

ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN COUNSELING

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MINUTES

Board Meeting
May 16, 2025

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling (ABEC) held its regular meeting on Friday, May 16, 2025, 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. Anjanette Robinson (Board Chair), Dr. Glenn Hollingsworth (Board Vice Chair), Dr. Sherrionda Crawford (member), and Ms. Cynthia Hooper (member). Members absent were Ms. DeAnna Tidwell (member), Ms. Jessie Bowie (member) and Mr. Jacques Austin (member). Also in attendance were Mr. Keith Warren (Executive Director), Ms. Vania Hosea (Assistant Attorney General), Mr. Brannon Littleton (CFO), Ms. Dawn Durick (Licensing Specialist), Ms. Deborah Whitman (Licensing Specialist), Ms. Karen Entriken (Investigator attending virtually) Ms. Karen Harlow (Legal Assistant), Dr. Charlotte Daughhetee (Academic Reviewer attending virtually), Dr. Latofia Parker (Board Compact Liaison attending virtually) and Ms. Renee' Reames (recording secretary). Public guests were also present and attended virtually.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Robinson, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. The regularly scheduled meeting was publicized 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. Mr. Warren read aloud the opening statement regarding the meeting being conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and Alabama Open Meetings Act. Mr. Warren called the official member roll, and a quorum of the members was in attendance. Chairperson Robinson welcomed everyone present at the meeting and attending virtually.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Chairperson Robinson presented the meeting agenda for the Board's approval. A copy of the agenda for the May 16, 2025 meeting was provided to the Board members prior to the meeting for their review. MOTION: Dr. Crawford made a motion to approve the May meeting agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Robinson presented the minutes from the March 21, 2025 regular meeting for the Board's approval.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and unanimously approved by the Board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Warren presented the Executive Director report to include the number of current licensees by designation. He reported on the number of consumer complaints submitted to the Board in fiscal years 2022 through 2025 and status of disciplinary fines assessed during this period (report available in the Board's official Book of Minutes).

Update on Tasks and Assignments: Mr. Warren reported that he had been unsuccessful in getting data from other states on the cost of supervision being charged by LPCs for ALC supervision. He also reported that the Board's Policy Manual was under review based on the recent changes in some of the Board's rules

and proposed new changes to the licensure applications and would be presented to the Board at a future meeting. He indicated that he was working on the specifications for the Academic Reviewer in accordance with the State's procurement procedures.

CE Seminars: Mr. Warren reported on the CE Seminar held on May 2, 2025 for LPC-Supervisors. He indicated that 278 licensees had registered to attend; however, 138 were actually present. The Board commented on the cost the Board had incurred in preparing for the number of registered licensees and the purchased resources not required due to the reduced number of licensees attending the seminar.

Mr. Warren indicated that he would follow-up with ALCA about the survey results from the May seminar and whether CE credits for the seminar were contingent on the attendee's submitting a final survey response as attendee participation.

Mr. Warren recommended that another CE seminar be scheduled in August 2025, and the Board discussed possible venues in North Alabama to host the meeting. Ms. Hooper indicated that she could inquire with the Huntsville hospital about conducting the meeting on the hospital premises and the Board asked that a survey of the licensees be conducted about having the seminar on Friday or Saturday. Mr. Warren indicated that he would inquire with the host facility about having virtual access to the seminar.

Financial Statement: Mr. Littleton presented the financial report for March through April 2025. He reported on the financial activities during the reported period and presented projected revenue and expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year, with a projected positive balance. He reviewed the current and projected expenditures compared to budgeted funds by category (object codes). The Board discussed the financial effects of a reduction in licensing fees from \$300 to \$200 for LPC licenses. Mr. Littleton reported a projected \$600,000 reduction in revenue based on \$200 licensee fees and the Board reviewed several scenarios in reduced licensing fees to benefit the licensees, along with the CE programs being offered by the Board.

The Board speculated on other revenue derived from the Compact licensure activities and ALC transitioning to a LPC based on the Board's 6-year ALC rule, etc. The Board agreed to continue to monitor financial activities, determine a baseline balance as reserve, and reconsider the matter of reduced licensing fees at a future date.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to accept the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

Chairperson Robinson deferred the Legal Counsel report to later in the meeting.

Update on Counseling Compact: Mr. Warren reported that the Compact had been advised of the Board's decision not to charge a privilege practice fee for individuals licensed in other states. He reported that Dr. Parker was stepping down as the Board's Compact liaison and asked the Board to consider a new liaison when meeting in July or September.

ACADEMIA RULES REVISION COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Hollingsworth reported that the Academia Rules Revision Committee had no report at this time.

SUPERVISION COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Crawford reported that the Supervision Committee had no report at this time.

ALCA UPDATE

Dr. Coleman, ALCA President, commented on the Board's CE seminar and thanked the Board. Mr. Warren extended a thank you to ALCA funding and sponsoring snack breaks at the seminar. Dr. Coleman indicated that she planned to meet with Mr. Warren to discuss pre-conference activities for the Association's annual meeting that was scheduled November 19-21, 2025 in Birmingham.

LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT

Investigative Committee Recommendations: Ms. Hosea presented to the Board the recommendations of the Investigative Committee (IC) regarding complaints. A list of cases was provided to the members (report available in the Board's official Book of Minutes).

- Close complaints due to no jurisdiction in cases 2025-032, 2025-034, 2025-043 and 2025-056.
- Close complaints as unfounded in cases 2025-030, 2025-036, 2025-038, 2025-042, 2025-045, 2025-047, 2025-049, 2025-050 and 2025-051.
- Close complaint 2025-025BR as founded and letter of concern sent to respondent and supervisor based on lapsed license for approximately 6 months and CE credits received during lapsed period was not eligible when renewing license.
- Close complaint 2025-031 as founded and letter of concern sent to respondent regarding supervision issues.
- Close complaint 2025-015 as founded and 6 months suspension of license, in which time additional CE hours required through 4 hours on workplace professional ethics and 6 hours on cultural sensitivity, along with a \$500 fine and 2-year probation. If CE hours were not completed within 6 months, license would remain suspended until CE hours were completed.
- Close complaint 2025-033BR as founded and reported as a second offense. Assessed \$100 fine for violations of practicing with a lapsed license.
- Close complaint 2025-040 as founded due to failure to comply in previous complaint case and license suspended until respondent complies with Wellness Program contract in previous case.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the IC's recommendations as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board with Chairperson Robinson recused in voting as an IC member.

RFP for Administrative Management Services: Ms. Hosea recommended that the discussion of the RFP for Administrative Management Services be deferred to the end of the business meeting before the Board recessed for lunch and Chairperson Robinson agreed.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Application Modifications: Mr. Warren presented modifications to the licensure applications and the Board approved the following applications (copies available in official Book of Minutes).

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the modified ALC Initial License Application as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the modified ALC License Fee Request form as presented, noting the one-year period to submit the request form along with the license fee. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the modified ALC Renewal Application as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the modified LPC (from ALC) Initial License Application as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the modified LPC Endorsement License Application with the additional formatted changes discussed by the Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the modified LPC License Fee Request form as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the modified LPC-S Application as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the modified Reduction of ALC Professional Experience Hours Application as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Ms. Hooper made the motion to approve the modified Final Supervision Evaluation Report form as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Request from Alicia Owens regarding Supervision Hours: Ms. Alicia Owens appeared before the Board to request approval of her supervision hours obtained while her ALC license was lapsed during the period of March 18, 2024 through December 18, 2024. The Board acknowledged the financial considerations for Ms. Owen and supervised hours toward obtaining her LPC license. After further discussion by the Board, Chairperson Robinson assigned the matter to the Supervision Committee to consider and make a recommendation to the Board.

Discussion of Wellness Program Contract: Mr. Warren indicated that the previous and current Wellness Program contract was based on a sole-source provider, and he was in the process of redrafting the provider services in the new Wellness contract to include applicants pending licensure. He indicated that he would present the proposed contract at the next Board meeting.

Academic Review Consultant Services: Chairperson Robinson reported that the discussion of the Academic Review Consultant contract, that was scheduled to expire September 30, 2025, had been tabled from the last Board meeting. The Board reviewed the proposed RFP specifications and discussed required and preferred qualifications of a consultant and include availability to attend Board meetings and meet deadlines established by the Board. The qualifications required would include (1) a doctoral degree in counselor education program, (2) minimum 5 years graduate experience in teaching, (3) in depth knowledge and experience with (a) academic terminology, procedures, curricular content and syllabus construction, (b) Board regulatory practices, administrative rules and issues for licensure, and (c) CACREP accreditation and counselor education program structures related to this accreditation. The preferred qualifications would include LPC license-holder. The Board recommended that the preferred requirements for supervision experience with a licensure applicant (ALC) be removed. The Board agreed that the RFP rating scale for proposals would include 40 points for experience, 40 points for scope of services and 20 points for cost.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the RFP specifications for the Academic Review Consultant with the additions and deletions discussed by the Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and approved by the majority of the Board, with Dr. Hollingsworth voting nay, and Chairperson Robinson abstaining from voting.

Review and Approval of Applications: Mr. Warren presented licensing application requests for the Board's approval (list of applications available in the Board's official Book of Minutes) and he indicated that the applications had been reviewed by Dr. Daughhetee.

Initial ALC: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the ALC requests for initial issuance of license. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

Provisional: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the requests of Provisional licensure. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and unanimously approved by the Board.

ALC to LPC: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the requests from ALC to be licensed as LPC. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

LPC by Endorsement: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the LPC applications by endorsement requests. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

LPC-Supervisor: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the LPC-Supervisor requests for licensure. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and unanimously approved by the Board.

