PRESENT: EXCUSED:

Mr. Buddy Boe Rep. Candace Newell

Ms. Leslie Bouie Mr. Christian Rhodes

Mr. Troy J. Broussard Ms. Raquel Richmond

Ms. Anne Candies

Mr. James Carter

Ms. Judy Reese Morse

Ms. Beth Scioneaux

Mr. Gary Solomon

Mr. Jefferson Turner

Ms. Sarah Usdin

EX-OFFICIO:

Mr. Kyle Wedberg

COUNSEL:

Mr. Mark Beebe

CALL TO ORDER

Board President, Mr. Troy J. Broussard, called the meeting to order at 4:57 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Broussard welcomed public comment regarding the Board Meeting minutes of March 10, 2020. There was none. Ms. Leslie Bouie moved to approve the minutes of the NOCCA Board Meeting of March 10, 2020. Mr. Buddy Boe seconded the motion. A roll call vote was completed. All were in favor. Motion carried.

STUDENT PRESENTATION

Mr. Blake Coheley, NOCCA Director of Admissions and Student Services, and Mr. Brian Hammell, Director of Communications, explained how NOCCA adjusted during the current pandemic to celebrate the students at the end of the year. Websites were created to acknowledge the President Honors recipients; the end of the year presentations and events of each discipline during the Celebration Season; the Celebration of the entire Class of 2020, and the Senior Awards given at the end of the year. The links for those sites were shared with the Board.

The event called Porch N Circumstance was created to honor the graduates of the Class of 2020, since a large gathering for a graduation ceremony was not prudent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Kyle Wedberg, NOCCA President/CEO; Dr. Kit Nelson, Director of Academic Studio; Mr. Coheley; Mr. Hammell; and Ms. Prinsey Walker, NOCCA Communications Assistant, drove 1200 miles through 8 parishes in 10 days to create individualized Graduation and Celebration Ceremonies for 97 of NOCCA’s 114 graduates. They gathered on front lawns, porches, and driveways; played “Pomp and Circumstance”; gave speeches; and awarded diplomas and certificates. The effort was warmly received by the families.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Mr. Broussard spoke in support of the renewal of Mr. Wedberg’s contract as President/CEO of NOCCA. Mr. Boe acknowledged Mr. Wedberg’s value to the organization. Ms. Judy Reese Morse stated that Mr. Wedberg was a great leader and she hoped the renewal of his contract was swift. Mr. Jefferson Turner spoke of the integrity and dignity of Mr. Wedberg’s leadership and of Mr. Wedberg’s commitment to serving the institution rather than the institution serving him. Mr. James Carter was in full support of Mr. Wedberg’s continued leadership.

Mr. Wedberg proposed, with so much upheaval and uncertainty as a result of the pandemic, to accept the same terms of his current contract for the next four years with the fifth year provided for any needed transition.

Mr. Broussard made a motion to renew Mr. Wedberg’s current contract as NOCCA’s President/CEO with same terms for four years with again a potential fifth year to provide for any potential transition to find the next CEO if the Board or Mr. Wedberg chooses not to renew at that time. In addition, within 30 days of the Revenue Estimating Conference’s budget for the fiscal year, the Personnel Committee shall review the salary of the CEO and make a recommendation to the Board. Mr. Boe seconded the motion. A roll call vote was completed. All were in favor. Motion passed.

COVID-19 RESPONSE IN QUARTER 4 of 2019-20

Mr. Coheley said that because of the inadvisability of gathering in large groups, a successful video lottery was held. The recording was made available immediately on the NOCCA website.

Ms. Lotte Delaney, NOCCA CFO, shared that there were several technology gaps made evident when students were sent home to complete work virtually. Within two weeks’ time, NOCCA was able to identify those gaps and provide Chromebooks and hotspots for students in need. Other needs that were identified were the ability to update faculty software remotely; increase quality of technology for music; and increase hardware in Media Arts for Level I students.

Classes were converted to online by first giving staff the opportunity to move offices home and to adjust to working from home. Then the faculty was given a week to prepare with no student responsibility. Google Classroom Suite was utilized. Dr. Nelson told of the faculty’s creativity in providing online instruction. Identified challenges were 1) decreased repetition affecting retention, 2) smaller dosage of the necessarily paired down curriculum, and 3) providing supports for the students who struggled.

COVID-19 FOR 2020-21

Some plans for 20-21 in response to the pandemic include 1) not thinking of NOCCA as a monolith, but instead as a vast community with varied needs, 2) planning with creativity and flexibility for 11 different arts disciplines and 4 grades of academics, and 3) deciding not to offer any external events so the campus is available and healthy for the purpose of serving NOCCA students.

Mr. Coheley stated that Admissions’ first commitment is to the students currently being served. Outreach and recruitment interests still include expanding to the state, but at this point, so much is unknown.

Dr. Nelson said the provision of emotional and Special Educational support was high priority. Ms. Judy Reese Morse suggested reaching out to Dr. Denese Shervington, Founder/CEO of the Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies (IWES) for support. Ms. Sarah Usdin alerted the board to a webinar on the upcoming Wednesday produced by IWES.

