

MINUTES

JOINT MEETING OF

THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AGING, CHILDREN AND YOUTH,  
LEGISLATIVE & MILITARY AFFAIRS  
THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, October 24, 2011

2:00 P.M.

Shewmaker Center for Global Business Development  
NorthWest Arkansas Community College  
One College Drive  
Bentonville, Arkansas 72712

Representative Stephanie Malone, the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative & Military Affairs, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Sue Madison.

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Mary Anne Salmon, Vice-Chair; Senator Kim Hendren; Senator Gene Jeffress; and Senator Johnny Key.

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON AGING, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, LEGISLATIVE & MILITARY AFFAIRS IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Stephanie Malone, Chair; Representative Lori Benedict; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; Representative Justin Harris; Representative Jon Hubbard; Representative Loy Mauch; and Representative Tim Summers.

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative Jerry Brown; Representative Les Carnine; Representative Debra Hobbs; Representative Donna Hutchinson; Representative Bobby Pierce; Representative Johnnie Roebuck; Representative Randy Stewart; and Representative Tim Summers.

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN ATTENDANCE:** Representative John Catlett; Representative Gary Deffenbaugh; and Representative Justin Harris.

**OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE:** Senator Cecile Bledsoe; Senator Bill Pritchard; Representative Robert Moore, Speaker of the House; Representative David Branscum; Representative Mike Patterson; Representative Mary Slinkard; Representative Charolette Wagner; and Representative Jon Woods.

At the request of Representative Malone, Committee members at the meeting introduced themselves.

Welcome to Senate District 8 and House District 99

**The Honorable Cecile Bledsoe**, State Senator, District 8, was recognized. Senator Bledsoe welcomed the legislators and other visitors to her Senate district and thanked them for attending the meeting. She expressed appreciation to Dr. Rebecca Paneitz for hosting the meeting at NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC).

**The Honorable Tim Summers**, State Representative, District 99, was recognized, and welcomed the legislators, staff, and visitors to Northwest Arkansas.

Welcome to NorthWest Arkansas Community College and Introductions

**Dr. Rebecca Paneitz**, President, NorthWest Arkansas Community College, was recognized. Dr. Paneitz said she was pleased to host the meeting. She acknowledged Senator Bledsoe for the work she has done for the college and for higher education, and commended Representative Summers for being tireless in his pursuit to make Arkansas a better place for our kids and for our future. Dr. Paneitz introduced:

- **Mr. Alex Vasquez**, Chairman, NWACC Board of Trustees 2011
- **Mr. Johnny Haney**, Trustee, and Chairman, NWACC Board of Trustees Advocacy Committee
- **Mr. Horace Hardwick**, Member, NWACC Board of Trustees Advocacy Committee, and Member, Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and his wife, **Jeretta Hardwick**
- Members of the Board of Trustees Advocacy Committee

Discussion of the Path to Accelerated Completion and Employment (PACE) Grant

**Dr. Rebecca Paneitz**, President, NorthWest Arkansas Community College, was recognized. Dr. Paneitz said that NWACC has been selected as the lead institution in a consortium of twenty-two (22) community colleges in Arkansas that have the shared goal of increasing the state's college graduation rate by 2025. She stated that the implementation of the PACE Grant will help achieve this goal.

**Dr. Ed Franklin**, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC), was recognized. Dr. Franklin reviewed a history of initiatives, grants, and programs designed to improve student opportunities, services, and success since the expansion of two-year colleges in 1991. He said it was important to look at all of these, including recent legislation, in the context of projects working together and moving toward student success.

**Mr. Mike Leach**, Director, Center for Student Success, Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, was recognized. Mr. Leach walked the Committees through a series of slides that showed what the PACE Grant will actually do. He said the primary goals are:

- 1) Create a new model for postsecondary training designed to improve student completion and reduce time-to-degree.
- 2) New model will initially target high-demand technical certificate and degree programs, and with success be expanded institution- and system-wide.

- 3) Specific goal: Increase graduation in targeted technical programs by 15% over the three year cycle of the Grant.

He presented a chart showing Target Occupations, Pathways, and Certificates/Degrees that illustrated National Park Community College's approach to goal achievement.

Mr. Leach said there will be three strategies to increase completion rates and reduce time-to-degree:

- 1) Transform Developmental Education using promising course redesign models.
- 2) Streamline Certificate and Degree Programs using promising practices identified by Complete College America.
- 3) Improved Advising and Student Engagement using technology.

