**Tift College of Education Board of Visitors**

Business-Education Building, Room 112 – Atlanta Campus

Friday, November 3, 2023

Meeting Minutes

**Board Members Present**

Mrs. April Aldridge, Ms. Amanda Buice, Ms. Margaret Ciccarelli, Ms. Cherie Goldman, Mr. John Hines, Dr. Jeff Jackson, Dr. Phil Lanoue, Mr. Ernie Lee, Dr. Jonathan Patterson, and Dr. Torian White

**Others in Attendance**

Dr. Sharon Augustine, Dr. Jeff Hall, Dr. Lucy Bush, Dr. Tom Koballa, and Dr. Loleta Sartin

Dr. Jean Walker and Mrs. Joy Wood

**Welcome**

Dean Koballa welcomed members to the meeting of the Tift College Board of Visitors at 4:05 p.m.

**Introduction of Board Members**

Board members introduced themselves, sharing their connections to Mercer University and the Tift College of Education.

**Recent Work and Accomplishments**

Dean Koballa reported on the recent work and accomplishments of the Tift College faculty. His report addressed student recognitions, faculty promotions, and College enrollment. College enrollment continues to increase, in contrast to national trends. Koballa attributed the enrollment increase to the faculty's ability to adapt to an ever-changing P-12 and higher education environment. Recent program changes and success in securing external funding and gifts are evidence of the faculty's adaptability, leading to significant enrollment increases over the last two school years.

**Innovative Ventures**

Mrs. Joy Wood discussed ongoing preparations to open the Roberts Academy at Mercer University in August 2024. In addition to reporting on the progress made to open the Academy in August, Mrs. Wood provided an overview of dyslexia, contrasted dyslexia with other learning challenges, and identified dyslexia resources for the Board to consider. Koballa agreed to provide each Board member with a copy of one resource, The Dyslexic Advantage, identified by Mrs. Woods. Accompanying this report are Mrs. Wood's presentation slides.

Dr. Jean Walker spoke about Mercer's Dominican Republic project and its affiliation with the University's McDonald Center for America's Founding Principles. The purpose of the Dominican Republic project is to improve the county's K-12 educational system. Under Dr. Walker's leadership, project activities have involved the development of innovative instructional modules and in-person and virtual educational professional development sessions for Dominican teachers and school leaders Tift College faculty. Future project activities will involve Dominican educators spending time working with faculty and visiting schools in the Atlanta area. Accompanying this report are Dr. Walker's presentation slides.

**Recommendations for New Board of Visitor Members**

Dean Koballa invited members of the Board to recommend persons as candidates for Board membership. No recommendations were made. Koballa indicated that confidential recommendations could be made following today's meeting.

**Breakout Sessions**

Dean Koballa invited Board members to join one of three virtual breakout rooms to provide input to improve the College in three areas:

1. New and proposed degree programs
2. Marketing and communications
3. External funding—grants, contracts, and gifts

The first breakout room was facilitated by Assistant Deans Sharon Augustine and Lucy Bush, the second breakout room by Associate Deans Jeff Hall and Loleta Sartin, and the third breakout room by Dean Koballa. The breakout rooms discussed lasted twenty minutes.

**Summary of Breakout Room Discussions**

Comments and recommendations generated during the Breakout Session were shared by group spokespersons and are presented below.

1. New and Proposed Degree Programs

-Health & Physical Education and Special Education are appropriate new programs for the College. Graduates of the programs should easily find jobs.

1. Marketing and Communications

-We should work with schools and teachers leading Teaching as a Profession Pathway programs and other education-related CTAE pathways, speak to classes, and invite teachers and students to our campuses.

-The faculty should continue efforts to recruit recent college graduates into the MAT programs from Mercer CLAS undergraduate programs.

-Tift College could hold in-person and virtual seminars or prepare videos on the website that discuss the long-term benefits of careers in education. The seminars and videos should speak to career changers and working adults.

-In promotional materials, Tift College should speak to the satisfaction educators experience by improving students' lives.

-The College should consider ads that reclaim that narrative about the positive aspects of education and entice persons to consider careers in education by highlighting the impact that educators have on future generations.

-Tift College should target school system Human Resource personnel, those responsible for hiring teachers, in a promotional campaign to attract new teachers into teacher certification and advanced degree programs.

(3) External Funding

-Tift College should continue to seek external funding to financially support adults wanting to become teachers and school leaders and teachers wanting to improve their teaching skills and expand their teaching fields.

-The College can seek funding to work with school systems wanting to develop Grow-your-own-teacher programs.

**Adjournment**

Dean Koballa adjourned the Board of Visitors meeting at 6:00 p.m. and invited those attending in person to join the College leaders for dinner and conversation.

Provided with these meeting minutes are the slides used to guide the meeting's agenda.