

**National Park College
Minutes of the
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 23, 2020**

The National Park College Board of Trustees met in regular session on September 23, 2020. The Finance Committee began at 3:15 p.m. followed by the regular meeting at 3:30 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom. Trustees present for the Finance Committee meeting were Mike Bush, Joyce Craft, Gail Ezelle, Jim Hale, Don Harris, Bev Joe, Forrest Spicher, and Raymond Wright. Trustees present for the regular meeting were Larry Bailey, Mike Bush, Joyce Craft, Gail Ezelle, Jim Hale, Don Harris, Bev Joe, Forrest Spicher, and Raymond Wright.

Staff and faculty members present were Amy Fincham, Anne Benoit, Ashley Clayborn, Brad Hopper, Bill Ritter, Brian Kroening, Blake Butler, Bruce Hankins, Chris Coble, Darla Thurber, Darlene Gentles, Cari Elliott, Donna Nevill, Donna Kay, Gwendolyn Carter, Janice Ivers, Jason Hudnell, Janet Brewer, Jerry Thomas, Jessie Ellis, Jennifer Evans, Jill Houlihan, John Anderson, John Hogan, Julie Larue, Kelli Embry, Kristin Quintanilla, Lisa Hopper, Lynn Valetutti, Mark Oliver, Melissa Craft, Melony Martinez, Mike Wiles, Nicole Herndon, Roger Fox, Steve Trusty, Tennille Johnson, Terri Helms, and Toni Knupps

The media was notified of the meeting. John Anderson from the Sentinel Record was present.

Chair Spicher welcomed everyone to the meeting. He recognized Mrs. Joyce Craft and her work and dedication to the Hot Springs School District. The new auditorium at the Hot Springs Junior Academy was dedicated to Mrs. Craft in July.

Don Harris presented the invocation.

Coach Jason Hudnell introduced a video of introductions featuring women's and men's basketball teams, cross country, cheer, and student ambassadors. The video included a list of students who were unable to film for the introductions. Mr. Hudnell stated that the softball and baseball teams will be introduced later in the school year. He also emphasized that we had student athletes from Arkansas, Texas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Georgia, and Mississippi. The first baseball scrimmage is September 24 and the softball team begins playing on September 27.

Items for Action

- a. Mike Bush made a motion to approve the August 26, 2020 minutes. Joyce Craft seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- b. Steve Trusty, Vice President for Finance and Administration, presented the June 2020 financial reports for approval. Don Harris moved to accept the financial reports as presented. Bev Joe seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- c. Julie LaRue, Interim Director of Human Resources, presented updates to NPC Policy 4.420 Definition of retirement. This policy was updated to merge policy 4.410 and 4.420 to offer early retirement under special incentives. Don Harris asked for clarification regarding what changes had been made and if they were extensive. LaRue responded

that the changes being made offered early retirement under special incentives rather than its own separate policy. Joyce Craft asked for clarification on what would be considered special incentives. LaRue answered that it would be at the discretion of the college for the purposes of saving money. John Hogan noted that it might be used if the college were to enter a state of financial distress. He said the essence of the decision to retire should focus on offering early retirement when it is warranted and instead of not being in control of when it is granted. Mike Bush moved to accept the financial reports as presented. Don Harris seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

- d. Kelli Embry, Vice President of Vice President for Workforce and Strategic Initiatives, presented updates to the High Priority Objectives (HPO). Embry stated the new HPO, along with the strategic plan approved by the Board in August, emphasize student success, expanding our reach in the community, and providing an exceptional academic and student life experience. The HPO was reorganized so that 1 through 5 focus on student success and achievement. The one HPO that changed this year was Objective 4 which focuses on closing the student achievement gap for underrepresented students. Joyce Craft made a motion to approve the ratifications as presented. Bev Joe seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- e. Julie LaRue, Interim Director of Human Resources, presented the ratifications of personnel actions. She noted that we were requesting five new hires, two ratifications for resignation, and the five retirements. Mike Bush made a motion to approve the ratifications as presented. Joyce Craft seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Items for Report

