Effective Onboarding: From Trustees and Seated President/CEO to Appointed President/CEO

Presented by: Halifax Community College
Mr. Michael G. Felt, Board Chair
Dr. Michael Elam, President/CEO
Dr. Ervin V. Griffin, Sr., President Emeritus
**HCC History**

- Halifax Community College was founded in 1967.
- It is one of 58 institutions within the North Carolina Community College System.
- Located in northeastern/north-central North Carolina approximately eight miles from the Virginia border.
- The 109-acre campus is located on Highway 158 in Weldon, North Carolina, less than a mile east of Interstate 95.
- HCC offers more than 37 programs that lead to certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees.
- The college also offer basic literacy, workforce development, human resource development and continuing education programs that cater to the interest of a diverse population.
- HCC serves more than 7,000 students annually and has articulation agreements with 16 state colleges and universities and 8 private institutions of higher learning.
“Choreographing and Orchestrating Change with Complete Transparency as a Board Chair”

- President Emeritus was in the position for 10-11 years & came at a “challenging” time for the College
- Consistently Rated “Outstanding” in Annual Performance Appraisals
- Extremely involved and loved in the Community
- Brought many National honors and awards to the College
- Six month Retirement notice at May 2016 Board Meeting
- The Board was stable at the president’s retirement.
- Uh Oh! Search will run into year-end Holidays! Now What?
“Decisions, Decisions, Decisions”

- Hire a consultant?
- Timing?
- Current President Involvement?
- Double Transition? Hire Interim, postpone search to New Year?
- How to involve Stakeholders? Who are they?
- Trusting the Board Chair’s Decisions through transparency and open communications
- Search Committee? Who are they?
- Media Involvement?
- Transparency...Always!
- Complete Confidentiality
- Transparency...Always!
## Halifax Community College
**Presidential Search Calendar Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-14-16</td>
<td><em>Forums Optional</em></td>
<td>Conduct Public Forums/Establish Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-15-16</td>
<td>No later than</td>
<td>Application materials posted on web-site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-22-16</td>
<td>1st PSC Meeting</td>
<td>Role &amp; Responsibilities will be defined. General instructions will be given. Confidentiality Agreements will be signed. Screening procedures, logistics, instructions and suggestions will be given.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-02-16</td>
<td>2nd PSC Meeting</td>
<td>PSC cuts to 10-12 Candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-02-16</td>
<td>DVD requested from remaining Candidates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-19-16</td>
<td>DVD due from semi-finalists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-22-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolidated DVD provided to PSC members. PSC informed if any Candidates are to be eliminated due to the results of Preliminary Reference Checks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-03-16</td>
<td>3rd (and last) PSC Meeting</td>
<td>PSC selects finalists (4-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 17-21</td>
<td>Staff plans and schedules Board interviews with finalists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-09-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth Reference Checks plus Criminal Background, Credit, and Employment Check Reports provided to the Board. Transcript for highest degree received provided to the Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 14-17 and 21-22</td>
<td><strong>Candidates meet with Constituents</strong></td>
<td>Board interviews finalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-27-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Board submits Name of Selection to SBCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-27-16</td>
<td>**** See Below</td>
<td>Board Announces New President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-16-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>SBCC Affirms Selection of New President</td>
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**Recommended Interview time**

**Candidates meet with Constituents (Recommended)**

**** Board Announces New President: This announcement should include the statement “based on final State Board approval.”
**Presidential Search Committee**
Chairman of the Board of Trustees served as Chair of the Presidential Search Committee
- Faculty Representative
- Non-Faculty Representative
- Student Government Representative
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local Minster
- Realtor
- Medical Chief of Staff at the Local Hospital
- Banker
- Economic Development Board Chair
- Sorority, Fraternity, of Civic Group
- Home Builder/Contractor
- Halifax Intergovernmental
- Halifax County Commissioners
- Northampton County Commissioners
Managing Expectations among the Stakeholders
Complete Transparency Throughout the Final Selection Process

• Outgoing President’s Initiatives & Meeting Expectations
• Board of Trustees, Determined the Job Description for our New President – Regular updates, Meet and Greets, Media Releases
• College Staff and Faculty – Search College Website, Meet and Greets
• College Students – Search College Website, Meet and Greets
• The Entire Community – Search College Website, Meet and Greets
• Media – Regular updates, Meet and Greets
• Electronic and Print Media had one on one time with the candidates
Managing Expectations among the Stakeholders
Complete Transparency Throughout the Final Selection Process

• The Search Committee recommended the 12 semi-finalist.
• Each semi-finalist was asked to submit a video presentation answering the same set of questions.
• After the video presentation, the search committee recommended 6 finalists to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.
• Final 6 applicants had comprehensive background checks and then the Board began its interviews, deliberation and selection
• Meet and Greets schedules for each of the 6 finalists where the entire Community was invited including including College Staff, Faculty and Media.
• Board Made Final Selection, Made Offer of Employment.
• Board Chair Negotiates New Contract with the assistance of Legal Counsel, and the Board Approves.
Schedule for the Finalist

11:00 am-12:00 pm  Interview with local press
12:00 pm-1:00 pm   Lunch at a local restaurant hosted by a presidential search committee member
1:00 pm-2:15 pm     Meeting with community stakeholders at a local restaurant with the presidential search committee member as facilitator and community members were able to give confidential feedback
3:00 pm-4:00 pm     College Family Meet & Greet in the Centre & staff was able to give confidential feedback on each candidate
4:00 pm-5:00 pm     Break
5:00 pm-6:30 pm     Interview at an off campus location
6:45 pm-7:45 pm     Board Dinner with presidential candidate
President Search

The Board of Trustees invites applications and nominations for the position of President of Halifax Community College. The President serves as Chief Executive Officer and reports directly to an appointed thirteen member Board. The current President is retiring after 10 successful years of sustainability.

