

## **Minutes**

### **Lowcountry Graduate Center Supervisory Council Meeting**

**Friday, April 2, 2021**

**ZOOM Web Conference**

**1:00 – 2:30 p.m.**

#### **Supervisory Council Members Present via Web Conference:**

*Suzanne Austin* – Provost, College of Charleston

*Lisa Saladin* – Provost, Medical University of South Carolina

*Sally Selden* – Provost, The Citadel

#### **LGC Staff Present:**

*Nancy Muller* – Director, Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC); Visiting Associate Professor of Public Health, College of Charleston

*Jonathan Solomon* – Administrative Assistant, Lowcountry Graduate Center

#### **Call to Order**

The scheduled meeting of the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) Supervisory Council was called to order by Supervisory Council Chair Saladin at approximately 1:00 p.m. Noting the meeting was publicized in accordance with South Carolina's FOIA, Saladin stated that no one from the media was present at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting although invitations by email had been extended to journalists at both *The Post & Courier* and SCBiz.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

There were no changes to the minutes of the January 8, 2021 meeting previously circulated. Selden made the motion they be accepted, and it was seconded by Austin. Thus, the minutes of the January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the LGC Supervisory Council were approved as submitted.

#### **Requests for Opportunity Funds**

Saladin suggested that each of the requests from member institutions for funds be briefly discussed in lieu of voting separately.

## **MUSC**

Saladin presented the request for \$25,000 from MUSC for the development of a new program offering MS in Genetic Counseling, stating the funds would be used for curriculum development and preparation of accreditation documents. Muller added that a portion of the funds are to be used for temporary stipends for adjunct professors hired for instruction. She said that nationwide the demand for genetic counselors is projected to increase by 21% over the current decade because of continuing advances in science and medicine. Hiring and retention of counselors are considered challenges. Saladin shared there is currently only one graduate program in genetic counseling in the state, and that is at the UofSC. However, it accepts only nine students a year because it uses only local preceptors, greatly restricting enrollment. MUSC plans to use preceptors both in state and out of state, and thus is making a significant investment in this academic endeavor. Muller told the group that two very positive letters of support were received from the director of the Greenwood Genetic Center and from the program director and professor of the UofSC's College of Medicine. She reminded the group that all such letters of support are in folders in the meeting packet of documents.

## **The Citadel**

The Zucker Family School of Education is requesting \$25,000 largely for stipends and travel expenses of faculty serving the Beaufort County teachers of English Language Learners (ELL), exploding in number in Beaufort County, where the 8-week program providing micro-credentialing of K-12 teachers in cultural and linguistic diversity in their instruction of students is commencing. The initiative beginning in Beaufort will form the core of a subsequent offering to all public school teachers in the tri-county area. This essentially is a rework and expansion of the proposal brought before the LGC Supervisory Council in January. It now includes mentoring the cohort of enrolled teachers for two years following their completion of the on-site program. Letters of support have been provided by the superintendent of Beaufort County public schools and the ELL program coordinator for the county, explained Muller.

The School of Engineering is requesting \$25,000 for stipends associated with effort by faculty to make modifications to existing graduate courses so the instructional format is adapted to online teaching of its graduate engineering programs currently offered in-person in weekday evening classes. This is intended to accommodate local area workers who wish to enroll in a graduate engineering program but need flexibility due to out of town travel on job assignments. It also accommodates military personnel who are deployed elsewhere but do not wish to interrupt their graduate education when dispatched. Letters of support were received from Boeing and from SRC emphasizing the value of online access for their employees. Additionally, Muller pointed out a testimonial letter from a current student on an overseas military assignment. Selden commented that the program is expanding internationally.

## **College of Charleston**

The School of Business is requesting \$25,000, divided equally for administrative support in admissions, program promotion, professional development of faculty in teaching an interdisciplinary curriculum, stipends for teaching overloads, and the licensing of specialized

software, such as Tableau for big data analytics, to enable the launch and offering of a new graduate certificate in Business Analytics. Positive letters of support were received from Noah Leask, a local entrepreneur responsible for six start-ups in a variety of fields, as well as Noah Gresham, CEO of Tattras, a locally based firm bringing clients business analytics solutions to their businesses. Selden advised Austin that intelligence should be dropped from the description of its graduate certificate since that is covered by The Citadel's own program. She also encouraged Austin to look at the University of Virginia's post-bac programs in business from its McIntire School (separate from UVA's Darden School of Graduate Business Administration).

Saladin asked if funds are available in the LGC's current FY budget to cover all four requests, to which Muller replied affirmatively. She added there is approximately \$140,000 remaining in the budget from the \$200,000 originally approved for Opportunity Funds, as only \$60K in requests were approved at the January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the group.

