

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING/RETREAT DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES GULF COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE

August 25, 2007

8 a.m.

High Cotton Marketplace
Apalachicola, Florida

Members Present William C. Cramer, Jr. (presiding), Denise D. Butler, J. Allen Cox, Karen L. Durden, Dan A. Estes, Charles S. Isler, Dr. Stephen C. Myers, William C. Sumner, Linda Wood (trustee designate), Dr. Jim Kerley, Derrick G. Bennett

Others Present Kimberly Krutchek, Wanda Luckie, Wayne Newton

Call to Order and Welcome Chair Cramer called the session to order at 8:25 a.m., following a continental breakfast. Dr. Kerley acknowledged the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Durden in hosting the very enjoyable dinner held on the previous evening. Chair Cramer welcomed everyone in attendance, with a special welcome for Mr. Wayne Newton, the retreat facilitator and a well known and highly respected representative of the Association of Community College Trustees in the area of college board and presidential relations.

Purpose and Agenda Review Mr. Newton commended the trustees for their commitment to the college, especially with regard to ensuring an effective relationship between the board and president. He indicated that essential communications pieces must be in place to achieve effective change management, such as in presidential transition processes, and he indicated the retreat agenda had been designed to achieve that outcome.

Formality vs. Informality In response to a question from Mr. Newton about a desired level of formality in terms of forms of address and the use of professional and courtesy titles, Dr. Kerley invited trustees to call him “Jim” in one-on-one and private interactions, and he welcomed their suggestions and feedback in any areas of interest or concern. With regard to public interactions, Dr. Kerley expressed a preference for ensuring appropriate respect for the position of college president by using more formal forms of address. Trustees expressed concerns about potential difficulties related to discussing college business with faculty and staff members directly. They indicated a preference for having college employees talk with the president about those matters and for him to discuss the issues further with trustees as appropriate. Chair Cramer encouraged trustees to maintain an appropriate balance of personal cordiality and professional distance when dealing with college issues.

Role & Value of Community College Boards Mr. Newton indicated his belief that boards of trustees and their members can have a marked influence on the quality of life of the people of their communities. He suggested that every message the board releases should begin by reflecting the following philosophy: “We are here to train people to become good citizens, to have a strong work ethic, and to build the nation.”

Trustee Responses Trustees responded orally to a series of five questions that focused on what they enjoy most about board service, the one thing they would change if they could, major short-term challenges, retreat expectations, and personal information that others would not know about them.

President's Remarks	Dr. Kerley responded to similar questions adapted for him as a president, expressing his appreciation for the privilege and honor of serving Gulf Coast Community College. He highlighted initial priorities for his administration, which included encouraging authentic communication, celebrating successes, sharing the stories of students, faculty, and staff, as well as updates on new and exciting programs and activities, through the media. Dr. Kerley indicated that he continues to listen and learn as he meets with individuals and groups on the campuses and in the community. He expressed a desire to do a better job of collaborating with FSU Panama City and the K-12 public schools in Bay, Franklin, and Gulf counties. He acknowledged the challenges associated with providing current and effective information technology processes and reiterated his commitment to developing a new strategic plan with input from the college's various internal and external constituencies. Dr. Kerley cited numerous other areas of concern, including his interest in implementing a formal program review process, examining budgeting and personnel processes, and ensuring avenues for input from students, faculty, and staff. He emphasized a revitalized focus on professional development of all employees, indicating that a new Innovation Grants program was being designed to encourage innovation and creativity from employees in all areas of the college. Dr. Kerley indicated he hoped the retreat would reinforce shared understandings about expectations between himself and the board.
Key Ideas	Mr. Newton asked the retreat participants to identify key ideas that had come from the trustees' and Dr. Kerley's earlier remarks. The key points were posted for referral later in the day.
Principles of Attitude Inventory	Mr. Newton referred to the ACCT Eight Principles Attitude Inventory in the retreat packets and asked trustees to rate the board on each principle using a scale of 1 to 4, with "1" being "Doesn't describe us at all" and "4" being "Describes us completely." Following responses, Mr. Newton compiled the results and reported a composite score of 28.35, which ranked the GCCC board in the top category, as described by the following summary: "The board's foundation is strong and demonstrates an upbeat and positive attitude. You seem to be realistically prepared for the challenges associated with governance." In areas where scores were low, the trustees who assigned them shared the rationale they had used and identified areas of concern.
Board Calendar	Mr. Newton called attention to a document titled "Board of Trustees Annual Calendar: Business by Month." He led review of various areas of responsibility and activities during the year and emphasized the value of early planning. He differentiated vision from mission and encouraged trustees to use the college's mission statement as the basis for justifying everything they do to meet the needs of the community. Mr. Newton encouraged Dr. Kerley to create brief and memorable vision and mission statements during development of the Strategic Plan. He emphasized the importance of having a leadership succession plan in the event of an emergency that would make it impossible for the president to perform his duties. He also encouraged trustees to be prepared to always project the college in the most professional and positive way possible when speaking for the college or the board. He encouraged Dr. Kerley to let the trustees know when he needs them to represent the college at various activities and events, and he encouraged trustees to make time to fulfill those responsibilities. Dr. Kerley indicated that he would provide a listing of anticipated educational opportunities so trustees could adjust schedules as needed to ensure board participation. With regard to evaluating the president's performance, Mr. Newton suggested that the board develop an evaluation instrument that included goals against which performance would be evaluated. He encouraged the trustees to ask Dr. Kerley to perform a self-analysis as part of the annual evaluation process. He also recommended that the board annually evaluate the performance of the board chair and that each trustee perform an annual self-analysis.

