

# Nevada Commission on Mentoring

Meeting Minutes  
Friday, November 19, 2021  
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

*Meeting Location: Due to the COVID-19 response and in accordance with Governor Sisolak's Emergency Directive 006; Subsection 1, this meeting was conducted via Lifesize.*

## 1. Call to Order:

Chair Catarata called the meeting to order on Friday, November 19, 2021 at 2:05 p.m.

## 2. Roll Call:

Rose Cota conducted a roll call. **Quorum was established** (7 Members present).

### Commission Members Present:

Chair Karl Catarata  
Vice Chair Katie Membreno  
Michael Maxwell  
Michael Flores  
Dr. Douglas Garner  
Sebastian Cardenas  
Brigid Duffy

### Commission Members Absent:

Coleen Lawrence

### Others Present:

Rose Cota, NDE Staff  
Gabby Lamarre, NDE Staff

## 3. Approval of Flexible Agenda

The Commission **did acquire quorum** and therefore could vote on approval for any objective in this meeting.

**Motion:** Approve Flexible Agenda

**By:** Karl Catarata

**Second:** Douglas Garner

**Vote:** Passed Unanimously

#### **4. Welcome and Introduction (Mission Statement)**

Chair Karl Catarata welcomed the members of the Commission and introduced himself to those who are new to NCOM. Chair Catarata explained that NCOM is working to get its footing back following the pandemic given that specific parts of the Commission were rearranged given funding and staffing, which caused some difficulties. Chair Catarata next asked the members to introduce themselves, their positions on NCOM, and to discuss their involvement in mentoring in the state.

Vice Chair Katie Membreno explained that she was involved in mentoring organizations throughout high school, including TULIPS and Batteries Included. Vice Chair Membreno explained that she is currently working with Ty's Place, an organization that supports mentoring nonprofits.

Michael Flores informed the Commission that he is the Vice President for Government and Community Relations for the University of Nevada, Reno. Mr. Flores further indicated that he has been running a nonprofit over in Sherman Gardens for approximately ten years, which offers recreation and homework help to young people in that area. Mr. Flores indicated that he became involved in the Commission when Assemblyman Thompson asked for help with the legislation. Mr. Flores explained that he is also a lobbyist and worked with the Assemblyman to pass this legislation. Mr. Flores indicated that he was the original chair of NCOM prior to passing the torch on to Dr. Michael Maxwell.

Sebastian Cardenas explained that he is the Senior Development Coordinator for the Public Education Foundation, where he deals with community relations and fundraising for public education. Mr. Cardenas further indicated that he is a DACA recipient who mentors young immigrants as well as prospective teachers. Mr. Cardenas explained that he is also a student teacher and is working in his role in the Public Education Foundation to help with a teacher pathway program.

Samantha Wilson explained that she is the Senior Database Manager in the Development Department at the Neon Museum. She informed the Commission that she has volunteered and runs an organization called Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) in southern Nevada, where she met Vice Chair Membreno, whom she has mentored since 2017. Ms. Wilson is also a part of the Board of the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network in southern Nevada.

Dr. Douglas Garner explained that he is now retired after 40 years with the Clark County School District. Dr. Garner worked as a psychologist and educator in the district and currently runs a consulting firm called Dr. Douglas Garner Consulting. Dr. Garner works in the areas of bias literacy, emotions literacy, and sports psychology and is currently working with some elite athletes regarding their mental health and sports analysis. Dr. Garner explained that he now enjoys spending time at home with his grandkids.

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Kamilah Bywaters indicated that she is currently working on her PhD in special education at UNLV and serves as a graduate assistant there. Ms. Bywaters explained that she will be teaching some courses as well as mentoring two different groups of teachers, who will be getting licensed as special educators. Ms. Bywaters further indicated that she is the president of the Las Vegas Alliance of Black School Educators, which is an educational advocacy nonprofit in Las Vegas.

