

ARKANSAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
Regular Quarterly Meeting
April 26, 2024

Minutes of Meeting

The April 26, 2024, regular meeting of the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) was held at North Arkansas College in Harrison. Chair Graycen Bigger called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., with a quorum present.

Coordinating Board present:

Graycen Bigger, Chair
Dr. Jerry Cash, Vice Chair
Dr. Kyle Miller, Secretary (via zoom)
Dr. Katherine Dudley
Heather Maxey
Lucas Pointer
Carolyn Rhinehart

Coordinating Board absent:

Chad Hooten
Dr. Jim Carr

Presidents, chancellors, institutional representatives, members of the press, ADHE staff and guests were also present.

Chair Bigger began by announcing that AHECB Member Kelley Erstine had been appointed to the University of Central Arkansas Board of Trustees and would no longer serve on the Coordinating Board.

calling on President Rick Massengale for a welcome. Dr. Massengale began by welcoming Coordinating Board members to North Arkansas College (NAC) and shared information about their institution.

Agenda Item No. 1
Distribution of Mineral Lease Funds

Nick Fuller presented the Distribution of Mineral Lease Funds. According to the provisions of A.C.A. §6-61-801 through §6-61-808, there is established the Arkansas Research Development Program for providing Arkansas Research Development Program Grants to publicly-supported universities in Arkansas by the Division of Higher Education. Act 870 of 2023 provides that after the sum of \$13,200,000 has been deposited into the Higher Education Building Maintenance Fund, any additional deposits are to be transferred to the Research Development Fund to be used as provided by law.

RESOLVED, That after review by the Legislative Council, the Director of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education is authorized to distribute up to \$475,000 from the Higher Education Research Development Fund to the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville for

continuing personal services and operating expenses related to ARE-ON.

There were no questions.

Heather Maxey moved to recommend Agenda Item No. 1 to the full Board for consideration. Dr. Kyle Miller seconded, and the Committee unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 2
Economic Feasibility of Bond Issue
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (UAF) requests approval of the economic feasibility of plans to issue bonds not to exceed \$34.175 million with a maximum term of thirty (30) years at an annual interest rate of approximately 5.50 percent. Proceeds from the bond issue will be used for educational and general (E&G) purposes. The University of Arkansas Board of Trustees approved this financing at its meeting on March 12-13, 2024.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board considers economically feasible plans for the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville issue bonds not to exceed \$34.175 million with a term not to exceed thirty (30) years at an annual interest rate of approximately 5.50 percent as requested by the institution for various E&G projects.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education is authorized to notify the President and the Chair of the Board of Trustees of University of Arkansas System and the Chancellor of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville of the Coordinating Board's resolution.

Chair Bigger asked if the 5.5 percent interest rate is fixed over thirty years. Nick Fuller said it will depend on what the final rate from the bank is. He noted that ADHE staff will report the actual interest rate yearly to the Coordinating Board.

Bigger asked if UAF would raise tuition and fees in the future to cover this bond. Fuller said they will not. The feasibility was based on current revenue projections, said Fuller.

Heather Maxey moved to recommend Agenda Item No. 2 to the full Board for consideration. Dr. Kyle Miller seconded, and the Committee unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 3

Economic Feasibility of Bond Issue
University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton

The University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton (UACCM) requests approval of the economic feasibility of plans to issue bonds not to exceed \$12 million with a maximum term of thirty-two (32) years at an annual interest rate of approximately 5.50 percent. Proceeds from the bond issue will be used for educational and general (E&G) purposes. The University of Arkansas Board of Trustees approved this financing at its meeting on March 12-13, 2024.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board considers economically feasible plans for the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton to issue bonds not to exceed \$12 million with a term not to exceed thirty-two (32) years at an annual interest rate of approximately 5.50 percent as requested by the institution for various E&G projects.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education is authorized to notify the President and the Chair of the Board of Trustees of University of Arkansas System and the Chancellor of the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton of the Coordinating Board's resolution.

Dr. Jerry Cashed questioned the negative operational margin for 2022-23 and asked what the operational margin for 2023-24 would look like.

Chancellor Lisa Willenberg and Vice Chancellor for Finance Jeff Mullen said UACCM is tracking even this year. If everything stays on track for the summer, we expect the operational margin to be even, said Mullen.

