related to sanitizing sprayers, masks, PPE, and cleaning supplies.

If additional relief funds are allocated for NFC, the Board will be kept informed.

**MOTION:** (M. Williams/Coker) that the District Board of Trustees gives the administration the authority to waive Student Activities and Capital Improvement fees for Summer 2021 and/or Fall 2021 depending on the circumstances at the time that decision needs to be made. The motion carried unanimously.

--Brief recess for dinner--

### **DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

Judy Lundell discussed the following from the Foundation Report for April 2021:

- Alumni Campaign
- Spring 2021 Scholarships
- Virtual Open House Scholarship
- Nurse Testing Scholarship

- CDL Scholarship
- Operation Outreach Hamilton & Taylor County
- High School Scholarship and Recruitment Visits

### PRESIDENT'S HIGHLIGHTS

Kristin Summers presented Board Policies that are being aligned with SACSCOC Principles:

**MOTION:** (Howell/Haas) That the District Board of Trustees approves the following edits to current policies for March and April 2021 to align with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation. The applicable SACSCOC standards have been noted at the end of each policy. The motion carried unanimously.

President Grosskopf gave updates on the following:

- Legislative session challenges amid pandemic protocols and intermediaries.
- Budget proposals from House and Senate, similarities and differences.
- Examination of special allocations and reallocations based on new funding model.
- NFC: Losing +/- \$400,000 of base funding and gives back +/- \$350,000 for a net loss of about \$40,000. We do not know if this is an attempt by the house to permanently fix historical funding inequities and then commit to using the funding formula for all new money going forward. There has been no real communication, but this is what the budget looks like currently.
- Challenges of the size band divisions in the proposed funding model and how NFC's grouping with larger institutions such as Chipola create disparate comparisons.
- Senate budget allocates closer to our historical distribution index with a net positive of \$30-40k
- With either option, NFC will end up with flat funding going forward.
- Rising expenses: health insurance, property casualty
- Unknown status of 6% holdback
- Policies of note:
  - Expansion of Dual Enrollment to private school
    - Current bill expands the number of institutions that have access to that resource. Any private for-profit post-secondary institution that offers anything under the dual enrollment umbrella will have access to this pot of funds for reimbursement of costs. The concern is that this allocation is not sufficient to support this possibility. Working closely with DOE to amend.
  - HB 51: Charter school bill makes it possible for colleges to start their own charter schools. Amended to include term limits for elected public school board members. This adds a controversy to the bill that will slow it down, but our hope is that the amendment will be stricken so the rest of the bill can move forward.

- HB 1035: Union recertifications bill changes the way collective bargaining units are certified in Florida.
- HB/CB 233: Intellectual diversity and viewpoint bill has major complications which completely redefine the way colleges and universities handle student code of conduct violations. It would turn the process into an adversarial situation similar to civil litigation rather than a teaching opportunity for educating students on appropriate college behavior. The implementation date of this is July 1, 2021 and would require a complete rewrite of college publications and training of staff. President Grosskopf has asked Senator Bradley's office for assisting with convincing the Governor's office to give a one-year implementation delay. It is being argued that students will benefit from more due process, but the constitution already requires due process which this College and most others appropriately provide. This due process is regularly monitored by our accreditation agency to ensure that students' rights are protected.

#### ATTORNEY TIME

Attorney Sniffen provided updates on the following:

Day-to-day discussions with staff and trustees to provide any type of training that would be of benefit to Board Members, employees, and/or administrators.

- Sexual Abuse -2020
- Public Records and Government in the Sunshine – 2019

With the 2021 summer workshop upcoming, Mr. Sniffen asked for suggestions on training desired by the Board and College Staff.

Mr. Lyons asked for two or three suggestions to be presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Sniffen also gave an update on the Verdini class action lawsuit regarding student fees. The case against Miami-Dade College is going forward, so there will be more to come.

He also discussed the situation last month with no quorum and how this affected the business of the college. The delay in approvals of several agreements caused missed opportunities for nursing students' clinical experience at TMH in conjunction with a career fair.

Mr. Sniffen asked if the Board would allow him to research the possibility of creating a policy that would authorize the President to approve an agreement in a case such as this and then be ratified by the Board at the next meeting. The present statutory scheme might not cover this scenario, but Mr. Sniffen did not want to spend time looking into this if it is not the pleasure of the Board.

Even though it would be a rare instance where this emergency power would be needed, possibly even in consultation with the Board Chair, Mr. Sniffen asked if this is something they would be interested in researching. The idea of giving the President that level of authority might not exist and would shut the whole project down anyway, but he is asking if the Board would even like him to take a look at it for possibly developing a rule for these very unique circumstances. The consensus from the Board members was they did not want to create a policy for such a unique and rare circumstance.

