

STCC Board of Trustees
COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
Monday, November 1 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting, Live Streamed via STCC YouTube Channel

Present: Committee Chair Jynai McDonald, Trustee Chair Marikate Murren, Student Trustee Monique Selden-Riley, Trustee Bill Johnson, Trustee Betty Sposito, Trustee Maurice Lindsay and President John B. Cook

Presenters: Darcey Kemp, Vice President of Student Affairs
Dr. Geraldine de Berly, Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. Vanessa Hill, Innovation Fellow & Special Assistant to the President
Professor Christina Atwater, AUC Faculty Co-Chair

- I. **Call to Order** – Committee Chair Jynai McDonald called the meeting of the Committee on Internal and External Relations to order at 5:02 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call** – The following Committee Members were present at Roll Call: Committee Chair Jynai McDonald, Trustee Chair Marikate Murren, Student Trustee Monique Selden-Riley, Trustee Bill Johnson, Trustee Maurice Lindsay, and Trustee Betty Sposito.

III. Student Enrollment & Retention Outlook – Darcey Kemp, VP of Student Affairs

Darcey Kemp provided a comprehensive outlook on student enrollment and retention, which started with a view of daily enrollment reporting specific to “Fall 2” and STCC head count and total registered credits. For comparison, VP Kemp included information for these metrics from 2019 (Pre-COVID) and 2020 (COVID conditions). As noted, the Division of Student Affairs continues working on efforts towards retention and enrollment, including ongoing outreach campaigns, upcoming outreach campaigns, and the use of targeted/specific/personalized approaches as they related to specific students’ status.

In regards to the vaccine mandate effective in January 2022, VP Kemp shared with the Committee the process of gathering COVID -19 vaccination documentation from students and provided an update of the percentage of students already in compliance. She noted that although advisement for the spring has not started (starts this week), we are encouraged by students’ response. Out of 2237, 744 (33%) students have uploaded their vaccination documentation (which came through pre-requirement). As part of the process, we are ready to provide an avenue for students to seek medical/religious accommodations.

IV. Academic Affairs Outlook / Opportunities – Dr. Geraldine de Berly, Vice President of Academic Affairs

a. Recent Federal Grant Awards (\$7M+)

Dr. de Berly provided information on the most recently approved Title V (\$3 million) and HSI STEM (\$4.3 million) federal grants. Common between both grants is that their focus is on student retention and graduation rates, and in particular for the large (30%+ Latinx population of STCC students). As noted in the presentation, these grants allow support for increasing number of students, including those low-

income, into STEM majors; and allows for the hiring of 'high touch' support staff. Dr. de Berly also spoke about Supplemental Instruction – noting that supplemental instructors (SI) are students who have taken courses in STEM – they then sit in courses and work with faculty to provide guidance and support to peers. These grants also provide support with developing math pathways. In addition monies provide funds for professional development for STEM faculty in areas such as gender bias, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Dr. de Berly noted that the money is to be used within five years. This gives us time implement, and she mentioned that we just closed the federal Title III grant, and that transition allows for STCC to have a new funding source for supplemental instruction (SI), which has a demonstrated effectiveness, and carries support from faculty.

V. Innovation Fellowship Update – Dr. Vanessa Hill, Innovation Fellow & Special Assistant to the President

Dr. Hill began with background data specific to lower retention rates of students placed in developmental math courses; students of color have an 82% developmental placement rate at STCC, versus 60% for white students.

The first task at hand is to develop a one semester, modular, developmental math course which will be a significant reduction from the upwards of 10-credit pathway current on the books. The project also reviews data on placement exams, as well as students' performance. Further development of the needed mathematical concepts, in modules, with prerequisites for college level courses and programs will continue in collaboration with math and other STEM faculty colleagues. Stronger connections with Springfield middle/high school math faculty is also part of the Fellowship.

So far Dr. Hill has done an extensive research and literature review to determine best practices. Dr. Hill has engaged with community colleges in and out of state, has surveyed faculty, has had initial contacts with Springfield public schools math faculty, has standing meetings with President Cook, and engages with Academic Affairs and meeting with Deans, faculty and departments.

