PRESENT: EXCUSED:

Mr. Buddy Boe Ms. Leslie Bouie

Ms. Anne Candies Dr. Rachel T. Davis-Haley

Mr. James Carter Ms. Janice R. Manuel

Ms. Beth Scioneaux Ms. Judy Reese Morse

Mr. Gary Solomon Rep. Candace Newell

Mr. Jefferson Turner Mr. Christian Rhodes

Ms. Sarah Usdin

EX-OFFICIO:

Mr. Kyle Wedberg

COUNSEL:

Mr. Mark Beebe

Ms. Stefini Salles

CALL TO ORDER

Board President, Mr. Buddy Boe, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The roll was taken. There were seven of thirteen members present. Quorum was present.

PRESENTATION

Ms. Prinsey Walker, NOCCA Communications Department Member and NOCCA Alum, showed one of the eleven short videos that she created to support the application and audition season. The Board viewed the Drama video which outlined the Drama audition requirements. These videos were posted on the website. Ms. Walker stated that the videos were created to reach those students who were not able to attend the virtual Audition Information Sessions or virtual Town Halls.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Boe asked for a motion to approve the Board Meeting minutes of both December 3, 2020 and January 7, 2021. Mr. Gary Solomon moved to approve the minutes of the NOCCA Board Meeting of December 3, 2020 and January 7, 2021. Ms. Sarah Usdin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was completed. All were in favor. Motion carried.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Mr. Kyle Wedberg welcomed Mr. Carlos Zervigon who will move into Ms. Usdin’s seat on July 1, 2021. Mr. Zervigon was able to begin attending Board Meetings as the NOLA-PS/OPSB appointed NOCCA board member before his term started in order to familiarize himself with the current business of the Board. Mr. Zervigon, glass artist, has served on the Boards of Audubon Charter School and Ben Franklin High School.

STUDENT SUPPORT/NOCCA PROGRAMMING

Mr. Wedberg presented for Mr. Blake Coheley, Director of Admissions. Mr. Wedberg asked the Board to keep Mr. Coheley in their thoughts as he recovers from COVID.

Mr. Wedberg thanked Ms. Leigh Traylor, Mr. Coheley, and the entire Faculty Leadership Team of Arts Chairs for creating and implementing a completely different application and virtual audition structure in response to the pandemic. Mr. Wedberg stated that NOCCA received 379 applications for the 2021-22 year, about 100 less than usually submitted (without summer auditions). Some departments reported having similar numbers from recent years while others reported their numbers down. Ideas are being discussed to increase late applications to attempt to fill the gaps. The new application and audition platform adopted this year, Acceptd, was received well by many on the team.

NOCCA’s February 1 numbers, reported by Mr. Wedberg, followed a similar trend as past years, with respect to the October 1 numbers. Remarkably, the retention did not appear to be affected adversely by the current pandemic.

The 11th/12th Grade Entry Lottery Process was reviewed and clarified with a proposed revision. Added was the requirement that students must be Level I or above to be considered eligible to apply. Intro students would no longer be eligible in the interest of equity (not all departments have Intro levels) and commitment to students who have been at NOCCA for potentially longer periods of time. Ms. Usdin made a motion to approve the revision to the NOCCA 11th/12th Grade Entry Lottery Process as presented. Mr. Turner seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted. All were in favor. Motion passed.

FINANCE

Ms. Lotte Delaney, NOCCA CFO, reported on the 2020-21 NOCCA Budget. NOCCA is on pace to not overspend or underspend.

Mr. Wedberg reported that the preliminary conversations with the Louisiana Division of Administration regarding the 2021-22 Budget, revealed that NOCCA would likely not be flat-funded and should be prepared for a cut. The Governor’s recommendation would likely be made towards the end of February.