Heather Maxey moved to recommend Agenda Item No. 3 to the full Board for consideration. Dr. Kyle Miller seconded, and the Committee unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 4
Economic Feasibility of Bond Issue
Arkansas Tech University

Arkansas Tech University (ATU) requests approval of the economic feasibility of plans to issue bonds not to exceed \$10.4 million with a maximum term of fifteen (15) years at an annual interest rate of approximately 7.0 percent. Proceeds from the bond issue will be used for educational and general (E&G) purposes and auxiliary renovations supported by tuition and fee revenue. The Arkansas Tech University Board of Trustees approved this financing at its meeting on December 14, 2023.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board considers economically feasible plans for Arkansas Tech University issue bonds not to exceed \$10.4 million with a term not to exceed fifteen (15) years at an annual interest rate of approximately 7.0 percent as requested by the institution for various E&G projects and auxiliary renovations.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education is authorized to notify the President and the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Arkansas Tech University of the Coordinating Board's resolution.

There were no questions.

Heather Maxey moved to recommend Agenda Item No. 4 to the full Board for consideration. Dr. Kyle Miller seconded, and the Committee unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 5
Economic Feasibility of Bond Issue
Arkansas Tech University

Nick Fuller announced that Agenda Items 4 and 5 were combined into Agenda Item 4.

Agenda Item No. 6
Associate of Applied Science in Radiologic Technology
Arkansas State University Newport

The proposed 65 credit-hour, 5 semester program in Radiologic Technology will prepare students for the American Registry of Radiologic Technology (ARRT) Certification exam by educating students on the operation of imaging or radiation therapy equipment and the preparation of patients for these imaging studies. Students completing this program will earn the Associate of Applied Science in Radiologic Technology, as well as the existing Certificate of Proficiency and Technical Certificate in Pre-Health Professions. Potential earnings of graduates within the area surrounding ASUN are approximately \$52,000 per year.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the offering of the Associate of Applied Science in Radiologic Technology (CIP 51.0911), at Arkansas State University Newport, effective Fall 2024.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Coordinating Board instructs the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education to inform the Chancellor of Arkansas State University Newport and Chair of the Board of Trustees of Arkansas State University System of the approval.

Dr. Typhanie Myers, Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, provided additional information.

Dr. Katie Dudley asked if the clinical spaces are exclusive to the ASUN students. Angie Smith, Director of Nursing Workforce and Innovation for St. Bernards Healthcare, said their clinical slots are not exclusive to any school. She explained that St. Bernards is a 437-bed facility serving 26 counties in Northeast Arkansas.

Chair Bigger asked if the clinical students would be placed would be placed primarily through St. Bernards. Dr. Myers said they are looking at St. Bernards Healthcare, Black River Health Systems and Unity Health in Searcy.

Carolyn Rhinehart moved to recommend Agenda Item No. 6 to the full Board for consideration. Dr. Katie Dudley seconded, and the Committee unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 7
Associate of Applied Science in Nursing
University of Arkansas at Fort Smith

The proposed 65 credit-hour program consists of 15 credit hours of general education, a 30 credit-hour nursing core, and 20 additional credit hours of courses that can serve as pre-requisites or co-requisites. The program also contains a total of 450 clock hours of laboratory and/or clinical experience.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the offering of the Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (CIP 51.3801), at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith, effective Fall 2024.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Coordinating Board instructs the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education to inform the Chancellor of the University of Arkansas Fort Smith and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas System of the approval.

Dr. Shadow Robinson, Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, provided additional information.

Chair Bigger asked for additional information regarding the partnerships with Mercy Health and Baptist Health. Dr. Robinson said that Mercy Health and Baptist Health have been key members of UAFS's advisory board since its formation and said they have a symbiotic relationship.

Carolyn Rhinehart moved to recommend Agenda Item No. 7 to the full Board for consideration. Dr. Katie Dudley seconded, and the Committee unanimously approved.

