**The Center to Advance CTE Board of Directors’ Meeting**

**Minutes**

May 13, 2020

Video call

**ATTENDEES:** Sarah Heath, Marcie Mack, Bernadette Howard, Heather Justice, Alex Harris, Nicole Smith, Wendi Safstrom

**STAFF:** Kimberly Green, Kate Kreamer, Meghan Wills, Katie Fitzgerald

**Welcome:** Heath called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Heath welcomed everyone to The Center to Advance CTE Board of Directors’ Meeting. Heath introduced new Board member Wendi Safstrom.

Heath asked for approval of minutes from January 30, 2020.

**MOTION: To approve minutes from January 30, 2020, as presented.**

 **Mack; Justice.**

 **MOTION APPROVED.**

Heath asked for approval of the consent agenda for the May 13, 2020, meeting.

**MOTION: To approve consent agenda for May 13, 2020, meeting, as presented.**

 **Howard; Justice.**

 **MOTION APPROVED.**

**FY20 Financial Report and Budget Amendment:** Justice and Green presented an overview of The Center’s finances, which are strong overall. Green explained that The Center has received 99.96 percent of projected FY20 income, but has only spent 48 percent of projected expenses. While The Center had developed plans to spend down its grants by the end of FY20, those plans have been upended. As a result of COVID-19 (coronavirus), many planned in-person activities have shifted to virtual, and these adjustments have had a cascading effect on expenditures. The Center’s funders have been extremely flexible, including supporting no-cost extensions and offering additional funding and support to meet near-term needs. Looking ahead, The Center’s projected expenses are likely to stay under budget and no-cost extensions are likely for a number of grants set to end in 2020. The Center has confirmed that none of its current funders are planning to rescind money; The Center is also developing relationships with several prospective new funders. Finally, The Center has a robust rainy day fund that can be accessed if needed, although that does not look likely in the near term.

The Center’s investments took a loss of 11 percent in March, but markets had already started to rebound in April. Given The Center’s investment policy statement, the organization’s investments are in a strong position, and advice received from The Center’s financial advisor, Merrill Lynch, is to stay the course. However, The Center is being a bit cautious in managing its expenses, including moving six to nine months of expenses into a money market fund or checking account to mitigate additional losses.

Green shared an overview of the requested FY20 budget amendment. The Center received a new grant in early February from the Siemens Foundation, and a budget amendment is needed to add this grant to the budget. This grant is the organization’s third grant from the Siemens Foundation, and it will support additional work on CTE communications and messaging with the counseling community with a deliberate focus on equity. The grant began in March 2020 and runs through early 2022; the kickoff of the work has been delayed as staff determined that now is not the right time to survey students and parents on perceptions of CTE. The total grant amount is nearly $840,000 and the FY20 budget amendment recognizes the portion of the grant that is projected to be used in FY20, which totals $61,897.60.

Heath asked for approval of the FY20 budget amendment.

**MOTION: To approve FY20 budget amendment.**

 **Mack; Justice.**

 **MOTION APPROVED.**

Heath asked for approval of the FY20 financial report.

**MOTION: To approve FY20 financial report.**

 **Howard; Justice.**

 **MOTION APPROVED.**

**Update on FY19-FY21 Strategic Plan:** Kreamer presented an update on the Advance CTE /The Center to Advance CTE’s FY19-21 strategic plan. The organization is nearing the end of year two of its three-year strategic plan. The Center Board approved the overarching priorities and strategies of the strategic plan, and staff revisit activities each year to ensure alignment with member and grant priorities. Advance CTE uses a four-point color scale to rate the organization’s progress on each strategy; green and yellow indicate that work is generally on track, while orange and red indicate that there are more significant concerns or disruptions to that work. The information Kreamer presented covers work through April 2020. On the whole, Advance CTE’s work is on track, with some activities intentionally delayed in response to capacity limitations and/or reprioritization of work. COVID-19 is starting to show an early effect on the organization’s work, although a stronger impact is expected in the next quarter.

Under the federal and state policy priority, activities related to development of tools and resources are generally rated yellow, which reflects some grants nearing their conclusion and others just getting underway. Now that most projects are underway, staff capacity will start to be redirected in these areas. The strategy related to revision of The National Career Clusters Framework is rated orange; this work is just getting underway and is not anticipated to be rated orange in the next quarter.

Under the professional learning priority, communications with Advance CTE members is rated as green, while the rest of the strategies are rated as yellow. The virtual learning strategy has been developed and will launch in the near future, and the 2020 Spring Meeting was cancelled as a result of COVID-19. Advance CTE is actively redesigning its professional learning work and has recently made a great deal of progress, and we anticipate that the color scores in this priority area will look different in the next quarter.

Under the promotion priority, many of the strategies are rated yellow. Advance CTE received its third grant from the Siemens Foundation to support communications and messaging work, but the launch of this project has been delayed as a result of COVID-19. The strategy to promote the 100-year anniversary of Advance CTE has been slowed down as other work has been prioritized; the organization plans to celebrate its 101-year anniversary in 2021. Fundraising and development work has been very successful and is rated green.