The NOCCA Institute (TNI)

Mr. Boe asked the Board to consider purchasing a King Cake to support the current fund raising effort by TNI in conjunction with the Culinary Arts Department. Mr. Boe also requested that the Board Members renew their Friends of NOCCA contributions. In addition, Mr. Boe spoke of the recent Alumni Email that would become a regular publication. The Working Group was scheduled for its 2nd meeting; topics include an updated MOU between NOCCA and TNI. Mr. Wedberg spoke of Dr. Laura Cornell, NOCCA’s Mental Health Professional, and the value of her role in navigating the students’ mental health during this pandemic. This position is the result of cooperation with the Children’s Bureau and is underwritten by TNI. Mr. Wedberg also applauded TNI’s Student Success Program which has provided almost $19,000 in gift cards to support food stability for families.

Ms. Usdin asked about the support for reliable internet connectivity in NOCCA’s student population. Mr. Wedberg stated that NOCCA has shifted to the use Verizon MiFI hotspots. He thanked Ms. Beth Scioneaux for her help in securing GEARS money which supported the purchase of technology such as computers, hotspots, and UV Scrubbers. The new Verizon hotspots are more robust and provide filtering capabilities. The IT team at NOCCA was able to distribute those within two weeks of receiving them.

Ms. Delaney spoke of the difficulty with securing reliable internet connectivity for the student population, even with the added equipment. She illustrated the complexity of the various walks to providing the hotspots, from the first communication that a student is having trouble to troubleshooting the need and solving the issue. Ms. Delaney concluded that to the best of her understanding, NOCCA did not currently have any students who were unable to connect for their classes. Mr. James Carter asked if NOCCA was considering student connectivity issues in relation to performance. Mr. Wedberg stated most definitely, with logistics being one of the reasons that a student might be invited to campus to support the stabilization of the work flow. In addition, some students have been provided increased time for completing work. In addition, much grace and latitude has been given in responding to the environmental situations students are experiencing while virtually attending classes. Mr. Turner shared relevant stories from the Musical Theatre Department. Mr. Wedberg stated the school is “retention minded” when approaching the difficulties that students are experiencing, knowing the year has been difficult and wanting students to succeed and continue their education at NOCCA.

CEO REPORT

Mr. Wedberg asked the Board to certify the faculty for the year. Ms. Usdin made a motion to certify the faculty. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted. All were in favor. Motion passes.

In addition, Mr. Wedberg reported on the establishment of the Core Equity Committee of seven people. Responsibilities and structure of the Core Equity Committee had been presented to the wider Equity Committee with full support. A full report on the Committee will be provided to the Board at the next meeting.

Mr. Wedberg thanked OPSB for including NOCCA in their work to vaccinate their faculty and staff. Surveys were distributed by OPSB which enabled NOCCA faculty and staff, Capitol Police, Goodwill employees, and TNI to sign-up for vaccination. At this point, a high rate of participants are waiting to receive information regarding the vaccination appointments.

COVID-19 FOR 2020-21

Mr. Wedberg reported that students are returning to campus on a Hybrid Schedule on February 8, 2021. Approximately 70-80% of the students requested to come back to campus on the Hybrid schedule. In addition, approximately 50 Academic Studio students had logistical issues at home and are coming to campus for their Academic Studio classes. The Board watched a slide show of accommodations made to the campus for the safe return in the Hybrid schedule, including tents to cover outdoor spaces and tape on the floors to signal safe spacing. Mr. Silas Cooper applauded the faculty for cooperating in the establishment of these spaces.

Mr. Wedberg recognized Mr. Carter who is now serving as the Chair of the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors.

In addition, Mr. Wedberg informed the Board that he has become the acting President of the National Board of the Arts Schools Network.

Mr. Wedberg closed with a message often shared in the weekly All Staff Meetings-that this is the time for radical compassion, leading with grace and gratitude, and remembering that everyone has something in their world they are struggling with.

REMARKS/OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Boe asked for remarks/other business from the Board. Mr. Solomon commended Mr. Wedberg and his team for doing such a great job of navigating the unique challenges of this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Boe asked for public comment. There was none.

Mr. Boe asked Mr. Wedberg to set up a meeting to discuss placing the Public Comments at the beginning of the meeting so the public can comment on action items before the Board takes action.

Mr. Carter made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Usdin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Submitted by: Reviewed by: Attest:

Leigh Traylor Kyle Wedberg Buddy Boe

Recording Secretary Secretary to the Board President of the Board

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_