

MINUTES

LTC AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 8, 2005
Baton Rouge Community College – Louisiana Building
5310 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806

The LTC Ad Hoc Committee meeting was called to order by Supervisor Stevie Smith at 2:07 p.m. Supervisor Smith served as Committee Chair in the absence of Supervisor Brett Mellington.

Bonni Blouin, Coordinator of Board Services, called roll and a quorum was established. The following Committee members were present: Edwards Barham, Mike Chandler, Alvin Kimble, and Stevie Smith. Board Chair Kathy Sellers Johnson and LCTC System President, Dr. Walter Bumphus were also present to attend the meeting.

Dr. Bumphus indicated that several people were present at the meeting today, at the invitation of the LCTC System Office, to speak about their relationships with and expectations of the Louisiana Technical College (LTC). He recognized Mr. Barry Erwin, member of the Workforce Competitiveness Task Force and president and CEO of the Council for a Better Louisiana (CABL), and Ms. Tia Edwards, Louisiana Chemical Association.

Acting Chair Smith noted that Mr. Chuck Fontenot, Bollinger Shipyards, would be participating in the meeting via conference call.

Mr. Barry Erwin addressed the Committee and stated that CABL has been involved with the Louisiana Community & Technical College System (LCTCS) since before its inception, having been invited by Commissioner Savoie, to provide positive input on the creation of the System. He stated that they (CABL) are very pleased with what has been taking place in the LCTCS and the LTC. He offered their support to help the LCTCS work through the current difficulties and stated that he is very distressed about what has been going on in the legislative processes aimed at the LTC. He further stated that they are very proud with the accomplishments of the LTC and very proud of the members who serve of the LCTCS Board. He further stated that he does not want to see the LTC fall apart.

Dr. Bumphus stated that LCTCS Board Chair, Kathy Sellers Johnson, convened the LTC Ad Hoc Committee and it was created in conjunction with House Bill 505 to review all aspects of the Louisiana Technical College. He added that the Committee heard from faculty, staff and students at the October meeting of the LTC Ad Hoc Committee and this month they will hear from the business community about their observations of the LTC.

Dr. Bumphus asked Mr. Erwin if there were any comments that he wanted to provide regarding the organization of the LTC.

Mr. Erwin replied that CABL is not on the ground floor level as is the business community, because they do not utilize the LTC services directly. He added that they are more of an advocacy/policy organization. He stated that unless they felt that the current structure was terribly flawed, they would not change it. He added that there may be some tweaking that needed to be done regarding the regional organization, but he did not feel that the issues that exist are part of the structure of the institution.

Supervisor Johnson asked if the current structure of the LCTCS is organized as it was originally intended to be structured.

Mr. Erwin responded that when the legislation was passed there were two divisions – a community college division and a technical college division. He added that he saw nothing wrong with the current organization of the LTC and thought that the current model was a good one. He further stated that he felt that the current issues are not about the function of the structure, except that some people just may not like it.

Chair Smith asked if CABL had heard from their business membership regarding concerns related to the LTC.

Mr. Erwin responded that they have not received any feedback. He added that he thought part of the problem is related to “chatter” coming from the Legislature that needs to be addressed. He spoke to the danger that exists when “chatter” is not addressed and people start to believe it. He added that the longer this “chatter” goes on, the more people will listen. He concluded by saying that the biggest problem is that some groups want the LTC to go back to the way it used to be and they will use any issue that comes up to substantiate their argument. He offered some advice – Combat and fight with information.

Dr. Bumphus reported that the study regarding enrollment and budget requested from Bob Keating will be available soon to provide to the Legislature.

Supervisor Chandler asked Mr. Erwin if he felt that the negative statements and issues coming from the legislature has affected the way CABL officials perceive the LCTCS.

Mr. Erwin responded that the issues have not changed their perception of the LCTCS. He suggested that it may be helpful to have Board members present when legislative hearings occur to provide answers to questions and to speak to the issues presented.

Supervisor Barham commented that the LTC was to be maintained as a separate entity. He added that one issue the Board has had to address is the possibility of returning to the “old way” and the fact that it will be impossible for smaller campuses to survive on their own.

Chair Smith asked Mr. Chuck Fontenot, Bollinger Shipyards, to speak to the Committee to provide his impression of services that he has received from the LTC and to offer any suggestions that he may have to improve those services.

