

MINUTES

LTC AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 12, 2005

Baton Rouge Community College – Louisiana Building
5310 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Brett Mellington, Chair, LTC Ad Hoc Committee, called the meeting to order at 2:23 p.m.

Bonni Blouin, Coordinator of Board Services, called roll and a quorum was established. The following committee members were present: Brett Mellington, Chair, Edwards Barham, Mike Chandler, Ava Dejoie, Alvin Kimble, Stevie Smith, Kathy Sellers Johnson, Ex-Officio member. Supervisor Carl Franklin and LCTCS System President Dr. Walter Bumphus were also present at the meeting.

Chair Mellington presented the order of the meeting. He stated the Committee would first hear from Dr. Margaret Montgomery Richard, Chancellor, Louisiana Technical College (LTC). Following Chancellor Richard, presentations will be made by representatives from the LTC Rural Council, LTC Student Government Association, and LTC Faculty Senate.

Dr. Montgomery Richard addressed the Board and reviewed the Executive Summary report that was previously submitted to members of the Committee for review (copy of summary attached). Copies of the full report submitted by the LTC were provided to Committee members. The Executive Summary begins with a history of the creation of the LTC under the LCTCS and the regional model. It provides a synopsis of the status of the implementation of the district model as the organization management structure of the LTC, the accomplishments experienced over the past two years in Instructional Programs, Workforce Development, Finance and Administrative Affairs, Student Affairs, and Information Technology, as well as the challenges facing the College. The report also includes a summary for each districts' implementation of the district model and challenges they have experienced.

Chair Mellington referred to a statement from the NCHEMS Report which states that they “found misunderstanding at different levels of the [LTC] system of the actual scope of the Vice Chancellor’s authority”. He asked Chancellor Richard why she thought this was an issue.

Chancellor Richard stated that she thought this issues stems from the Elsner Report, where it was also mentioned. She added that although the vice chancellors had the responsibility of managing resources, they did not have the authority and could not move any money without approval of a campus dean, because the allocation model was originally granted to the each individual campus and each campus received their own

individual allocation. She added that the vice chancellors also do not feel that they have the authority to hire and/or fire employees. She stated that because the chancellor is the signature authority, as the head of the agency, the chancellor is the only person authorized to hire and fire. She further stated that problems still exist in the Human Resources area and it has become a “laser focus issue”.

Chair Mellington stated that he felt the crux of many problems being experienced is the misunderstanding within the LTC of who is in control.

Dr. Bumphus stated that the issue of signature authority and/or hiring problems is listed as a challenge by several of the vice chancellor’s reports.

Chancellor Richard reviewed infrastructure improvements, major accomplishments and major challenges within the LTC (listed in the Executive Summary). Also provide were two recommendations: 1) Institute performance indicators directly related to the College’s mission and hold the College accountable; and, 2) Mandate policies to create a seamless education experience for students from the technical to the community college.

Chancellor Richard concluded her report by stating the need to have “the opportunity to strengthen this model and be allowed to operate at the same level as other higher education institutions in the state.”

Supervisor Barham asked for clarification regarding funding allocation to the LTC districts and whether the money goes to the district vice chancellor and whether they have the authority to allocate those funds at his/her discretion.

Chancellor Richard stated that the distribution of the allocation model funds is based on FTE’s per campus, by district. When the money is distributed to the district, they know what each campus generated by FTE for the previous year. She added that money goes straight to the vice chancellor and they can and have the authority to move money once it has been allocated.

Supervisor Barham asked for the process of how a vice chancellor would hire someone at the district level.

Chancellor Richard stated that the job vacancy is posted, a search committee is assigned to review the applicants and the committee makes a recommendation to the vice chancellor. The vice chancellor then makes a recommendation to the Chancellor’s Office. The recommendation is then submitted to Human Resources and then submitted to the LCTCS Board of Supervisors for approval. She added that she does not get involved in hiring at the district/campus level unless there is a salary issue.

Supervisor Barham concluded that, in essence, the district vice chancellor has control of his/her personnel.

Chancellor Richard asked for one of the vice chancellors who listed this issue as a challenge to address this issue with Committee members.

