

Minutes
Academic Affairs Committee
Board of Trustees
December 9, 2003

The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees met in the Board Room, 18th Floor Patterson Office Tower at 11:35 a.m. on December 9, 2003. Alice Sparks, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, called the meeting to order. The following members of the Committee were in attendance: Michael Kennedy, Elissa Plattner, Elaine Wilson, and Barbara Young. Other Board members in attendance: JoEtta Wickliffe, Russ Williams, Davy Jones, Marianne Smith Edge, Myra Tobin, and Marian Sims.

Ms. Sparks distributed the minutes of the October 29, 2003 meeting and asked for any corrections or additions. With no corrections or additions, a motion was made by Barbara Young to accept the minutes as distributed. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Sparks introduced the following resolution, which was presented for approval at the December 9, 2003 Board of Trustee meeting:

AACR 1 Candidates for Degrees - Resolution authorizing the President to confer upon each individual whose name appears on an attached list the degree to which he or she is entitled upon certification by the University Registrar that the individual has satisfactorily completed all requirements for the degree for which application has been made and as approved by the University Senate and the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Elissa Plattner to approve the recommendation. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Sparks informed those in attendance that the major topic for the meeting was an update on the Lexington Community College (LCC). The Academic Affairs Committee asks for periodic reports to be better informed of academic issues.

Dr. Nietzel reminded the Board that in July 2003 the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools continued LCC's accreditation for another year, but placed it on probation for 12 months for failure to comply with various accreditation criteria concerning the issue of whether LCC had sufficient autonomy from UK to justify separate accreditation. In August 2003, Dr. Todd appointed a 14 member Special Task Force on Options for SACS Accreditation of the Lexington Community College and asked Ben Carr to serve as chair.

Dr. Carr stated the Task Force was charged with considering three options:

1. LCC maintains its relationship with UK, but institutes changes that would convince SACS that it has sufficient autonomy and independence as an institution to justify being separately accredited.

2. LCC is not separately accredited, but is included as a component of the accreditation of the University of Kentucky.

3. LCC is accredited as a separate community college, either as a freestanding institution or as part of KCTCS.

After carefully considering all options, the Task Force unanimously agreed to recommend to Dr. Todd that LCC be transferred to the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and maintain its separate accreditation as an institution of higher education. The Task Force also recommended that the decision on LCC's future be made as soon as possible, to allow LCC to meet the SACS deadline for responding to the July 2003 letter and to allow the maximum time for implementing whatever decision is made.

According to Dr. Carr, the Commission on Colleges has been looking more closely at "colleges within colleges" in recent years. To maintain its relationship with UK and be separately accredited, LCC would have to have complete autonomy over matters such as its curriculum, funding raising, capital projects, student fees, publications, college transcripts and diplomas, budgets, purchasing, bookstores, etc. LCC does not have independent authority for these things—all must go through UK. In the opinion of the consultant that LCC hired to look at the situation in July, it would be nearly impossible, given the close relationship that has been fostered over many years, for LCC to meet the SACS criteria and remain organizationally a part of UK.

Dr. Kerley stated that losing LCC's separate accreditation is not acceptable. The faculty and administration have had many meetings to discuss the issues, and separate accreditation is the key concern. LCC enjoys their relationship with UK, but the institution is passionate about its mission of open access, which is critical.

Ms. Wilson asked Dr. Kerley about the students and their concerns. Dr. Kerley reported that the students are not as concerned with whether LCC is part of UK or KCTCS as they are about credits, transferability, dorms, and basketball tickets. If a poll were taken, the students would want to stay affiliated with UK.

Ms. Plattner summarized the situation with the community college system being affiliated with UK as a matter of the heart; accreditation is a matter of the head. We need to do what is best for the students. Open admissions and open access close to home are critical for the students.

LCC is required to submit a follow-up report to SACS for another visit in the Spring of 2004. If Dr. Todd accepts the recommendation of the Task Force, it is likely that SACS will postpone the visit indefinitely until the agreements are in place.

Dr. Carr emphasized that whatever the outcome, one of the goals will be to make things as seamless as possible for the students. The Task Force tried to look at what was best for LCC and the students, not look at it from a financial standpoint. Mike McCall, President of KCTCS, has assured UK that KCTCS will support whatever decision is made.

Dr. Nietzel envisions a close partnership with LCC. However, analyses of and adjustments to some of the current arrangements will have to be conducted. Additional input will be sought before a final decision is made. Dr. Nietzel thanked Dr. Carr for his exceptional service as chair and the completion of a difficult task in a short period of time.

Ms. Sparks reminded the Board that today's discussion was just an update. A formal recommendation will be made at the Board meeting in January. The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Sparks
Chair
Academic Affairs Committee