

**MINUTES**  
**ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS, SCIENCES AND THE ARTS**  
**BOARD OF VISITORS REGULAR MEETING**

**January 7, 2019**

**5:00 p.m.**

The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts (ASMSA) Board of Visitors met in the Boardroom on the first floor at 200 Whittington Avenue, Hot Springs, Arkansas.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Battle, Chair convened the Board of Visitors regular meeting into open session at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed all Board members.

**II. ESTABLISH QUORUM**

**Members Present**

Mr. Hayward Battle, Chair  
 Mr. Steve Faris, Vice Chair  
 Mr. Timothy Barnes, Secretary  
 Mr. Gary Dowdy (via Zoom)  
 Mr. Brian Reed  
 Mr. Todd West

**Members Absent**

Ms. Ann Xu

**Ex-Officio Members Present**

Mr. Tom Chilton, Director, Arkansas  
 Economic Development Commission,  
 Division of Science and Technology  
 Mr. Alex Kaye, President, Student Government  
 Association

**Ex-Officio Members Absent**

Maria Markham, Ph.D., Director,  
 Arkansas Department of Higher Education  
 Mr. Patrick Ralston, designee for Stacy Hurst,  
 Director, Department of Arkansas Heritage

**Administrative Members Present**

Mr. Corey Alderdice, Director  
 Mr. Bob Gregory, Dean of Academic Affairs  
 Rheo Morris, Ph.D., Dean of Students  
 Ms. Valerie Carpenter, Director of Admissions  
 Mrs. Ashley Smith, Director of Finance  
 Mrs. Marta Collier-Youngblood, ASMSA Foundation  
 Executive Director  
 Mrs. Lorraine Munroe, Administrative Assistant

**Administrative Members Absent**

Mrs. Munroe called the roll of Board members who were present, and a quorum was established.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. West and seconded by Mr. Reed to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2018, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

#### IV. CONSENT AGENDA

##### 1. Director's Comments – Corey Alderdice

Director Alderdice reported that the Creativity and Innovation Complex is near completion. He stated that he expected to receive the Certificate of Occupancy during the week. Furniture installation is scheduled for the following week and ultimately the building will be ready for the Preview Weekend on Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, as well as classes starting on January 28<sup>th</sup>. He stated that the delay in opening has been the furniture provider, who had planned to deliver the furniture by the start of semester date deadline. The final touches are being made to the rest of the building and property, and remains on budget. The dedication of the building will be March 27<sup>th</sup> to coincide with the March Board of Trustees meeting and the Silver Gala.

Director Alderdice spoke of the Alumni Summit, which is part of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the institution. He stated that the school worked with a group of ASMSA partners and stakeholders to host a group of two dozen alumni at a two-day event in Little Rock. Director Alderdice reported that it included people who are engaged in the startup and technology sectors within Arkansas and across the country. He reported that it was a wonderful event and thanked Dr. Ron Hart, who was initially involved with the creation of ASMSA and a great supporter of the school for the past 25 years. Director Alderdice complimented Steve Rice and Marta Youngblood for their work in making it a successful event. The event included dinner at the Governor's Mansion that was attended by the Governor and the First Lady.

Director Alderdice reported that, during the last couple of years, a two-day fall break has been offered to employees. This year, the seniors were offered a full week off for break, specifically to allow their families time to do college visits with them so that they would not have to compete with class and other assignments. The feedback has been very positive. He reported that as he looks at the calendar for next year, he stated that it is something that will continue to be offered.

Director Alderdice reported the National Consortium of Secondary STEM Schools (NCSSS) recognized ASMSA is Coding Arkansas' Future initiative as one of the five finalists for their inaugural Innovation Awards, which is a great testament to the work of Daniel Moix, Carl Frank, Steve Rice, David Slaymaker and Natalie Humphreys to help achieve the Governor's vision of expanded computer science offerings across the state.

Mr. West asked about the ACT averages and the measuring of the test scores.

Director Alderdice reported that when the state released the report, it was sent out and the *Democrat Gazette* had it in their education briefs section. Director Alderdice stated that the Class of 2017 had a 30.6, which was the highest in the school's history. The 30.0 score that the Class of 2018 was the second highest. Director Alderdice stated that he has not seen the most recent December scores for the Class of 2019, but their previous scores put them on the trend line to finish around 30.1. The Director continued by noting that even with the dual paradigm of the students that are admitted -- the "transitional" and "transformational" students -- 30 is higher than some of the peer institutions in other states that do not have that strong of a commitment to the transformational learners as well.

