

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

March 2, 2020

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. Barnes, Chair convened the Board of Visitors regular meeting into open session at 5:04 p.m. and welcomed all Board members.

II. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Members Present

Mr. Timothy Barnes, Chair
 Mr. Todd West, Vice Chair
 Mr. Brian Reed, Secretary
 Mr. Steve Faris
 Mr. Gary Dowdy
 Marlene Battle, Pharm.D.

Members Absent

Ex-Officio Members Present

Mr. Tom Chilton, Director, Technology
 Development at Arkansas Economic
 Development Commission
 Mrs. Krystal Nail, Program Director,
 Division of Elementary & Secondary
 Education Learning Services, Office of
 Office of Gifted & Talented and Advanced
 Placement
 Mrs. Pam Brady, Chair, Parents Advisory Council
 Mr. Hays Denney, President, Student Government
 Association

Ex-Officio Members Absent

Mrs. Maria Markham, Ph.D., Director,
 Arkansas Division of Higher Education
 Mr. Patrick Ralston, Director, Arkansas Arts
 Council

Administrative Members Present

Mr. Corey Alderdice, Director
 Stuart Flynn, J.D., Dean of Academic Affairs
 Rheo Morris, Ph.D., Dean of Students
 Mx. Charlene Feick, Interim Director of Admissions
 Mrs. Ashley Smith, Director of Finance
 Sara Brown, Ph.D., Director of Institutional Advancement
 Mrs. Lorraine Munroe, Administrative Assistant

Administrative Members Absent

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Dowdy and seconded by Mr. West to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2019, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Barnes thanked Mr. West for chairing the December meeting in his absence.

Mr. Barnes asked if the Board had any questions regarding the reports under the Consent Agenda. No questions were asked by the Board.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Director's Comments – Corey Alderdice

Director Alderdice highlighted his report stating that the fiscal session will begin with budget hearings in March. He reported that not every campus gives a presentation during that process but only if members have a specific question or concern. Director Alderdice stated that the fiscal session is a formality since the budgets are primarily set based on the full session in odd number years.

Director Alderdice reported that he is watching sales and use tax collections so that the preliminary budget process can get started and stated that late April is when budget exhibits are due to the System office. He stated that the online institutional sales tax collection is 4%, up YTD, which gives the institution some opportunity. He stated that one of the areas where some of the resources will be allocated is in the realignment of the Residence Life staff positions, particularly in the establishment of the Residential Experience Coordinator positions. He stated that it is interesting to look at how Residence Life/Student Affairs positions have evolved not only across ASMSA but also across higher education over the past two decades. Director Alderdice stated that ASMSA has instructors with backgrounds in biology, literature, language, etc., and believes that there is that expectation of professionalism that is more current in student life practices. To better lean on that experience of professionalism and also to recruit more experienced individuals, ASMSA is bifurcating the live-in positions in the coming year. Director Alderdice reported that ASMSA will continue to have four Residential Mentors, which will be a Bachelor's degree required position; however, six positions will be re-categorized into Residential Experienced Coordinators, which will be a Master's degree required position with a salary of approximately \$35,000. When calculating the additional fringe benefits – housing, meals, utilities – it puts these positions near faculty starting positions. Director Alderdice reported that applications have been received from several of ASMSA's peer institutions which indicates that the role and compensation puts ASMSA on a competitive footing in recruiting for those roles. Candidates will continue to be interviewed.

Mr. Barnes stated that he was very pleased about the recommendations that are taking place in Residence Life, having the new positions supporting the Residential Mentors. He said that the change will prove itself to be extremely valuable not only for the institution but also for the students as well. Mr. Barnes reported that it directly addresses one of the concerns that needed to be addressed.

Director Alderdice reported on legislative audits. He stated that he and Dr. Bobbitt presented at the special audit that was requested by Senator Sample last year. Director Alderdice stated that he is pleased that the audit contained no findings against himself, ASMSA, or any other staff member and served to respond to several erroneous claims that had been made about the

school. He said that *The Sentinel-Record* had not yet reported on the results having been informed of them but had finally been advised by the paper that they will report on the outcome in the following week.

Mr. Faris stated that *The Sentinel-Record* ran a positive story on Possip.

Director Alderdice stated that Possip is a platform that gathers parent feedback and praise in real-time allowing schools to analyze data systematically and over time.

Mr. Dowdy asked Director Alderdice if he would speak about the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program.

Director Alderdice stated that the maximum savings per ASMSA student would be \$200 – 4 courses up to the \$125, and the cost per class is \$50. Director Alderdice reported that it is his intent to hold the concurrent credit assessment at \$250 per semester because there are supplemental costs related to concurrent credit (e.g. textbooks, lab supplies, lab materials), which should generate some institutional savings.

