

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

May 4, 2020

5:00 p.m.

The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts (ASMSA) Board of Visitors met virtually via a ZOOM meeting.

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

Mrs. Krystal Nail, Program Director,
Division of Elementary & Secondary
Education Learning Services, Office
Of Gifted & Talented Placement
Mr. Patrick Ralston, Director, Arkansas
Arts Council
Mrs. Pam Brady, Chair, Parents Advisory Council
Mr. Jacob Holmes, 2020-2021 President Elect, Student
Government Association

Ex-Officio Members Absent

Maria Markham, Ph.D., Director,
Arkansas Division of Higher Education
Mr. Tom Chilton, Director, Technology
Development at Arkansas Economic
Development Commission
Mr. Hayes Denney, President, Student
Government Association

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

Mr. Barnes called the meeting to order, stated that a quorum was established, and asked for a motion be made to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2020, meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Dowdy and seconded by Mr. Faris to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2020, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Prior to addressing the Board with his report, Director Aldredice introduced Nick Seward, who has been leading ASMSA in the protective equipment 3-D printing initiative since Dr. Bobbitt called upon ASMSA's campus to assist with that need for UAMS and other partners statewide at the start of the pandemic. Director Aldredice reported that Mr. Seward has been instrumental in marshalling a variety of colleagues, alumni, and current students together to produce over 600 face shields.

Mr. Seward showed the participants a sample of what has been produced and also stated that the strap that has been used for the headgear has come from Alliance Rubber, a local and world-wide manufacturer in rubber products. Mr. Seward stated that the amount of community outreach has been outstanding. He reported that there are about ten printers on campus, and about as many off campus printing the headgear. Mr. Seward reported that the Garland County Library heard of the efforts of ASMSA and also have started printing headgear as well. He also stated that there are some local schools participating in the production.

Director Aldredice stated that the experience has been a tremendous opportunity for the school to leverage its expertise in 3-D printing. Director Aldredice reported that Mr. Seward is recognized nationally as a leader in the Open Source 3-D printing movement. He explained that the design is used is an open-source design that has been approved for emergency use by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Director Aldredice stated that on behalf of the community of learning he is very appreciative for what Mr. Seward has done to support and lead the initiative and certainly the distinction and appreciation it has brought to ASMSA.

Mr. Barnes thanked Mr. Seward for his leadership and time in the production of the equipment. He said that he does not know what the future holds but the students can use this experience in their careers and in their lives. Mr. Barnes said that he is appreciative of Mr. Seward's efforts in stepping out and taking a lead for not only the school but in serving the community as well.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Director's Comments – Corey Aldredice

Director Aldredice reported that he received preliminary approval from the Board of Trustees at their meeting to hold an alternative Commencement ceremony on Saturday, August 1, 2020, at Bank OZK Arena. He reported that it was the desire of parents and students that ASMSA conduct a physical Commencement ceremony and with the System's restrictions that are currently in place, there is a narrow window in time in August that is a viable time. Director Aldredice stated that it is contingent upon the ability to host large gatherings but with Bank OZK Arena capable of hosting 6,000 people -- and with the usual ASMSA number of 1,300 participants -- Director Aldredice stated that the facility offers the restrictions of social distancing for this ceremony. He asked the Board of Visitors to mark their calendars for Saturday, August 1st to attend. Director Aldredice stated that the institution still plans on doing a small digital ceremony, combined with the Honor's Day festivities, on May 23rd. He stated that it is important to recognize the graduates in the normal time while setting aside the ability to do a physical ceremony later on.

Included in his report, Director Aldredice stated that information had been sent out to campus employees and stakeholders regarding COVID-19 and ASMSA's responses to the pandemic. He stated that updates on the COVID-19 website will continue to be made as new information and decisions are made regarding the campus. Director Aldredice reported that information that was included in the report was the priorities and campus values during remote instruction.