- a. Board Chair Report – Chair Spicher congratulated Jerry Thomas, Vice President of Student Affairs and his team on success in these challenging circumstances.
- b. Enrollment Report
 - a. Credit - Dr. Jerry Thomas reported that he was happy and excited that we beat our enrollment projection. While we saw a 7.8% decline we had predicted a 12% decline given the circumstances. Dr. Thomas said that the recruiting season for fall 2020 enrollment started very optimistic. We knew it would be a difficult recruiting season with shrinking numbers in high school seniors but all metrics pointed to fall enrolment increase. Then, we had to adapt quickly to recruit, advise, and register remotely to enroll students. We developed new advising and phone systems and pushed enrolment back two weeks in order to accommodate our circumstances. Dr. Thomas emphasizes the outstanding work done by the staff and team at NPC to overcome these obstacles. Our student population continues to trend younger and our minority population has increased. Also noteworthy is that we have 70 students enrolled in the SAU degree program with more than 20 students on track to attend SAU classes on our campus over the next school year. Online enrollment increased 25% and totals 45% of courses this term. Kelli Embry leads the campus with over 24,000 minutes logged from use of Zoom technology. Dr. Thomas is confident that we will be able to meet the challenges to come regarding technology and recruitment. Chair Spicher congratulated Dr. Thomas again and commended the hard work and success of National Park College.
 - b. Non-Credit - Kelli Embry reported that the Workforce and Continuing Education numbers have decreased 36%. Workforce training enrollment has suffered

because of lack of opportunity for face-to-face instruction in the industry. Embry recognized that the Makers Space has been moved to the Fisher building and the official reopening on October 12-14.

- c. Adult Education – Bill Ritter, Director of Adult Education, reported that 164 students have been served since July 2020, which is a decrease but is a trend across the state. The largest contributor of our decline is the closing of the Garland County Detention Center.
 - d. National Park Technology Center, Mike Wiles, National Park Technology Center Director, reported that two programs had to be canceled due to state funding cuts. However, in the programs that remain we have had a 5% decrease when we expected 10% decrease.
- c. Building and Campus Development Update – Brad Hopper, Director of Physical Plant and Maintenance, gave a construction update. The hospitality and makers space had a new air compressor installed and are waiting on siding to be delivered to the west end of the building. The roofing of the Lab Science building is to be completed this week. Tim Wilson with Wilcox expressed his thanks for the opportunity to continue serving NPC. Dogwood Hall's floors need to be refinished and the landscaping needs to be reworked next spring. There are still two openings in the department and a few part time staff members. Dave Ingle, a longtime night custodial supervisor that resigned five years ago, has returned to Arkansas and has agreed to return to his position.
- d. President's Report – Dr. Hogan stated that he appreciates the opportunity to hear about the changes of our campus. He emphasized the excellent success we had in enrollment despite the circumstances, which contributed to the financial success shared by Steve Trusty. None of this could be done without the support of the Board of Trustees. Dr. Hogan reemphasized the list of retirees which symbolize the dedication and hard work at NPC.

Dr. Hogan stated that he was proud of the way everyone has adapted to make the semester successful. We budgeted to be down by 250 students, which would have been 1665 enrolled. We reached 1914.

He stated that it is significant that 45% of course enrollment is online, and we will continue to invest in quality education. We have asked a lot of the faculty, staff, board, and students and we have to continue to invest in online in addition to continuing to build our on-campus experience. He said it "cannot be an either/or, it has to be a both/and." Additionally, he stated "we beat our projections and that was not an easy task. We also greatly increased our online enrollment, which takes significant effort by our faculty to adapt and implement new technology." Furthermore, "the commitment of our students to persist and complete their education during this time is remarkable. They continue to display Nighthawk Grit, and as an institution we must answer their commitment with all of the support we can provide."

Dr. Hogan also recognized Kelli Embry's leadership of the new High Priority Objectives.

Finally, Dr. Hogan states his regrets for the spring Board retreat being canceled due to the pandemic in the spring. We are going to use the board meetings moving forward to unroll strategic conversations in lieu of the retreat.

Mike Bush asked Dr. Hogan about the occupancy rate of Dogwood Hall. Dr. Jerry Thomas stated that we are at 86% occupancy. Some rooms had to be reserved for quarantine resources during the pandemic.

Chair Spicher discussed all of the new ways we are learning to communicate, learn, and succeed with the use of technology. He stated that there were a lot of positives discussed in today's meeting and any disappointments were understandable given the current circumstances.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Forrest Spicher, Chair

Joyce Craft, Secretary/Treasurer