Director Alderdice stated that the main project the IT department is working on is getting the CIC wireless access points installed and security cameras will be installed the following week. IT has also been working on getting the new internet contract in place. Director Alderdice stated that the institution is switching from Telecomp, which is an AT&T resaler directly to an AT&T agreement that meets all of the requirements of both the UofA System and AT&T's corporate office and has now been signed off at this time. He continued stating that by spring break, the school will have the new infrastructure in place that will bring the campus to full gigabit service.

## 2. Academic Affairs Board Report – Bob Gregory

Mr. Gregory reported that Dr. Morris, along with some faculty members, took ten seniors to Japan during the October break. He continued to state that the October break has been a good benefit to the school with students able to make college visits and PSAT prep. It has been advantageous to make October a focal point to help accomplish what the students need to do. Mr. Gregory also reported that there are eight National Merit Semi-Finalists.

Mr. Gregory stated that there have been some challenges with the Research in the Park project due to the temporary government shut down. The Park Service is not available to let the students take their data samples but adjustments are being made to continue their research in the meantime so that students remain able to compete in the upcoming science fair.

Mr. Gregory reported that the students moved back on campus the previous day from winter break and classes will resume on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Battle had asked for confirmation of the loss of two students from the start of the school year.

Mr. Gregory reported that he was advised that he is not to comment on specifics on the loss of students in the future. He stated that with ASMSA being such a small school that it is easy to identify who the student(s) might be and, because of the privacy laws, comments should not be made on students as it has been done at previous board meetings. Mr. Gregory stated that classes will be starting the next day after the winter break and will have a firm idea if there were any withdrawals at that time. Chairman Battle asked if there were any minority losses and Director Alderdice interjected that the question is identifiable data and cannot provide for that asked information.

Mr. Barnes stated that because the school is not a very large group of students, it is reasonable that when specific information is asked, someone in the audience may be able to figure the information out who the student is who has withdrawn. Director Alderdice stated that he is agreeable to providing enrollment numbers but when one gets into identifying features of those students -- because the number of departures are so nominal -- that he tends to be more cautious.

## 3. Residential Affairs Report – Dr. Rheo Morris

Dr. Morris reviewed her report to the Board. She reported that a new school nurse has been hired and is doing well settling in and interacting with the students.

Dr. Morris stated that the counselor that was hired earlier in the year has started a few focus groups that have become very popular with the students.

Chairman Battle asked Dr. Morris how the trip to Japan went, and Dr. Morris stated that it was an awesome trip. She stated that Dr. Oatsvall was also a chaperone on the trip who speaks Japanese and did much of the translating.

4. Admissions – Valerie Carpenter

Ms. Carpenter updated the Board stating that there has been an increase in the number of applications. The number of applications started at 245 and 35 completed applications have been received as of January 7<sup>th</sup>. She stated that she believes an incentive to apply may have had an impact as well where if a student is low-income based and select whether they receive free or reduced lunch, and if the applicant is one of the first 30 that apply, they can get a free ACT waiver. Such a waiver removes the only cost that is associated to applying to ASMSA.

Ms. Carpenter mentioned the various conferences that are scheduled. She stated that the Girls of Promise Coding Summit was held on December 7<sup>th</sup> in Pine Bluff. Many connections were able to be made with the Mayor's office also attending. It was also a good opportunity to network with Jefferson County advocates as well. Ms. Carpenter also stated that the school will be represented at the AGATE conference that will be held in Little Rock on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Responding to Mr. West's question if there have been any new counties added in the application process, Ms. Carpenter responded that there were two applicants from Ashley County and three applicants from Chicot County.

5. Institutional Advancement – Marta Collier-Youngblood

Mrs. Youngblood reported that, as of this date, the school has exceeded \$70,000 (interest has not been included in the amount) and also that the UofA Foundation awarded the school a \$100,000 endowment for advancement support services. Mrs. Youngblood stated that the Foundation is in a good position this year, and stated that the next fund-raising event is the Silver Gala that will be held on March 27<sup>th</sup>. She also reported that there is a small but steady success on alumni engagement.

Mr. Faris stated said that he was delighted that the UA Foundation made such a great contribution. Director Alderdice stated that he believes the UA Foundation has become more attuned to the smaller campuses that do not have large, robust development staffs. Most of the time, development officers are going out and seeking donations that benefit students and faculty. The purpose of the contribution is for the UA Foundation to put some resources behind creating more robust development offices across the System.