Dr. Michael Maxwell explained that he was the previous Chair for NCOM prior to Chair Catarata taking over the position. Dr. Maxwell indicated that he is a 25-plus year educator and is currently the Executive Director/Vice President for Acelero Learning Headstart in Clark County. Although Dr. Maxwell is not currently participating in any mentoring groups, he is professionally mentoring one on one and in the past, he formally mentored with the Omega Gents as well as the SANKOFA Rites of Passage the West Las Vegas Art Center. Dr. Maxwell explained that he has been coaching sports for as many years as he has been in education and continues to support mentoring organizations as much as possible, particularly through the work at NCOM.

Dr. Laura Davidson, Director of Research and Evaluation for the Washoe County School District indicated that she has been with the district for more than ten years and was a mentee of the late Ben Hayes, who had been a member of NCOM until his passing. Dr. Davidson explained that she currently oversees all matters related to data and research for the school district, which includes: school improvement; data tools; program evaluation; research; and student voice. Dr. Davidson explained that in her current position she has done a lot of work in developing instruments to measure the quality of youth staff relationships in school settings. Dr. Davidson is also overseeing the evaluation of a number of different types of evaluation programs in Washoe County School District.

Rose Cota, NDE, informed the Commission that she is the admin assistant who takes care of NCOM needs.

Gabby Lamarre, NDE, informed the Commission that she is the Title I Director and Federal Liaison for the agency.

Chair Catarata noted that Floyd Velasquez, who is an active participant within the UNLV community, was at today's meeting as a participant and a listener.

Brigid Duffy introduced herself as the Chief of the Juvenile Division for the Clark County DA's Office as well as a Governor's appointee to NCOM. Commissioner Duffy indicated that she has been working with juveniles in Clark County through the delinquency and foster care systems for approximately 21 years. Commissioner Duffy is also part of the Executive Leadership team for the My Brother's Keeper Alliance as well as the Children's Commission, among others.

## **5. Approval of NCOM October 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Karl Catarata asked the Commissioners for any edits or amendments to the October 15, 2021 meeting minutes. There were none.

**Motion:** Approve NCOM October 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

**By:** Karl Catarata

**Vote:** Passed Unanimously

## **6. Public Comment #1**

Chair Karl Catarata opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment.

## **7. Chair's Report:**

Chair Karl Catarata reminded the Commission that based on the approval of the NCOM October 15 meeting minutes, the commission did approve of doing an actionable thing as a Commission regarding communicating to legislators about the intentions and priorities of NCOM as well as ensuring that NCOM has something it can deliver to legislators and critical stakeholders for the upcoming legislative sessions.

Chair Catarata next discussed the letter to legislators that he and Commissioners Duffy and Membreno had crafted. Chair Catarata indicated that the letter was dated for the following week in hopes of being sent, but informed the Commission that the date could be changed if need be. Chair Catarata read the letter aloud to the members of the Commission. Key points upon which Chair Catarata touched in this letter were as follows: communicating the Commission's current priorities while keeping these priorities in line with the late Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson's vision of NCOM; the funding issues NCOM suffered during the pandemic; the Commission's legislative priorities; the fact that NCOM is seeking to renew efforts to fund its programs that are critical to supporting nonprofit organizations in the state; special thanks to Dr. Maxwell and Michael Flores; establishing a national mentorship affiliate at the level of \$125,000; providing capacity building grants to local mentoring organizations in the state; and a statewide annual conference on mentoring. Chair Catarata concluded the letter by stating his hopes that NCOM and legislation can continue to work together to successfully create positive outcomes for mentoring organizations in the state and move forward in funding these programs. Chair Catarata next opened the floor for discussion from Commission members.

Dr. Michael Maxwell thanked Chair Catarata for compiling the letter and communicating NCOM's goals to legislators.

Douglas Garner commended Chair Catarata's letter and asked for clarification regarding the \$5,000

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Chair Catarata had mentioned in the letter.

Chair Catarata clarified that the \$5,000 mentioned was for the statewide annual conference on mentoring and potentially could be not enough funding for this event.

Douglas Garner concurred that this was not enough funding and that Chair Catarata should ask for additional funding.

Michael Maxwell concurred, indicating that \$5,000 would be enough to contribute to or partner with another organization, but in order for NCOM to hold a conference of its own, the price tag would likely be more like \$30,000.

Vice Chair Katie Membreno suggested keeping the wording in the letter consistent in terms of consistently including the word mentoring.