**President's
Plans for
Future**

Dr. Kerley shared a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted key elements of his vision for the college. He proposed a new strategic planning model that would ensure consistency with state educational goals and plans. He shared a new organizational structure, which reflected an increase in the number of administrators who report directly to the president in areas such as Academic Affairs & Learning Support, Administration & Finance, Institutional Advancement, Economic Development, Student Support & Enrollment Management, Information Technology, and Multicultural Affairs. In response to a trustee request, Dr. Kerley indicated he would share organizational charts that provided names of top-level administrators and structural detail of functional areas reporting to Cabinet members. He shared feedback from the Faculty and Staff Perception Survey conducted during the summer and from his meetings as early as April with individuals and groups in the community. Dr. Kerley presented his "Wave of Change" proposal, which included the following first steps: Listening and Learning Tour, Structure Changes, Process Changes, Strategic Planning, and Low Hanging Fruit. He summarized four strategic planning areas of focus, which had been identified recently by the President's Leadership Team (PLT): Enrollment, Communication, Competitiveness/Collaboration, and Program Enhancement. Dr. Kerley also shared a listing of action teams that would be used to address specific problems within limited timeframes, replacing some of the committees that had existed for many years. He shared data that compared GCCC to other Florida community colleges of similar size in areas including headcount and FTE enrollment, student gender, enrollment of prior high school year graduates, enrollment of minority students, credit program completers, minority credit program completers, number of transfer students to SUS institutions, distance learning enrollment, and retention.

**Support
for Change
Agenda**

In response to Dr. Kerley's presentation, each trustee expressed support for the plans and organizational changes that had been shared. Requests of Dr. Kerley included informing trustees of progress and of new priorities as they are identified and monitoring the rate of change, focusing on priorities, and ensuring that trustees are advised early of major role and assignment changes. After other trustees expressed satisfaction with Dr. Kerley's performance thus far, Mr. Isler characterized the board's selection of Dr. Kerley as GCCC's fifth president in these words: "We knew when we hired him we were hitching a racehorse to our wagon." The characterization was unanimously endorsed by the trustees.

**Board
Meetings**

Some discussion focused on reformatting the agenda of board meetings to increase opportunities for showcasing students, programs, faculty, and staff. The trustees also indicated they wanted more time to review matters they would be asked to approve at meetings and requested that supporting materials be mailed to them prior to the meeting. Following consideration of several suggestions for improving the trustees' ability to prepare for board meetings, Mr. Cox suggested that Dr. Kerley discuss possibilities with Ms. Luckie and refine the process prior to the next regular meeting.

**Additional
Key Ideas**

In addition to the key ideas noted earlier, trustees identified others based on their discussions throughout the day. Sixteen ideas were written on charts and displayed so that everyone could see all of the key ideas captured during the retreat. Key ideas are listed below:

- Explore medical field opportunities
- Collaboration with 28e possibilities (e.g., new airport, FSU & K-12)
- Workforce training
- Reformatting board meeting agenda
- Vocational-Technical expansion
- Improved communication

- Data-supported assessment
- Remediation in hard science education
- GCCC/Globalization – Multicultural Affairs
- Program enhancement
- Professional development
- Foundation/College relationships
- Policy on trustee professional development
- Evaluation process (president & board chair & trustee self-evaluation)
- Explore new delivery systems
- Long- and short-range planning (already in progress)

Mr. Newton asked trustees to select the three issues they considered most significant for short term, ranking them in order of importance. The top three issues are listed below:

1. Program enhancement
2. Improved communication
3. Explore new delivery systems

Dr. Kerley emphasized the consistency between the issues identified by the trustees and those identified by members of the PLT in a separate retreat setting.

**Expectations
and
Conclusion**

One by one, trustees assessed whether their expectations for the retreat had been met, and all agreed that the retreat was a valuable experience and should be repeated at least twice a year. Some of the descriptive terms and phrases used for the day included the following: openness; best thing yet; “new delivery systems” -- just what I wanted to hear; cohesive group; readiness to help Dr. Kerley meet the people in the community he needs to meet; eagerness to participate in strategic planning activities; great introduction to the board; and excited about the future. Chair Cramer concluded the comments by indicating he was pleased the board had taken advantage of the opportunity to employ Mr. Newton and his skills in leading the retreat. He characterized the retreat as the beginning of a “new day” for the board, now strengthened with the knowledge of some better ways of doing business and the renewed promise of working together as a highly productive team. Dr. Kerley assessed the day as positive, productive, and focused on planning for the future. He indicated that the board, community members, students, faculty, and staff would be invited to participate in a number of planning activities in the months ahead. He reiterated that his purpose for coming to Gulf Coast was to make a difference in lives, and he expressed appreciation for the board’s endorsement of his vision. Ms. Durden indicated that the college has outstanding support from state legislators, noting in particular how positively impressed Representative Jimmy Patronis and Senator Don Gaetz have been with their interactions with Dr. Kerley. Mr. Newton thanked the trustees for the opportunity to work with them and invited them to contact him by telephone or email and to visit him on his farm in Iowa.

Adjournment

After sharing a handout describing the duties and responsibilities of trusteeship in Florida, Chair Cramer adjourned the special meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Secretary

Chairman