Responding to Mr. Faris' inquiry as who would be the speaker at the Gala this year, Director Alderdice reported that it will be a dinner and it will be a ticketed event compared to the luncheon that has been an open event in the past. Mr. Faris stated that perhaps some students can make some comments on what the school has done for them. Also, have some alumni present some success stories about how ASMSA has influenced them in their present lives.

Mr. Faris also stated the importance of the local legislative delegation to attend and hear the success stories of some alumni through the years. He asked Director Alderdice to also focus on the Hot Springs community and what the community has done to help the school as well. Mr. Faris reported that when focus is made on the community and how they have supported the school, it makes it more difficult for someone to come in out of nowhere and try to move the institution to another location. Mr. Faris referred

to a situation a few years ago stating that if the institution had not received the extra money to build the new Student Center, Governor Beebe at the time was thinking of moving the institution to Searcy. Mr. Faris stressed the importance of how the community has supported the school.

Director Alderdice then added to Mr. Faris' point, that ASMSA was announced as one of the nominees for the Chambers Large Business of the Year award. He stated with all the work that has been done by the ASMSA Foundation with the business community, and the partnerships that the faculty are developing with Mid America and Research in the Park with Hot Springs National Park Service, the school is trying to be a good steward of our financial and community support.

Mr. Faris stated that those are the things that need to be mentioned in Director Alderdice's 25 year report. Chairman Battle stated that Mr. Faris made a point well taken because it was a local effort and push to locate the school in Hot Springs.

#### 6. Finance Report – Ashley Smith

Mrs. Smith stated that the Quarterly and Budget reports have been submitted to the System Office. She stated that the institution's revenue and expenses are still on track.

Mrs. Smith reported that the UofA System's ERP project -- the implementation of the new accounting system -- is progressing on its timeline and taking much time and work in executing the system. In preparation for the new platform, her department added a new position to provide her more time to focus on the system transition and larger administrative tasks.

Mr. Barnes asked Mrs. Smith if all of the financing - personnel, payroll, accounts receivable, purchase orders, etc. – are going to run through the UofA System.

Mrs. Smith concurred stating that it was and is scheduled to go live July 1, 2020. She stated that January kicks off the design of the new system. Currently, each campus can choose what system they want to use. However, the new system will move every campus under the same system that is anticipated to be completed within two years.

Mr. Faris asked Mr. Alderdice exactly what was the Summit Planning Committee. Mr. Alderdice stated that it was the Alumni Summit on Technology and Entrepreneurship and Innovation. He reported that Dr. Hart wrote a piece several years ago about needing to leverage ASMSA alumni for economic development. Director Alderdice, along with Mr. Steve Rice, visited with Dr. Hart about two years ago on the topic.

Mr. Brian Reed asked Mrs. Smith about how the UofA EPR would allocate business directly on the shared system. Mrs. Smith responded stating that it is based on the number of licenses that will be required on each campus. Currently, the school uses the Banner program with five user licenses. When the new system is implemented, each employee on campus will have a license so employees will be able to log into the system and see their paystubs and information. Mrs. Smith responded that it is unreasonable to buy that many licenses under the Banner system. Efficiencies will increase due to the increase in licenses.

#### 7. Parents Association – Corey Alderdice

Director Alderdice reported that Mrs. Bradish has stepped down from the Parents Advisory Council. He stated he had permission from Mrs. Bradish to state that her son is not enrolling for the Spring semester and did not feel it was appropriate to serve in that capacity.

## 8. Student Government Association – Alex Kaye

Mr. Kaye reported that in the month of October, the SGA celebrated Spirit Week with students participating in staff and student-judged fashion shows each day. Fall Fest also took place during the month of October.

Mr. Kaye stated that the Student Affairs Committee amended the SGA Constitution to better reflect the process of Floor Representative re-elections.

Mr. Kaye reported that the Mental Health Committee is currently working on policy changes with Mrs. Stich.

Mr. Kaye stated that the Activities Committee continues to work with Aladdin to reorganize the cafeteria to improve on efficiency and cutting down line time. Some new equipment has been added to help in that area.

Mr. Kaye informed the board that the majority of the senior class has voted on an overnight trip to the 4-H Center in Little Rock for their senior class trip. The trip will include rockwall climbing, canoeing, archery and other indoor activities.

Mr. Kaye stated that the SGA has begun holding President's Council and Town Hall meetings where the presidents of clubs can get together and coordinate events and fund-raising activities. Town Hall meetings act as a forum for students to ask questions, and the SGA updates the students on what is voted on.