President Grosskopf was excused from the meeting for a discussion about his salary. Mr. Sniffen and Tyler Coody shared a comparison of Presidential compensation within the Florida College System.

Mr. Wright wished to go on the record in saying that he is very disappointed that our President is paid so little and feels that we are taking advantage of him by not offering compensation commensurate with what similar size colleges are paying their presidents.

The Board asked for the attorney and Chair to hold a meeting to come up with a number that President Grosskopf would accept in the way of a salary increase (since he is the lowest paid in the system) and for the rest of the College if possible. They agreed to prepare this and present it at the next meeting for review and/or approval.

**MOTION:** (Coker/Washington) That the Board Chair and Board Attorney meet with the President to review his contract and come up with a number that President Grosskopf would accept in the way of a salary increase. After a brief discussion and consensus of the group, the motion was expanded to include consideration of increases for the entire College staff. The amended motion carried unanimously.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Michelle Wheeler explained the handout of instructions from the Governor's office of appointments and asked the trustees to submit their applications for reappointment since we have several trustees that have expired and a few more that will expire in the next year.

Mr. Coker invited Lisa Arwood of Taylor Gymnastics and Tonya Benzinger of Aucilla Christian Academy to request use of the auditorium for dance recitals. Lisa Arwood gave an overview of her business and history of renting the VHP Auditorium for their end of the year performances. She stated that they have been told they are not able to rent the facility due to COVID and wanted to advocate for trying to get back to normalcy with the use of this facility for her business. She cited how much the services she offers to her clients in our facility benefit their confidence. She argued that the safety protocols the college has in place are too strict given that other events are able to take place and vaccinations are up. She requested that they be allowed to use the facility as her recital is scheduled for June 6<sup>th</sup> and Tonya Benzinger's is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup>, the day after NFC's graduation.

Tonya Benzinger then introduced herself and gave an overview of her history of using the Auditorium and why it is the best location for this type of event. She mentioned alternate locations they have tried since COVID began and waivers they used when selling tickets. She also noted that no other spaces large enough to accommodate the crowds they expect (with proper spacing) are affordable. She pleaded for the consideration of the Board to reopen the space for outside vendors.

Mr. Coker asked the group if Madison County has a mask ordinance and Mrs. Benzinger thanked the group for their time.

Chair Lyons stated that it was not something that could be voted on because it was not on the agenda. There was a brief discussion regarding the closure of the facility and how the events that are currently planned are either sponsored by the Health Department (Vaccinations) or closely monitored by the Health Department for safety (Graduations and Pinnings). When asked about capacity of the auditorium Dean Hogan explained the software that is being used to account for social distancing when tickets are issued and that 100 guests in the audience falls within the CDC guidelines for a space this size. Mr. Coker questioned this restriction and asked to work with staff to increase the number we can allow in the facility so the dance instructors can hold their events there.

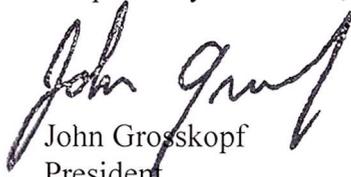
Attorney Sniffen explained the litigation climate that the pandemic has created and how careful the College has to be to not be found negligent and open to lawsuit. He explained that the burden is on the defendant to show that CDC guidelines are being followed in order to be protected and that our insurance will likely not protect a COVID claim even with a waiver. President Grosskopf explained that as member of the FCSRMC, they have heard presentations from the providers that explain there is no legitimate way for us to have a waiver that cancels liability. He also stated that pandemic protection is not available insurance coverage. There is some shielding because of statute, but not from insurance. Attorney Sniffen advised that if the Board does decide to take action, that they do take the liability perspective into account. He agreed that we are in a much better spot than we were a few months ago, but there are still serious concerns about the pandemic.

After a brief discussion regarding personal liabilities should the Board decide to act against CDC guidelines, the Board decided to defer to staff to come up with plans for reopening further and review it at the next meeting.

**MOTION:** (Washington/Coker) That a plan for reopening the Van H. Priest Auditorium to outside vendors while following CDC guidelines be researched and presented for review and further discussion at the next meeting. The motion carried by general consensus.

Chair Lyons announced that the next regular meeting will be held on May 18, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., in the Student Center and asked Mr. Al Williams to pray before dinner. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
John Grosskopf  
President

  
Ricky Lyons  
Chair

/mmw