

Board of Trustees: Enrollment and Student Services Committee
October 13th, 2025
Nazaretian House Conference Room
Minutes

- I. Call to order: 12:10 p.m. by Chair, Bill Dunnivant

- II. Roll Call: Present – Bill Dunnivant, Alyson Quinn (Zoom), Alyson Knox, William Richardson (Quorum established)

- Absent – Jimmy Baker, Mac McCutcheon

- Attendees: President Catherine Wehlburg, Dr. Alyson Gill, Richard Collie, Amy Garrison, Derrek Smith, Michael Radden, LaShanda Chamberlain, Chris Latham, Scott Rhodes, DJ Doorenbos (Zoom)

- III. Approval of Agenda: Knox motioned to approve and Richardson seconded, all in favor, none opposed

- IV. Approval of July 17th, 2025 Minutes: Dunnivant motioned to approve, all in favor, none opposed

- V. New Business:
 - a. Fall enrollment by College 2019-20 to present
 - i. Scott Rhodes presenting
 - ii. Rhodes begins by thanking all involved for a very successful Fall enrollment, it was a team effort to meet challenges head on
 - iii. New enrollments: biggest change was in undergrads, 13.3% increase in new undergrad enrollment, we reached over 3,000 students for the first time since 2018
 - iv. Lots of good collaboration with Chris and the marketing team for this semester
 - v. Grad enrollment decreased by 4 students, mostly flat, but changes have been made to our marketing investments to address that change and should see Spring improvements
 - b. Fall admissions by College 2019-20 to present
 - i. Scott Rhodes presenting
 - ii. College of Business admitted students jumped significantly from 2024 to 2025
 - iii. Dr. W noted that Human Resources program has grown within that College
 - iv. Martinez noted that the difference in admitted and enrolled for College of Ed could be due to students not having the needed pre-requirements
 - v. Rhodes noted we had 61% yield for Fall undergrad (students who were admitted and did enroll), other regional public institutions sit at the mid-40s
 - vi. Dr. W notes that generally more students are applying to multiple institutions, but of course they can only go to one, and we know that's the case for us in North AL as well

- vii. Dr. W notes that our students are often a different case from traditional students, which can help us
- viii. Dunnivant asks if we have things on our website to entice students to choose us other than those multiple schools?
- ix. That will be what we work on with marketing moving forward
- c. Projected Spring enrollment by College 2019-20 to present
 - i. Scott Rhodes presenting
 - ii. 32% increase in applications compared to Spring 2024, which also indicates a strong conversion pipeline to Fall 2026 as well
 - iii. Continuing focus on digital marketing and CRM automations
 - iv. Dunnivant asks what those focuses are specifically (phone, computer, TV)
 - v. Rhodes mentions search engine ads and social media that drives attention to our site to get leads
 - vi. Going forward we will work with Derrek and his team to focus on yield and retention
 - vii. Admissions has gone through sales trainings and we will continue that after the busy recruiting season closes, they will also start utilizing a sales coach who will listen to their calls and offer suggestions for how to improve
 - viii. Dunnivant wonders how employees will feel about that
- d. Plan to increase yield
 - i. Amber Martinez presenting
 - ii. To encourage students to complete their enrollment, we are implementing a strategy for new admitted students to choose an Athens State T-shirt to be sent to them with a sticker sheet, we can track who has done this and use that data to engage with admitted students
 - iii. This starts our connection with them early and builds their Athens student identity
 - iv. We are also keeping up events at our Community College partners and continuing to build those relationships
 - v. Recruiters have office hours on those campuses and can set up appointments with students the same day or ASAP using a calendar synchronization
 - vi. Dunnivant asks if we have a digital video truck at the community colleges like we did at Fiddlers this year?
 - vii. Martinez says we do have digital boards in student centers that show upcoming events and featured programs
- e. Persistence plan for new students entering Fall 2025
 - i. Derrek Smith presenting
 - ii. The difference between Success Coaching and Faculty advising/mentorship
 - iii. When we talk about student persistence, it's very important for students to engage with Success Coaches early on so each individual student knows what their pathway is (because every student comes from a different place)
 - iv. We make sure we are proactive in our interactions with them, we don't wait for them to come to us, we seek them out
 - v. We often see transfer students come in with experience at other institutions that aren't as positive, so we try to turn that around and give them a clear path to success with Athens