Under the partnerships priority, Advance CTE is in a very strong position. We have continued to deepen relationships with the organizations with which we partner and in what ways, and staff members have more diverse and more extensive relationships with partner organizations that leads to greater continuity of partnerships. Advance CTE’s partners have been strongly engaged in many activities, including Perkins V regional meetings and state plan expert reviews. In the future, Advance CTE plans to think further about how to measure the impact of its partnerships, not just the quantity.

Under the processes and protocols priority, Advance CTE has made a great deal of progress over the last year. The organization has streamlined its back-end operations, developed standard operating procedures for a number of processes, is undergoing a revision of its performance evaluation system, and is undertaking an internal equity training process that has strengthened the organization’s culture and processes that has led to a great deal of forward progress.

Harris asked if Advance CTE’s work is translating to stronger Perkins V state plans. Kreamer responded that it’s too early to know the full answer, but we are optimistic that the supports provided to states have resulted in stronger state plans. Through the state plan expert review process, 37 states and DC received comprehensive and actionable feedback on their draft Perkins V state plans, and we heard from states that the feedback was very impactful. Advance CTE is currently reviewing all submitted state plans; this review will result in a 50-state analysis that will be released in fall 2020. In our review of submitted state plans, we will look for evidence that states incorporated the feedback we shared during the expert review process.

Heath added that each state is in a different place; everyone has learned and grown from the process but not each state will end up in the same place. Justice shared that third-party feedback helped state staff make a case for bolder changes. Green added that the expert plan review process helped solidify Advance CTE’s understanding of the pillars of strong Perkins V plans, which form the structure for the 50-state plan review and analysis.

**Development/Fundraising**: Kreamer provided an overview of the development efforts between January and April 2020, noting many grants have ended and re-started or are new. She shared that funders rather invest in current activities than engage with new partners given coronavirus. Kreamer noted many grants may need to have adjusted timelines and include no-cost extensions due to coronavirus and staff is working with funders who are very flexible. Harris shared that foundations typically base funding on their own endowment size, meaning the organization may expect 15-20 percent less in overall philanthropic funds for new grants. Kreamer responded that the organization is in a fortunate spot that many grants are just beginning so the organization is in a strong financial position. Safstrom shared that her organization is in a similar situation, and commends the organization for having strong relationships with funders.

Smith asked if the projected reduction in funding is a concern from current funders. Kreamer responded that funders are being more thoughtful and scrutinizing their giving, but that should not impact the organization. Smith asked if Advance CTE should reimagine the work to better serve underserved or vulnerable populations. Kreamer shared that the organization is continuing to focus on equity throughout all grants. Green shared that the organization is working on positioning CTE as necessary to the economic recovery and develop new solutions in response to coronavirus. Green also shared that the organization is holding on expanding the physical footprint of the office space to remain conservative in spending.

**Career Cluster Revision Update:** Wills shared that Advance CTE has developed an identity for the Career Cluster revision to help direct how we talk about the work going forward. “Advancing the Framework: A state-led Crowdsourcing Initiative Focused on Modernizing the National Career Clusters® Framework.” The key themes are that states are leading, modernization and being forward-looking. She also shared that the current plan incorporates the input the Board of Directors provided during the January meeting. Wills added that we are working with Vivayic on this initiative; we are currently in the process of finalizing scope of work and timeline with Vivayic and should have that done in the coming weeks.

Wills shared that we have developed some internal talking points to help frame why we are undertaking this initiative, with a focus on ensuring the Framework will be adaptable to the future of work, which is even more important now given coronavirus.

Wills provided an overview of the objectives of the initiative, including to better understand who and how the Framework is being used; to gather feedback on what is and isn’t working with the current Framework; and to solicit ideas to ensure the Framework is relevant and adaptable moving forward. Advance CTE is focusing most of the immediate attention on clarifying and defining the purpose of the Framework, which will be foundational to the entire initiative and our ability to ensure the Framework best meets the need of the field.

Wills shared the two defined phases of the initiative. Phase I (“Build Empathy”) is focused on understanding how the Framework is being used and where there are gaps between the intent of the Framework and current uses. This phase will largely include gathering input from the field and conducting research around the use of the Framework on the ground. Part of Phase I is the launch of a Career Clusters Kitchen Cabinet. Advance CTE have had great interest in this kitchen cabinet, with nominations submitted by 24 State Directors.

Phase II (“Generate Consensus”) will focus on identifying a collaborative path forward, anchored on an agreed upon purpose and vision for the Framework, with state CTE leaders engaged throughout. This will identify if and how we will make changes to the Framework

Wills shared that after Phase II there will be a reflection point to identify next steps, whether we are undertaking a major transformation of the Framework, making minor adjustments or some other path forward. We have extended timeline to provide more time to clarify purpose and based on feedback from the Board.

Wills asked for feedback on the proposed phases and timeline. Heath shared that aligning the Career Clusters launch in tandem with state plan revisions and rollout may be helpful. Smith shared that her organization uses Career Clusters Framework and related information frequently and was hoping for updates to the Framework. Safstrom shared her organization is doing a lot of work around the “future of work” and the impact of coronavirus, which may relate to the Framework revision. Safstrom reiterated the importance of positioning CTE as a critical part of the economic recovery.

**Other Items/Next Steps**: Next Board of Directors Meeting is June 29, 2020, at 4 p.m. ET to approve the FY21 budget.

**Heath adjourned the meeting at 5 p.m. ET.**