Agenda Items No. 8 & 9
Arkansas Public Institutions
Letters of Notification and Letters of Intent

The Director of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education approved institutional requests for new programs not requiring Board action unless further review is requested by the Board. During this period, the Institutional Certification Advisory Committee received notice of requests from Arkansas public institutions to offer degree programs. The program notice lists appear in the Arkansas Public Institutions Letters of Notification on pages 8-1 through 8-28 and in the Arkansas public institutions Letters of Intent on pages 9-1 of the agenda book.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 10
Out-of-State and Arkansas Private Institutions

RESOLVED, That pursuant to A.C.A. §6-61-301, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board grants initial certification to the institutions listed on pages 1 - 3 to offer the specified degree programs to Arkansas residents for a period of three years through December 31, 2027.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education is authorized to notify the administration of said institutions that the certification of the degree programs requires the institution to notify the Arkansas Division of Higher Education whenever any of the following occurs: (1) major reorganization of the controlling body; (2) changes in the charter or incorporation documents of the institution; or (3) changes in the method of operation of the institution's programs in Arkansas.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Coordinating Board instructs the Commissioner to notify the administration of said institutions that any advertisement or published materials using the name of the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board or the Arkansas Division of Higher Education must contain the following statement:

Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board certification does not constitute an endorsement of any institution or program. Such certification merely indicates that certain criteria have been met as required under the rules and regulations implementing institutional and program certification as defined in A.C.A. §6-61-301.

Initial Program Certifications – Distance Technology

Aspen University, Phoenix, Arizona

The Chicago School, Los Angeles, California

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, San Marcos, California

Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota

New Institution – Initial Program Certifications – Distance Technology

University of California, Irvine, Irvine, California

New Institution - Initial Program Certification – Campus in Arkansas

Alice L. Walton School of Medicine, Bentonville, Arkansas

There were no questions.

Carolyn Rhinehart moved to recommend Agenda Item No. 10 to the full Board for consideration. Dr. Katie Dudley seconded, and the Committee unanimously approved.

Agenda Items No. 11 & 12
Out-of-State and Arkansas Private Institutions
Letters of Notification and Letters of Intent

The Director of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education approved institutional requests for new programs not requiring Board action unless further review is requested by the Board. During this period, the Institutional Certification Advisory Committee received notice of requests from out-of-state and Arkansas private institutions to offer degree programs to Arkansas residents. The program notice lists appear in the Letters of Notification on pages 11-1 through 11-6 and in the Letters of Intent on page 12-1 of the agenda book.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 13
Approval of Minutes

Carolyn Miller moved to approve Agenda Item No. 13. Dr. Jerry Cash seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 14
Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Warden began by thanking the Coordinating Board and ADHE staff for all they do to help move education forward in Arkansas.

Institutional Changes

Dr. Wade Derden has been named the new National Park College president, effective July 1, 2024. Derden is currently the executive vice president for advancement and government relations at National Park College.

LEARNS

The LEARNS Act requires that a Career Ready Pathway to a diploma be developed. Warden said processes and requirements are being developed to ensure they lead to high-wage, high growth careers for all graduates.

90 Hour Bachelor's Degree Consideration

Standard measure has a bachelor's degree at 120 credit hours, said Warden. Several schools around the country are considering implementing 90-hour bachelor's degrees. ADHE will pull together a committee to see if this is something that would work for Arkansas.

Dr. Jerry Cash what schools are currently implementing 90-hour bachelor's degrees. Mason Campbell said Brigham Young University does. Campbell said he will provide a list of all the institutions that currently implement 90-hour bachelor's degrees.

Agenda Item No. 15
Annual Report on First-Year Student Remediation

Mason Campbell presented a summary report on the Annual Report on First-Year Student Remediation. He provided an overview of the 21,510 first-time entering, degree-seeking students who graduated high school in 2021 or 2022 and enrolled in an Arkansas public institution of higher education in AY2023. Of this population, 91% were classified as full-time students and 9% were classified as part-time students. With regards to sex, 56% were female, 44% were male, and less than 1% percent did not report. When examining the institution type, 70% of this population enrolled at a four-year institution compared to 30% enrolled at a two-year institution. Lastly, remediation status of all first-time entering students, 62% did not require remediation while 38% did require remedial coursework.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 16
Report on Student Retention and Graduation

Sonia Hazelwood presented a summary report on the Annual Report on Student Retention and Graduation. When looking at both public sectors together The state's fall-to-fall retention rate of 74.7% for the Fall 2022 cohort had an increase of 2.1% over the Fall 2021 cohort. Both male and female cohorts for the 4-year institutions reported increases in their retention rates for the Fall 2022 cohort, while the 2-year colleges reported a 3% increase for the female cohort and a modest decline for the male cohort.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 17
Annual Report on Retention and Graduation
of Student-Athletes

Sonia Hazelwood presented a summary report on the Annual Report on Retention and Graduation of Student-Athletes. In Academic Year 2022-23, 4,120 students participated in athletics at ten universities and nine 2-year colleges. This is the second most student-athletes ever reported for an academic year. This is a decrease of 12 student-athletes over the 2021-22 academic year, including 751 student-athletes reported by nine 2-year colleges.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 18
Request for ARHEG Slot Fee Increase

