



Educating future business professionals today to build stronger communities tomorrow

MINUTES

Kelce Board of Advisors Meeting
Noon CDT, May 18, 2026, Kelce #121

Present: Nancy George, Joe Harris, Brandee Johnson, John Lowe (via Teams), Jeff Ney, Doug Eaton, Nick Coomes, Rachel Vanzant, Ben Burns, Mike Foster, Ross Turney
Pitt State members: Paul Grimes, Alexander Binder, Lynn Murray, Mimi Morrison
Pitt State Guests: Becky McDaniel

- I. Lunch Served
 - A. Welcome by Dean Paul Grimes
 - B. Special Guest: Becky McDaniel, Associate Vice President for University Advancement
Becky welcomed everyone – she represented Dr. Kathleen Flannery, Vice President of University Advancement and President of the Pittsburg State University Foundation. She opened her remarks by thanking everyone for their contributions to the new building project.
 - University wide updates
 - President, Dr. Thomas Newsom is finishing his first year at Pitt State; very engaged
 - 1st goal was to re-envision the university's five-year strategic plan
 - New 4-step plan known as Access Pitt State; discussion of goals and initiatives
 - Enrollment growth is key priority with targets set for each major academic unit
 - Capital campaign will kick off with the 2027 fiscal year
 - This is a \$100 million campaign over 5 years
 - #1 priority is scholarships – KCOB was early adopter of new method for administering endowed scholarships to support Great Gorilla program
 - Scholarship Recognition for KCOB will be held in the fall as a luncheon at the new building due to the new timing of scholarships through Financial Aid
 - Dr. Grimes explained the process for administering scholarships for next academic year – donors will still have opportunity to meet their students
 - Facilities is a key component of campaign – major STEM project already being planned (Heckert Wells and Yates) and a new project at the football stadium
 - Heavy Equipment/Industrial vehicles building project is moving forward
 - Program support and faculty support are included in campaign as well
 - 983 students registered for freshman orientation this summer which is 18% over last year
 - Housing contracts are up by 8% for the fall
 - KBOR meets this week – they will approve fundraising projects and tuition increases
 - Dr. Grimes explained the business donor walls in the new building – Mission Statement included on first floor wall, split face gorilla is included on 2nd floor wall
 - University Development update – raised \$23M this year. For the first time there were over 1,000 first-time donors this year
 - Advancement events – Alumni Grandparents University – June 4; Alumni Office will host its annual Paint the Town Red Chamber Coffee at our new building in the fall; October 2 – the annual Presidents Society event also scheduled for our new building; Homecoming is Saturday 10/17 – watch for an invite to KBOA for the “Brunch on the Balcony” board event during the Pitt State Homecoming Parade
 - Board of Advisors Golf Tournament endowment currently has over \$96K in funds and an additional \$6K allocated for next FY scholarships

