MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

333 Market Street | 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

January 14, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Wittig at 11:00 a.m.

Attending:

James Agras (via phone)	Maureen Lally-Green (via phone)	Colleen Sheehan (via phone)
Carol Aichele	Teresa Lebo	Craig Snider (via phone)
Jay Badams	Donald LeCompte	Karen Farmer White (via phone)
James Grandon (via phone)	Francis Michelini	A. Lee Williams
Kirk Hallett	Justin Reynolds	Larry Wittig

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 12, 2014 meeting of the Council of Higher Education were approved on a **Williams/Michelini** motion.

REPORT OF THE ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY POSTSECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. Theresa Barnaby, Acting Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and Higher Education, provided the following report:

Wilson College

- Wilson College submitted a request to the Department in July 2013 to amend its Articles of Incorporation to change from a women's college to a co-educational institution. As required by regulation, the request was published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Several alumni protested the change and requested a hearing. The hearing was held on June 16, 2014. Following the hearing and consideration of briefs by the parties, Acting Secretary Dumaresq released a decision on January 6, 2015.

- The Department ruled that Wilson's decision to allow the admission of male students is a decision within the purview of its Board of Trustees. Amending its Articles to operate as a coeducational college is not in violation of relevant law or regulations and is not a basis for the Department to deny the proposed amendments. The decision

also noted that Wilson's action of proceeding to change to a co-educational college prior to receiving the Department's approval did not comply with regulatory requirements. However, Ms. Barnaby stated that the situation did not justify pursuing the revocation of Wilson's degree-granting status. The Department therefore approved Wilson's request to amend its Articles to operate as a co-educational institution.

Rural Regional College

- Ms. Barnaby reported that the Secretary of Education convened the initial meeting of the board of trustees for the new Rural Regional College on December 2, 2014. The meeting was held jointly in Harrisburg and St. Marys. A slate of officers was elected to lead the board for the first year. Following the election of officers, the Secretary turned the meeting over to the board chair, Mary Jo White.

- The main issues discussed during the meeting were the Department's guidelines for a college plan, the deadline for submission of a college plan, and the lack of funding for the board. Legislation establishing the college gives the board one year to submit a college plan to the Secretary. While the Fiscal Code allocated $1.2 million to the college, it also stipulated that the college is not established until the Secretary approves the college plan. Therefore, the funding provided for in the Fiscal Code is not available to the board for the purposes of drafting the college plan.

- As a result of the fiscal circumstances, the Secretary offered three options to the board for the purposes of drafting a college plan. The first option was for PDE to extend an existing contract with a research firm to the board for the purposes of gathering the necessary data. A second option was for a PDE staff member to work with the board to prepare the college plan. The third option was for one of the community education councils in the region to amend its budget and grant application to include activities in line with assisting the board.

Division of Veterans & Military Education

- The Division of Veterans/Military Education suspended the approval of two schools: Smith and Solomon Driver Training (SSDT) and the Lehigh Career Technical Institute (LCTI). Suspension prohibits the schools from enrolling new GI Bill beneficiaries for a maximum of 60 days. Beneficiaries already enrolled may continue to receive benefits.

- SSDT charged GI Bill® beneficiaries more than other students. (This also was reported to the Division of Private Licensed Schools, which found discrepancies in student charges as well.) In order to have its approval reinstated, SSDT needs to correct this issue and submit a plan to the Division of Veterans/Military Education.

- Lehigh Career and Technical Institute (LCTI) incorrectly certified beneficiary enrollment to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), causing thousands of

dollars of overpayment to students and resulting in debt to the VA. Both the VA and the Division of Veterans/Military Education have tried several times to provide training, but the certifications have not improved. For LCTI's approval to be reinstated, LCTI needs to correct all certifications from March 2014 and the school also needs to develop a plan to correctly certify beneficiaries to the VA in the future.

- If these issues are not corrected, the schools' approvals will be withdrawn. Typically when an approval is withdrawn, the VA will pay for veterans already enrolled through the current term/enrollment period.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Wittig reported that the Community College Survey, which was approved by the Council of Higher Education last summer, was transmitted to all 14 community colleges in the Commonwealth and closed on December 19, 2014. Responses were received from 11 of the 14 institutions. A summary of the feedback received via the survey will be given at the March 2015 meeting, as the next step in crafting a white paper for the Council's consideration. Board staff will work to compile a profile of each community college to serve as a supplement to the white paper.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m. on a **Michelini/Williams** motion.

Stephanie Jones

Stephanie Jones
Administrative Assistant