Board of Trustees: Enrollment and Student Services Committee
July 17th, 2025
Founders Hall Chapel
Minutes

I. Call to order: 12:05 p.m. by Chair, Bill Dunnavant

II. Roll Call: Present – Bill Dunnavant, Alyson Quinn, Penny Roberts (Quorum established)

Absent – Jimmy Baker, William Richardson, Mac McCutcheon

Attendees: President Catherine Wehlburg, Alyson Gill (Zoom), Richard Collie, Helen Crider, Amy Garrison, Derrek Smith, Michael Radden, LaShanda Chamberlain, Chris Latham, Alyson Knox, Scott Rhodes, DJ Doorenbos (Zoom), Casey Capps (Zoom), Bethany Jackson (Zoom), Tim Dempsey (Zoom), Ashley Beck (Zoom), Carolyn Carthen (Zoom), Victoria Mould (Zoom)

III. Approval of Agenda: Roberts motioned to approve and Quinn seconded, all in favor, none opposed

IV. Approval of May 12th, 2025 Minutes: Roberts motioned to approve and Quinn seconded, all in favor, none opposed

   a. Dunnavant asked Gill for a follow up on the Athens Academy, Gill gave an update about how those have gone this summer – they have been excellent opportunities for faculty development, plan to continue them next summer
   b. Dunnavant asked about integrating local businesses into those, Gill stated we are actually doing that via our Strata Career Grant and the new position of Director of Corporate Relations instead
   c. Dr. Wehlburg stated also got some news about funding for short term Pell Grants for microcredentials and similar programs that do not typically qualify for traditional Financial Aid

V. New Business:

   a. Summer and Fall 2025 Enrollment and review of enrollment funnel
       i. Helen Crider presenting
       ii. The data we have right now is especially exciting because with Target X we can get even more information and data to support our Enrollment efforts, this data updates in real time, we can track goals and other information about students
       iii. Summer ended up fairly flat, which is still better than expected because it had trended down with initial reports
       iv. Presentation slide with Summer funnel shows a true picture of the Summer enrollment numbers – funnel is top heavy but numbers are still pretty accurate
       v. Fall funnel also shows extremely top heavy, applications are at 41% (which is currently inflated because of student behavior, they often apply for multiple programs or multiple terms)

      vi.   In this data we can see our top performing programs and our top sources for students and their information, it's extremely beneficial to have more than just numbers but also how they are moving through the funnel and what they are interested in, this means marketing and enrollment can work together to make the best and most informed decisions

     vii.   Dr. Wehlburg notes that this data can also be broken down by ad sources so we know which students came from which ads or campaigns

   viii.   Dunnavant asks if we know the percentage of conversion from prospects to enrolled, but that may not be a clear and accurate picture of our efforts because the prospects include cold students who we're contacting from list calls

     ix.   Previously we had limited data and incorrect data, so this is so much better

b.   Launch and impact of centralized student call center

      i.   Scott Rhodes presenting

     ii.   Rhodes summarizes our leads from our call center from May and June, which is already showing promising results

    iii.   Our inquiries as they come in now are being called within minutes, which is possible with the extra hands the call center provides (admissions could not do this on their own as it would be all they did)

    iv.   The goal is to provide insight into what's working to improve enrollment outcomes

     v.   We get a monthly report, but the summary for these are: over 1000 leads in May and June were engaged (we have contacted them either by call, email, or text), 136 total applications converted, converted 164 students to interviews, overall conversion rate 46%

     vi.   We also started calling old leads in our system (~5,000 calls made to date, over 9,000 texts, and over 10,000 texts) but the leads are not all quality

    vii.   Some other highlights: undergrad outreach has some room to grow and our graduate leads are low, our web leads are coming in but we need a secondary tracking form to learn more about our ROI and lead sources (we will get that with Element 451 – our secondary CRM), we will also add more help from our AI Agents who will be able to handle after hours calls and messages

   viii.   Roberts asks the cost of Element 451, Rhodes states it is $55k annually

     ix.   Comparison of Salesforce (Target X) and Element 451 AI Agents and why we added that CRM: the AI Agents for Element are already trained for education rather than corporate world

