

MINUTES
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES, AND THE ARTS
BOARD OF VISITORS REGULAR MEETING
September 18, 2012
5:00 p.m.

The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts (ASMSA) Board of Visitors met in the Boardroom on the first floor at 200 Whittington Avenue, Hot Springs, Arkansas.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Lynne Dardenne, Chairman, convened the Board of Visitors regular meeting into open session at 5:03 p.m. and welcomed all Board members.

II. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Members Present

Lynne Dardenne, Ph.D., Chair
 Mr. Luther Lowe, Vice-Chair
 Mr. Hayward Battle
 Mrs. Karen Garcia
 Mrs. Leigh Merry
 Mrs. Julie Mullenix

Members Absent

Ex-Officio Members Present

Miss Marta Gwyn Collier, designee for John Ahlen, Ph.D., President, Arkansas Science and Technology Authority
 Ms. Mary Kathryn Stein, designee for Tom Kimbrell, Ph.D., Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education
 Mrs. Martha Carlson, President, ASMSA Parents Association
 Ms. Sorena Lo, President, Student Government Association

Ex-Officio Members Absent

Mr. Shane Broadway, Interim Director
 Arkansas Department of Higher Education
 Ms. Joy Pennington, designee for Ms. Cathie Matthews, Director, Department of Arkansas Heritage

Administrative Members Present

Mr. Corey Alderdice, Director
 Mr. Chris Robbins, Dean of Distance Education and Information Technology
 Mr. William Currier, Dean of Students
 Mrs. JaNan Abernathy, Director of Finance
 Mr. Greg Reed, Director, Institutional Advancement
 Mrs. Lorraine Munroe, Administrative Assistant

Administrative Members Absent

Janice Sullivan, Ph.D., Dean of Academic Affairs

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mrs. Garcia and seconded by Mr. Battle to approve the minutes of May 24, 2012. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Director's Comments – Corey Alderdice

Mrs. Garcia asked Mr. Alderdice what the timeline was for razing the old Residential Life Building (RLB). Mr. Alderdice responded that the continued occupation of Pine Street Building is part of what stands in way of complete demolition of the old Residence Life Building. Mr. Alderdice explained that the former complex includes three buildings – the Pine Street building, the former RLB and the Cedar Street building. Mr. Alderdice reported that the Pine Street building was formerly used as residential spaces and has been retrofitted into classroom and academic support spaces. The second building was the old hospital, which was primarily the residence hall. The Cedar Street building was the former parking garage and intensive care unit. Mr. Alderdice stated that it is the intent of the Master Plan to keep the Cedar Street building and the remaining space will be demolished. One of the things that will prevent that from going forward is the need to move some of the mechanical systems from the prior Residential Life Building into the Cedar Street complex. The cost to do that will be between \$1 - \$2 million for updates to the mechanical systems, and the total cost for renovating the space will be approximately \$6 million. Mr. Alderdice stated that the school is working primarily through the Office of Institutional Advancement to raise the private funds necessary to move that project forward.

Dr. Dardenne asked how the use and payment of utilities will be affected since the old RLO building is still being utilized in some capacities. Mr. Alderdice responded that the unoccupied spaces have been brought down to the minimum and maximum temperatures for sufficient operation of the spaces. He stated that the switch was recently made two weeks ago by the facilities staff and that the utility bills will be observed over the next few months. Mr. Alderdice stated that the goal is to keep the minimum temperature settings in the winter and the maximum temperature settings in the summer to prevent issues from arising in the unoccupied spaces. In answer to Mrs. Garcia's question about a definitive timelines, Mr. Alderdice responded that it all is dependent on securing funds to renovate the Cedar Street building, which is where the mechanicals will be relocated.

Dr. Dardenne stated that she noticed the senior class has maintained a larger number of students than in the past years. Mr. Alderdice stated that Dr. Sullivan has worked very closely on retention and that it is not uncommon among the other 14 state-supported residential math and science schools to experience an attrition or non-completion rate of 25% or higher. Mr. Alderdice stated that the numbers at ASMSA in some prior years have been as high as 30%. Mr. Alderdice stated that it is important to identify prime candidates for success and then help them make a successful academic transition once they matriculate at ASMSA.