Arkansas Division of Higher Education administers a grant program for Arkansas students and a forgivable loan program to assist Arkansas students attending specified out-of-state health and medical professional schools. This grant program is known as the "Arkansas Health Education Grant (ARHEG) Program. In accordance with Arkansas Code 6-81-1101, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) is authorized to enter into direct contracts with selected accredited schools of dentistry, optometry, and veterinary medicine, along with podiatry, chiropractic, or osteopathy which do not participate in the program, if the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board determines that the needs of the state are not being met by institutions participating in the program. Currently, there are 13 Chiropractic slots in the ARHEG program. The Arkansas Chiropractic Physicians Association (ACPA) has requested the scholarship be increased to \$10,000 each while the 13 ARHEG slots remain the same. This is to better incentivize students into the professional program of Chiropractic care.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, authorizes the increase of the scholarship to \$10,000 of the chiropractic slots in the Arkansas Health Education Grant (ARHEG) Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Coordinating Board instructs the Commissioner of the Division of Higher Education to send a copy of this resolution to the Arkansas Chiropractic Physicians Association (ACPA).

There were no questions.

Dr. Katie Dudley moved to approve Agenda Item No. 18. Carolyn Rhinehart seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 19
Rules Governing the Arkansas Future
Grant Program

In compliance with Acts 413 of 2023, the rules for the Arkansas Future Grant Program were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for initial approval.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Arkansas Future Grant Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Arkansas Future Grant Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Future Grant Program rules be approved for public comment release.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 20
Rules Governing the Arkansas Higher Education
Transition Scholarship Program

In compliance with Acts 413 of 2023, the rules for the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for initial approval.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rule presented in this agenda item for the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the rule for the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Governor's Higher Education Transition Scholarship Program rule be approved for public comment release.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 21
Rules Governing the Arkansas
Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program

In compliance with Acts 413, 386, and 539 of 2023, the rules for the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for initial approval.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge scholarship rules be approved for public comment release.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 22
Rules Governing the Arkansas
Governor's Scholars Program

In compliance with Acts 413 of 2023, the rules for the Governor's Scholars Program were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for initial approval.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Governor's Scholars Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Governor's Scholars Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Governor's Scholars Program rules be approved for public comment release.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 23
Rules Governing the Arkansas
Workforce Challenge Scholarship Program

In compliance with Acts 413 and 539 of 2023, the rules for the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for initial approval.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship rules be approved for public comment release.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item No. 24
Rules Governing the Arkansas
Teacher Academy Scholarship Program

In compliance with Act 237 of 2023, the rules for the Teacher Academy Scholarship Program were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for final adoption, pending review of the Administrative Rules Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board reviews the rules presented in this agenda item for the Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship Program to be administered by the Arkansas Division of Higher Education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commissioner of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or his designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the program rules for the Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship Program rules be approved for public comment release.

There were no questions.

Dr. Katie Dudley moved to approve Agenda Items No. 19 - 24. Dr. Jerry Cash seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Agenda Item No. 25
Rules Governing the Productivity
Funding Distribution Policy

In compliance with Act 215 of 2021, the rules for the Productivity Funding Distribution Policy were presented to the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) for adoption, pending approval of the Administrative Rules Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council.

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board adopts the proposed rules presented in this agenda item for amendment of the Productivity Funding Distribution Policy, pending approval of the Administrative Rules Subcommittee of the Arkansas Legislative Council.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Director of the Arkansas Division of Higher Education or her designee is authorized to make technical changes and corrections, when necessary, in the rules to amend the Productivity Funding Distribution Policy.

There were no questions.

Dr. Katie Dudley moved to approve Agenda Item No. 25. Heather Maxey seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Report of the Committees

Lucas Pointer presented the report of the Finance Committee and moved approval of Agenda Items 1 - 4. Heather Maxey seconded, and the board unanimously approved.

Chair Bigger presented the report of the Academic Committee Agenda Items 6,7 & 10. Dr. Katie Dudley seconded, and the board unanimously approved.

Remarks by Presidents/Chancellors and Guest

The next quarterly meeting will be held on July 26, 2024, at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, at 9:00 a.m.

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

Nichole Abernathy

APPROVED:

Dr. Kyle Miller, Secretary