



Lowcountry Graduate Center

**K-12 Teacher Education & Administrative Leadership
Advisory Board**

Meeting Minutes

5 November 2020

Meeting via Zoom

<https://cofc.zoom.us/rec/play/UKlWULQctIdoJnvRxGM6jdixI7ShdyADs6zDrgrkD1W6sz3nBKkS27cTJFZp9LdDK8AePCfOCd0vFuo.XhClj38y82JL8BRQ?autoplay=true>

Participants:

- Dr. Nancy Muller – Lowcountry Graduate Center
- Jonathan Solomon – Lowcountry Graduate Center
- Anne Weston – Ashley Hall
- Juliet White – Beaufort County School District
- Sharron Snyder – Berkeley County School District
- Daryl Brown – Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Robin Willis – Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Jessica Williams – Colleton County School District
- Kenneth Wilson – Dorchester School District 2
- Shelissa Bowman – Dorchester School District 4
- Lee Westberry – The Citadel
- Evan Ortlieb – The Citadel
- Fran Welch – College of Charleston

The Lowcountry Graduate Center's (LGC) Fall 2020 K-12 Teacher Education & Administrative Leadership Advisory Board meeting began at 4:03 PM on Thursday, November 5th, 2020. Introductions were made.

Dr. Muller opened the meeting by explaining that the recent location of the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) from the former Paramount Drive location to Trident Technical College

Thornley Campus, plus further staff downsizing, has allowed for a \$200,000 surplus in the current year's budget. This money is being repurposed as funds to promote and help establish programs/courses by the LGC's member institutions: College of Charleston (CofC), The Citadel, and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). These public institutions can in turn tap into these funds to fill workforce gaps locally, as well as nationally or internationally. In November, the LGC has received about half a dozen applications to receive such funding, for consideration at the next meeting in January of the LGC Supervisory Council.

More recently, the LGC has received five applications, two of which are in education. One is from CofC and is a fast-track Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Elementary Education. The other is from The Citadel and was submitted by Dr. Lee Westberry, specifically targeting Beaufort County School District and helps create a program in literacy and English as a Second Language to those who are not native English speakers. This is due to Beaufort County experiencing "incredible growth rate in the numbers of children that fit that category" and is maxed out the teach capacity, said Director Muller.

Dr. Lee Westberry, Program Coordinator of School Educational Leadership at The Citadel stated that the goal of the course would be to prepare teachers in their pedagogy and literacy studies and allow for teachers to properly address students.

Dr. Evan Ortlieb, Dean of the Zucker Family School of Education at The Citadel, added the School of Education's mission through this program in development is about career development and community empowerment, as the ESL (English as a second language) population has gone into the Beaufort area. Within the last decade, high school graduation rates have decreased 12-13%.

Dr. Fran Welch, Dean of the School of Education at CofC, talked some on the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Elementary Education fast-track degree program. The degree is only one-year starting the summer prior to entering and then two semesters. The second semester being their internship, while the second summer is their reflection and research portion of the MAT. The program is now within its second cohort and have had positive reviews from students. The program is a residential experience, where students spend the entirety of the program within one school.

Director Muller began presenting a PowerPoint titled "The Future of Higher Education: Challenges & Opportunities," which highlights the Center's new home at Trident Technical College (TTC). The move took place in August 2020 when the LGC was decoupled from the School of Professional Studies and the College of Charleston North Campus, which has been closed. With the move came certain costs to ensure that students, faculty, and staff had capabilities in or out of the classroom. The LGC spent \$70,000 in upgrading the internet access and speed, while installing webcams and microphones in all five LGC designated classrooms. In addition to the five classrooms, students have availability to a conference room and a student lounge. The new home is in Building 920 on the Thornley Campus, off Rivers Ave., in the 700-wing.

Over the past nine months, the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed over 23,000 lives. The unemployment rate in the Charleston area was under 3.5% prior to COVID. That percentage jumped to over 14%. Yet, even with some job gains and lower unemployment numbers, this is attributed to the exit of people from the labor market, especially women due to childcare and remote home learning. Data suggests that by May half of the claims for unemployment came out of the manufacturing sector, which the industry was hit twice as hard as the hospitality sector. The company Burning Glass has developed a patented means of analyzing job postings across ~50,000 job sites across the country, in real time.

Looking at the targeted cluster areas of economic and/or business development that Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA) compiled after their strategic planning effort in 2017, as recently as two months ago, the organization confirmed that aerospace, automotive, IT, life sciences, and advanced logistics remain essential and targeted cluster sectors. This is due to Charleston achieving diverse foundations in these five areas. The CRDA is confident in the areas economic and business recovery post-COVID.

In late August or early September, a report from the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce (CMCC) and CRDA titled, “Talent 2020 and Beyond” which looks at the top three talent gaps in the local region. These talent gaps are where the most jobs were posted for hiring, yet the fewest qualified people actively looking to apply. The top category was healthcare practitioners and technicians with 1,100 openings but only 340 qualified applicants. However, there does seem to be some good signs regarding the underlying health of the local economy. Requirements in biological and agricultural engineering, and biomedical engineering are two of the fastest growing areas projected over the next five years.