2. Student Government Association – Hays Denney

Mr. Denney reported that the SGA sponsored the Winter Formal event on December 8th with a photo booth set up for students. The feedback on the dance was very positive and attendance was high. Mr. Denney also stated that the E-Board was working on some compromising bills that allow students to have more fairness in the elections, especially the floor reps. He reported that other bills were drafted that help deal with academic residential policies for students.

Mr. Denney stated that the Activities Committee, along with the E-Board, has sponsored the SLAMT Spirit Week, which was a great success.

Mr. Denney also stated that the Food Service Committee worked with the cafeteria to implement a food waste program where all compostable material is donated to a local farmer or to ASMSA staff. He reported that the tissue dispensers in the cafeteria have been replaced with spring loaded ones and the students have expressed appreciation of this change.

The Mental Health Committee has held activities for the student body and activities have been planned for every month.

Director Alderdice introduced Mrs. Pam Brady, Chair of the Parents Advisory Council. Mrs. Brady, a resident of Sheridan, Arkansas, stated that she is a parent of a junior at ASMSA and will work to finish this year and carry into the senior year to build additional structure around the Advisory group in the coming months. Director Alderdice stated that he is pleased to have her enthusiasm in planning for the coming year.

Mr. Faris asked Director Alderdice about the new Possip program.

Director Alderdice reported that Possip is a new ed tech startup based out of Nashville, TN, that he became aware of through an *Education Week* article late last year. He reported that one of the topics that have been explored this year is how can the school do more to increase parental engagement, as well as ensure clear communication between the institution and parents. Director Alderdice stated that, by all measures,

it is a fairly simple process. He reported that program asks the parents three questions in bi-weekly surveys:

1. Are you happy with ASMSA this week?;
2. What praise do you have for ASMSA?;
3. What ideas, thoughts, areas of improvement, or concerns do you have?

Director Alderdice reported that it gives staff an opportunity to follow up directly with individuals. He stated that the other piece of information that is important is that it lets the school be able to take its temperature broadly across the parent base and is a good reminder that folks are pretty happy with the institution, faculty, and staff. Director Alderdice added that what has been encouraging for those who have clicked "NO" is the institution can generally point to what is on the parent's mind who typically have already been engaging with which gives the institution an opportunity to circle back again to see if the question/situation has been resolved. Director Alderdice reported that it has been pleasant to have these positive feedbacks that has allowed the institution to share with the campus some of the good responses and to reach out directly to individual faculty and staff members who have gone above and beyond in their work.

Mr. Faris stated that he thought it was really good to give parents an opportunity to have the open door if they need to be able to vent their concerns, happiness, and frustrations. He stated that because of that, it will defer people showing up at the meetings. Mr. Faris stated that the idea of getting a report on what is coming through the Possip program at every meeting is going to be really helpful to the Board as well. Mr. Faris reported that he appreciates the idea of having something where people can't say that they don't have any way to get in touch with people or the school and hopes it is a success for the institution.

Director Alderdice stated that it does not replace scheduled meetings, calls, or emails, but Possip certainly is a bi-weekly reminder that there is no excuse not to share one's perspective.

Director Alderdice reported that 40% of the parents have responded which is considered by Possip a very successful participation rate. He stated that Possip has been extremely helpful with the Strategies Team.

Mr. Barnes asked the Board to approve the Consent Agenda. By unanimous vocal approval, all of the Board members approved the Consent Agenda.

V. UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ALUMNI + FRIENDS OF ASMSA – Amy Stvartak

Ms. Stvartak, Administrative Liaison of AAFA, introduced herself and presented to the Board the organization's mid-year review. She stated there have been seven meetings that had occurred and data has been one of the major issues that the association is trying to figure out – where everyone is located, how to contact alumni, how to engage them, etc. Ms. Stvartak reported that the database is now up and running and is hopeful that in the next year her ability to reach out to alumni is going to get better.

Ms. Stvartak reported that the association has done some student and alumni events. She reported that a hydration station was setup when the students moved in at the start of the school year and interacted with the students to find out their requests. Ms. Stvartak stated that the association works with Steve Rice, Faculty Liaison, and also Director Alderdice to give the students the opportunities to utilize the resources that the alumni can provide them.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Barnes reported that one of the issues that was discussed at the last Board meeting was a recommendation to look at continuing to use ZOOM conferencing for members that are not able to attend meetings in person but are available to connect via ZOOM technology. Mr. Barnes asked the Board if they had any comments about the Board continuing/discontinuing the use of ZOOM.

Mr. Faris stated that he was not sure what the reasoning would be to discontinue its use. He reported that with the technology that is being utilized at the school the use of ZOOM is important if a representative of the Board is not able to physically attend the meeting. Mr. Faris cited as an example that the new parent representative may not be able to attend a meeting but can participate in the meeting via ZOOM. He stated that it is fairly standard for most boards to utilize that technology.