Director Alderdice reported that for an institution that is primarily defined by its residential program, a shift exclusively to remote learning for the semester was a seismic change for campus. In preparing the institution for the change, ASMSA spent much time zeroing in on what the priorities and values would be to get through the remainder of the semester. He continued stating that COVID-19 presented extraordinary circumstances and that two of the primary concerns for the students would be considerations about equity for the students, and to know that there are a variety of challenges and circumstances in trying to receive and participate in instruction. Secondly, is how to prepare the returning students to jump back into our college bridge curriculum when instruction resumes in the fall.

Director Alderdice spoke about the budget planning for FY21. He reported that when the budget hearings for the fiscal session began in March at the outset of the pandemic, the state reduced the RSA forecast by 4.2%, approximately \$50,000 out of ASMSA's budget from FY20. The revised forecast at that time still anticipated a 2% increase in sales and use tax collections for current fiscal year which would translate in an increase in next year's budget. Director Alderdice reported that ADHE met with Chancellors and CFO's across the higher ed campuses in the state and advised that campuses should plan for a 10% reduction in both EETF and RSA, which would amount to approximately \$941,000 in funding reduction. He stated that this came as a surprise and concern to institutions when coupled with the reductions in RSA that were set during the fiscal session. Director Alderdice continued to state that during the fiscal session, 85% of the funds were budgeted in Category A, 5% in Categories B, C, and D.

Director Alderdice showed a chart of the EETF and RSA Funds from FY07 to FY21. He stated that the document highlights that the EETF model is highly susceptible to "economic mood swings". He reported that the last recession took 6 years to return to FY08 levels. Director Alderdice reported that it will also take significant time to build back from the current situation. As he and Mrs. Smith worked to develop a preliminary top-level budget for the System, he looked at various items that could be reduced. Number one on the list is the capital allotment. It would cover approximately two-thirds of the reduction; the second option would be the utilities buffer that has been maintained in order to adjust for fixed cost increases from year-to-year. The third path is a departmental reduction in operations funding by 10%. Director Alderdice stated that it is disconcerting that capital funding is being eliminated because it is essential to the long-term health of the institution and also greatly jeopardizes the ability to move forward with the Chapel and Convent renovation projects. The funding has been received by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation but if the circumstances prevent the school from moving forward with the project, the loan will be returned in full with the nominal interest that would have been acquired, but will wait to see what the final forecast will look like. Director Alderdice reported that he is currently holding onto it for now to see what the final forecast will be.

Director Alderdice stated that, in terms of economic relief, ASMSA is left out of the CARES Act because we are not a Title I funded school. ASMSA will not receive the funding that is applicable to traditional K12 institutions. Also, ASMSA is not a PELL institution so it will not receive funding that is allocated to traditional colleges and universities. He continued stating that one potential avenue would be the Governor's discretionary emergency education fund which is estimated to be in the area of \$30 - \$40 million. Director Alderdice reported that there are two possible avenues. He stated that there is some precedent from the 2010 recession that could make a request for capital support, especially since the initial plan seems to forego that not for just this year but also that next period of returning to stability in the budget, or a smaller request to plug some of the operational gaps for the coming year.

Mr. Barnes stated that the information Director Alderdice presented was not good news at all. He stated that ASMSA is not equitable in how it is funded in terms of K12 school districts or higher education. Mr. Barnes reported that the students at ASMSA are the brightest and best students across the State of Arkansas. He reported that it is a special place, experience, and curriculum that could only be found at ASMSA. Mr. Barnes stated that he hoped the Board as a whole would unanimously support the Director and the staff in whatever direction the Director would like the Board to take. Mr. Barnes reported that exceptions need to be made for ASMSA and get behind the Director and his efforts. He stated that he and the Board are available to do whatever Director Alderdice needs them to do, or whatever path the Director chooses, to include the Board in his decision to make the voices of the Board heard to those who are in the chain in which the problem can be temporarily or permanently resolved that allows ASMSA to go forward in the next academic year without fear of losing anything that the institution brings to the students, Hot Springs community, and the State of Arkansas. Mr. Barnes stated that very difficult decisions might need to be made during the next academic year and strongly advised the Board that the Director will need their support and be a united voice for the institution. He continued stating that these are uncharted waters, that no one predicted that are unique, and it is going to take a united Board to come along side and help the institution to meet its mission and objectives for everyone involved.