Mrs. Garcia stated that she noticed over a third of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch programs and asked if the Board could do anything to help with the needs of these students. Mr. Alderdice stated that there is a change in the concurrent credit policy where a student must now pay \$50 per course for concurrent credit at UALR. He stated that if a student is taking several concurrent credit courses, the fees could be considerable. Mr. Alderdice stated that with the new regulations, UALR has tried to make the cost as reasonable as possible. Mr. Alderdice stated that any financial support from the Board for these fees would be appreciated.

Mr. Lowe asked Mr. Alderdice to speak about the completion of the Library. Mr. Alderdice responded stating that Hill and Cox had been very prudent with the funds and have been able to turn back \$70,000 to the project. Also, there is some debt relief from the UA System in the amount of \$150,000 that will be deferred for one year. The “Read...Lead...Succeed” program was able to provide \$45,000 from the Foundation.

In response to the question of what is the maximum student population, Mr. Alderdice stated that the new Residential Life Building can accommodate 246 students. Mr. Alderdice stated that he was aware that the current enrollment is close to the maximum amount of students the building can contain. He also reported that he remembered it was a concern of the Board during the May 2012 meeting of what would happen if interest should increase to beyond the number of rooms in the building. Mr. Alderdice reported increased interest by students will provide ASMSA with a stronger base of students from which to recruit.

Mr. Alderdice stated that there are two types of students that are served in the program: the transitional student and the transformative student. He explained that the transitional student has had tremendous opportunities already presented to them and comes to ASMSA strongly prepared. The transformational student has not had many experiences or preparation, enters with lower ACT scores and may lack in confidence relative to some of their peers as to their aptitudes. He added that he thought it was an extremely important population to serve, but ASMSA needs to grow the stronger base of transitional students. Mr. Alderdice stated that, at the end of the day, the academic quality of the experience has been great to this point, but the residential space has been a hindrance to some of those higher level students matriculating to ASMSA. He noted it will be very interesting to go through the first admissions cycle to see if the new student center will make a difference in considerations of some of those stronger students.

2. Office of Distance Education and Information Technology – Chris Robbins

Mr. Robbins stated that there was an increase in enrollment by 56% for 2012-2013. Mr. Robbins reported that with the advent of the Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium, the ASMSA Office of Distance Education receives only a fraction of the actual billable tuition. Mr. Robbins stated that if his office was able to charge the stated \$600 per student per year, ASMSA’s ODE revenues would be approximately \$3.13 million as opposed to the projected revenue of \$1.9 million. Mr. Robbins said that he will be working with ADE over the course of the year to allow a return to billing of pro-rata tuition. He reported that the program is theoretically capable of operating in the black, but some changes will need to be made with the way the Distance Learning Consortium allows billing.

Mr. Alderdice stated that there was a wide amount of variance to how districts are taking advantage of the Consortium. He reported that there are some districts that use the service for 20 students and others with 200 students. This, he stated, is not to the benefit of the providers.

Mr. Robbins stated that the net effect is that districts have realized that for the flat fee of \$2,500 they have an inability to lower their own instructional costs at the expense of the distance learning providers. Mr. Robbins reported that he is seeing evidence that this is taking place.

Mrs. Carlson asked how the shortfall was being covered. Mr. Robbins stated that would not think of it as a shortfall. Mr. Robbins reported that ASMSA's Office of Distance Education operation is an important component of the school that gives back to students in the State and that it is an extremely popular program for the school. Schools, by definition, are not for-profit entities, and there is always an expense associated with teaching students. Mr. Robbins stated that he would like the program to, at least, cover the operational cost and will be working with the Department of Education to see if adjustments can be made to the Distance Learning Tuition Grant Program and the way that ASMSA can charge.

Mr. Alderdice stated that his primary concern with the DLT Grant process is that the money is for faculty and faculty alone, which means that the distance education providers have to be committed participants to offer the opportunity in the first place. This has been a component of the outreach program over the past decade and takes a considerable investment to be a provider.

Mrs. Carlson asked how the difference is covered between revenue and expenses. Mrs. Abernathy stated that the overall operating budget does not segregate the distance education tuition dollars that are paying for a certain program or which state revenue dollars are paying for a certain program. Mrs. Abernathy reported that there is a collective budget of \$9.8 million and those sources of revenues include the Distance Education program, the billable hours of Distance Education, state general revenues, Education Excellence revenues, student assessments, etc. There are sources of income and sources of expenses and it is part of the overall operating budget. It is a collection of revenues that cover the expenses of the school.