Mr. Fontenot, Corporate Director of Training & Recruiting, Bollinger Shipyards, stated that he has utilized the services at seven (7) of the LTC campuses along the gulf coast. He stated that he used the campuses to provide training in welding and fitting and had experienced no problems. He added that the LTC campuses used curriculums provided by Bollinger because the fit was better. He further stated that he had no issues with the LTC.

Mr. Fontenot offered one improvement. He stated that he has experienced problems with individuals not having the reading and writing abilities that are needed to pass the tests to advance in their fields. He stated that the main issue they have is related to literacy.

Board members shared other instances where companies experienced a problem finding capable individuals, those who had sufficient reading and math skills, to hire for available jobs.

Chair Smith asked Mr. Fontenot what he would suggest to fix the literacy problem.

Mr. Fontenot responded that his company had worked with the Literacy Alliance of Greater New Orleans to provide training to his employees who could not read the tests needed to pass certain levels of training. He stated that the training took place during a six (6) week period, twice a week for 2 hours a class. He added that the company uses an “unconventional method” of training to teach individuals how to read. He stated that nineteen (19) individuals received the training and it kept them from losing their jobs.

Supervisor Barham asked Vice Chancellor Toya Barnes-Teamer who was present in the audience if she was familiar with the Literacy Alliance program.

Vice Chancellor Teamer stated that the Literacy Alliance is housed out of Loyola University and it is a federally funded program where literacy research and training is conducted on adults to try to get them back in the workplace. She stated that the LTC has been trying to work with the Literacy Alliance through the “Bridge Project”. She added that this project fell through after Hurricane Katrina hit. She further stated that she felt that this is an excellent model and one that we should try to use across the State of Louisiana. She noted that two components exist, one being The 21st Century which is curriculum that is application based and career application driven. She stated that the LTC-Young Memorial Campus had served as a research center for the Literacy Alliance.

Supervisor Barham asked how the program is funded.

Vice Chancellor Teamer stated that because the Literacy Alliance was already being funded through an Annie E. Casey Foundation, the training was being provided through the grant. The partnership with the LTC was to provide the technical skills training and it

allowed business and industry partners to review the curriculum and make recommendations for modifications to the curriculum to meet their needs on the technical skills side. She added that the Literacy Alliance conducts the follow-up and tracking of the students. She noted that the program did not cost anything, but if the grants are not refunded it would cost to continue the training.

Mr. Fontenot added that Bollinger is also providing the Employee Literacy Program to their employees, through the Literacy Alliance, and it has been a huge success.

Chancellor Montgomery-Richard stated the issue exists that the LTC does not receive funding for adult education. They only receive funding for courses that lead to preparing individuals for college level work. She stated that if the LTC could get the resources for training, the programs are there for the training.

Supervisor Kimble asked if any of these issues have been addressed with the high schools.

Chancellor Montgomery-Richard responded that the technical college's role in the high school deals with dual enrollment where a student can receive college credit and Carnegie unit credit. She stated that the LTC believes that early exposure to college will lead to more students actually coming in to the technical programs and finishing. She stated that the real challenge are those individuals who do not have the skill sets.

Chancellor Montgomery-Richard stated that the LTC is also reviewing its curriculum to see what changes may be needed, and added that training of faculty is also taking place.

Supervisor Barham stated that the NCHEMS Report speaks to the role of the System in that somebody should serve as a link to learn about these problems and to serve as an advocate to the Legislature. He stated that this problem is beyond the individual campuses capability, or the district's capability. He added that this whole discussion supports that statement.

Acting Chair Smith asked Mr. Fontenot about literacy training that he has used in other parts of the state.

Mr. Fontenot stated that he has worked with Goodwill Industries to provide training in Lockport and Morgan City. He added that he does not have to provide this type of training in the Lake Charles plant because most of those employees can read.

Supervisor Chandler asked Mr. Fontenot if he has done any advertising around the state for open positions.

Mr. Fontenot responded that he had conducted a job fair at the LTC-Bastrop campus recently and it was a huge success and he would encourage anyone to contact him directly to receive information related to employment with Bollinger Shipyards.

Chair Smith thanked Mr. Fontenot for his comments and his time.