There is a paradigm shift regarding workforce needs, where companies and businesses are valuing at a higher rate competencies and skills rather than degrees and titles. A survey done by Strada Education Network suggests that within the last year, ~62% of workers would be more interested in nondegree skills training than pursuing college degrees if needed to change jobs due to job-loss or the pandemic.

CMCC and CRDA have both emphasized “Foundational, Cross-Cutting Skills,” which are soft-skills that are needed across various industries and sectors. These skills include customer service, organization, analytical and computational skills, attention to detail, project management, etc. For higher education institutions around Charleston, both agencies recommended that curriculums incorporate skill sets and knowledge on soft skills. In relation to the Healthcare industry, the top four skills/competencies are: communication, teamwork, planning, and organization.

As previously mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted women in leaving the labor force and people of color are equally affected. Studies have begun to show that both demographics face similar problems: lack of social capital to network, lack of mentoring, generational poverty, lack of options for childcare, and systemic bias (racial and/or sex). This racial bias is evident in industry such as computer science, engineering, and high tech where 85% of jobs are filled by people who are white. 79% of practitioners and technicians within

healthcare across the tri-county region are white, while 42% of the lowest paying jobs in the industry are filled by whites. These jobs consist of custodial, and caregivers.

It is the CRDA & CMCC's challenge to businesses, institutions, and organizations to act with intentionality in hiring and professional development. What influenced this thinking is a creation by Ernst and Young called an Inclusivity Index, which incorporates four metrics: (1) non-white vs. white median household income, (2) non-white vs. white educational attainment at bachelor's degree level or higher, (3) non-white vs. white poverty rates, and (4) the ratio of non-white management workers relative to the proportion of non-white workforce. The index was run against the growth rates of the top 50 largest U.S. metropolitan areas by employment growth, and found that with only one exception, the 10 fastest growing metro areas in terms of number of new jobs created were always the areas with the most inclusivity with the highest Inclusivity Index calculated. With this understanding, leveraging human capital to generate economic vibrancy can in-turn create opportunities for historically disadvantaged and underserved populations/communities. Social justice and equity are good for business.

In the wake of the COVID-19 global pandemic, there have been eight guiding principles to help reduce inequities not only within businesses, but also within society:

- 1) Ending racial disparities and inequities in income, education, and social capital
- 2) Skills to demonstrate adaptability and agility
- 3) Validating organization's social and environmental footprint
- 4) Surprising customer/patient by over-delivery
- 5) Transparency within messaging to build trust between customer and business
- 6) Collaborative awareness, with active listening in a spirit of collaboration and team building
- 7) Global awareness and consciousness in tools for capacity-building in developing nations
- 8) Valuing one's lifelong learning and access to economic mobility

Lastly, Dr. Muller discussed the strategic planning process and timetable for the Lowcountry Graduate Center. The director has already outlined the process the LGC plans to pursue as a state funded organization, with creating a Request for Proposal(s) (RFP) to solicit bids to hire a consulting firm or a single consultant, who is an expert in strategical planning and knowledgeable of The Lowcountry and higher education. The person/company hired will interview key stake holders.

After the RFP is sent out, a small selection team will be named to choose the consultant or firm.

The next step will be to form a strategic planning steering committee that would follow the process and view input via interviews and/or focus groups. These could be groups of key stakeholders and business advocacy organizations such as CRDA and CMCC. One of the things that will be presented to the steering committee will be the latest in job-demand data via the Talent 2020 & Beyond report. The consultant/firm will begin drafting a document that will include key priorities, objectives, and goals, which will be presented to the committee. The goal and plan to have this completed is by no later than July 1st, 2021 to be operationalized and outlined for implementation by the start of the next fiscal year.

Darryl Brow, Director of Emerging Workforce & Trident Regional Career Specialist at Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, said that he finds it interesting that the LGC is in the process of strategic planning currently, and advised that the Graduate Center put measurable efforts in the strategy to act as a guide in achieving its objective. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a “long-range” project, and so while the LGC develops its strategy, it is important to include aspects that are not only achievable, but also measurable.

The key to the Charleston area, according to Mr. Brown, is having “wonderful companies” come to the region, but also having “the talent when they come here.” There is a STEM gap of about 40% in the region, and while there are many transplants in Charleston, a key to regional success is closing that gap with residents.

Shelissa Bowman, the Director of Elementary Education at Dorchester School District 4, expressed that there is a real concern and room for improvement for students under the high school level, and with data from CRDA and CMCC, there is a starting point towards future opportunities, goals, and accomplishments.

Sharon Snyder, with Berkeley County School District, stated that the school district is promoting programs that teach critical thinking, communication, advocacy, resilience, and collaboration in partnership with other entities from students four-years-old and up.

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In other news, the LGC has released its first newsletter in over a year. The link is here: <https://mailchi.mp/94717343e5c9/a-year-of-transformation-at-the-lowcountry-graduate-center>. The meeting concluded at 6:00 PM.

Minutes prepared by Jonathan M. Solomon, Administrative Assistant

12 November 2020