Mr. Robbins stated that he does not speak on behalf of the Arkansas Department of Education Distance Education Program but can provide the data to show the Arkansas Department of Education Distance Education Program cost that they are paying per student is not equivalent to ASMSA's cost to educate the student. He believes ODE can make a strong case for additional funding or, more likely, the ability to charge a pro-rata tuition when the State funding falls short of ASMSA's stated purchase student tuition. Mr. Robbins reported that he has had some preliminary conversations with his counterparts in the distance education programs and they are very much seeing and sharing these same concerns.

Mr. Robbins reported that the Arkansas Department of Education's Office of Distance Education that operates out of the Maumelle facility has been experiencing some of the same financial concerns. They have been seeking a smaller facility to cut costs and have also sent a number of faculty home to teach from home to minimize some of their utility costs. They have also lost a full-time administrator that will not be replaced. Mr. Robbins stated that ADE's Office of Distance Education and ASMSA's Office of Distance Education are the State's two most comprehensive providers, offering a wide variety of courses while the other smaller providers are specialized (i.e., the Dawson Co-Op focuses primarily on career education, The Early College High School focuses on AP coursework, etc.). They are specialized providers because they have specialized missions.

Mr. Robbins reported that, based on the limited information available to him, the major providers of distance education are: ASMSA (largest provider), Arkansas Department of Education Distance Learning Center (Maumelle), Dawson Educational Service Cooperative (Arkadelphia), Early College High School (based out of the Southeast Co-Op/UA

Monticello) and Arkansas Virtual High School (based out of the Arch Ford Cooperative-not to be confused with the Arkansas Virtual School, which is a K-8 program).

3. Financial Report – JaNan Abernathy

Ms. Abernathy reviewed her report with the Board, and stated that the State reports were due on 9/21/12.

4. Residential Affairs Report – William Currier

Mr. Currier reported that move in day was very hot, but everything went well. It was a good start to the year.

Mr. Alderdice interjected that on a day that emotions were running high, the community leaders really excelled with their assistance, and that helped make the transition for the students a positive experience.

Mr. Currier reported that all is going well with the new building. He stated that the Maintenance Department has done a terrific job assisting in the transition. Mr. Currier stated that the light in the new building is wonderful, and the students now have lounges on every floor with plenty of room to meet.

5. Academic Affairs Board Report – Dr. Janice Sullivan

Due to illness, Dr. Sullivan was absent from the meeting.

In her absence, Mr. Alderdice reported that the students are well into their FIRM projects and have submitted an initial draft of Parts I and II of their literature review and research prospectus. Mr. Alderdice stated that the students who used their summer wisely are deep into the process and are moving into the collection-of-data phase of their projects.

In regard to the *Science Department Update* in this section of Dr. Sullivan's report, Miss reported that she would like to see added to the record that Dr.'s Buzen and Krakowiak helped with a Central Arkansas Biotechnology STEM Academy summer camp that was held at UCA. The camp was possible through the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation Grant and \$13,414.79 in grant money was given to ASMSA that was used for salaries for the faculty, equipment and housing for the students who stayed at UCA. Miss stated that out of the 20 or so students who attended the camp, 17 or 18 of the students are current ASMSA students.

Miss stated that the grant money for this project was a one-time deal and the funds are no longer available through the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. However, Miss reported that she will propose to her constituents in ADE and ADHE that additional funding be built into the budgets instead of through foundations for summer academies.

5. Institutional Advancement – Greg Reed

Mr. Reed reviewed his report with the Board.

Mr. Reed stated that he would like to have a major event every semester. The next event will be held in the fall at the Double Tree Grand Ballroom in Little Rock.

Mrs. Vicki Hinz discussed the upcoming event, *Open Book Celebration*, and advised the Board that the department has secured a major figure, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, to be ASMSA's keynote speaker at the event. Mr. Abdul-Jabbar is an advocate and supporter for STEM education and will be talking about STEM to 1,000 local Hot Springs ninth graders that will be hosted by Hot Springs High School.

Mr. Reed talked about doing a better job in nurturing relationships when fundraising. He referred to his handouts and highlighted several areas relating to developing and cultivating relationships with foundations, corporations and individuals. Mr. Reed also discussed the solicitation process and stewardship.

Miss stated that Mr. Abdul-Jabbar is also involved with FIRST Robotics and that he was the celebrity draw to the FIRST Robotics national competition this past year.