- vi. Dunnivant asks if we are doing anything to help these potential students see that what they're doing at Athens becomes a career (since most students are going into education to get career ready)
- vii. Smith notes that through our Strada Career grant, we are integrating career activities into courses that everyone takes (UNV)
- viii. Dr. Gil notes that through the grant we have 7 different programs across campus working with specific industry partners to make sure we are meeting their needs in our programs and we are implementing a Career chat bot
- ix. Dunnivant asks if we are advertising that potential students can get a degree with us and get an immediate pay jump
- x. Rhodes notes that we are working on getting career options/salary information up on the program pages on the website with tools that would keep it up to date at all times
- xi. Returning to the Success Coach/Faculty advising model, things don't end for the student once they meet with Success Coaches, since students often make changes throughout their time to major or program or goals
- xii. Success Coaches continue to check in with them over the first few semesters and encourage them to make appointments for their needs
- xiii. We also run a texting bot (EdSights) which sends 14 messages per semester to check in with students, it also provides drop out alerts to us and makes it even easier to follow up with students
- xiv. Success Coaches do an excellent job at meeting needs almost immediately, and they also teach our UNV 300 classes, so they see the barriers that students are facing on the Academic level
- xv. In Fall 2016, we launched a retention scholarship to help eliminate the financial barriers to keep students going, and we support about 20-27 students annually, which adds up to 5% to our retention measure every year, and retention has been consistently growing
- f. Update on Fraudulent applications
 - i. Alyson Knox presenting
 - ii. With growth has come the challenge (for us and other schools across the country) of fraudulent applications
 - iii. At the beginning of the semester, we got an influx of apps that were odd but provided legit transcripts, and they continued to have red flag qualities
 - iv. We reached out to IT to find new ways to prevent the fraudulent applications and included the addition of requesting a photo ID
 - v. We also established a review process in Admissions to verify flagged submissions
 - vi. Ultimately 23 "ghost students" were fully admitted and enrolled in courses (which did cause some issues with Financial Aid) and they are reflected in our final numbers, but it was not enough to skew the data at a large number
 - vii. We are also looking into adding the software program Persona, which has checks to make sure a real person is behind every application
 - viii. We are also considering bringing back our application fee (with options to remove that barrier as needed for real students)
 - ix. Dunnivant asked why this is happening to us?
 - x. Knox notes that it's a growing pain that now we are more present in our marketing and it's also a nationwide problem

- xi. Lashanda Chamberlain also notes that it's easy to do with our current free application, since there aren't barriers for entry for bots
- xii. Dr. Gil notes that Alyson Knox was the key to getting this problem corrected
- g. Analysis of High-Growth programs
 - i. Dr. Alyson Gill presenting
 - ii. For Spring, as of this morning, Nursing and IDP were the biggest programs for College of Arts and Sciences
 - iii. For College of Business, Management
 - iv. For College of Ed, Early Childhood
 - v. Early Childhood may be getting a boost from our Compass Scholarship which is part of our scholarship leveraging
 - vi. Dunnivant asks what programs we can advertise to maximize the movement of Space Force to the area?
 - vii. Dr. Gil notes that we do have an aerospace program, but there is only one faculty member, so we may need to make a hiring decision on that front
 - viii. Program Array Committee, meets twice a year, and gets recommendations from the Colleges and compares funding and resources to make strategic curriculum decisions
 - ix. Students coming in for the current Fall 2025 cohort actually were mostly Undecided
- h. Bear Bash updated
 - i. Amy Garrison presenting
 - ii. Bear Bash represents a completed goal for our Strategic Plan for this year and it was meant to be a welcome for students and first touchpoint for campus
 - iii. We based the event completely on feedback from current students who mainly wanted the event to be an opportunity to meet their professors and peers
 - iv. The event had three parts set up to mingle with each other, see the campus, and then interact with College
 - v. 190 registered, 91 attended
 - vi. Post-event survey had amazing feedback, many felt welcomed, connected, and like they belonged to the campus community
 - vii. They also loved the swag and free stuff and family feeling
 - viii. This will be an annual event for the Fall moving forward
 - ix. It was very well marketed and displayed on social media

VI. Discussion

VII. Adjourn: Knox made a motion to adjourn at 12:59 pm, Richardson seconded

Respectfully submitted by: Emily Jackson

Packet contents: Agenda
 July 17th Meeting Minutes
 Presentation materials