     x.   Contact rates are 61% for undergrad and 77% for grad, our contact numbers for grad are really good but our lead generation is lower so we need to grow in that area

     xi.   Dr. Wehlburg notes that the call center gives us the benefit of extended hours in Admissions which can help us determine if that's a need for our students in other departments as well in case we need to expand that

    xii.   Dunnavant asks how many students we would need in the top of the funnel to reach an enrolled goal of 3000 or 1000

   xiii.   Dr. Wehlburg explains that the numbers at the top of the funnel do matter but they have to be quality leads or they really don't help, and we are using the data we're farming to make sure we are meeting quality applicants where they are for their preferred offerings

          xiv. Scott gives the example of targeted marketing for specific programs: MBA student ads perform well on Linked In but Education student ads don't

          xv. Dunnavant notes that we need to be constantly updating our data about where students are getting their advertisements, can we ask the students what messaging they prefer?

          xvi. Crider notes that we do have a question on the application about where they heard about Athens State

c. CRM optimization through Target X

          i. Alyson Knox presenting

          ii. Our CRM journey started in 2019 with a very basic operating system that was not centralized so we needed something better

          iii. From 2020-2024 we used Admissions Pros, but it had many flaws including not really being a CRM, not being good with communications, and not being user friendly for staff or students

          iv. In 2024-2025 we started and completed our Target X Application and Retention components

          v. In 2025 we also started our Element 451 implementation

          vi. Our goals for our CRMs are to get as much data as we can about students while also keeping that data centralized so it can be used across campus for many purposes and departments

          vii. Dunnavant asks the purposes for Target X on the internal and external side

          viii. Knox explains that Target X is used internally for us to help move students through the funnel and assist with communications and keeping student data all in one place and externally it hosts our application and student portal

          ix. Gill praises Knox and her team for the work they have done on the implementation these CRMs and requests that Scott Rhodes give more info on the Director of Marketing Automation position

          x. Rhodes states this position will be able to assist Knox in her efforts and will be working on all of our automation efforts and Element 451 implementation

d. Enrollment pathways and new partnership opportunities with community college partners

          i. Gill notes that we want to make sure we know this is a team effort, that lots of different people are involved in our "Silos"

          ii. We are trying to create better pathways so that students can see a clear map from their Associates Degree to their Bachelors Degree, it gives us more of an active role rather than a passive one

          iii. Chris Latham presenting

          iv. We currently have pathways established with many local community colleges and we are working on adding these to the website by the Fall so students can go to the website and go on a "journey" to see how their current school and program will translate to Athens State and furthering their degree

          v. This will link from the home page and be very easy to get to and access for prospective students

          vi. Crider explains that Pathways help make the process less complicated and makes sure they don't miss anything on their way, it's beneficial for us, for the community colleges, and most importantly the students

       vii.   Dunnavant asks if our tracking can go so far as knowing that a student visited a certain pathway page, consensus is that we wouldn't hold that data until they made an inquiry and were in the system

      viii.   Latham notes that we did previously have this on our website for just Calhoun, but this expands that reach and keeps it in one place

      ix.   Richard Collie notes that is also expands our reach to Dual Enrollment students in these schools as well

      x.   Crider asks if we could make this work backwards for people looking into specific programs, so they could see which school would be best for that goal? Latham states potentially, we can look into it

e. Technology and data integration across enrollment services

      i.   Gill notes that this has essentially been the point of our entire presentation, our goals are to make our systems more efficient with this technology and data integration, so in the interest of time, we will pass through this section

f. Changes in Digital Marketing

      i.   We had previously had a contract with GMB for our digital marketing, but we mutually decided that contract will end in July

      ii.   The committee will be making a recommendation tomorrow to the Board for a new Digital Marketing firm starting August 1st through the end of the year, with as little disruption to our current strategies as possible

      iii.   This is not a new expense, rather money that was previously allocated, and just a change of vendor

VI. Discussion

a. None needed

VII. Adjourn: Dunnavant made a motion to adjourn at 1:07 pm, Roberts seconded

Respectfully submitted by: Emily Jackson

Packet contents: Agenda
                    May 12th Meeting Minutes
                    Presentation materials