

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

**December 6, 2021**

**5:00 p.m.**

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Barnes convened the Board of Visitors regular meeting into open session at 5:03 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  
Ms. Mary Alice Chambers  
Marlene Battle ('97), Pharm.D.  
Mrs. Mary Zunick

**Members Absent**

Mr. Gary Dowdy

**Ex-Officio Members Present**

Mr. Patrick Ralston, Director, Arkansas Arts Council  
Mrs. Amy Stvartak ('11), Chair of Association of Alumni and Friends  
Ms. Jennifer Fowler ('04), Director, Arkansas National Science Foundation EPSCoR  
Mrs. Whitney Moore, President, Governing Council  
Traci French, M.D., Chair, Parents Advisory Council  
Ms. Danielle Luyet, ('22) Vice-President Student Government Association

**Ex-Officio Members Absent**

Mrs. Krystal Nail, Program Director, Division of Elementary & Secondary Education Learning Services, Office Gifted & Talented Placement  
Maria Markham, Ph.D., Director, Arkansas Division of Higher Education

**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, Director of Admissions  
Sara Brown, Ph.D., Director of Institutional Advancement  
Mrs. Whitney Moore, Interim Director of Finance  
Mrs. Lorraine Munroe, Administrative Assistant

**Administrative Members Absent**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Barnes called the meeting to order, stated that a quorum had been established, and asked for a motion be made to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2021, meeting. A motion was made by Mrs. Zunick and seconded by Dr. Battle to approve the minutes of September 13, 2021. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

Director Alderdice thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the meeting. He stated that he wanted to discuss some of the items that was in his Quarterly Report. Director Alderdice reported that much of the demolition and preservation work has been done on the Convent and Chapel. It will be very special once it is finished in 2022.

Director Alderdice also reported that the Board of Trustees authorized the design professional selection and project approval on the new campus Administration Building. The project cost is approximately \$3 million.

Director Alderdice highlighted the success of the STEM Pathways program. He stated that the program, which includes computer science, biology, and soon to be statistics initiatives, are serving more than 2,000 students across the state. That is a new record for that program. With the inclusion of statistics next year, there is still room for growth.

Director Alderdice stated that he and three ASMSA instructors had the opportunity to attend the national kickoff of Computer Science Education Week at the Governor's Mansion. He stated a host of other partners from 22 states and Washington, D.C., were on site to celebrate this national week.

Director Alderdice stated that there have been changes in personnel that he wanted to highlight. He reported that after 16 years at ASMSA, Ashley Smith has moved on to a new position at the University of Arkansas System as part of the Project One (Workday) Team. She has demonstrated herself to be an expert on the Workday platform. He continued stating that Whitney Moore, who has attended the Board meetings in the capacity of Governing Council President, will now be serving as Interim Director of Finance until a permanent candidate is chosen for the position. He stated that he will use this time to reassess the Finance organization and will provide details on how it turns out.

Director Alderdice reported that 94% of students and 85% of employees are vaccinated. He stated that ASMSA is a leader within the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, as well as the 17 peer institutions on this statistic.

Director Alderdice referred to the Annual Report on Statistics for Grants and General Messaging. He stated that this report gives specific breakdowns of student demographics, as well as college matriculation for both the Class of 2021 as well as recent cohorts of graduates.

Director Alderdice also reported that a selection was made for a new Coordinator for Alumni and Community Relations. Director Alderdice stated that he wanted to thank Amy Stvartak and the AAFA team for their leadership the last several years in helping to reconstitute that organization. He reported that ASMSA is making a significant investment in providing them with the resources and personnel to have on hand to help achieve their goals and vision for what the Alumni and Friends of the institution can achieve.

Director Alderdice stated that he can't say enough how proud he is of the team that is on campus and the work they have done to make this a successful semester, notably the resilience the students and parents have shown adjusting to the conditions that have been presented amid the pandemic.

Mrs. Stvartak stated that she wanted to thank Director Alderdice for all of his investment in AAFA efforts particularly for making the decision to hire someone for this position.