Reduction in Hours: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the requests for a reduction in supervision hours. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and unanimously approved by the Board.

Inactive: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the requests for inactive licensure. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

Special Reviews: Mr. Warren presented two licensure requests for special review and Board approval.

HWC – Applicant had applied for a LPC by Endorsement license and had a Counseling Psychology degree. Mr. Warren reported that Dr. Daughhetee had reviewed the application and HWC met the academic criteria.

LMS – Applicant had applied for ALC license with Counseling Psychology degree.

The Board discussed reviewing the Board's rules concerning academic requirements for a counseling degree and contacting the universities about changing the name of the degreed program.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the request from HWC and LMS for licensure. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and unanimously approved by the Board.

Chairperson Robinson reported that the Board was scheduled to break for lunch and inquired about working through lunch. She reminded the members that an Administrative Hearing was scheduled at 1:00 p.m.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion for the Board to adjourn into Executive Session for approximately 40 minutes to discuss the Administrative Management Services Contract. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford. Ms. Hosea certified the purpose for the Executive Session and the following votes were recorded: Dr. Hollingsworth, aye, Dr. Crawford, aye, Ms. Hooper, aye. Chairperson Robinson adjourned the meeting into Executive Session at 12:15 p.m. All staff and guests left the meeting and the Zoom access for virtual participation ended.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to end the Executive Session and resume the business meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board. Chairperson Robinson reconvened the business meeting at 12:53.

Chairperson Robinson announced that the Board meeting would recess until 1:00 p.m.

Chairperson Robinson reconvened the Board meeting at 1:00 p.m. Ms. Hosea reported that the respondent in the complaint case scheduled for an Administrative Hearing had arrived and was without legal

representation. She reported that she had meet with the respondent and discussed a settlement agreement to include surrender of license, agree to complete the Wellness Program, pay the outstanding disciplinary fine to the Board and upon resolution of all legal issues, the respondent would appear before the Board should he wish to reapply for licensure, and should the respondent not comply with all stipulations of settlement, the respondent would be asked to appear before the Board for further consideration.

Chairperson Robinson turned the meeting over to Judge Jerry Wood to preside over the Administrative Hearing. Respondent, Christopher Jason Pope, responded under oath to questions presented by the Board's Legal Counsel, Ms. Vania Hosea, and he acknowledged receipt of notice of hearing.

Near the conclusion of the hearing, Mr. Pope asked the Board to consider the following disciplinary conditions: voluntary surrender of his license, continuing with the Wellness Program, paying the Board's outstanding fine and his license continue in good standing. He indicated that he would like to continue with the recovery program and pursue re-licensure. Judge Wood indicated to Mr. Pope that he would be contacted by the Board about the Board's final decision and Mr. Pope left at 1:55 p.m. when Judge Wood concluded the hearing.

The Board indicated to Judge Wood that they would be voting during the business meeting on the final order concerning Mr. Pope and an ALJ recommendation was not required.

Chairperson Robinson called a recess of the Board at 1:59 p.m. for 5 minutes and reconvened the business meeting at 2:05 p.m.

The Board discussed the seriousness of the criminal charges against Mr. Pope as discussed in the hearing and considered Mr. Pope's request to the Board concerning his license. Ms. Hosea recommended the following action in consideration of the evidence presented at the hearing:

- license indefinitely suspended,
- completion of the Wellness Program,
- pay the \$1000 outstanding fine to the Board,
- resolve all criminal cases involved, and
- appear before the Board if seeking reinstatement of license, upon successful completion of these terms.

Ms. Hosea explained that the Board would be provided a progress report from the Wellness Program in this matter.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to accept Ms. Hosea's recommendations to indefinitely suspend the license of Mr. Pope and include in the consent agreement that Mr. Pope complete the Wellness Program, pay the outstanding fine of \$1000, resolve all criminal cases that he was involved and upon completion of these conditions, he must appear before the Board if seeking reinstatement of his license.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Counseling Regulatory Board Summit: Mr. Warren reported that the Counseling Regulatory Board Summit meeting was scheduled June 25-27, 2025 in Austin, Texas and he inquired about attendance by the Board members.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to authorize reimbursement for member attendance. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

RFP for Academic Review Consultant:

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to authorize the Board Chairperson to release the final RFP for Academic Review Consultant services. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hooper and unanimously approved by the Board.

RFP for Administrative Management Services: Chairperson Robinson indicated that the RFP for Administrative Management Services would be tabled to the next Board meeting and no motion resulted from the Executive Session held earlier in the meeting.

Next Board Meeting: Chairperson Robinson reported that the next Board meeting was scheduled July 18, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. at the Board's office.

Board Travel Expense Forms: The Board accepted the travel expense reports submitted by the members for meeting attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Dr. Crawford made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board. Chairperson Robinson adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anjanette B. Robinson
Board Chair

Keith E. Warren
Executive Director

/rr _____ Minutes approved on: _____