

## **State Board of Private Career Education**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**December 14, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.**

### **Telephone Conference**

**Members Present:** Brock Thompson, Alice Obenshain, Jack Avery, Sterling Penix

**Others Present:** Alana Boles, Tracye McKeown

### **Welcome and Approval of Minutes of July 15 Meeting**

Alice Obenshain, Chairman, called the meeting to order and recommended approval of the minutes from the July 15, 2022, meeting. Brock Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved.

### **Report of Private Career Education Work**

Alana Boles reported that Tracye McKeown has returned to working with private career education schools in the Academic Affairs department at ADHE.

Ms. Boles announced that Brittney Matthews has resigned from the board.

Ms. Boles updated the board that ADHE continues to regularly receive new private career education school applications. She noted that CDL and CNA school applications are the main fields currently being received. Ms. Boles also stated that five to seven new instructors and program requests from schools are received and processed weekly. Ms. McKeown reported that 15 to 20 closed school transcript requests are received each week.

### **Schedule for 2023 Meetings**

Ms. Boles recommended scheduling regular board meetings for 2023. The following dates were proposed to the board: January 25, April 26, July 26, and October 25. Ms. Boles will email these dates to the board. Ms. Obenshain asked for a motion to approve the dates for the 2023 board meetings. Jack Avery made a motion to approve the dates. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **Input and Questions from the Board**

Mr. Avery asked if schools have returned to normal operations following the pandemic. Ms. Boles reported the schools are back in person and back to normal. Mr. Thompson commented that he had an instructor with a sick child whose school protocols required a five-day quarantine. He said the covid protocols impacted his instructor's ability to instruct and this could impact other schools.

Mr. Thompson asked if there had been a discussion with Julie Chavis about creating a special committee to discuss incarcerated persons, recidivism and their potential enrollment in private career education schools as discussed in the July 15 board meeting. Mr. Thompson stated that in 2019, *Arkansas Code 20-77-135*, was allowing some people that had been incarcerated but had been rehabilitated to work with drug rehabilitation services at different emergency rooms, etc. Mr. Thompson asked, since the workforce now has less people in all industries, how could that impact private career education schools in being able to hire someone that has a record. Ms. Boles said the law which established the State Board of Private

Career Education schools only requires background checks on owners of schools and admissions representatives. Ms. Boles added that a potential owner or admissions representative can have a misdemeanor. If they have a felony, a waiver can be requested from the Director of ADHE to move forward with licensing. Ms. Boles said that a background check is not required on instructors and there is no rule or law regarding students at private career education schools having a record.

Sterling Penix said concerning the question of individuals leaving confinement and education and job training, he would be happy to connect anyone with the Arkansas Department of Corrections' probation and parole services to see what opportunities might be available. Mr. Thompson commented there could be some federal funds available for schools to help people seeking reentry into the community and workforce. Mr. Penix said there is the *First Step Act*, which is a federal program to open some Pell and federal monies to help people leaving confinement get job training. Ms. Obenshain commented that the regulation preventing a person from applying for financial aid if convicted of a felony while accepting financial aid, is no longer in effect. Ms. Obenshain said regarding creating a special committee to discuss incarcerated people, recidivism, and their potential enrollment in private career education schools discussed in the previous board meeting, Ms. Boles reported that Chavis said the committee could not be formed due to transparency requirements. Ms. Obenshain commented Arkansas would be well-served to create an improved means through which felons can pursue training, certification, or a degree that would expand their employment opportunities.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

Ms. Obenshain entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Thompson made a motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.