Dr. Toya Barnes-Teamer, Vice Chancellor, District I, addressed the Committee and thanked them for allowing her to speak on behalf of District I. She explained the process of hiring at the district level. She stated that there are basic policies that have been approved by the LCTCS Board that must be followed in the hiring process and that no appointment is made at the district level without a search committee consisting of representatives from each of the campuses within the district. She further stated that all district staff members are interviewed by district deans or their designees. She added that there is more input in the hiring of an employee at the district level than there is of the termination of an employee at the district level and the campus level. She stated that she has experienced challenges with the termination process.

Supervisor Barham asked if, as a District Vice Chancellor, she has found that the hiring of an individual at the campus and/or district level, was basically a procedural process.

Vice Chancellor Teamer responded that the hiring process is a procedural process and the Chancellor's Office does not make the decision of hiring and only gets involved if there is a logistical issue regarding salary range or qualifications.

Vice Chancellor Noreen Smith addressed the Committee and agreed that hiring and termination policies and procedures do exist. She added that in District VIII, the same hiring process is followed. She stated that sometimes the process takes longer than usual and many times there are requests for additional information and this has tended to slow down the operation and the functioning in being able to fill positions. She added that the Human Resources issue is a major problem and it will only get worse with the hiring freeze that has been ordered by Governor Blanco. She shared several problems that she has experienced regarding students registered for classes and no instructors to teach them and no way to hire anyone. She also listed several incumbent worker training program contracts that may not be able to move forward due to personnel issues.

Supervisor Barham asked Vice Chancellor Smith if she felt that policies exist that are unnecessary or burdensome without producing any good results, or if the state level staff is interfering in the hiring process.

Vice Chancellor Smith responded that currently their Finance and Human Resources functions are contained in PeopleSoft and every person hired must be put into the system. She stated that some changes should be possible to make, i.e., changing the source of funding and rate of pay, to allow current employees to fill vacant positions. She further stated that nothing can be done on the local level – it must be done at the system level. She concluded that “the freeze” is going to cause District VIII to experience a shutdown.

Dr. Bumphus stated the hiring processes for the Louisiana Technical College is more extensive than other colleges because there are 40 separate campuses and there is a process to follow and deadlines to be met. He added that all employees must be

approved by the Board before they are hired and begin receiving a salary. He further stated that he has taken the position that students must be served and he has instructed chancellors that, if necessary, ratification to employment can be made. But, these decisions should be made in August, not in October.

Further discussion among committee members and LTC Vice Chancellors regarding the processes of hiring and firing continued.

Supervisor Dejoie proposed establishing a policy that would allow the campus/district the ability to have a hiring process without requiring the action to come before the Board, other than for ratification.

Vice Chancellor Teamer stated that she felt that there should be a timeline, not only from the campus level to the district level, but also at the Office of the Chancellor. She added that interpretation of policy differs at times and this sometimes causes problems and can slow down the process.

Chair Mellington addressed a comment made by Vice Chancellor Chris Williams regarding “adoption of the old way versus the new way by all stakeholders”. He asked for clarification of the comment by Vice Chancellor Williams.

Vice Chancellor Williams addressed the Board and provided his explanation to his comment. He stated that the comment deals with “making sure we are all on the same page with all stakeholders”. He added that when Governor Foster gave the charge to the System it was very different from how the LTC had traditionally operated. He stated that the comment was made so that “we would have the reassurance that we would continue to hold true to the new way of doing things in the LTC”.

Chancellor Richard stated the need to experience full inclusion of the LTC and move away from “us and them” in referring to the community and technical colleges.

Chair Mellington referred to another statement in the NCHEMS Report, “in practice, the long standing culture of competition and lack of local collaboration among the technical college campuses remains.” He asked how the LTC feels about that statement.

Dr. Bumphus stated that Vice Chancellor Garret, District II, had listed this issue as a challenge under the LCTCS, stating “differentiating the role, scope and mission of technical colleges versus community colleges.” He asked Vice Chancellor Garret to expound on this issue.

Vice Chancellor Garret addressed the Committee and stated that many schools have been very responsive to business and industry and were used to responding quickly to industry needs. He added that now the credit model exists where programs have been converted to credit hours and then the clock hour programs still exist. He explained that it comes down to funding issues. He continued that he felt technical colleges should offer credit courses for certain programs, but some programs do not fit the credit hour. He added that

the technical colleges should get credit for responding quickly to industry needs and they should not eliminate any industry if they approach the technical college to offer some type of training. He added that the main mission of the LTC is to put people to work.