Director Alderdice stated that the individual that has been hired has not only worked with ASMSA in the past but also another of our peer institutions and brings some great relationships to a generation of ASMSA alumni.

Ms. Chambers asked Dr. Morris about the SEL model and does the network exist any longer in the residential programs of ASMSA's sister schools?

Dr. Morris asked Ms. Chambers if she could clarify her question – Ms. Chambers stated that in the past, there used to be a network of all the math and science schools' residential programs, where ideas were shared and the schools used the wellness model, and Ms. Chambers was curious where the SEL model is coming from since it looked interesting.

Dr. Morris responded stating that the school does not have an official residence life program that is shared with other schools but reported that she, Director Alderdice, and Dean Flynn have quarterly meetings with other STEM schools where there are discussions about pressing topics. Dr. Morris reported that the setup is not just for residential life. She continued stating that she has been in residential life in higher education for a long time and have done different versions of the "wellness wheel", and said that SEL encompasses the model, but it is only a part of social emotional learning. Dr. Morris stated that the whole purpose behind it is to make sure that the students aren't just academically bright but that they are also civic minded citizens who know how to do things on their own.

Director Alderdice expanded on Dr. Morris' comments stating that NCSSS is also broadly focused on more than research and curriculum. NCSSS previously hosted a mental wellness summit that ASMSA attended. Director Alderdice continued stating that all schools are doing more to grapple with the mental health needs of students. He reported that the NCSSS Leadership Summit and the National Professional Conference that is hosted each year tends to have topics in the aforementioned domains and is very proud of Dr. Morris' team for participating in those events.

Dr. Battle asked Dr. Morris about the staff and their challenges and how her department is adjusting to those issues and if the staff is working overtime.

Dr. Morris stated that her staff is not necessarily working overtime but they are wearing more hats than they would usually be asked to do. Dr. Morris reported that she is spending more time at the school as well. She stated that it is "all hands on deck" approach. She stated that the staff very much care for the students so it is not a big stretch

for them to go above and beyond their duties; however, she does advise them when they need to take a break and not burn out.

Ms. Chambers asked Dr. Morris what is being done to encourage the kids to get out and exercise because she knows that some of them will stay inside 24 hours of the day.

Dr. Morris stated that the school does have a Fitness Center and positive peer pressure encourages each other to go out and exercise. She continued reporting that part of the SEL is to make sure that students take care of themselves and one of the SEL programs was on physical exercise. Dr. Morris reported that each of the students' floors do 20-30 minutes of physical activity and physical education in their routine. Dr. Morris reported that Residential Mentor, Ashlynn Nash, conducts a full-body fitness class that is open to all students and incentivizes the students by giving the students a t-shirt when they attend a certain amount of classes. Dr. Morris also reported that there is a hiking club, ultimate frisbee, and volleyball as well. She stated that there are many activities for the students to participate in.

Looking at the Consent Agenda, Mr. Barnes asked for a Student Government update.

Ms. Danielle Lyuet, SGA Vice President, presented the Student Government report. She stated that the Wellness Committee planned several activities around World Mental Health Day in October. Ms. Lyuet stated that the Activities Committee sponsored Spirit Week. She reported that the Food Committee reported that the cafeteria is working with two students in the Research in the Park class to begin a composting program to benefit the school garden. Ms. Lyuet stated that the SGA held its first Town Hall on October 18<sup>th</sup>. She reported that a senior class motto was chosen -- "No worries! It's just a two-week break," and the class song chosen is, "We Didn't Start the Fire," by Billy Joel. Ms. Lyuet reported that elections will be held for next semester after the semester break.

Mr. Barnes asked for an update from the Parent's Association.

Dr. French reported that the Parent's Association has had two meetings since the last Board meeting. She stated that the committee has focused more on college planning and education for parents and students as well as trying to focus more on mental health resources available to the students. Dr. French reported that Bret Vallun attended a meeting and talked about the college application process to the parents and how they can support their students and also college fairs.