In progress and to come are meetings with campus community such as student support services. A team of math faculty are working on identifying key concepts and learning outcomes. When building the course, making sure that the modules link to pathways and prerequisites. Dr. Hill is also working on identifying the proper technology/software to use. The proposed new course, which will also entail an overhaul of what is published in the course catalog, is anticipated to be reviewed by the STCC Curriculum Committee in Spring Semester 2022, for implementation in the Fall of 2022.

VI. Conversation with All-Unit Congress (AUC) – Professor Christina Atwater, AUC Faculty Co-Chair

As the new co-lead of the AUC, Professor Christina Atwater introduced herself and also described her hopes for AUC in the future given the NECHE evaluation report. Prof. Atwater noted that shared governance issues are not new to STCC, and she provided a context and history of the All Unit Congress, including a reference to ten years ago, when NECHE also made shared governance an area of emphasis. In 2013, as noted in the timeline, over 190 employees voted and selected the AUC model. The model was acknowledged by then President, Dr. Ira Rubenzahl. Of note, the AUC by-laws include a description

of a relationship with the Board of Trustees and STCC President, so that employees have a channel to communicate. The AUC has been attending Trustee meetings, and is now included with agenda-setting on Internal/External Committee meetings. Also starting the Fall of 2022, STCC administrators (the CFO and Chief Academic Officer) were invited to present to an AUC General Assembly meeting. Included in the presentation was an organizational chart of the current AUC structure.

Professor Atwater did observe that the current AUC structure is not effective, and suggests that the mechanism of shared governance only allows the AUC to be a reactionary body and not to participate in the process of true shared governance. In reference to NECHE's evaluation of the AUC as "ad hoc self-styled advocacy:" Prof. Atwater agrees with NECHE's statement and outlined reasons why. The AUC has made some adjustments, and seeks to build the trust and ultimately participate in decision making. Prof. Atwater shared highlights from Stephen Bahls' in *Shared Governance in Higher Education (2017)*.

VII. President's Perspective – Dr. John B. Cook

Dr. Cook thanked Prof. Atwater for the detailed presentation and context. He invited Trustees to look at the AUC bylaws as part of their governance review, and in particular the first proclamation that describes the relationship with the Board of Trustees and Administration. President Cook also shared an invitation to review the NECHE standards themselves, and the specific role a Board of Trustees serves as the policy authority, and when and how policy is delegated. Dr. Cook shared the sentiment by NECHE and Professor Atwater regarding the "Ad Hoc" culture at STCC. In 2016, STCC did not have a campus master plan, IT plan, comprehensive program review, and other fundamentals.

He additionally pointed out current initiatives that did not exist in the past, such as a "Fall 2" start which provides an onboard to STCC mid-semester. Further, in the presentations, key concepts that involved a tailored/individualized approach are critical, and such strategies are being used for retention and recruitment. It is great to have federal funding to help with these initiatives. With the math fellowship we are making progress towards reforms.

a) Personnel Report

In regards to personnel, Dr. Cook made a few remarks. He noted that we hired a Director for MILE (Male Initiative for Leadership in Education). The Office of Human Resources is sending out a weekly email with job postings; a practice that was done in the past and has been reestablished. In regards to Job postings, Dr. Cook noted that the Dean of Admissions is retiring after many years of service, this vacant is now posted as Dean of Enrollment, Retention & Completion.

b) Strategic Planning

This month Dr. Cook and Chair Murren will go before the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) regarding accreditation status. NECHE will be encouraged to know that Trustees are looking into hiring a consultant to look into models of shared governance, with important mapping to NECHE standards. Regarding development of the next Strategic Plan, STCC will work through the Internal and External Committee to keep Trustees apprised and included.

c) Status on COVID Vaccination requirement

Dr. Cook mentioned that he recently shared an email with Trustees regarding a communication sent to campus. We now have details and clarity for accommodations, and the college will keep an indoor mask requirement in place through the end of the semester, notwithstanding the fact that the City of Springfield has lifted its mask mandate.

VIII. Old Business – None

IX. New Business - None

X. Next Meeting Date and Time: Monday, February 7, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

XI. Adjournment: At 6:09 p.m. Board Chair Marikate Murren called to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Bill Johnson, and was unanimously approved through roll call.

Respectfully submitted by Nanette Flores