Dr. Bumphus said that one of the problems being experienced is due to funding and the fact that State funding is not provided for training. Discussion followed regarding the funding received from the Board of Regents and what programs would and would not qualify for funding.

Vice Chancellor Garret stated that another issue is when training is referred to “non-credit”.

When asked what he would call the training, he stated he would call it credit.

Supervisor Smith asked if the Vice Chancellors felt that they had enough budget authority, at the district level, to manage the budget.

The response was that they felt they did have the authority to make any necessary changes as needed.

Supervisor Barham asked for clarification to what had been stated regarding the authority to manage personnel and/or budget. He stated that the delays in getting personnel decisions implemented affect the fiscal impact. He added that there seems to be more problems associated with terminations than with hiring. He asked if this was policy.

Chancellor Richard stated that this was policy. She added that the Vice Chancellor has no authority to release an employee. A process must be followed prior to termination and if an employee has tenure, a tenure hearing must be held.

Chair Mellington stated that this policy may be something that the Board needs to review.

Supervisor Dejoie addressed an issue submitted by District II that speaks to the absence of student financial modules, data collections and time keeping software system.

Vice Chancellor Wayne Meaux stated that these challenges are experienced due to PeopleSoft issues that have not been addressed. He stated the need to have a system-wide accounting of student tuition, fees, etc., and when a student transfers from one campus to another it will be easily accessible. He added that a lot of time-keeping is manual and it is hoped that this can be taken to an electronic level.

Chair Mellington thanked Chancellor Richard and the Vice Chancellors for their time and for the information provided.

Chancellor Richard called Mr. Prosper Chrétien and Ms. Jill Heard, Co-chairs of the Rural Council, to come forward. Chancellor Richard indicated that every campus dean

over a rural campus signed up for this committee. She stated that the rural campuses have unique and common issues.

Ms. Heard provided a brief background on the development of the Rural Campus Council. She stated that as Dean of a small rural campus, she complained a great deal to Chancellor Richard about the allocation model that is driven by student enrollment and FTE. She stated that a salary schedule is used to pay teachers and the structure is the same in a small rural area as it is for a large area like New Orleans. She voiced the difficulty experienced at the rural campus level to operate on a budget driven by the number of students. She stated that Council members have developed a number of recommendations to some of the issues experienced at small schools and they have been presented to Chancellor Richard and she has offered ideas on how to work around some of these issues.

Mr. Chrétien addressed the Board and stated that as schools designated to a rural council, they understood that they are not a splintered group, but part of the LCTCS and they operate under the direction of the vice chancellors under the authority of the chancellor. He stated that the Council has made recommendations to Chancellor Richard because the “rural” schools are unique and they experience problems because they are small campuses located in rural communities. He indicated that they are struggling to find a population to work with and to train individuals to service whatever industry is available. He stated that the Council was broken into committees to address certain problem areas. One of the committees was devoted to marketing. He reported that he chaired this committee and developed a marketing plan for the rural campuses, which was supposed to be presented at a recent Rural Council meeting, but it was cancelled due to Hurricane Rita. He shared some of the specifics of the marketing plan and noted that the plan was created by the faculty of the LTC-Evangeline Campus, and indicated that they plan to implement this plan through the committee to see if the plan will produce greater enrollment for the rural campuses.

Mr. Chrétien stated that the rural colleges are unique and are specific in how they operate and how problems are addressed. He noted two problem areas: 1) number of students enrolled in program areas, 2) budget allocation and how the funds are allocated. He spoke to the problems experienced regarding paying instructor salaries/raises and the problem of finding dollars to maintain the programs currently offered at the campuses. He also spoke to problems experienced when a course has to be cancelled due to low enrollment. He stated that this will continue to be a problem as long as the funding formula remains the same as it is now. He offered recommendations for solutions to these problems: 1) allow stability to have continuous enrollment to allow students to enroll throughout the semester, and 2) allow scholarship of high school students. He elaborated on these two recommendations and stated that continuous enrollment is now being allowed at the rural campuses. He stated that if the campuses were allowed to scholarship a certain number of high school students, the students would be eligible for Pell grant funds when they return for their second semester which would cover the cost of tuition.

