

MINUTES
Programs Committee
State Board of Community Colleges
Thursday, February 4, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sam Powell, chair	Mary Ann Rice	Jesse Watts
Bobby Irwin	Hari Nath	Burr Sullivan
Ann Whitford	William Holder	Jerry Vaughn

NCACCP LIAISONS

Amanda Lee, President, Bladen CC
David Heatherly, President, Coastal Carolina CC

SYSTEM OFFICE STAFF AND OTHERS:

Kimberly Gold, Vice President	Bryan Jenkins Lisa Eads	Deana Guido Elizabeth Grovenstein
Alex Doles	Lori Byrd	
Sondra Jarvis	Maureen Little	

WELCOME AND ETHICS STATEMENT: Chairman Powell called the meeting to order at 1:00pm in the Dallas Herring State Board Room in the Caswell Building. Roll was taken and there was a quorum. Chairman Powell read the Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Statement and asked if there were any known conflicts. None were noted.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Chairman Powell requested a motion to approve the February 4, 2021 agenda. Mr. Holder made a motion to approve the agenda and Ms. Rice seconded the motion. The agenda was unanimously approved by the committee.

FOR INFORMATION:

Curriculum Program Application (Attachment PROG 01)
Background on Program Approval Application Process (Discussion Only)
Chairman Powell provided a brief background on this item.

Mr. Holder asked for clarification regarding a question from the January 14, 2021 meeting. The question concerns the additional sites mentioned in the Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) support letters and the timing of those sites becoming available to students. He also asked for clarification of how students would be able to meet the 1,500 exams requirement from the accrediting agency. It was discussed that the clinical sites and slots locations are not managed by the System Office and the number of students in each Medical Sonography program are based on the availability of clinicals determined by the accrediting agency.

The System Office presented data from the Data Warehouse noting that there were 80 graduates in the 2019-2020 year from the Medical Sonography programs statewide and in 2020, there were 228 students enrolled in Medical Sonography. These numbers do not include the two new approved programs at Wake Technical Community College or Fayetteville Technical Community College. There are 127 slots available for students each year statewide with a maximum potential of 254 enrolled students in the 2-year program.

Mr. Holder asked if the 127 students per year can complete the 1,500 examinations required to graduate from the program. It was discussed that the accrediting agency looks at each program and the available number of clinicals to determine how many students each community college can admit to the program each year.

Ms. Whitford clarified that both first- and second-year students are required to attend clinicals and stated for a clinical site to qualify to host students, that clinical site must perform a certain number of examinations per year to receive accreditation. The program of study for Medical Sonography is designed to have clinical experiences in both the first and second year of study. Clinical sites must meet the requirements laid out by the accrediting agency to qualify to host students, which could include the number of examinations performed each year.

Ms. Whitford stressed the difficulty community colleges can face to find clinical sites to host students and that South Piedmont Community College (SPCC) needed twenty-three sites in nine counties to host their Medical Sonography students, with ten of those sites located in Mecklenburg County. She questioned the support letters provided by CPCC as it seems their claims on future clinical site numbers do not appear to be supported by program data and information submitted from other impacted colleges and employers in this region. The Committee did note that the information on where the clinical sites CPCC has secured are located, the process for securing these sites, or when they will be available were not included in support letters nor confirmed in previous committee meetings.

Chairman Powell asked if the Medical Sonography programs are accredited or in the process of being accredited. After the State Board approves the curriculum application, they then complete the accreditation process with the Sonography Joint Review Commission. It could take upwards of a year for a program to fully finish the accreditation process.

Chairman Powell clarified that there are minimum expectations that students will experience a substantial number of examinations and that each of these sites must be acceptable to the accreditation board. The clinical sites must be able to deliver the experiences needed for a student to gain the skill set. While a clinical site may not have to deliver all of the experiences for students to gain skills, they do need to demonstrate that they have the ability to deliver a certain number of skills. They also need to have someone who can accompany students in a one-on-one experience compared to nursing where multiple students can be assigned to one instructor.

Mr. Holder asked for more clarification on the fact that there were 127 program slots were available and there were 228 total students enrolled in 2020. The 127 program slots are the number of students the program can admit each year as first-year students while the 228 are the total number of first-year and second-year students in 2020. The maximum number of students that can be enrolled in the program is 254 students. Mr. Holder asked if there was information on how many of the 228 students were first-year students in 2020. That information was not on hand for this meeting, but the 228 students did not include the two new programs at Wake Technical Community College or Fayetteville Technical Community College as they had not started enrolling students at that time. Mr. Holder asked if the data on the number of first-year students in the program in 2020 could be provided by the February 18th Programs Committee Meeting.

Ms. Whitford reminded the Committee that, even if a site offers the type and number of procedures needed, there is no guarantee that the site could be a clinical site as the site may not be able to accommodate an instructor to host a student due to staffing issues.

Chairman Powell summarized that SPCC expressed concerns that a new program at CPCC could cause problems with the continuation of the SPCC program while CPCC stated they can secure enough clinical sites to host their future students. He asked for confirmation that the core issue surrounds the number of clinical sites as they are a limiting factor on the number of students the System can serve in this program. From the accreditation point of view, clinical sites drive the number of students a program can admit.

Mr. Irwin asked the length of time it takes for a clinical site to complete the setup and accreditation process. According to previous Programs Committee meetings, SPCC stated that the college has been working with a clinical site for 18 months and continues to work with them to complete the accrediting process. Based on this information, the Committee predicted that the full process could take 18-24 months which is concerning when CPCC was not able to provide a timeline for the sites the college stated it could secure.

The Committee debated on having a neutral expert from the field give an insight on this matter in relation to the larger issue at hand and continued to discuss the potential benefits and harm granting approval for this program application could have on other Medical Sonography programs in the System, especially when one of the programs has been serving the System for twenty years.

Members of the Committee expressed the need for an agreement or compromise to meet student needs at both colleges but questioned if the colleges could reach a compromise given past failed mediations and the history behind this current program application. A compromise was proposed in a mediated discussion with the System President where the SPCC program would be expanded and clinical slots would be held for CPCC students. Concerns were expressed about the location of the delivery presenting a barrier for CPCC students. The compromise was not accepted but SPCC presented a willingness to discuss expanding their program to admit CPCC students further. Committee members questioned if there was a barrier due to the

location of the delivery as claimed by CPCC as the two colleges are geographically close to each other.

Mr. Holder asked if a compromise would be included in the vote at the February 18, 2021 Programs Committee meeting. At this time, there does not seem to be a willingness for a compromise and until the colleges express support for a compromise, the Committee cannot manufacture a compromise. If this were to happen, the Committee could consider it but currently, the vote would address whether to approve or decline CPCC's application. The Committee supported this decision.

Mr. Irwin noted that one factor of consideration should also be job market saturation in this field. The Committee supported this consideration as more colleges are showing interest in this program and expressed concern that expanding this program could have a negative impact on student success if the market for Medical Sonographers is saturated. Monitoring on how long it takes students to secure these positions and guidance for colleges on the need for additional Medical Sonography programs in the System is needed.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 1:43pm by Chairman Powell.

Recording Secretary
Alexandra Doles