Brigid Duffy suggested focusing the pandemic's negative impact on children, particularly children's mental health due to children being forced into isolation.

Dr. Michael Maxwell concurred.

Brigid Duffy further suggested tightening up the legislative priority section of the letter to be clearer for non-members of the Commission. Ms. Duffy provided an example of describing what education inclusive of K-12 university mentorship actually means in the statute. Ms. Duffy further indicated the importance of considering the audience that may be reading the letter and refraining from using jargon that may not be understood as well as specifically discussing the different types of mentoring activities NCOM supports.

Sebastian Cardenas concurred with Commissioner Duffy and suggested that the wording include something along the lines of supporting K-12 and college university mentorship initiatives and partnerships. Commissioner Cardenas also suggested moving employment and post-secondary development higher on the list, perhaps even to the top, because that is a big priority for the state currently.

Chair Catarata summed up the changes to be made: more money; grammar; tightening up legislative priorities and being more specific regarding the needs and the impacts on Nevada's children; employment and post-secondary education.

Gabby Lamarre suggested discussing AB 235 and its requirements in the letter and reminded the Commission of the annual report. Ms. Lamarre asked for clarification as to whether this letter will

be replacing the annual report.

Chair Catarata indicated that this letter will not be a substitute for the annual report as the annual report is more comprehensive of all that NCOM is doing and informed the Commission that in addition to sending the letter to legislators, he intends to personally provide legislators with whom he meets with a copy.

Michael Maxwell suggested dropping this letter into the annual report as an example of the communication the chair has had with legislators. In addition, Commissioner Maxwell suggested creating a one-pager or a pamphlet that includes graphics.

Chair Catarata concurred and informed the Committee of his hopes that the annual report would actually be a booklet that could be mass produced and would include the elements Drs. Maxwell and Garner had noted.

## **8. NCOM Development updates:**

### **a. Full Commission Review on Members**

Chair Karl Catarata introduced Dr. Laura Davidson, Washoe County School District, and informed the Commission that Dr. Davidson is applying for the position held by the late Ben Hayes.

Dr. Laura Davidson reintroduced herself to the Commission and discussed that although she comes from a research background, she has always had a strong emphasis on applied research in youth settings. Dr. Davidson's current aim is to create data tools and research that supports schools. Dr. Davidson further indicated that her career in its entirety has focused on understanding and highlighting the importance of adult-youth relationships specifically. Dr. Davidson informed the Commission that she received her PhD from UNR in social psychology, and nearly all studies she has done have been focused on the importance or relationships between staff and youth in multiple settings such as detention, school, and afterschool settings. Dr. Davidson explained that she has developed instruments to help measure the quality of youth-staff relationships in school settings, and all of these contain measures she has developed around staff, family, and student relationships with one another and then linking them to student outcomes.

Douglas Garner indicated his belief that the piece Dr. Davidson brings to the Commission with her work with data will be instrumental in moving the Commission forward.

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Michael Maxwell asked who the current superintendent is for Washoe County.

Laura Davidson responded that the current superintendent is Kristen McNeill.

Michael Maxwell next indicated his belief that because the superintendent appointed Dr. Davidson to be the representative on the Commission, the Commission does not need to vote as this is an appointed position rather than a voted position.

Gabby Lamarre confirmed that Dr. Maxwell was correct in that this position is appointed and does not require a vote.

**b. Non-profit guest speaker**

Vice Chair Katie Membreno informed the Commission that she would be doing a HOBY presentation and that Ms. Samantha Wilson would be available for support and to answer questions.

Vice Chair Membreno reminded the Commission that HOBY stands for the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership and was originally founded in 1958 as a nonprofit organization by actor Hugh O'Brian, who led a life of service and left a lasting legacy with HOBY, which expanded across the world. Ms. Membreno further indicated that HOBY has inspired young people to make a difference in their communities and has a long history of successfully motivating young people to develop into outstanding leaders. Ms. Membreno explained that the mission of HOBY is to inspire and develop global youth to a life of dedicated leadership and service and innovation. Some of HOBY's core values include: volunteerism; integrity; intelligence; diversity; community partnerships. Ms. Membreno next informed the Commission that HOBY seminars usually occur late in June and have been traditionally held at UNLV. These seminars are an opportunity for students from across the state to experience the program through leadership development programs that provide information about volunteering in the state. Due to the pandemic, the seminars have moved online and consist of a two-to-three day live, online program that allows students to participate without travel. Sophomores who participate in the program then become HOBY alums and are challenged to complete 100 hours of community service.