Miss stated that FIRST Robotics has grants for schools and is holding their first regional competition in northwest Arkansas. Miss stated that she needed to get with Mr. Reed to discuss FIRST Robotics with him and the connection with Mr. Abdul-Jabbar.

Mr. Lowe asked Mr. Reed if the Foundation fund had approximately \$115,000 in the Foundation Fund and Mr. Reed concurred that the information was correct.

Mr. Reed stated that a ASMSA Foundation Board is in the process of being established and that by-laws in draft form and Foundation policies have been developed.

In response to Mr. Lowe's question regarding entering alumni information in the database, Mr. Reed stated that approximately 60% of the data on graduates have been entered. Mr. Reed stated that electronic forms of alumni information had not been kept prior to 2007 and that it will take working with people who are in contact with those alumni to gather the needed information.

Mr. Reed reported that out of the \$1 million in grant requests, \$2,556 has been received. He stated that the primary reason for not receiving additional funds is that the requests are at the "first ask" level of the foundations. Mr. Reed stated that the foundations that have been contacted now know who he is, are more familiar with the school's Foundation and now is the time to start the cultivation process. Mr. Reed acknowledged that there were two grant requests made in the amount of \$400,000 each that did not materialize for the completion of the Library. Mr. Reed confirmed that there is currently a grant request in motion with the Blue & You Foundation for \$32,000 to enhance and extend the wellness program.

Mr. Alderdice stated that the Academic Affairs office is working on a \$25,000 American Honda Foundation Grant that would be used toward summer research opportunities for students. Mr. Alderdice stated that Dr. Lindsey Waddell, who has initiated the grant, works part-time writing grants and conducting research in Academic Affairs.

Mr. Alderdice called attention to the Huddle Up Conference that Institutional Advancement sponsored this summer. ASMSA hosted six peer schools to discuss advancement, development and other information. Mr. Alderdice reported that there is a new spirit of collaboration and partnership among these institutions. There will be a follow-up virtual conference at the end of September and an on-site visit at the Alabama school in March.

6. Parents Association – Mrs. Martha Carlson

Mrs. Carlson presented a revised format of the Parents Association report that is more concise and visual. The Board complimented Mrs. Carlson stating she did a great job on the new format and in providing information on the activities on the Parents Association. Mrs. Carlson reported that the Parents Association is working on creating a new student directory. She also stated that the Parents Association is working on distributing newsletters informing parents on hot topics of what is happening at the school.

7. Student Government Association – Sorena Lo

Ms. Lo introduced herself to the Board as the new Student Government Association President. Ms. Lo reported that the SGA had passed a bill to purchase outside café tables for the Student Center. Ms. Lo reported that the Constitution is being revised and that the Activities Committee is drafting a bill for the Fall Festival.

A motion was made by Mr. Battle and seconded by Mrs. Merry to accept the Consent Agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Dardenne stated that a Nominating Committee needed to be established for positions of Chair and Vice Chair. The Nominating Committee members are: Mrs. Leigh Merry, Mrs. Julie Mullinex and Dr. Lynne Dardenne.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A motion was made by Mrs. Mullenix that the Board hold a special meeting prior to the next Board meeting to look at the statutes that created the Board of Visitors to ensure that all members are aware of what the Board's role is and to also explore and form committees to better assist the school. The December 4, 2012 meeting will be held from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm with the Board meeting commencing at 6:00 pm. Motion was seconded by Mr. Lowe. Motion passed unanimously.

Miss stated that grants are available through the Arkansas Space Grant Consortium that is headquartered out of UALR for different activities. ASMSA should be able to access some of the funds that are available. It can make a difference for student programs that the school does not have a budget for and it builds a linkage so the school can interact with the faculty at UALR before the students graduate. Miss also reported that there is a SURF Grant Program (Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship) that is designed to allow students who are classified as undergraduate students that are taking concurrent enrollment classes to access research funding which is approximately \$4,750. She was not sure if ASMSA can access it. Miss stated that she would be willing to work with the school to look into the possibility of accessing these funds.

Mr. Lowe asked to have the minutes posted somewhere on the website so it can be viewed and accessed easily by the Board and to also receive the Board packet electronically. Mr. Alderdice stated that it would not be a problem to carry out Mr. Lowe's request.

VII. AUDIENCE WITH INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS


No request or comment from an individual or group.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, a motion was made by Mr. Lowe and seconded by Mr. Battle to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Approved as written _____

Approved as amended _____



Mrs. Karen Garcia, Secretary

(Date)