The motion was made by Austin to approve all four requests totaling \$100,000, seconded by Selden. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Requests of New Program Offerings**

Saladin proceeded to introduce the request by UofSC's College of Engineering and Computing to offer its newly approved PhD in Informatics at the LGC as a hybrid offering. She noted that it is offered through in-person instruction, online, and a hybrid formats of instruction, based on its CHE approvals. The proposal points out that UofSC wishes to better serve current students from Hilton, Beaufort, Charleston, and Mount Pleasant. Saladin said that she considers the program to be in direct competition with MUSC's PhD program in Biomedical Data Sciences and Informatics, jointly offered with Clemson University. Muller said she asked UofSC about the question of duplication, and its department chair explained its target audience is far broader, encompassing graduate students who are working professionals in computing technologies, business, health sciences, and clinical practice settings seeking to advance careers in teaching, research, or leadership and management. Saladin responded that the real obstacle is the request for classroom space. In light of the Supervisory Council's recent decision to terminate at yearend its rental of space on the Trident Technical College (TTC) campus, the request cannot be fulfilled. Muller explained that she had been in conversation with UofSC months earlier and encouraged the faculty to submit the proposal, allowing the LGC to help it get established in Fall 2021 and then secure its own space after December 31<sup>st</sup>. Saladin said they can go their own way. Selden suggested they go to Darla Moore's space downtown. Saladin said that following her conversation, she put in writing to UofSC provost Bill Tate news of the Supervisory Council's decision in February to transition the LGC out of physical classroom space effective December 31, 2021. All three provosts agreed that Muller should tell UofSC's School of Engineering and Computing of Saladin's conversation following the group's classroom space decision in February and thus decline of this request.

When asked by Austin about the request from Winthrop, Muller explained that its dean requested removal of this item from the April meeting agenda because its provost had not met with the

university's president about bringing any of its programs into Charleston. Muller said she has already communicated regarding future space but will share the decision regarding UofSC as well.

### **Notification Document to SC Authorities**

Saladin complimented Muller on her writing of the document, commenting that the data she cited from research provided helpful content. She said the first paragraph can be deleted, as the LGC is not an institution of higher education and therefore not subject to Section 59 of the SC Code of Laws. Selden suggested entitling the document a "courtesy notification." While the background section provides an interesting backdrop, Saladin said most, if not all, of it could be deleted. Muller said she provided the background detail in her initial draft largely for the benefit of Selden and Austin, still very new to the state and especially the LGC. Saladin recommended concluding the document with the simple statement this decision becomes effective December 31, 2021. Selden suggested deleting the paragraph about Google's initiative. Muller explained she added it to give a context to the LGC's involvement in supporting non-degree programs of a skills building and professional development nature but will remove it, as requested.

It was decided that the paid lobbyists of the three member institutions will decide to whom they will speak and share the Courtesy Notification document, including the Commission on Higher Education. Austin suggested that the three provosts collectively send an email to the three of them when the edited document becomes available, asking them to determine its distribution with appropriate stakeholders. Selden asked Muller to also draft a one-page summary of key bullet points. Muller asked to be copied on the instructions and correspondence with the lobbyists to be sent by the Supervisory Council.

### **Update: TTC MOU Renewal**

Muller stated that in accordance with the current rental agreement with TTC for space, the LGC must give 90 day's prior notice in writing if the agreement, as amended, ending July 31, 2021, is not to be automatically renewed. This means by April 30<sup>th</sup> such a notification must be sent. Saladin said she has had a brief conversation with Cathy Almquist, provost at TTC, to this effect. Saladin moved that notification in writing be sent to TTC to extend rental of current space only through December 31, 2021, asking that a terminal rental agreement between TTC and the College of Charleston serving as the LGC's fiscal agent be provided for execution prior to July 31, 2021, upon the expiration date of the current agreement. The motion was seconded by Selden and approved unanimously. Muller said she will draft and send this formal notification to Saladin who in turn will use it to notify TTC.

### **Status of the Review of Bids for LGC Website Hosting/Maintenance/Social Media Support**

Austin said that she had recently met internally with staff. The College of Charleston's IT department has offered to host the LGC's website, if necessary, should a new vendor not be selected through the RFP and bidding process by August 8, 2021 upon the expiration of our agreement for such services by ReasonOne. Muller said that Procurement, with the concurrence of the Vendor Selection team, pulled the current RFP for editing upon learning of the decision by the LGC Supervisory Council to cease the use of physical classroom space after December 31<sup>st</sup>. This will necessitate substantial changes to the website, currently focused on the LGC's current location at TTC and its facilities. Andrew Bergstrom with the College of Charleston and Spencer Morgan with The Citadel are assisting Muller with such edits, in hopes we can renew the solicitation of bids over an additional 60 days. Procurement feels confident more bids will be submitted beyond the two initially received. Saladin instructed Muller to move forward with the revised RFP. She asked if changes to the website could begin before ReasonOne ends its contract, and Muller responded changes could be identified and even some could be made without publishing the revised pages. This will be investigated.