In addition to the concerns being addressed regarding student safety in the formulation of plans for 2020-21, Mr. Wedberg spoke about adult safety as well. NOCCA is aware of faculty members with underlying health conditions and faculty members who are caring for family members with underlying health conditions. Also brought to the attention of the Board is the fact that while students have been home, national reports of domestic abuse have increased while reports of child abuse have decreased by half. The role of school personnel as mandatory reporters in understanding that statistic is critical. All of these factors are being considered in the plans for 2020-21.

FINANCE

Ms. Delaney, shared that NOCCA was on course through HB1 to receive a standstill Operating Budget for 2020-21 from the state. This was a great relief. There remains a large unknown about whether or not NOCCA will experience mid-year cuts in response to the current crisis.

NOCCA has two capital outlay projects represented in HB2: the roof project which has not begun and the window replacement project. The roof project has been put back in as a Priority One project with $500,000 allocated. This will allow that project to begin in 2020-21.

THE NOCCA INSTITUTE REPORT

Ms. Sally Perry, Executive Director of TNI, identified that NOCCA has requested that the core program, Student Success, be given greater priority, anticipating increased need from families. Good news shared was that an underwriter has come forward to fund the Student Success program which has established some stability in the planning for 2020-21.

NOCCA PRESIDENT/CEO REPORT

Mr. Wedberg thanked Ms. Beth Scioneaux for her service as Interim State Superintendent and acknowledged the challenge of coming forward at this extraordinary time. Mr. Wedberg also thanked Ms. Anne Candies and her husband, Mr. P.B. Candies, for their support along with Mr. Stephen Stryjewski, father of student Penelope Stryjewski, in providing family dinners for the staff as an end of the year thank you.

The Tier 2.1 Financial Disclosure form deadline has been extended.

Mr. Wedberg spoke of the past work with The People’s Institute and the Racial Equity Institute (REI) and the continued work on equity and the desire to come to a common language and a common understanding around equity, with full acknowledgement that there is much work left to be done.

REMARKS/OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Broussard stated that his experience on the Board has been remarkable and thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as President of the Board.

Mr. Broussard asked for public comment. Mr. Wedberg read a question from the public Q&A. Mr. Wally Scott asked, “Is there a statement about the BLM email that was sent as well as why in 2018 was the artist Ayo Scott denied to put Black Lives Matter on the mural and told that if he did the project would be defunded?” Mr. Wedberg stated that he and Ms. Perry received the email that Mr. Wally Scott referred to over the past weekend and that earlier on this day he had responded to the email. Mr. Wedberg stated that TNI, who oversaw the project, is currently in conversation with Mr. Ayo Scott. Mr. James Carter asked for clarification of the issue. Mr. Wedberg explained that the mural along Homer Plessy Way was a TNI commissioned piece and that at some point during the mural planning Mr. Scott was asked to remove an image of a Black Lives Matter (BLM) sign and a police officer. Mr. Wedberg stated that recently Mr. Scott has expressed his disapproval of being asked to take it out and disappointment that he responded to the request by removing the images. Mr. Wedberg stated that though he was not a part of the mural planning and decision-making at the time, he acknowledges that he was aware of this request taking place at the time and as an individual and as the leader of this institution accepts responsibility for engaging in this conversation moving forward. Mr. Carter asked who made the request of Mr. Scott and Mr. Wedberg said his efforts to learn that information did not yield an answer other than TNI as an institution. Mr. Carter stated that this situation was a representation of what was happening on a larger scale in our nation. Mr. Carter requested an audit of the leadership at NOCCA to determine if qualified diversity is truly being implemented system-wide. Mr. Carter also requested a closer look at whether or not African American males have difficulty matriculating through the system and asked for commitment to the deep dive into ensuring that NOCCA’s opportunities are available and successful for the population represented by the New Orleans community. Mr. Wedberg thanked Mr. Carter for the thoughtful comment and offered to share the report prepared annually for the state which outlines progress toward a more diverse population at NOCCA. Mr. Wedberg reiterated his commitment to this effort. Ms. Morse asked if Mr. Wally Scott would like to speak to the Board. Mr. Wally Scott made the request not to speak. Mr. Boe asked if TNI could provide an update on this situation; if an audit of staff and faculty could be shared with the Board; and if a demographic audit of the 2020-21 class could be shared. Mr. Boe asked for reassurance that TNI was responding to Mr. Ayo Scott which Mr. Wedberg provided. Ms. Usdin stated that the Orleans Parish School Board was launching into a diversity audit as well in a move towards anti-racism. Ms. Usdin invited NOCCA to partner with the parish in that effort.

Mr. Broussard asked for more public comment. There was none.

Mr. Boe made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Carter seconded the motion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Submitted by: Reviewed by: Attest:

Leigh Traylor Kyle Wedberg Troy J. Broussard

Recording Secretary Secretary to the Board President of the Board

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