

MEETING MINUTES

Approved by the Committee on Equal Opportunities, January 22, 2024

Who: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
Meeting Type: Committee on Equal Opportunities
Date: October 23, 2023
Time: 1:00 p.m. ET
Location: Bluegrass Community and Technical College, The Den Gallery

WELCOMING & CALL TO ORDER

The Committee on Equal Opportunities (CEO) met Monday, October 23, 2023, at 1:00 p.m., ET. The meeting occurred with a hybrid modality with committee members joining in person at The Den Gallery at Bluegrass Community and Technical College and virtually via ZOOM. Chair Elaine Walker presided.

ATTENDANCE

Committee Member attendance:

- Attended: CB Akins, Whitney Allen, Rochelle Brown, Luv'Tesha Robertson, Elaine Walker, Maira Gomez
- Did not attend: David Carpenter, Robert Croft, Kellie Ellis, Faith Kemper

Gaines Brown, CPE's Associate for Diversity, Equity &, Inclusion, served as recorder of the meeting minutes.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Walker requested if there were any proposed changes to the meeting agenda as proposed.

MOTION: CB Akins moved that the Committee adopts the agenda. Luv'Tesha Robertson seconded that motion.

VOTE: The motion was approved.

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

Dr. Carlous Yates, Associate VP for Diversity Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) provided greetings and a welcome to their campus. Dr. Yates introduced each of the faculty and staff presenters during their greetings.

INITIATIVES FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS

Peter Mottas, Coordinator of LGBTQ Services at BCTC, provided presentations for initiatives for LGBTQ students at their institution. Mottas shared that CDC research discovered that 26 percent of college students identify as LGBTQ.

Travis Powell, CPE Vice President and General Counsel, asked questions regarding the requirement for their Safe Space Training and Mottas shared that it is not mandatory. However, a large portion of faculty and staff completed the Safe Space Training. This same training has also been made available to the other 15 colleges within the KCTCS system.

Mottas also shared that they received a 4 out of 5 for their Campus PRIDE Index which they expressed is fairly challenging to achieve at a 2-year college. All in all, the KCTCS system has been successful in demonstrating their commitment to creating a safe and welcoming campus environment.

INITIATIVES FOR OPPORTUNITY

Kauai Thurman, Director of African American Student Initiatives provided a presentation for the African American Student Initiatives at their institution. Thurman provided details on the Bridge to Success Summer Program which targets African American Seniors with a 2.0 GPA to take courses over the summer and transition into college. Additionally, Thurman described that FAFSA completion has been a barrier for several students in their matriculation into college. However, Thurman's capacity at BCTC assists these students and their parents through FAFSA workshops.

Thurman also shared information on their Few Good Men and Becoming HER programs that aim to bolster retention and graduation rates through programming and interactive discussion on current events that provide students a safe space to engage in thoughtful dialogue.

Rev. Akins posed a question on the quantity of students participating in their summer bridge program and the strategies to increase enrollment. Kauai Thurman responded that the grant approval came through shortly before the beginning of the summer bridge program and the timeline did not permit for proper recruitment. BCTC now has a Recruiter that engages with the community to attract students to their summer bridge program.

Dr. Robertson also asked for information regarding student success metrics for participants within their summer bridge program. Currently they are experiencing a 100 percent retention rate for the participants in summer bridge program, and Thurman shared that the students that participate in these programs do better than those that do not. Dr. Offutt also shared that Kauai Thurman is a recent cohort graduate of the Academic Leadership Development Institute.

Overall, it appears that Kauai Thurman's success through the summer bridge program, additional URM student success initiatives, and the Academic Leadership Development Institute for Ms. Thurman is indicative of the success of these programs.

INITIATIVES FOR IMPACT

Savannah Sipple-McGraw, Coordinator of Academic Diversity and Inclusion at BCTC, provided a presentation for their institutional strategies for impact. Sipple-McGraw shared the functionalities associated with her role including their relationship building, professional development, and implementation. Moreover, Sipple-McGraw works collaboratively with Assistant and Associate Deans, facilitates professional development session centrally focused on challenging conversations while also partnering with other campus departments.

Training curriculum is held in-person but they are also accessible online on various topics such as microaggressions, allyship, etc. Hiring Committees have received a guide for how to recruit diverse faculty and staff from Sipple-McGraw and their staff. Dr. Yates also acknowledged that Sipple-McGraw is a faculty member at BCTC and is familiar with the pedagogy to communicate effectively with other faculty members at BCTC and the entire KCTCS system.