### **Outlay of Funds: Reports from Grant Recipients Since 2018**

Muller explained that First Year Report for the EMPA program arrived shortly after the January 8<sup>th</sup> Supervisory Council meeting. She has since communicated to Judy Millesen, its program director, Austin's request of her in late February that a 1-2 sentence explanation of the termination of the program be provided so that 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year reports are not necessary since she has ended the program. Muller pointed out that the Health and Human Performance Department Chair Wes Dudgeon provided for the meeting packet such a notification of suspension for the Workplace Wellness graduate certificate program due to a lack of faculty at the College of Charleston. Saladin asked if the monies from the LGC had been spent. Muller explained that they had been spent and fully reimbursed, \$25,000 each in both cases, because LGC Opportunity Funds sent at "arms length" to the College of Charleston are provided as reimbursements of actual expenses incurred. In the case of Workplace Wellness, the funds were used for stipends to an instructor and an adjunct who worked on curriculum requirements. In the case of the EMPA program, monies were largely spent on promotion and marketing to generate enrollments in the new program. Austin said this situation was embarrassing to her because both came from the College before she was hired as its provost. She added that she has found a certain naiveté about what it takes to engage in graduate education. It will not happen again. She wants the deans to be instructed to speak first with her before supporting any future requests. Selden added that the application requirements should specify the request has been reviewed by the department chair, school dean, and provost before being submitted. Austin insisted that line items for their signatures should be added to the application form.

### **Revision of Guidelines for LGC Opportunity Funds**

Apologizing for her oversight, Muller returned the group to the agenda item regarding guidelines for Opportunity Funds, as these had been discussed in January with edits accordingly made and

subsequently circulated by email from her to the Supervisory Council. However, a formal discussion and vote are required regarding governance of the process for approving and releasing such funds. Muller added that she would make the additional edits given the preceding discussion regarding requirements for internal reviews and signatures by the member institutions submitting requests for funds. All other edits in the document were said to be acceptable and good. Selden made the motion to accept the revisions, subject to the above noted additions, and Saladin offered a second to the motion. It passed unanimously. Muller said she would soon share this with the three member institutions so that plans and efforts for submissions in the Fall 2021 could get underway.

### **Old Business/New Business/Next Meeting Date**

Although not on the agenda as business, several documents in the meeting packet were swiftly shared, depicting 1) the required annual competitive report of all offerings in graduate programs – public and private – throughout the Charleston Metro Area; 2) the statewide reports of all F2F and hybrid programs in the LGC’s three targeted sectors offered by all institutions in South Carolina; and 3) a new report by the LGC listing those programs currently offered online – even if also offered hybrid or F2F – by the three member institutions. Muller said that the statewide report including offerings by MUSC was intended to exclude strictly clinical programs that have to be taught on clinical premises with patients since the LGC does not have licensed facilities for patient services in its current location. In other words, it was intended to represent programs that potentially could be offered with in-person or hybrid instruction on the LGC’s current location at TTC.

The first and second set of reports have been offered routinely to the LGC Supervisory Council since 2017, Muller explained. All three provosts said these reports are very helpful to them. Saladin stated she wants to examine more closely the statewide report to insure it accurately depicts the offerings of MUSC.

Selden asked about the MS in Engineering Management from UofSC, surprised to see it listed at the LGC. Muller explained it was the first new program added to the LGC following her hiring in 2013. Although enrollment had not grown, it has continued to be listed. Each term, the LGC consults UofSC for its classroom requirements. Some students have elected to drive to Columbia for in-person classes rather than remoting from the LGC. Because of the pandemic, the LGC has not hosted any classes for the program for the past year. This is similar to The Citadel’s MS in Project Management program, as well as its Ed.S. program, both of which also continue to be listed by the LGC but for whom there have been no F2F classes at the LGC for a year. Saladin asked if there were any other programs listed as such, and Muller said only the MBA in Healthcare Management from SC State University. Saladin acknowledged that she had had a conversation with the SCSU provost regarding the recent decision by the Supervisory Council to end the use of physical classroom space effective December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Austin had to suddenly excuse herself due to a pressing matter. Saladin said that she, too, had to leave the meeting for an appointment. Muller said she would organize a subsequent meeting

date in late June for the Supervisory Council and followup by email with several questions regarding old and new business directly with Saladin.

The meeting ended at approximately 2:15 p.m.