Director Alderdice stated that he has had conversations with the System office about what a potential request to the Governor would look like. He stated that discussions should take place as to which of the two routes might be the better avenue for discussion. Director Alderdice asked would it be a one-time capital funding which offsets the multi-year loss in planning, or is it a request to plug the smaller budgetary holes for the year? He continued stating that one of the reasons he has waited to reach out to the Governor is he is waiting to see what the dollar amount will be for the local K-12 districts. Director Alderdice stated that he is aware of what the higher education piece of it looks like, as well as how those funds are being distributed in part for direct student relief, as well as money with a bit more flexibility for the institutions. Pertaining to ASMSA's request, Director Alderdice stated that he would welcome observations and feedback on which strategy might be helpful.

Mr. Faris stated that he would present both options since he might get one or a bit of both. Mr. Barnes agreed with Mr. Faris. He continued asking Director Alderdice when would he be ready to visit with the Governor and if Director Alderdice had plans to touch base with the local delegation of legislators?

Director Alderdice reported that Senator Sample, Representative Cozart, and Representative Warren are aware of the anticipated budget reductions. He stated that the figures are an estimated reduction. The DF&A report are March dollars where the numbers are still up 3.2%. He reported that the more realistic indicator of what the final numbers will look like will be out at the beginning of June. Director Alderdice reported that he anticipates DFA to release a revised revenue forecast for the year at some point early in May that will give a better picture of the numbers. He stated that the information he has heard is that the sales and use tax collections, in particular, have been tanking.

Mr. Faris reiterated to the Director that when he visits with the Governor to not hesitate to ask for some of the money that goes to the high schools. He stated that it may take a constitutional tweak to do that, but it would be a good opportunity to bring it up so that perhaps that money can be given to the school every year. Mr. Faris personally offered his assistance to accompany Director Alderdice when he visits the Governor because he has experience in dealing with the issue beforehand.

Mr. Barnes reported that he was in a Department of Education Zoom meeting the previous week where it was stated that (K-12 section) there would be no reduction for state aid for K-12 school districts. He reported that when the Legislature met, they adjusted the budget, but left the K-12 funding alone.

Mr. Barnes stated that their funding won't be reduced in 2020 until 2021. So K-12 will not be getting a reduction and that goes for their categorical money that they receive each year for those districts. Mr. Barnes agreed with Mr. Faris stating that who knows what 2021 will look like for public schools and higher education. He stated that he agrees with the argument that the school doesn't fall under a Title I, K-12, higher education schools, two year, or vocational schools. Mr. Barnes reported that the school has a tremendous impact not only on the lives of the students, but also for the faculty, staff and the community. He stated that it would be good to look at both plans and that he doesn't know of anyone who is in state government, or who is a state official, who would look at the school and say that it is fair and balanced with higher education or K-12 schools.

Mr. Faris also stated that he is in agreement with Mr. Barnes and if there was a time to ask for consideration to request the facilities money, it is now.

Director Alderdice stated that the public school fund for the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education does have just short of \$10 million that is listed in Category D on RSA. He inquired if there has been any indication of how the department was going to absorb those reductions or what those reductions are going to effect?

Mr. Barnes responded stating that he would have to look to see specifically what programs and services that it would affect. He stated that it was not an area that he personally was familiar with but can ask and receive a response for Director Alderdice. Mr. Barnes advised Director Alderdice that he and Mrs. Nail could investigate and get an answer to that question.

Director Alderdice stated that the school receives the STEM Pathways Grant. He reported that ASMSA has received \$500,000 each year for Coding Arkansas Future initiative, as well as the Advanced Biology Plus initiative. He is servicing about 1,500 students a year which has been the hub of the actions regarding the Governor's Coding Initiative and that number has remained flat since the State pivoted its distance education model. Director Alderdice reported that he has a concern that perhaps not that the funding might be eliminated, but it might be reduced. He stated that good attention has been received in the readiness that teachers within the school's cohorts of both of those programs have had when it comes to pivoting to on-line instructions. Director Alderdice said that their comfort, familiarity and readiness for that move in this period is largely thanks to those funds and one of his priorities is protecting that fund in full.