Vice Chair Membreno informed the Commission that HOBY is run entirely by volunteers and as such, is very dependent upon its volunteers and upon new people joining. Ms. Membreno informed the Commission that they can help HOBY in a number of ways: sponsoring students; reaching out to high schools that participate in HOBY and sharing information with those schools that don't; financial donations as well as donations of office

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supplies, snacks, drinks, and gift cards; applying to become a volunteer.

Samantha Wilson reiterated the fact that HOBY is completely volunteer-run and although it does have staff, they are primarily national and international staff whose role is primarily to oversee the volunteers. Ms. Wilson further explained that HOBY of Southern Nevada has always struggled financially in multiple ways, such as: Nevada is one of the high, top-tier sites when it comes to the fee that students pay because there are not enough sponsors to allow fee reductions. This higher fee also affects the schools. In the past HOBY was fully sponsored by UNLV and so accommodations and classroom usage did not have to be paid for seminars; however, Ms. Wilson explained that this is no longer the case and as such, HOBY asks students to pay a high fee for the campus accommodations. Although Zoom has made this piece easier, it does have the potential to cause problems with accessibility for students who do not have a computer or internet access. Ms. Wilson informed the Committee that HOBY highly encourages alum to return and volunteer because they have been through the program and, as such, make good mentors to the next generation of HOBY alum. Ms. Wilson explained that HOBY's main goal is some sort of sponsorship support, especially from NCOM, as HOBY's focus is volunteerism and leadership in group, individual, and community settings. Ms. Wilson explained that a huge focus for her when she was Leadership Seminar Chair was to connect students to nonprofits to provide them options not only for volunteering but for career choices down the road.

Vice Chair Membreno concluded her presentation by stating that HOBY is similar to NCOM in that students are being supported to volunteer and choose career paths in nonprofit organizations. HOBY is also building leadership skills to create strong leaders in the community.

Sebastian Cardenas asked Ms. Wilson the reasons behind why HOBY is struggling with getting sponsorships and what NCOM could do to help.

Samantha Wilson explained that HOBY had a very strong program for many years at UNLV, but because it is 100-percent volunteer run, when people left, their contacts went with them and as a result, connections were lost, resulting in a lot of turnover. Ms. Wilson further explained that HOBY does not have enough older volunteers with a professional understanding of volunteering to help rebuild the foundation that was lost. Ms. Wilson reiterated Ms. Membreno's suggestions for how NCOM can help HOBY: finding a way to sponsor a student or connecting HOBY to someone that may need a sponsor, and volunteering.



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Sebastian Cardenas indicated that HOBY is facing many of the same challenges that a lot of mentorship nonprofits across the state are facing and suggested that this ties directly into NCOM's vision for the Commission in that the relationships should be opened up to the people doing the work so that they don't have to struggle, and the costs don't fall upon the students and the people that need help.

Chair Catarata concurred that this definitely fits into the puzzle of when NCOM is advocating to the legislators and the Governor for important organizations like HOBY.

### **9. Agenda Item Considerations**

Chair Karl Catarata indicated that January is National Mentoring month and as such, Chair Catarata will be sending all the commissioners some upcoming ideas and events in which NCOM could either participate or help create to honor mentoring month. Chair Catarata indicated the importance of incorporating a formal proclamation of mentoring month with NCOM's mission and suggested there need to be tangibles involved.

Vice Chair Katie Membreno asked the Commission to send her the contact information for suggestions of mentoring organizations they would like to see in upcoming meetings.

Chair Karl Catarata also indicated that he would be following up with NDE in terms of Coleen Lawrence's appointment, whether it comes through the Board or through the governor's office and would share this info with the Commission at the next meeting.

### **10. Public Comment #2**

Chair Karl Catarata opened the floor to public comment.

There was no public comment.

### **11. Adjournment**

Chair Karl Catarata adjourned the meeting at 3:19pm.