

EAST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OFFICIAL MINUTES OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
EACC Boardroom
6:00PM

Date of Meeting: February 28, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Trustees meeting was called to order by Chairman Brent Howton at 6:02pm.

II. ROLL CALL

The following board members were in attendance: Mr. Alan Curtis, Mrs. Beverly Devazier, Mrs. Jan Haven, Mr. Rausch Hodges, Mr. Brent Howton, Judge Ann Hudson, Mr. Kevin Lewey, Mr. Al Miller, and Dr. Florine Milligan.

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Cathie Cline, Mrs. Lindsay Midkiff, Mr. Jack Hill, Mr. Adam O'Neal, Mr. Jim Huff, Dr. Don Lewis, and Mr. Alan Cline. Special guests from the University of Arkansas System included Dr. Donald Bobbitt, President, Ms. Melissa Rust, Vice President for University Relations and Chief of Staff, and Mr. Chris Thomason, Vice President for Planning and Development. Minutes were recorded and transcribed by Mrs. Anne Kelso.

MEDIA PRESENT

Media representation included Mr. Brodie Johnson representing the Forrest City *Times-Herald* newspaper.

III. UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS SYSTEM AGREEMENT

Mr. Howton stated, that before the Board is the proposed agreement that would enable EACC to become a member of the University of Arkansas System. Each of you received the agreement by email, as well as the resolution that would approve the agreement, for review. If approved, and the University of Arkansas System Board also approves the agreement, this transaction would take place approximately March, 2025 depending on the Higher Learning Commission's processes and approvals. If there are any questions, Dr. Cline will be happy to answer them at this time. If not, I would entertain a motion and second. Mr. Alan Curtis moved that the resolution prepared for EACC and the University of Arkansas System be approved, and Mr. Al Miller seconded. Mr. Howton called for discussion. Following comments, the motion was approved with no opposition.

Mr. Howton thanked the Board for their vote. He noted, if we look at the mission statement for EACC, it states that our goal is to provide affordable and accessible learning opportunities in order to promote student success and to strengthen our community. I believe that in the last 50 years, we've done an outstanding job of doing just that. Your action tonight, I believe, will strengthen our college, our programs, and our outreach as we look forward to serving as an academic and economic leader for the next 50 years. We look forward to continuing to empower our students and our community to succeed through business and industry partnerships and educational programming. It's our duty to look to the future, and I believe that our partnership with the University of Arkansas System will solidify our programs, our mission, and our future.

Dr. Donald Bobbitt, UA System President, thanked the Board. He stated, we are both humbled and honored by the opportunity before us. Although I haven't talked with my entire Board, many are excited, for so many reasons, by the opportunity to have this fine institution as part of the UA System. It starts at the top, and you have an exceptional President. The other Presidents and Chancellors in the UA System describe her as "top-shelf" and they were excited that she would be joining them as a colleague. So, I simply want to say to you that there is a lot of work to be done, and I pledge to you, along with my colleagues, Chris Thomason, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, and Melissa Rust, Vice President for Government and Community Relations/Chief of Staff, that these individuals will be assisting the campus as we plow through the paperwork that is required of this process. But I will tell you, looking at this institution, its record and service to the community and to your students, your financial health, and the health of the UA System and what we have been able to do in assisting the community colleges that have joined the System in the past couple of years, I think the Higher Learning Commission is going to embrace this, and I believe they'll move quickly. Again, I thank you for your vote and for your faith in the University of Arkansas System.

Dr. Cline noted that FAQ's are included in the packet and will also be placed on our website. I find it helpful to have answers prepared for people's questions. She thanked Dr. Bobbitt for his kind words and noted that this is an exciting moment.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Mrs. Haven made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Milligan seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Approved:

Mr. Brent Howton, Chair
EACC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Date