- Becky asked if there were any questions from the group; Dr. Grimes inquired if units could suggest strategic initiatives for program support as part of the capital campaign; when told “yes,” he described the student managed investment fund idea that the KBOA had discussed several times over the years but which had not gained any traction with the Foundation Board of Directors; after a short discussion including how much it would take to seed such an undertaking with new funds, Board Member John Lowe volunteered his willingness to contribute \$100K to help establish a KBOA sponsored fund and asked others to join the effort; with great appreciation for John’s generosity, everyone agreed that this would move us forward; Becky and Dr. Grimes agreed to start the work in determining how such a fund can be established within the framework of the Foundation’s current operations and how other business schools oversee and regulate the student groups who manage funds (Note: after the meeting other board members expressed their interest in supporting this project in response to John’s suggestion that the board have an active role in working with the student investors.)
- II. Opening of the Meeting – Chair Nancy George – everyone introduced themselves and memories of our old Kelce building – stories tended to focus on the people who met and forged relationships in the building (friendships, mentorships, partnerships, and marriage) and the eccentricities of the classrooms and spaces
- A. Introduction of New Board Members
- Hollie Mellon – Ernst & Young
 - Nick Coomes – Watco
- III. Update on Gorilla Rising Project – Paul Grimes and KLT
- A. Target move-in date: 07/06/26
- B. Previews of building to key constituencies – not sure what these gatherings will look like at this point – will host Pitt State employees as well as an event for our new downtown neighbors; other events will be forthcoming as determined by President Newsom
- C. Ribbon cutting ceremony: 08/11/26 – for both Kelce and the Besse; first floor of Hotel Bess will be university operations including Small Business Development Center and the Center for Reading; floors 2-14 are studio apartments operated by Student Housing office – specific apartments for business students designated on floors 3 through 5 – Dr. Talkington will be leading the living-learning community for business students who reside in Hotel Besse
- There will be 2 shuttles running from campus to new buildings with an anticipated maximum 17-minute wait time between shuttles. There are 156 parking spaces available for faculty, staff and students on our block with additional public parking available on surrounding blocks
- IV. Development Update – Becky McDaniel for Jenni Hall
- A. KBOA Homecoming Event: 10/17/26 – Homecoming Parade “Brunch on the Balcony”
- B. KBOA Endowment – gives dean ability to support student activities; endowment account sitting at about \$35K; only about \$1K currently available on the spending side – asked board members to help grow this to a healthy amount
- C. Next Fall’s Annual Golf Tournament – Jeff Ney – Golf Tournament will be the first Monday in October at Brookridge Golf Course in Overland Park – online registration will be available soon; currently have \$96K in endowment fund and \$6K for current scholarships for six students; last year we reached capacity on the number of golfers who played – discussed the limited potential options for growth – best option may be to add a spring tournament
- V. Center for Professional Selling – Chandler Davidson, Assistant Instructional Professor of Marketing
- A. Update on Affiliation, Advisory Board, MBA Stage Scholarships, and Future Activities
- Organization has been granted associate membership in the national organization, the University Sales Centers Alliance (USCA)
 - The USCA currently has 68 members; there are membership benefits for KCOB including national recognition – Chandler and Lynn Murray will attend the national conference in Chicago this September and we will be assigned a peer institution to serve as a mentor. The affiliation should also aid in recruiting students into the sales program and will help us produce and deliver professional development activities to community businesses
 - Active advisory board has been established – 11 members – first meeting was in November – received a lot of direction from board members – micro-internships in sales available through our KCOB Internship Office

- Next selling center advisory board meeting will be 08/11 – wish to continue to advance curriculum; continue to develop programming
- MBA Stage Scholarships - original gift of a portable professional stage provided by board member Todd Allison – Advanced Sales Mgt students sold ad spaces for the stage which sits in Gorilla Village for tailgating entertainment at all home football games – have raised \$3,100 for scholarships to date; some space purchased by the businesses of other KBOA members

VI. Curriculum Initiatives Update

Undergraduate:

- A. Business Education; Business Studies BBA pathway for secondary teacher licensure; response to KSDE submitted; final approval forthcoming

Graduate:

- B. Public Administration; Online MBA emphasis approved; in cooperation with College of Arts and Sciences; focuses on management and economic development of micropolitan communities; marketing underway and first courses roll out this fall
- C. The board discussed new programs and certificates – lots of discussion on AI and how it's used in the workforce; consensus that AI is moving fast and it will be essential for KCOB to carve out an appropriate path to integrate instruction of AI into the curriculum; future workers will be required to understand how AI can be used to enhance business functions and improve efficiency of time and effort; board members shared their experiences with how AI is currently impacting their own organizations' work; Dr. Grimes suggested that members of the board be invited back for a panel discussion with students on the future of AI and in order to provide some insight into what is happening in our regional economy and how AI skills will become essential for many entry-level jobs; several board members agreed that they would be willing to participate and help with such an event

VII. Old Business – Personnel Updates

- A. Last December, Dr. Anil Lal, Professor of Economics, passed away while starting phased retirement; position restructured to allow the hiring of an economic forecaster for the Business and Economic Research Center (BERC); search is now underway (35 applicants so far)
- B. Data Technician for the BERC has been hired; starts in June just before our move to the new building

VIII. New Business

- A. Committee Assignments and Meetings – reviewed assignments
- B. Next Meeting: Fall Semester Friday 10/16/26 (Homecoming weekend)
- C. Top Kansas MBA programs in the state – KCOB is 2nd in Kansas according to the *Wichita Business Journal* – Dr. Grimes noted how the earnings from online MBA program which flow back to the college made a significant contribution to the new building's furniture and instructional equipment budget
- D. KBOA email address book – give updates to Dr. Grimes
- E. Dr. Murray discussed new Suitable program to encourage both in-course professional development activities and extracurricular learning for students will be implemented in the fall; incentives and badges available to enhance student resumes
- F. Kelce Advocates have been selected – a corps of high energy and high achieving students who will help with recruiting prospective new students during campus visits, assist the college with major events and help host visitors and guests in the new building, etc.; 7 students selected to serve as KAs this coming academic year

IX. Adjournment: approximately 3:00 p.m.