Dr. Bumphus introduced Ms. Tia Edwards, Louisiana Chemical Association. He stated that the LCTCS has worked closely with Ms. Edwards with the PTEC program.

Ms. Edwards provided remarks on her experiences with the Louisiana Technical College. She stated that “if you want to see an industry, an association, or a person who is the biggest cheerleader for the Louisiana Community & Technical College System, you’re looking at her right now.” She stated that in 1997 when the Louisiana Chemical Association (LCA) decided to look at a trainer to provide training for process technology operators for industry, they looked to the LCTCS.

Ms. Edwards provided the following information in relation to the LTC:

- 2 year associate degree in PTEC program at the LTC-River Parishes and Ascension campuses, Baton Rouge Community College and the SOWELA Technical Community College.
- The LCA is extremely pleased with the training received and they cannot get enough students to fill the need
- The Process Technology program needs a strong student in academics (reading, math, science). The academic core of the PTEC program is very rigorous. Also needs someone who can speak with their other colleagues, a team leader and someone who can engage the other workers. She stated that they have gotten those students from the community and technical colleges in the LCTCS.
- LTC River Parishes campus is used to bring in new hires from Dow, Dupont, Monsanto for training. Prior to the creation of the facility at River Parishes, new hires were taken out of state to a facility in Texas.
- A \$3.5 million dollar outlay was granted during Governor Foster’s administration, to equip a glass lab at the LTC River Parishes, SOWELA, BRCC campuses to create pilot plants so students can see what it is like to work with the instruments.
- The LCTCS should be proud that they are bringing money and keeping money in the State of Louisiana with the LCTCS campuses.
- 70 operators were just recently hired. 28 operators had 4-year degrees and a few of those hired had Master’s degrees. Jobs in Louisiana are not for the 4-year degree person, but for those that have specialized training. This training is obtained through two-year programs or some type of technical training institution.

Supervisor Barham noted the need to work with the high schools to promote programs within the LTC.

Dr. Bumphus thanked Ms. Edwards for her input and her time.

Vice Chancellor Toya Barnes-Teamer addressed the committee, on behalf of Dr. Larry Crane, Northrop Grumman, and read a written statement provided by Dr. Crane. (copy of letter attached to minutes).

Supervisor Johnson read an e-mail that was sent to the LTC Ad Hoc Committee by Mr. Wade McBride, Smurfit-Stone (copy attached to the minutes).

Dr. Bumphus commented on the letter from Dr. Crane. He stated a lot of the state funds in Mississippi go to the community and technical college system, whereas the LCTCS does not receive funding for training.

Vice Chancellor Greg Garrett addressed the committee and spoke to the statements issued by Mr. Chuck Fontenot regarding literacy training. He noted the large range of training for students that attend the LTC and spoke to the different training techniques used. He stated that he felt some of the problems being experienced by the instructors of the LTC are due to training being done on the computer through Plato. He stated that many instructors feel that if academic instruction is going to be provided it should be applied instruction. He added that applied instruction works better for certain fields, such as welding. He reiterated his belief that the applied application of the academics should be utilized in the system in many of the programs.

Dr. Bumphus asked what support could be given to the campuses in order to allow the variety of training that is needed.

Vice Chancellor Greg Garrett responded that more instructors are needed; therefore, more funding. Given that funding is provided based on the number of students enrolled in credit courses, this is a problem.

Supervisor Johnson asked how the message heard today can be presented to the legislators that need to hear it.

Dr. Bumphus stated that the minutes from the meeting will be used to draft the Board Matters newsletter. He added that he will share the letter from Mr. Larry Crane, Northrop Grumman, and the e-mail received from Mr. McBride, Smurfit-Stone, with legislators.

Further discussion related to different techniques of training and funding issues followed.

Supervisor Barham again referenced the NCHEMS report and noted that a major function of the Louisiana Technical College had to be as an advocate. He added that someone needs to address the legislators to tell them that they are wrong when they say that welders don't need to know how to read and write. He further stated that the LCTCS needs to receive funding for training of the students.

On motion of Supervisor Johnson, seconded by Supervisor Kimble, the LTC Ad Hoc Committee adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

APPROVED MINUTES – NOVEMBER 8, 2005 MEETING
Approved 12/14/05