

ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN COUNSELING

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MINUTES

Board Meeting
September 17, 2021

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling (ABEC) held its regular meeting on Friday, September 17, 2021 to conduct business. The meeting was held at the Board's office located at 2777 Zelda Road in Montgomery, Alabama. Members in attendance were Ms. Anna Barksdale (Board Chair), Dr. Latofia Parker (Vice Chair), Dr. Debra Atchison (member), Ms. Karole Ohme (member), and Dr. Jennifer Brown (member). Board members attending virtually were Dr. Sheila Webb and Dr. Robyn Simmons and public guests. Also in attendance onsite were Dr. Keith Cates (Executive Director), Mrs. Hendon Coody (Legal Counsel attended virtually), Mr. Keith Warren (Administrative Director), Mrs. Cindy Edgar (Assistant Administrator), Dr. Charlotte Daughhettee (Academic Reviewer), and Ms. Renee' Reames (recording secretary).

CALL TO ORDER: Board Chair, Ms. Barksdale, called the meeting to order at 9:16 a.m. The regular meeting was advertised to the public on the Board's website, (www.abec.alabama.gov), as well as the Secretary of State's website, (www.sos.alabama.gov), in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act. A quorum of the members was in attendance in-person and Ms. Barksdale welcomed guests attending virtually and members and staff. Ms. Barksdale read aloud the Board's mission statement and commented on the protocol for open proceedings for guests and members. Mr. Warren read the Opening Statement.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA: Ms. Barksdale presented for the Board's approval the Board meeting agenda. A copy of the agenda was provided to the Board members prior to the meeting for their review. Dr. Brown made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ohme and unanimously approved by the Board.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: Ms. Barksdale presented the minutes from the July 16, 2021 regular meeting. Dr. Parker made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Atchison and unanimously approved by the Board.

Dr. Brown made the motion to accept the amended Legal Counsel report in the June 11, 2021 meeting minutes as presented (copy in Official Book of Minutes). The motion was seconded by Dr. Parker and unanimously approved by the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Proposed Rule 255-X-3-.01 Licensed Professional Counselor: Mr. Warren reported that individuals had requested to appear before the Board to comment on the proposed rule changes. He read aloud the Comment Protocol for speakers and others attending the meeting (copy in Official Book of Minutes), when proceeding with public comments and addressing the Board. He indicated that the Board had received written comments from the public (copy in Official Board of Minutes) and individuals representing those interest groups had requested to address the Board. The following individuals were recognized: Dr. Paul Hard, Dr. Daniel Birdsong, Dr. Judith Harrington, Dr. Guinn Pearson, Dr. Brad Willis and Dr. Amy Upton. Comments from the speakers included concerns about lack of transition time between the specified January 1, 2022 beginning date that

required a minimum of 60 graduate semester hours or 90 graduate quarter hours, as a single conferred/awarded master's degree in counseling (clinical counseling, rehabilitation counseling, marriage couple and family counseling, community counseling, or school counseling), and the lack of grandfather licensure clauses, and no path to attain additional program hours outside of the single master's degree specified programs.

Mr. Warren thanked the speakers for their comments and Ms. Barksdale called a 5-minute recess of the Board at 9:49 a.m.

Ms. Barksdale reconvened the Board meeting at 9:58 a.m.

Mr. Warren, again, thanked the speakers for their comments about the proposed rule and recommended an amendment to proposed Rule 255-X-3-.01 Licensed Professional Counsel that allowed anyone enrolled prior to the January 1, 2022 beginning date would be given 24 months to submit an application for licensure. The Board discussed that this amendment would allow a person to apply to the Board within 24 months and the individual could be allowed as much as 4 years through supervision programs before their application was considered voided, and furthermore, the Board relied on evidence of acceptable transfer of hours into another suitable program (a relationship between one educational institution to another) rather than restricting hours to one single institution. Dr. Brown made the motion to approve Final Rule 255-X-3-.01 as amended in 255-X-3-.01(2)(a), stating: Anyone enrolled prior to January 1, 2022, in any approved program (clinical counseling; rehabilitation counseling; marriage, couple, and family counseling; community counseling; or school counseling) will be given twenty-four (24) months to submit an application for licensure. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ohme, and following a roll call vote, was unanimously approved by the voting members, with Dr. Atchison abstaining from vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Dr. Cates introduced new staff member, Ms. Latoya Vickers, Administrative Assistant.

Dr. Cates also updated the Board on the development of the iGov licensee database, indicating a tentative operational date of December 31, 2021. In addition to working toward paperless licensing records through the online application process being developed through the iGov database, the scanning of licensing files will be implemented in stages, through Alabama Business Systems.

Changes to the Board's website was also discussed and Mr. Warren commented that improvements to allow licensee search online and other upgrades were planned.

Dr. Cates reminded the members to refer complaints and inquires to Board administration. This prevented any liability as an individual board member speaking on behalf the full Board.

Dr. Cates also reminded the Board that election of Board officers was due, as new business, at the next Board meeting, along with selecting Board meeting dates for calendar year 2022. The Board discussed planning a Board training session.

APPLICATION REVIEW: Dr. Cates presented applications for the Board's approval:

Initial ALCs: Dr. Brown made the motion to approve the initial ALC applications as recommended by Dr. Cates. The motion was seconded by Dr. Atchison and unanimously approved by the Board.

ALC to LPC: Dr. Atchison made the motion to approve the ALC to LPC requests as recommended by Dr. Cates. The motion was seconded by Dr. Webb and unanimously approved by the Board.

Reactivation: Dr. Atchison made the motion the approve the reactivation request of their license as recommended by Dr. Cates. The motion was seconded by Dr. Webb and unanimously approved by the Board.