Scroll Down for the President Profile

Halifax Community College

Founded in 1967, Halifax Community College (HCC) is one of 58 institutions within the North Carolina Community College System. HCC offers more than 37 programs that lead to certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. The college also offers basic literacy, workforce development, human resource development, and continuing education programs that cater to the interest of a diverse population. HCC serves more than 7,000 students annually and has articulation agreements with 10 state colleges and universities and 8 private institutions of higher learning.

HCC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Minority Serving Institution. Student demographics reflect the service region’s population, which is 58.4% minority. Moreover, the gender breakdown is 60% female and
It is expected that the presidential search committee will be recommending finalists to the Board of Trustees shortly.
Outgoing President’s Comments
Presented by: Dr. Ervin V. Griffin, Sr.

“Smooth Transition”

Both Retiring President and New President are jointly visible for events, public roll out and Board Meetings even before the New President Takes the Helm.
Atmosphere of Halifax Community College Prior to My Arrival

June 2005
Students were protesting. They were upset over the budget cuts, high turnover of HCC instructors, and Board of Trustee Leadership.

September 2005
The HCC Board of Trustees had to investigate complaints against the college and its president or they would face a loss of state funding.
The Board of Trustees could not get quorums at emergency meeting.
The media was camped out on campus almost daily.

January 2006
The 3rd president of Halifax Community College was fired after an investigation into allegations of mismanagement and misconduct.

February 2006
Interim President of Halifax was hired.

December 2006
The 4th President of Halifax Community College was hired.
The image of Halifax Community College nationwide was negative.
Challenges the CEO and Board of Trustees Must Face

- Boards understanding their proper role and avoid acting in an improper manner.
- Allowing faculty to appeal to board members directly when faculty don’t like the president’s decision
- Micromanaging college operations
- Failing to understand the appropriate role of the president and board of trustees
- Dealing with inappropriate behavior by an individual board member
- Handling friction between board members or between board members and faculty leaders
- Insuring the board will stay supportive of the CEO in the face of employee criticism when the CEO is simply implementing board directive
- Helping CEOs provide more communication with their trustees when they are consumed with issues on campus or in the community.
- Helping CEOs avoid being preoccupied with being “one election away from losing their job.”
- There are inevitable differences between and within boards regarding experience.
Media Coverage on the Transition

The spirit of leading the college
The outgoing president invited the incoming president to his last Board meeting.
Dr. Elam wearing the sports coat Dr. Griffin gave him at a community event.
Both Presidents shared the stage when HCC received the 2017 AACC Community College Safety, Planning and Leadership Award of Excellence.
Dr. Griffin made sure Dr. Elam’s robe was ordered before he left.

Dr. Ervin V. Griffin, Sr.
Fourth President

Dr. Michael A. Elam
Fifth President
Incoming President’s Comments
By: Dr. Michael A. Elam
In the early stages of my work life, as I climbed the career ladder, there was always a supervisor or other accountable individual to assist with the onboarding and training process. This was a very helpful element in transition process from one position to another. Unfortunately at the pinnacle of my career that same onboarding process is usually non-existent.

I have served as Interim Chancellor for two technical community colleges in Louisiana and been selected President for three comprehensive community colleges one in Texas and two in North Carolina. As an Interim for one of the technical colleges I was able to provide an onboarding process that was helpful to the incoming Chancellor because there was an overlapping period built in to that transition. That transition period offered valuable time to discuss key issues needing to be addressed, including personnel matters, cultural issues, and capital projects.
• When I was hired at HCC I was able to arrive earlier enough to attend the last Board meeting led by my predecessor, Dr. Ervin Griffin. I was able to experience a Board meeting, how it operated as well as see how the Board members interacted with their President and with each other. I was able to meet the Board and leadership team members individually. The Board meeting also gave me an opportunity to observe staff presentations and interaction with the Board.

• During the overlap period I was able to setup a couple of opportunities to meet with Dr. Griffin one-on-one to discuss some of the files that he had compiled for me. Those files consisted of various critical projects and cost centers with budget information for special initiatives. They helped me to more quickly understand the full complexity of selected projects deemed important by Dr. Griffin. I also took the opportunity to attend Dr. Griffin’s retirement Gala and played a significant role in the gala program. I was able to be introduced to key stakeholders and community leaders in the community by Dr. Griffin and the Board Chair Mr. Felt.
After Dr. Griffin’s departure from the college Mr. Felt volunteered to introduce me to Commission members, Mayors and City Council members and other top officials as I strategically visited the power brokers throughout the College service area. Another advantage that has been afforded me is access to Dr. Griffin and two other former Presidents who all still live in the community. In addition to Dr. Griffin and Mr. Felt one of the other Presidents offered to take me around also in one of the neighboring towns. We met with many in the town and concluded with lunch at a local café where local business members had an opportunity to meet with me and ask questions about my future plans, etc.

Dr. Griffin, Mr. Felt and others continue to serve as valuable resources for me sharing information and projects. The onboarding process at HCC has been the most beneficial and smoothest I have experienced. I am much better prepared to lead, collaborate, and address the challenges facing the college as a positive result of this process.
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