Director Alderdice spoke about planning for the fall semester. He reported that the Board of Trustees at their meeting reaffirmed that it is their intent to reopen the campuses to face-to-face instruction in the fall, if circumstances allow. The most likely scenario that the school is preparing for in the coming year is similar to what the school has experienced during the spring. Director Alderdice continued that with much discussion about the potential resurgence of COVID-19 at some point, he stated that the school must be ready to pivot to remote learning should circumstances warrant. He stated that the faculty will be building out their fall courses with that in mind.

Director Alderdice stated that the second potential option is a delayed start. He reported that it seems as though it is less and less a potential need, depending on how the first stage of reopening in both Arkansas and other parts of the country goes. He continued stating that he had mapped a scenario that if instruction had to wait until the first of September, how would we consolidate the fall semester around that.

Director Alderdice stated that the third option is what a potential all-remote semester might look like for the fall. He reported that it was by no means the preferred scenario, but it is one that must be thought about. Director Alderdice stated that there have been discussions about parents who may be cautious in the fall, that offers of admissions have been extended to students and for them to return their Intent to Continue forms. He stated that, thus far, there have not been concerns of returning back to normalcy. Director Alderdice reiterated that it depends on how things are looking in July and August.

Dr. Battle asked if there was a definitive date that was discussed about reopening the school for the fall?

Director Alderdice responded stating that the Trustees response was brought about when the campuses should look to open in the Fall. He said that July 1 would be his definitive answer for the cut-off date for the fall. He continued by stating that he would like to see what the shape of the post first wave looks like before reaching a firm decision on the fall.

Stuart Flynn, Dean of Academic Affairs, wanted to emphasize that the decisions that were made to get the students across the finish line this year involved choices in curriculum that had to be made to ensure that students with connectivity issues or other challenges pertaining to remote learning situation would be supported. The key was to get the students through it. He continued stating that the way the week was organized was based on ideas to offer both synchronous live sessions that the students can rely on to meet with teachers, and also to provide other days in the week that were open so that students could communicate with teachers by request and have time to juggle the workload. Mr. Flynn also said that at the same time, the schedule needed to adhere to ASMSA's standards while also creating a framework that appreciates the nature of these challenges to the students. He reported that he felt it worked well but it was a bridge. However, he stated, that it will have to look different in the fall where emphasis will have to be put on accountability that was not put in place in the spring. Mr. Flynn reported that all of the staff in the areas that collaborate to support students are on alert. He stated that staff is continuously checking in on students, seeing what they need, encouraging them, and also at the same time, being very clear about what is expected of them.

Director Alderdice thanked the Student Success Coordinators, Rheo Morris, Staci Stich (Licensed Professional Counselor), as well as Student Life and their programs for the variety of services to help students adjust both to the broader circumstances as well as the academic circumstances.

Director Alderdice thanked Dr. Battle for her participation in the Strategic Planning Session last month. A follow-up report from the consultant will be made later in the week and will be meeting again on May 18th to finalize the metrics for assessment of the report.

He also congratulated Mr. Brian Reed for his reappointment for seven years to the Board of Visitors.

2. Student Government Association – Jacob Holmes, President Elect, Student Government Association

Mr. Holmes introduced himself to the Board. Due to Mr. Holmes' problems with connectivity issues, Director Alderdice stepped in and stated that he has been in touch with the E-Board using them as a barometer for students' needs and concerns while also going forward planning for the coming year.

Mr. Barnes stated that he is looking forward to hearing from Mr. Holmes to get the ideas from the students' side and their prospective, and advised him that the Board is available to support him and the rest of the students.

Mr. Barnes asked the Board for a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. A motion was made by Mr. Faris and accepted by Mr. Reed to accept the Consent Agenda. The motion was vocally passed unanimously.