Mr. Powell requested additional information regarding workshops and Sipple-McGraw provided insight on collaborative review for assignments and included additional information on making assignments accessible while also diversifying assignments highlighting diverse contributions to literature, technology innovations, gender disparities, etc. Dr. Akins inquired on the implantation of the guide for hiring committees and Sipple-McGraw stated that they are in the process of collecting and analyzing data for diverse hiring initiatives. Ultimately, this will provide insight into the effectiveness of the guide.

INITIATIVES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Erin Howard, Associate Dean of Global Learning at BCTC, provided a presentation for the initiatives of student success including information regarding their study abroad efforts, and their general demographics of the institution. Dr. Howard services Study Abroad, Latinx & Immigrant Services, International Student & Scholar Services, and Refugee Carer Pathways Program. The Baseline Global Learners (ESL) increased by 434 participants from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023. BCTC has created formalized partnerships in South Africa, Kenya, and Scotland focused on student exchanges and articulation/dual degree programs. Additionally, BCTC has hired a new Latinx Student Services Director, Ruth Gonzalez.

In the Fall of 2022, BCTC supported 71 students with KHAS applications with 59 receiving funds up to \$5,000, and 13 additional students were supported. Howard also shared that 63 percent of their international students need ESL services with majority of these students coming from the following countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Venezuela, Ukraine, Syria, and Afghanistan. Moreover, 20 percent of these international students possess a

high-level degree from their home or secondary country. Overall, these figures show the importance of BCTC's KHAS program in providing critical support to international students.

WELCOME FROM BCTC ACTING PRESIDENT

Dr. Greg Feeny, Acting President of BCTC, provided a welcome and greetings to the CEO. Dr. Feeny shared his excitement and appreciation for the staff that are implementing DEI strategies on their campus. Chair Walker shared acknowledgement that it is difficult to hire a dedicated staff person for DEI initiatives but noted that BCTC has an expansive staff commitment to implement said initiatives.

UPDATE FROM CPE VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL COUNSEL

Committee members received an update from Mr. Powell regarding its efforts to visit all 24 public colleges and universities. Powell noted that it is a rewarding experience to witness the DEI initiatives in person on these campuses and to ask questions and connect with faculty, staff, and students.

He also shared that the CPE board approved a 2024-26 biennial budget request at its September Council meeting, which asks for a system-wide inflationary adjustment for each of the public institutions. CPE is also asking for 22 million dollars to go into the performance funding model, as well as capital requests to approve new construction projects and an additional 350 million dollars each year of the biennium to service asset preservation. There is a lot of deferred maintenance that have accrued over the years and this request will provide the funding necessary to provide maintenance to these assets. Mr. Powell also noted that they have done a lot with less for a long time, but these funds will help.

CPE is also finishing up the Senate Joint Resolution 98 study that looks at the overall governance structure of higher education, the prospect of adding a 4-year university to Southeast Kentucky, and the impact of splitting the KCTCS system from its current focus on both technical and academic education. This study includes a cost-benefit analysis to determine the efficacy of the aforementioned outcomes. Ultimately, this study will provide comprehensive insight into the implications of these proposed changes to higher education in Kentucky.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The revised minutes of the April 24, 2023, meeting, were approved as distributed.

The minutes of the June 26, 2023, meeting, were approved as distributed.

APPROVAL OF PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Three institutions presented performance improvement plans for approval. These were Kentucky State University, Henderson Community College, and Big Sandy Community & Technical College. Committee members did not note any needed changes to the proposed plans.

MOTION: Rev. Akins moved that the Committee approve the performance improvement plan for Kentucky State University. Dr. Robertson seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

MOTION: Dr. Robertson moved that the Committee approve the performance improvement plan for Henderson Community College. Rev. Akins seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

MOTION: Rev. Akins moved that the Committee approve the performance improvement plan for Big Sandy Community and Technical College. Ms. Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF STRATEGY REVISIONS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024

The Committee received submissions for strategy revisions from Kentucky State University.

MOTION: Dr. Robertson moved that the Committee approves the strategy revisions for Kentucky State University. Whitney Allen seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion was approved.

BEST PRACTICES FOR DEI STRATEGIES REPORT

Dr. Offutt presented a high-level overview of the upcoming best practices lessons learned from the annual reporting of the institutional diversity strategies review process. She highlighted the progress of institutions from the initial implementation of the statewide diversity policy. Sample campus scorecards were shared demonstrating the metric progress over the duration of the policy, and sample best practices that have been used for each of the three focus areas, opportunity, success, and impact, were highlighted from some institutions.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Offutt announced that the 5th Annual Higher EDquity Symposium will be taking place November 13-14, 2023 at Eastern Kentucky University. The theme is “Creating A Commonwealth for All.”

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned at 3:30 p.m. ET.