Dr. Bumphus asked if dual-enrollment would help with this situation.

Chancellor Richard stated that this would help and added that if a special appropriation or the dual enrollment stated that it would provide \$300 for each student enrolled it would allow the rural campuses to operate more effectively.

Supervisor Barham stated the need to pursue all the proposed ideas, but added that one of the driving forces behind the District Model is the realization that rural campuses cannot be continued on the same basis as they have existed until now. He added that this may mean consolidating the record keeping, finance, human resources, etc., so this financial responsibility will be removed from the campus. He further stated that thought needs to go into creating “district” programs instead of “campus” programs.

Mr. Chrétien offered additional recommendations: 1) continuous enrollment; 2) self-paced progression to allow evaluation and monitor progress of student; 3) distance learning techniques to access courses offered at the larger schools and teach these courses to students at the rural campuses; 4) innovative delivery methods. He concluded that, “the name of the game is moving forward and this is what we want to do, and we want to move forward as part of the System that we are in right now”. He reported that the topic of discussion for the next Rural Council meeting will address how the campuses can utilize foundation funds to improve the campuses and provide individual techniques. He added that they will pursue grants offered by Ford Foundation, Hershey, General Electric and Kellogg. He stated that they have also contacted the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center and they have stated their interest in working with the schools. He thanked the Committee members for their time.

Chair Mellington stated his interest in reviewing the marketing plan created by the Rural Council.

Mr. Chrétien stated that he would mail Chair Mellington a copy of the plan. He thanked Dr. Richard for her recognition of the rural schools and for her assistance, patience and positive attitude.

Dr. Richard announced that Mr. Chrétien has announced his retirement effective January 1, 2006.

Chair Mellington asked the representatives from the Student Government Association to come forward to address the committee members.

Student Government Association (SGA) representatives, Jude Paul Savoie, LTC-Gulf Area campus, Cedric Hampton, LTC-District 2, Baton Rouge campus, and Mike Chandler, sitting student Board member and student at LTC-Shreveport Bossier campus, addressed the committee and shared experiences related to the Student Government Association. One of the noted problems experienced is the lack of participation by students.

Chair Mellington stated that the LCTCS purpose is to assist the students. He stressed the importance of the Student Government Association in letting the Board know of any problems being experienced by students. He stated that as the SGA representatives, they are the leaders of their campus and stand to be the best marketing tool of the LCTCS. He emphasized the need to share their positive experiences with other students.

Supervisor Smith asked the student representatives, from their perspective, if there was anything in the organization structure of the Louisiana Technical College that they thought needed to be changed.

Cedric Hampton responded that being the CEO of the district, he did not think anything needed to be changed. He spoke to the chain of command that currently exists for the students.

Mr. Savoie stated that a misconception exists in regards to the function of the LTC and its purpose. He stated that the biggest problem exists in changing the perception of the LTC for people who think the technical college is just for training in a certain area, but instead they are "career teachers". He added that the message they want to send is, "We are going to teach you your career and then set you off to lead a good life."

Supervisor Chandler expressed his concerns about the possibility of raising tuition at the technical college. He stated that if tuition is raised, they will lose students. He also spoke to the problem existing regarding Pell grants and the fact that many students cannot receive Pell. He added that attention also needs to be given to communication issues that exist between teachers and the students.

Mr. Savoie reported on round table discussions conducted by SGAs that are held two times a month. He explained that all campus SGAs meet to discuss problems or issues that the students are experiencing. He noted that one of the issues that have been addressed is the unavailability of individual student e-mail addresses on each campus. He added that this would allow teachers and students greater communication abilities.

Supervisor Johnson stated that the larger universities offer this service and the students are allowed to keep their e-mail address even after they leave the college.

Chair Mellington thanked the students for coming to the meeting and sharing their thoughts with the committee.

Chair Mellington asked the Faculty Senate representatives to come forward to address the committee.

The listed representatives of the Faculty Senate came forward to address the committee: Luther Davis, Executive Faculty Senate President, representing District I; Cynthia Grimmert representing District VII; Kenny Eagan representing District VI, Jerrylene Fontenot, representing District IV, and Frances Thrasher, District VIII.