Dr. Franklin concluded the presentation with a discussion of the impact the PACE Grant will have on all twenty-two (22) participating two-year colleges. He said the Grant will enable a proactive approach to addressing key barriers to student success. It will position Arkansas to leverage more resources, and, using data to make decisions, to deepen/scale strategies and further advance the student success agenda. Dr. Franklin stated that, together with the Kresge Foundation Grant, the Winthrop Rockefeller Grant, and other grants, this comprehensive approach maximizes opportunities to improve student success and to measure what has made the difference, so it can be implemented on a system-wide basis.

**Mr. Augusta Farver**, Vice President for Instruction, Pulaski Technical College (PTC), was recognized. Mr. Farver brought greetings on behalf of Dr. Dan Bakke, President, and the PTC family, and commented that PTC was excited about the PACE Grant and the opportunities it will provide to all of the community colleges in Arkansas to continue and expand best practices. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Farver continued with an overview of PTC and the population served by the two-year college. He introduced other members of the PTC staff present at the meeting: Ms. Cynthia Fletcher, Dr. Pam Cicirello, and Ms. Cindy Harkey.

**Ms. Cynthia Fletcher**, Dean, Academic Success, Pulaski Technical College, was recognized. Ms. Fletcher continued the PowerPoint presentation and discussed the first of three strategies as it relates to the PACE initiative: Strategy 1 – Developmental Education Redesign Strategies at PTC. She said that PTC is looking to expand its Academic Success Bridge Program, the purpose of which is to improve the success rates and academic skills of students in developmental courses. She stated that the Developmental Math Department has been working over the past two years on a modularized curriculum and has streamlined it from four levels to three levels so that a student may complete all developmental courses within a year. The goal is for a student to complete all sixteen (16) modules within one semester and then progress to the college algebra course. She said the department also started a pilot program with 8-week courses in intermediate algebra and college algebra this past fall; the 8-week intermediate algebra class finished with a 100% success rate and students have now transitioned into the 8-week college algebra course. When the results of the transition are in, the program's success will be determined. Ms. Fletcher went on to say that promising results have also come out of mainstreaming upper-level writing directly into college-level English, another program initiated on campus. Ms. Fletcher said the PACE Grant will allow PTC to continue expansion of its developmental education programs that have already been started.

**Dr. Pam Cicirello**, Dean, Allied Health and Human Services, Pulaski Technical College, was recognized. Dr. Cicirello spoke on Strategy 2 – PTC Allied Health Programs and showed what kinds of

career pathways will be affected in the Central Arkansas region by the PACE Grant. She discussed the degrees and certificates associated with Strategy 2 – PTC Information Technology Programs and the partnerships needed to make these programs successful.

**Ms. Cindy Harkey**, Vice President of Student Services, Pulaski Technical College, was recognized. Ms. Harkey concluded the PowerPoint presentation with a discussion of Strategy 3 – Student advisement and placement technologies. She spoke on the development and improvement of academic advising through various grants to PTC, and said the PACE Grant will allow PTC to expand advising strategies, to target them to specific programs, and to implement additional ones to increase student retention. Ms. Harkey said the ultimate objective of the PACE Grant at PTC is to provide a clear pathway to graduation and provide well-trained employees in high-demand areas in Central Arkansas.

**Mr. Shane Broadway**, Interim Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), was recognized. Mr. Broadway stated that the AATYC, the twenty-two (22) two-year colleges, the four-year institutions, and the ADHE are working together on the various grants, initiatives, and programs to ensure efforts are not being duplicated in targeting student success. He said the tone had been set by the Governor in his State of the State address when he delivered the goal of doubling the number of degrees by 2025. Mr. Broadway said that actions taken during the legislative session helped those at the departmental level work with institutions and change the discussion from improving student enrollment to giving a student the best possible chance to walk out with a credential. He said that the leadership of the Governor and that of the Committees has helped change the mindset and discussion on campus. In summary, Mr. Broadway said there's a lot of work to be done at all levels to get the PACE Grant finally implemented. He said he appreciated the support of the Governor, the Committees, and the educators in these efforts.

Following the presentations, a discussion ensued on topics that included:

- Working together to apply for grants,
- Career coaches and funding,
- Models being considered that will enable student success,
- Measuring and reporting on the number of students that graduate and are able to get a job to pay back student loans,
- Determining the worth of a degree upon graduation and over time,
- Impact of the Arkansas Common Core State Standards Initiative, and linking the K-12 curriculum to higher education,
- Implementing financial literacy programs for students,
- Guiding students to regional services and jobs; meeting employment needs of the region,
- Remediation and revision of math that allows pre-testing and retesting, leading to a student taking a lesser amount of remedial courses for college-level work,
- Block scheduling, cascading math courses, and other models that will reduce the amount of time a student spends in developmental education, and
- The percentage of students defaulting on student loans.

Representative Malone thanked the presenters.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.