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

Ms. Stvartak stated that the Association met and have tabled most of their activities. She stated that what they are doing is continuing to reach out to the graduating seniors sending them congratulatory cards on their graduation and accomplishments, and inviting them to be a part of the Alumni Association. Ms. Stvartak reported that their next meeting is scheduled for May 30th, and is looking forward to attending Commencement on August 1st.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Director Alderdice reported that the Strategic Planning process continues and stated that he appreciates the variety of ways that the Board engaged in that process, as well as in the full-day session in which the core areas were identified. He stated that if the opportunity allows, the process will continue on May 18th with some analysis of the data and focusing in on the actual accessible matrix that will be put in place in the next five years. Director Alderdice also thanked Dr. Brown for her assistance and leadership in the process.

Director Alderdice also congratulated Dr. Brown and the Art Department on the \$25,000 Wingate Grant that was received and will be matched with ASMSA's \$25,000 Institutional Advancement funding, for a total of \$50,000 in equipment investment for ASMSA's Arts program. He stated that Windgate was an incredible partner in validating design and craft courses and that Sara Henry will build out her 3-D art program.

Mr. Barnes thanked Dr. Brown for her efforts and leadership in the Strategic Planning process. Mr. Barnes reiterated to the Board that it is imperative that they know the mission of the institution.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Barnes stated that part of the new business is to take what Director Alderdice has stated throughout the meeting, as well as what can the Board do, to support him and the institution. He also reported that the Board should take the lead and direction from the Director, faculty, and staff to support the events of the summer, i.e. budgetary wise, school wise. He continued stating that this is unique opportunity for the Board to become a united voice for the institution. Mr. Barnes stated that he is looking forward to working with everyone throughout the remainder of this year and next year.

Mr. Barnes asked Mr. Flynn if he had some things in place so the students didn't feel like they were lost or if they felt they didn't get what they needed in matriculation through their syllabus.

Mr. Flynn responded to Mr. Barnes stating that he talked to teachers about as they were developing the adjusted syllabi going through the spring. He stated that it was not only important to get the seniors to graduation but the other important consideration was preparing the sophomore and juniors for next year. Mr. Flynn reported that if the school is able to reopen in August as

usual, he does not think any of students will be disadvantaged as a result of going remote during the spring. He stated that as he has talked to teachers about the concern with the sophomores and juniors, they feel that they have been able to deliver the necessary content to support the students as they enter their schedule next year.

Mr. Flynn also stated that the circumstances have created opportunities for teachers to reevaluate what is essential in their courses. He reported that the opportunities that presented themselves because of the pandemic to revise syllabi, to reconsider classroom management, etc., all of these questions are crucial that are now in the forefront.

Mr. Barnes stated that he very much appreciated the Board attending the Zoom meeting to look at what the institution is facing and hopes that everyone is safe in all their dealings. He stated that there are many unique opportunities and challenges, but still the mental health for everyone is vital. Mr. Barnes also reported that it is important that the Board to come together as a united voice for the leadership, faculty, staff, and students.

Mr. West thanked Director Alderdice and the staff and appreciated all of what has been done to take care of the students and keeping the Board informed. He stated that anything the Board can do to help support on an on-going basis, especially during this time, to please reach out to the Board.

Mr. Reed asked Director Alderdice how the May 18th Strategic Planning meeting will be structured. Director Alderdice responded stating that the May 18th meeting will take what was accomplished at the previous month's meeting and then focus on the assessment matrix for the five to six topic areas. Given the social distancing and the stakeholders being across the state, it will take place via Zoom.

Mr. Reed asked the Director how the Possip platform has been working since the changes in curriculum. Director Alderdice responded by stating that he continues to be thrilled with the response that the parents are putting into the program. He stated that he is still getting about 70 or so bi-weekly surveys, as well as the fact that it is a very good means of follow up. Director Alderdice stated that Mr. Flynn, Dr. Morris and the SSCs have been great in using the information from the input, to ask specific questions, to identify potential concerns and jump in with parent engagements from it. He reported that Possip has been renewed for the next academic year.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, a motion was made by Dr. Battle and seconded by Mr. Faris to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Approved as written *BR*

Approved as amended _____

Brian Reed
Mr. Brian Reed, Secretary

10-5-2020
(Date)