Mr. Davis indicated that a lot of the issues that he planned to discuss have already been discussed at length earlier in the meeting. He shared the Faculty Senate relationship pre district model and post district model. He offered information on the creation of the Faculty Senate, the organizational structure, and their purpose.

Mr. Davis shared a few issues that are being experienced by the campuses: 1) faculty is unsure about where they fit into the scheme of things; 2) feelings that “they” want the LTC campuses to be more academic, when they are really workforce development; 3) concerned that they will lose their identity and their primary mission which is workforce development; 4) campuses being penalized because they offer mainly non-credit type courses; 5) until there is a system in place to assist the technical college with receiving credit for training, they will continue to suffer; and 6) faculty is angry and upset, morale is broken and feel like they are at a disadvantage.

Mr. Davis closed by saying, “Our faculty want to continue the shared governance that we have with the college and keep technical education at the technical college and maintain our mission of workforce development.”

Supervisor Johnson asked if the faculty is attuned to the demands of business and industry in the communities served. She elaborated by referring to a newspaper article which quoted a human resources director at Royal Martin Lumber Company regarding operating and maintenance personnel openings, which stated the need for people who can read, perform basic math functions and keyboarding. She stated that employers are demanding that employees have these additional skill sets.

Mr. Davis agreed with Ms. Johnson’s statement and added that they have to more creative in the way that information is presented so students are better equipped.

Mr. Kenny Eagan addressed the committee to offer the idea to design curriculum for the individual course, i.e., automotive training. He stated that one problem experienced at the campuses regarding general education courses, is that the courses are too generalized, instead of offering skills needed in a particular field. He stated the need to tailor the skills that are taught to match what the employers want. He added that one of the distinctions that has not been made at the technical college is career education. He stated the need to tailor requirements for certain fields and entrance requirements.

Discussion regarding education requirements for the technical college followed.

Supervisor Smith stated that one of the major problems being experienced within the LTC is the lack of funding for non-credit courses. He stated that the notion that exists with some, that the LCTCS Board of Supervisors wants to do away with the technical colleges and just have community colleges, is untrue.

Chair Mellington agreed that the most important issue is to have a student that is successful and has achieved their goal in education, whether it be technical or academic.

Supervisor Barham agreed to the importance of teaching Math in relation to the curriculum. He asked if a Math curriculum were created for the automotive field, would it be the same for the carpenter field.

Mr. Eagan responded that the Math requirements would not be the same for an automotive technician and a carpenter or a welder. He added that he has done some research with developmental education people and he has developed a program for automotive that goes with the curriculum. He stated that he has talked with several developmental education instructors who have used the program and they indicated that is a practical approach, using the Plato system that currently exists. He added that the provision exists for a student to pick up additional modules of training if needed.

Supervisor Barham posed a question to Larry Tremblay, Board of Regents, regarding funding for technical competency areas. He asked Mr. Tremblay how the training needs to be structured so that the Board of Regents would acknowledge training being provided at the technical college.

Mr. Tremblay stated that he does not work in the finance area, but he believes that the way the formula works is that as long as the course is part of some formal program, it can be funded. He added that this has been part of the challenge at the LTC - to make different courses part of some formal program to receive funding. He added that one of the challenges that exist, is that universities offer non-credit courses and are not funded for them. He further stated that other issues exist because a technical college will offer a career training course and want it to be funded, and a community college will offer the same course as part of their continuing education program and it is not funded. He stated that the Board of Regents is very much in support of the Louisiana Technical College and very much in support of anything that increases the education of Louisiana citizenry.

Chancellor Richard clarified that students enrolled in courses within a technical competency area (TCA) get funding because it is a credit course. She added that the TCA itself is not considered a true exit point or credentialed by the Board of Regents so it is not counted. She provided the example of the welding curriculum where numerous TCAs exist due to the different types of welding courses. She stated that these TCAs are not counted by the Board of Regents. She added that if this practice could be changed it would greatly help the college.

Chair Mellington suggested having the welding program follow the model of the nursing program where an individual can complete a certain level of training and it is considered an exit point for the program and therefore a completed program. He stated the need to have this type of training funded.

Chair Mellington thanked everyone for their participation today.

The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.