PRESENT: EXCUSED:

Ms. Anne Candies Mr. Wood Delahoussaye

Ms. Rhenea Carter Mr. Stephen Weber

Dr. Rachel T. Davis-Haley

Ms. Janice R. Manuel

Dr. Joe Ricks

Ms. Beth Scioneaux

Mr. Gary Solomon

Mr. Mark-Anthony Thomas

Ms. Robin Williams

Mr. Carlos Zervigon

EX-OFFICIO:

Mr. Silas Cooper

CALL TO ORDER

Board President, Mr. Gary Solomon, called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

The roll was taken. There were nine members present. A quorum was present. Additional members arrived during the meeting.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Mr. Brian Hammell, NOCCA Director of Communications, shared slides and described highlights of the recent events of Celebration, Graduation, and Senior Saturday. The Celebration Ceremony honored all outgoing senior (and sometimes junior) students who completed their arts training at NOCCA. During the Academic Studio Graduation Ceremony, fifty-eight students received Louisiana High School Diplomas. The first-ever and hugely successful Senior Saturday event drew family members as well as members of the community for an afternoon of senior presentations and performances. The menu of events enabled attendees to view more than one discipline’s contribution; culminating in an engaging afternoon that facilitated the school’s growing efforts to promote peer-support.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Carlos Zervigon moved to approve the NOCCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2023 and NOCCA Board of Directors Personnel Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2023 in globo. Ms. Beth Scioneaux seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

STUDENT SERVICES

Mr. Blake Coheley, Director of Admissions and Student Services, Mr. Hammell, and Mr. Andy Bower, Director of Community Engagement and Statewide Outreach, presented information. Mr. Bower, with the use of graphic slides, showed the growth toward the goal of reaching all nine statewide regions designated by the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development. Experiences included the statewide college prep workshop which served forty-one students from twenty-five schools across nine parishes, and the seven local summer programs across fifteen parishes that were taught with the collaboration of nine NOCCA instructors (faculty, administration, and alumni). By the end of the summer, NOCCA will have reached twenty-nine parishes in all nine of the arts regions. Mr. Coheley shared the data which reflects the summer programs effect on total students served during 2022-23. In addition, Mr. Coheley described the upcoming Experience NOCCA offerings from 4:00-5:30.

ARTS AND ACADEMICS

Dr. Kit Nelson applauded the students and Ms. Lara Naughton, Director of College Counseling and Student Advancement, for the over $31 million in scholarships and $7 million in grants that were awarded to the graduating class of 2023. Dr. Nelson described the addition of summer offerings for support of incoming 9th graders to the Academic Studio.

FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. Lotte Delaney, NOCCA CFO, explained that NOCCA is on schedule to spend the budget as planned for 2022-23.

Mr. Zervigon made a motion to approve extending the payment to Mr. Cooper of the $3000 one-time supplement from ESSER funding that NOCCA faculty and staff previously received. Ms. Scioneaux seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Delaney shared handouts to illustrate the effect on NOCCA of recent legislative actions. Of greatest importance was the appropriation of $8.1 million in House Bill Two, a necessary step towards the purchase of the Chevron Forum from The NOCCA Foundation. For over a year, many have worked hard to convince the state of the benefit and financial significance of this purchase. Mr. Solomon explained that the Foundation was not benefiting financially from this planned sale but instead was freeing itself up to provide even greater support directly to NOCCA students. The Board applauded the Foundation.

NOCCA FOUNDATION

Ms. Sally Perry, NOCCA Foundation Executive Director, expanded on the planned sale of the Chevron Forum to NOCCA. Ms. Perry expressed excitement for the new event, Senior Saturday, and described her team’s ideas for their contribution to the event in the future.

PRESIDENT/CEO REPORT

Mr. Mark-Anthony Thomas made a motion to request approval for up to a 3% salary increase for unclassified faculty, staff and President/CEO pending notification of the final budget of Fiscal Year 2024 and availability of funds. Ms. Rachel Davis-Haley seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Cooper yielded his time to Mr. Thomas, the NOCCA Faculty and Staff Representative. Mr. Thomas expressed that faculty had recently come to him requesting a review of the language in the school policy regarding expulsions and suspensions and invited Ms. Anne Gisleson, Chair of Creative Writing, to speak. The year post-COVID has been very challenging, even more so than post-Katrina. Ms. Gisleson described that within one month the Creative Writing Department had three instances of disciplinary events. These events led to a review of NOCCA’s current policy regarding expulsions and suspensions. Ms. Gisleson verbally provided a statement of their observations and requests to update the NOCCA protocol policy. Resources were provided as well.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Joe Ricks made a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss the results of the Interim President/CEO evaluation that was recently conducted. Ms. Manuel seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Dr. Ricks made a motion to end Executive Session and move back into Regular Session. Ms. Manuel seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Solomon asked Ms. Anne Candies, Chairmen of the Personnel Committee, to share the recommendation of the Personnel Committee as a motion. Ms. Candies stated that the Personnel Committee recommended that 1) Mr. Cooper be given an Excellent review on his evaluation, 2) based on the Personnel Committee’s review of Mr. Cooper’s performance over the past 18 months that Mr. Cooper is retained as NOCCA’s permanent President/CEO, 3) the Board, through its President, offer Mr. Cooper the position of permanent President/CEO, 4) should Mr. Cooper accept, his current contract is amended to reflect his change in status to include other terms recommended by legal counsel to achieve the proposed status change including extending the term through June 30, 2026 all subject to final Board approval and approval by Mr. Cooper, and 5) Mr. Solomon is authorized to work with counsel to affect the changes and negotiate the final terms of the President/CEO contract with Mr. Cooper. Dr. Ricks seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Solomon asked for public comment. A rising Level III Media Arts and Ben Franklin High School student, Julien, spoke as a representative of ten students who were working to form a Student Advocacy Group at NOCCA. Julien shared the group’s plans for its development. The group requested an amendment to the NOCCA Bylaws to include the reports and recommendations of the Student Advocacy Group. Mr. Zervigon asked that Julien share the proposal with the Board so that it can be reviewed in accordance with Louisiana policies for board practices.

BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT

Dr. Ricks made a motion to allow Mr. Solomon to sign the presented NOCCA contract for legal services with Adams and Reese. Mr. Zervigon seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

REMARKS/OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Solomon asked for any closing remarks/other business.

ADJOURN

Dr. Ricks made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Candies seconded the motion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Reviewed by: Attest:

Leigh Traylor Silas Cooper Gary Solomon

Recording Secretary Secretary to the Board President of the Board

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