

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**333 Market Street, Honors Suite, Harrisburg, PA
July 12, 2017**

The meeting of the Council of Higher Education was called to order by Council Chairman James Grandon at 2:20 p.m.

Attending:

James Agras *(via phone)*

Andrew Ahr *(via phone)*

Carol Aichele

James Barker *(via phone)*

Nathan Barrett

Nicole Carnicella

Ellie DeWitt

Sandra Dungee Glenn

Alex Fey

James Grandon

Pamela Gunter-Smith *(via phone)*

Kirk Hallett

Shirlann Harmon

Maureen Lally-Green *(via phone)*

Jonathan Peri *(via phone)*

Colleen Sheehan *(via phone)*

Craig Snider *(via phone)*

Karen Farmer White *(via phone)*

A Lee Williams

Larry Wittig

OPENING REMARKS

Council Chairman James Grandon announced that Dr. Wil Del Pilar departed his position as Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education. He welcomed Julie Kane, Higher Education Association in the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education, who joined the Council to provide a report in Dr. Del Pilar's absence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 10, 2017, meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Dungee-Glenn/Carnicella** motion.

**REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF
POSTSECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

Ms. Kane reported that nearly \$1 million in It's On Us PA Governor's Grants were issued to 36 colleges and universities. She noted that a summit for grant recipients and other postsecondary and PreK-12 partners held on June 23 drew over 100 participants. She also stated that initial progress reports from grant recipients show that more than 87,000 students and 16,000 staff members have been reached as a result of the effort. Finally, she reported that the 2017-18 state budget includes an additional \$1 million in funding for It's On Us PA grants.

Next, Ms. Kane provided an update on the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). As of June 30, Pennsylvania had 81 postsecondary institutions approved to participate in SARA, ranking the state second to Texas in terms of the number of participating institutions.

Ms. Kane reported that Secretary Rivera approved the Rural Regional College (RRC) Plan in May and said the RRC has begun hiring staff to develop curriculum, policies and procedures so that the College can operate independently as of the 2018-19 academic year. For the 2017-18 academic year, Ms. Kane said the RRC is enrolling students, but operating in cooperation with Gannon University.

Ms. Kane also provided an update on the Department's participation in Complete College America (CCA) and said Pennsylvania was one of five states selected to participate in the 15 to Finish Campaign. Through this effort, the Department identified a state-level team that will work with CCA strategists and Pennsylvania stakeholders to identify strategies to advance college access and completion in the Commonwealth.

Ms. Kane then provided an update on an alternative to meeting the Mathematics Basic Skills requirement for certification. Ms. Kane said that, effective June 2017, teacher candidates can satisfy this requirement by earning a grade of B (3.0) or higher in a college-level math course that aligns to the mathematics basic skills competencies. Ms. Kane noted that this approach may be expanded to cover other Basic Skills assessment requirements pending the success of the math pilot.

Sandra Dungee-Glenn asked if pre-service teachers who finished their academic coursework could return to a postsecondary institution to take a math course in place of the related Basic Skills assessment. Dr. Christina Baumer, Acting Director of the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, replied that following the enactment of Act 24 of 2011, students with baccalaureate degrees do not need to take the basic skills tests, and that students entering teacher preparation programs must pass the assessments before being admitted to the program.

Ms. Kane announced that the U.S. Department of Defense awarded Pennsylvania a \$400,000 grant as part of the Troops to Teachers program. She said the Department will award the grants to colleges that partner with Local Education Agencies to provide or create pathways for veterans to enter the teaching profession. Grants will be awarded in fall 2017 and the Department has an opportunity to apply for additional grant funding in 2018. Finally, Ms. Kane announced a competitive grant program developed by the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality – the Higher Education, Early Child Care & Community-Based Partnerships Grant – that is supported by Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds. The grants will encourage partnerships between postsecondary and child care providers to provide sustainable pathways to certification.

DISCUSSION ITEM **ERIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLAN**

Mr. Grandon announced that Board received an application to establish a new community college in Erie County. He said the Erie County Community College Plan was approved by Erie County Council on June 27 and that the county government voted to serve as the local sponsor of the institution. Mr. Grandon noted that, per Section 1902-A of the School Code, the State Board of Education is the decision-making authority on whether to approve or

disapprove plans to establish and operate community colleges. Erie's plan to create a new community college was submitted to the Board on July 3.

Mr. Grandon reviewed in detail the requirements set forth in the School Code related to the Board's review and consideration of plans to establish community colleges. Mr. Grandon said the review of Erie's plan will require a dedication of time and serious study. As such, he proposed appointing a Special Committee to shepherd the application through the review process and to conduct proceedings as appropriate under the School Code. He invited members of the Board to discuss formulating a Special Committee for this purpose and said he would call for a motion to formulate during the consideration of action items if there was support.

Mr. Grandon said the Board also has the discretion to request that the Department of Education provide its findings and recommendations on Erie's plan. He stated that he believed gaining the Department's perspective on whether the proposed college meets the requirements of the School Code would be informative to the Board's decision-making, and he suggested that the Council formally make that request of the Department. Mr. Grandon invited discussion on that matter as well and stated that he would call for a motion to request that the Department make a report of its findings and recommendations on the plan during the consideration of action items if there was support.

Mr. Peri suggested that the committee examine what the prospects or standards will be to ensure that there will be academic performance that at least meets industry standards or better.

Ms. Dungee-Glenn asked if there is a standard amount of time for the review of such plans. Karen Molchanow, Executive Director of the Board, said the review could take up to a year based on the length of consideration for different types of applications that have come before the Board.

Mr. Grandon sought to clarify that the Governor's office would not consider the addition of another community college until the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Mr. Wittig requested that a summary of the Board's requirements relative to the application be reiterated. Ms. Molchanow summarized the pertinent sections of the School Code.

Mr. Agras asked about the impact of the Rural Regional College (RRC) on the application. Ms. Kane said Erie County is one of the nine counties in the RRC service area, but that the RRC is not an official community college and does not have a local sponsor. Mr. Agras then asked about duplication of educational offerings presently offered by Gannon and Mercyhurst Universities. Ms. Molchanow said the School Code directs the Board to assess whether the region already is adequately served by existing institutions of higher education and that Mr. Agras' question was pertinent to the review the Board must undertake.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ERIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLAN

A motion to adopt a resolution appointing a Special Committee on the Erie County Community College Plan was made by Larry Wittig and seconded by Sandra Dungee Glenn.

VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote.

REQUEST FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ISSUE A REPORT OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ERIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLAN

A motion was made to request that the Department of Education review the Erie County Community College Plan and make a report to the Board of its findings and recommendations regarding the application by Larry Wittig and seconded by Sandra Dungee Glenn.


VOTE: All were in favor as indicated by unanimous voice vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Grandon announced that the Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness Committee was scheduled to meet at 3:00 p.m. and asked members to clear the room so that staff could make necessary transitions for the Committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.



Karen Molchanow