Mr. Faris interjected commending Mr. Kaye on the thoroughness of his presentations, taking much time from his studies to update the Board. Also, Mr. Faris complimented Mr. Kaye for his Mental Health Committee stating that it is an important group given the stress and time in today's world to help the students. Mr. Faris also asked Mr. Kaye if there were any issues that the students would like to change. Mr. Kaye stated that some students need to communicate better and come forward, that authorities are approachable and their issues will be addressed in a timely manner and receive the support they need.

Mr. Faris stated to the Director that his intention was not to put anyone on the spot, but when someone assembles reports as Mr. Kaye did, there are good things happening because feedback is being received from students.

## V. OLD BUSINESS

The Chair stated that at the conclusion at the last meeting (September 24, 2018), a motion was made and seconded asking the Director to contact the System Office to request legal counsel to do a session on grievance or compliance. The Chair asked Director Alderdice to report his actions.

Director Alderdice stated that having spoke with Dr. Bobbitt, as well as the General Counsel, their recommendation was to have the Human Resource representative from ASMSA conduct the session. Director Alderdice stated that the System office appreciated the feedback of the Board but as he noted in his letter, the System office thought it was appropriate that the relevant party on campus that would field these concerns and help deliver that information so that people would know who to go to with those concerns. He reported that the System office felt that it was disproportionate to the need of the campus. So the session was held in October and employees were provided with that clarity.

Mr. Faris stated that he does appreciate the level of their appreciation of the Board's request but said that in the future, if something comes up before the Board of a situation that needs to be discussed with the UofA Board, there needs to be an avenue to do that. He reported that no one likes the idea of someone picking up the phone to call Dr. Bobbitt because they can't get an answer from the school. Mr. Faris stated that while he understands his letter and it is somewhat to the point, he reported that he does not think that they appreciated the Board of Visitors request. Mr. Faris stated that he feels that the System Office passed the request back to the Board of Visitors because they felt it was the thing to do for several reasons. He stated that he believes it was a disservice to the Director for the Counsel, or someone from the University System not to write a letter to the Board of Visitors themselves.

Mr. Faris stated that the Board of Visitors is a goodwill Board but are also a link to the Board of Trustees in many ways so there needs to be communication with them; but the communication should go through the Director. He stated that with the Chairman's request, he does not believe that the Board was overreaching to clarify a point about grievance procedures.

Chairman Battle agreed with the comments of Vice-Chair Faris stating that the System and Board of Trustees can provide that conduit between the Board of Trustees and the Board of Visitors. Chairman Battle asked Director Alderdice how did the grievance meeting go that was held by ASMSA's Human Resource Manager. Director Alderdice stated that it was a productive session and that employees were provided the information that was requested. Director Alderdice stated that the grievance part of the meeting that was held before fall break lasted approximately 30 minutes and a transgender student support session was about an hour, with outside speakers giving the presentation.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Battle stated that his tenure on the Board expires on January 14, 2019, so he opened the floor on the nomination of new officers. He stated that it has been a real privilege to meet and serve with the people on the Board and have thoroughly enjoyed his time of serving.

Mr. Faris stated that he has been Vice Chair of the Board and when accepting that position at that time, he stated that he did not want to be Chair of the Board. He stated that, and proposed to, nominating the three newest members of the Board to step up as new officers of the Board -- Mr. Timothy Barnes, Mr. Todd West and Mr. Brian Reed.

After deliberation, a motion was made by Mr. West and seconded by Mr. Reed that Mr. Timothy Barnes be elected as Chairman of the Board. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Reed and seconded by Mr. Faris that Mr. Todd West be elected as Vice Chairman of the Board. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Faris and seconded by Mr. West that Mr. Brian Reed be elected as Secretary of the Board. Motion passed unanimously.

## **VII. AUDIENCE WITH INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS**

Natasha St. Martin, a parent of a current student, addressed the board with individual concerns.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, Vice Chairman Faris commended Chairman Battle for being present at every meeting since he became Chair and showed the dedication to the institution and concern he has shown for the position he has held.

Mr. Faris asked Director Alderdice to reach out to Senator Sample or another representative, to have a Citation initiated for Chairman Battle for his long-time service on the Board of Visitors. Chairman Battle stated that he appreciated the Director and stated that it was a joyful experience for him to serve.

### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to conduct, a motion was made by Mr. Faris and seconded by Mr. West to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 pm.

Approved as written \_\_\_\_\_

Approved as amended \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Timothy Barnes, Secretary

5-13-2019  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)