Inactive Status Request: Dr. Atchison made the motion the approve the request for Inactive Status of their license as recommended by Dr. Cates. The motion was seconded by Dr. Brown and unanimously approved by the Board.

LPC Endorsement: Dr. Parker made the motion to approve the LPC Endorsement applications as recommended by Dr. Cates. The motion was seconded by Dr. Atchison and unanimously approved by the Board.

LPC Supervisor: Dr. Brown made the motion the approve the LPC Supervisor request as recommended by Dr. Cates. The motion was seconded by Dr. Simmons and unanimously approved by the Board.

NCE: Dr. Atchison made the motion to approve the NCE accommodations request as recommended by Dr. Cates. The motion was seconded by Dr. Webb and unanimously approved by the Board.

Provisional: Dr. Parker made the motion to approve the Provisional request as recommended by Dr. Cates. The motion was seconded by Dr. Atchison and unanimously approved by the Board.

Ms. Barksdale called a 10-minute recess of the Board at 11:00 a.m.
Ms. Barksdale reconvened the Board meeting at 11:12 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mr. Warren reported on the financial activities of the Board for the period ending August 31, 2021. He reported that expenses during the past 9-month transition period had been kept at a minimum. He also reported on the work to investigate and resolve complaints that remained open from 2018 through 2020, along with new complaints received in the current fiscal year. Mr. Warren reviewed the project total number of licensees and indicated that a more accurate count will be available through the iGov database.

LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT: Ms. Coody reported that the Investigative Committee had not met the day before the Board meeting to review complaints. Following a presentation by Mrs. Coody concerning Case 2018-002, the Board approved the following action:

Dr. Brown made a motion to administratively close Case 2018-002, as recommended by the Ms. Coody, due to not being able to locate the Respondent, a non-licensee, and unable to investigate the case further. The motion was seconded by Dr. Atchison and unanimously approved by the Board.

NEW BUSINESS – RFP ACADEMIC REVIEWER PROPOSAL: Mr. Warren reported that the Board previously had an emergency contract with Dr. Charlotte Daughhete for services as an Academic Reviewer. Request for Proposal for these services were released to vendors in this professional service and one RFP was received from Dr. Charlotte Daughhete. The Board reviewed the proposal by Dr. Daughhete and Dr. Brown made the motion to approve a 2-year contract with Dr. Charlotte Daughhete for Academic Reviewer services. The motion was seconded by Dr. Atchison and unanimously approved by the Board.

Administrative Services Contract: Mr. Warren reported that the contract for administrative management services would expire September 30, 2021, at a rate of \$15,00 per month. Dr. Brown made a motion to approve a 2-month emergency contract with Warren & Company, with a contract proposal to be presented at the Board's November meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Webb and unanimously approved by the Board.

LICENSING SPECIAL REVIEW – License Academic Requirements: Dr. Cates introduced Ms. Michelle Hunt who had requested to address the Board regarding her academic credentials to sit for the ALC exam. The Board was provided a copy of the written request. Also at the meeting, speaking on behalf of Ms. Hunt, was James Hill, who presented Ms. Hunt's educational background and request consideration of additional Education Specialist (EdS) degree hours to bridge the gap in hours, as substantially equivalent. The Board discussed that it was not a CACREP-accredited program. After a lengthy discussion by the Board, Dr. Brown made the motion to table further discussion to allow time for further review. The motion was seconded by Dr. Parker and unanimously approved by the Board.

REDUCTION OF HOURS REQUEST – Program in Counseling Education at Auburn University at Montgomery: Dr. Cates introduced Dr. Paul Hard, who had requested to address the Board regarding the use of post-graduate practicum/internship hours for Reduction of ALC Professional Experience Hours, indicating that it had been approved by the Board. A copy of the communications was provided to the Board (dated November 2019 to Dr. Hard from former Board Director, Gary Williams).

Dr. Cates commented on the documentation that was available at the time of the communications was prepared, dated November, 2019, and reported that a grid was approved by the Board during this period; however, the documentation did not include reduction of hours. The Board reviewed the documentation presented by Dr. Hard concerning AUM's request to supplement the preapproved academic grid for designated courses in each of the 11 academic area and the Board's approved as an extension of the existing grid (November, 2019 communications).

For reduction of hours requests, the Board discussed that a review of syllabi and content was necessary due to the various labeling as practicum. Following a review of the November, 2019 communications from the Board's former Director, Dr. Brown made the motion to accept for Reduction of Supervised Experience Hours the practicum and internships within the AUM Counseling Programs Education Specialists program from students enrolled in the program between Fall 2019 to September 17, 2021; specifically CED 657, CEED 6914, ECED 7926 and ECED 7927. The motion was seconded by Dr. Parker and unanimously approved by the Board.

Following additional discussion about the current requirements for reduction of hours request, Dr. Parker made the motion to keep the current requirements for Reduction of Hours and future requests are to go through academic review to determine qualifications. There was no second to the motion

and the motion died. Dr. Cates summarized by adding that hours that are post-masters, e.g., EdS and PhD in internship and practicum experience do not meet the requirement for reduction of hours.

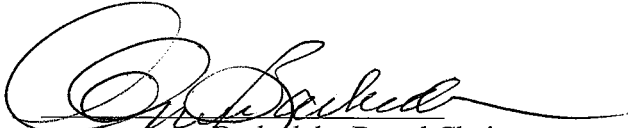
OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: Ms. Barksdale announced that the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting was November 12, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

There being no further business of the Board, Dr. Brown made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Dr. Parker and unanimously approved by the Board. Ms. Barksdale adjourned the meeting at 12:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Renee Reames, Recording Secretary



Anna Barksdale, Board Chair

Approved on: 11-10-2021 /rr