Dr. French stated that, in their second meeting, Ms. Stich updated the committee on mental health services that are available on campus, and Dr. Morris gave an overview of the Residential Life program on campus and how they are trying to support the students in their endeavors.

Mr. Barnes asked for an update from the Governing Council.

Mrs. Moore reported that the Council had met a few times during the semester and is mainly working on the Faculty Advancement Plan and will be ready to present to the faculty when the school resumes from winter break.

Director Alderdice added additional information on the Faculty Advancement Plan stating that Dr. Patrycja Krakowiak who is chairing that special committee is going to offer a high-level summary of it at the next faculty meeting. He continued stating that the group has been working diligently with him and others to flesh out the rubric, which will be how points are awarded in a variety of categories. Director Alderdice stated that earning these designations will give folks a look at that draft during the non-instructional week after the holiday; once the feedback is in place, the draft of the plan will go to the General Counsel's office for review. He stated that he is hopeful that the changes will be in effect July 1, 2022, although he stated that he felt that was a little aggressive. Director Alderdice reported that he felt confident that by January 1, 2023, all should be in place. The plan must go to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Mr. Barnes asked if Ms. Stvartak had an update from Alumni and Friends.

Mrs. Stvartak reported that the big news is the new hire for Coordinator for Alumni and Community Relations. She stated that Homecoming was done virtually at the last minute and knows how disappointing it was for the students. Mrs. Stvartak reported that she is looking to next semester hoping to schedule some alumni speakers.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to report.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Barnes stated that the item refers to resuming on-site Board meetings in the spring. He stated that he thinks it's a great idea and always good to get things accomplished. However, he stated that he also realized that we are all dealing with the unknown Covid variants. Mr. Barnes reported that members can take care of themselves and their families but one can't take care of others who they may come in contact with. He continued stating that, although Director Alderdice has done a great job of assessing the situation, he wants to assess the situation at the time of the next meeting and then make a decision that gives Board members adequate time to make a decision if they would like to attend the next meeting.

Dr. Battle concurred with Mr. Barnes' statement.

Director Alderdice reported that when the Agenda was drafted, Omicron was not on the school's radar as yet and one never knows how quickly things can turn. Director Alderdice stated that he wanted the Board to think about a hybrid model in which two meetings a year are held in person for all parties that would contain a more immersive program that has been done in the past. This would start in fall 2022. He reported that, perhaps, the September and March meetings could be designed to be in person and more in-depth and the December and May meetings be conducted virtually. Director Alderdice

stated that for some Board members, the travel is no small feat but he said that he does see value in this split approach.

Mr. Barnes said that he thought it was a good idea for some discussion for the Board to talk about it.

Mr. West asked Director Alderdice if there was something that he wanted the Board to do from an advocacy standpoint for the school.

Director Alderdice reported that the most important thing the Board could be doing at the moment is advocating on the admissions front with the two new pathways that are available to students in the present admissions cycle. Director Alderdice also reported their involvement in HELIX (Helping Elevate Low-Income Students To Excellence) the Prep Academy as well as the Visual Arts and Design Program of Distinction. He continued stating that these are two niche programs that are designed for a very specific audiences of students. HELIX, for the transformational learners who ASMSA has always had a commitment to, and now as the institution achieves the next stage in the arts mission of the school to truly finally have a full sequence where the students can dive deep. Director Alderdice stated that talking about those experiences advocating for students to consider this opportunity. He continued stating that that is probably the single greatest commitment the Board can make on behalf of the institution.

Director Alderdice stated that under New Business as well, the Board needs to be thinking in advance about electing new officers at the March meeting.

Mr. Barnes thanked Director Alderdice for his presentation and to wish everyone a wonderful holiday. He stated that this was a time to reflect in the next couple of weeks for those students to get back with family. Mr. Barnes reported that he hopes that everyone takes the time to refresh themselves and get back with family and friends and enjoy the celebration of what this season gives us.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, a motion was made by Mrs. Zunick and seconded by Mr. West to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 pm.

Approved as written ✓

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

Brian Reed  
Mr. Brian Reed, Secretary

3-18-2022  
(Date)