Director Alderdice interjected stating that Zoom was introduced for a former member who had a unique change of circumstances and was clearly aware of why they could not attend the meetings in person. That situation was a break of historic practices. He stated that the previous expectation that the members engage directly with the institution through their physical presence at meetings. Director Alderdice reported that the members of the campus community have brought forward the desire that the group (Board) be physically engaged with life and learning at ASMSA.

Mr. West then said that listening to what Director Alderdice had stated adding the faculty presence and having people in the room, considering that the Board meets four times a year, that it is the preference of the faculty and Board, to physically attend Board meetings if possible. Occasionally, if that is not possible, ZOOM is the preferable backup but not the primary way to meet.

Mr. Reed added that in his opinion, no one has abused using Zoom to attend the meetings and it needs to be used as an alternative to attend the meetings.

Mr. Dowdy stated that the audio has been difficult at times when he has used ZOOM and offered to help in any way he could to resolve the situation. Mr. West stated that if ZOOM was going to be setup as a secondary method it would be good to have it better professionally installed for the purpose of holding a meeting.

Mr. Barnes also stated that more transparency is better than less, and he would like to continue the use of ZOOM for meetings for board members who are unable to physically attend.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to report

VIII. STRATEGIC PLANNING FOCUS GROUP – Dr. Sara Brown

Dr. Sara Brown, Director of Institutional Advancement, stated that when she came to ASMSA discussions took place about strategic planning as a way to look at the different pathways for ASMSA in the next five years. She reported that she has had past experience with strategic planning and with different consultants and introduced Ms. Brenda Mauldin who Dr. Brown had worked with in the past. Dr. Brown stated that Ms. Mauldin has much experience dealing with non-profit organizations, education, and the arts communities and has a broad knowledge of the strategic planning processes, grant writing, etc. Dr. Brown reported that Ms. Mauldin was approached to help with the process. Dr. Brown stated that focus groups were set up and meetings

were held with the Foundation Board, and also with community leaders. An additional focus group with parents will also be established. Ms. Mauldin also met with student leaders, as well as faculty and staff. A focus group with alumni will be held in the coming weeks.

Ms. Mauldin thanked everyone for the opportunity for her to engage in the strategic planning process. Ms. Mauldin asked the Board to share their opinions and thoughts for the greater good of the school to the following questions:

- In looking at the future of ASMSA, how important is enrollment growth over the next five years?
- Should the school remain exclusively residential or should online and commuter options be considered? And if that was the case, could it change the school's identity throughout the state?
- How does the school overcome the challenge for funding?
- Much of the public views ASMSA as a math and science school. How can the school overcome that perception?
- What additional actions should ASMSA take to improve the residential experience?
- Does the Board see value in the school's relationship as a campus of the University of Arkansas System?
- What can ASMSA do to better support students' mental health and wellness?
- What are some specific ideas as to how to create, promote and encourage the stakeholders to be stronger and more positive advocates for the school?
- How important is research, inquiry, and creative expression is to the school's academic environment?
 - a. How do you work to build additional partnerships so that research is not only an internal endeavor?
 - b. How do you focus on additional resources on students in both the STEM areas and the arts who want to compete on the national level?
- What are the most significant barriers to progress over the next five years at ASMSA?
- What question do you feel is critical that has not been asked?
 - a. The question was asked by Mr. Dowdy: What is the role of the Board of Visitors and what is its function?
 - b. Mr. Barnes stated that a greater emphasis placed on diversity in broad areas because it is a critical component of our society now.

The Board responded with their thoughts and ideas to the questions. Ms. Mauldin expressed her appreciation for the Board's attention and passion in communicating their thoughts on the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Barnes thanked Ms. Mauldin for her guidance in the process.

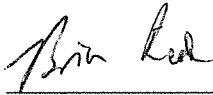
Director Alderdice stated that the next two major dates in the strategic planning process are April 21st (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) and May 18th (9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) He reported that the meeting on April 21st will be a SWOT analysis, that will include working with Ms. Mauldin as well as campus and external stakeholders. He stated that the hope is to identify about four to seven key concepts. Director Alderdice stated that once those concepts emerge, another meeting will take place on May 18th to bring the actionable items and measurable outcomes from that meeting. He reported that he looks to have both the core campus planning group (Governing Council and other interested parties), as well as individuals from the various stakeholder groups (students, Board of Visitors, Foundation Board, Alumni, Parents). He asked the Board if they had interest in participating and are able to commit to the two full-day sessions, he would welcome their participation and to let Mrs. Munroe know of their availability.

Mr. Barnes thanked everyone for their time and effort to attend the meeting and Director Alderdice for getting the information out to the Board. He also thanked Mrs. Munroe for all her efforts in disseminating and answering information to Board members in the past and congratulated her for her 20 years (in July) at the school.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, a motion was made by Mr. Faris and seconded by Dr. Battle to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Approved as written



Approved as amended

5-11-2020

Mr. Brian Reed, Secretary

(Date)