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**TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE DISTRICT**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

**September 24, 2020**

The Board of Trustees of the Texas Southmost College District convened in open session via videoconference on September 24, 2020 at 5:32 p.m. Board Members present were Ms. Adela Garza, Chair; Mr. Ruben Herrera, Vice Chair; Dr. Tony Zavaleta, Secretary; Mr. Art Rendon, and Ms. Eva Alejandro. Also present was Dr. Jesús Roberto Rodríguez, President of Texas Southmost College. Absent board members included Mrs. Delia Saenz and Mr. J.J. De Leon.

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Garza, at 5:32 p.m.

**2. Pledges of Allegiance**

Secretary Zavaleta led the United States Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Public Comment**

Chair Garza asked if there were any speakers signed up for public comment. There was one speaker signed up, Mr. Antonio Guevara.

Mr. Frank Perez read the official guidelines for public comment. Chair Garza recognized Mr. Guevara as a speaker.

Mr. Guevara congratulated the entire TSC team for achieving reaffirmation of accreditation from SACSCOC through 2030.

He addressed agenda item 8C, Consideration and possible approval of the updated Tuition and Fee Schedule. He asked the board to consider two items: extending the 20% tuition discount into the Spring 2021 semester, and applying the discount to required fees. He said his recommendations come from a genuine desire to work collectively at TSC. He listed reasons to support his request. He shares the administration's desire to ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education, and he noted college affordability continues to be a challenge for students during the pandemic. While tuition has been cut several times over the past few years, he said we must recognize college tuition continues to be a barrier for entry for many in our community. As a

business instructor, he discussed price elasticity – which demonstrates how responsive customer demand is for a product based on its price. He pointed out that reducing tuition by 20% had a dramatic impact on enrollment, and he felt that by continuing this initiative, TSC could continue to grow enrollment in a significant way.

This concluded public comments.

#### 4. Consideration and possible action on the Minutes of the following meetings

##### a. Consideration and possible action on the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees held on August 27, 2020.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Herrera to approve the minutes of the Regular Board meeting of August 27, 2020. The motion was seconded by Secretary Zavaleta and carried unanimously.

#### 5. President's Report

Chair Garza called on President Rodríguez to give his report. President Rodríguez reported on the following items:

- **Fall 2020 Enrollment Update**

Enrollment for the fall enrollment is the largest since the college was re-established as an independent institution of higher education in 2013. Current enrollment for Fall 2020 is 8,780 students, a 1.76% increase over last fall.

President Rodríguez thanked the faculty, staff, and administration for their dedication over the summer months to reach this milestone. He also thanked the Board of Trustees for making critical and timely decisions to help students stay on track with their educational goals during the summer and fall through the TSC Cares initiative and the 20% reduction in fall tuition.

- **SACSCOC Reaffirmation of Accreditation**

TSC was awarded reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) at their September 3, 2020 meeting. TSC earned the best outcome possible, meeting or exceeding all core requirements and standards. Accreditation is reaffirmed for the next 10 years, through 2030.

President Rodriguez thanked the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, students, and community partners for their collective effort during the two-year process.

- **Swag giveaway for TSC Freshmen**

TSC will welcome Freshmen Scorpions with an on-campus Scorpion Swag Giveaway on Wednesday, September 30th, from 10 a.m. to noon. Students were invited to decorate their cars and show off their Scorpion pride by participating in the drive-thru event.

- **Open Educational Resources**

TSC has significantly increased the number of courses that use Open Educational Resources (OERs) from 3.5% in Fall 2019 to 37% in Fall 2020. OERs are teaching, learning, or research resources that are in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits the free use, adaptation, and redistribution of the resource by any person.

Developing and offering OER courses directly translates to cost savings for TSC students and TSC dual credit partners.

President Rodriguez called on Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President for Instruction, to expand on this report. Dr. Kile noted that as of the end of summer semester TSC has 28 courses that use OERs, comprising almost 7,000 seats for students, including those at high schools. Faculty are currently developing eight additional OER courses during the fall semester, which will save even more students the cost of purchasing textbooks.

- **WTCE COVID training**

President Rodriguez called on Dr. Joseph Fleishman, Associate Vice President of Instruction-Workforce Development to discuss COVID-19 Safety Training programs TSC offers to the community. Dr. Fleishman said TSC was very quick to respond to the community's need to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. He and his partners swiftly developed programs to assist local businesses in safely reopening after the mandatory shelter-in-place orders began to ease. He recognized key individuals who participated in developing the training courses: Dr. Arturo Rodriguez, City of Brownsville Public Health Director; Belinda Medrano, Valley Baptist Medical Center Brownsville Infection Control Specialist; and the Alliance Safety Council.

The Texas Workforce Commission has provided funding to train employees at no charge to qualifying businesses, and TSC is partnering with three workforce boards to provide training across South Texas from Brownsville to Laredo: Workforce Solutions Cameron, Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley, and Workforce Solutions South Texas. The Brownsville and South Padre Island Chambers of Commerce have reached out to their members to provide information about the courses.

TSC offers three training programs: Disinfection Specialist, Employee Safety, and Operational Planning, in both English and Spanish. To date, 20 businesses have been served through the training, with 237 students registered.

Dr. Kile discussed a future partnership with HCC to deliver these three programs to businesses in the Houston area. She thanked the Board of Trustees for providing the college with support to adapt quickly and offer this important training to the community

President Rodríguez thanked the entire campus community for their efforts in launching a very successful fall semester. He also thanked the Trustees in setting the tone for dedicated service for the entire college.

Chair Garza congratulated President Rodríguez for achieving reaffirmation of accreditation from SACSCOC. She acknowledged the positive impact the Board members have had by working in a unified fashion. She also recognized President Rodríguez's leadership, hard work, and vision for the college. She pointed out that many trustees are products of TSC and feel the love and commitment President Rodríguez and his team have for the college.

Vice Chair Herrera reiterated Chair Garza's words of congratulations for the campus community's commitment and hard work.

## 6. Academic Committee

Chair Garza called on Secretary Zavaleta to make the report.

### a. **Consideration and possible action to approve the revised Memorandum of Understanding between Texas Southmost College and the Harlingen Police Department (HPD) in the delivery of peace officer training**

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, was called on to present this item. She presented a revised memorandum of understanding with the Harlingen Police Department. The original MOU was approved during the summer. The first addition revised the organizations' authorized representatives. The other significant revisions addressed Additional Terms and Conditions that governs amendments to and administration of the MOU. Dr. Kile affirmed that TSC legal counsel had reviewed and approved the revisions.

**A motion was made by Secretary Zavaleta to approve the revised Memorandum of Understanding with the Harlingen Police Department in the delivery of Basic Peace Officer training and allow President Rodriguez to sign the Memorandum of Understanding. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro and carried with five votes and two absences.**

### b. **Consideration and possible action on a new articulation agreement between Texas Southmost College (TSC) Associate of Science in Computer Science and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) Bachelor of Science in Computer Science**

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, was called on to present this item. She said the new articulation agreement provides students graduating from TSC with an Associate of Science in Computer Science an opportunity to smoothly transition into the UTRGV Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. All 60 semester credit hours from the Associate of Science in Computer Science at TSC will transfer into the UTRGV Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. The effective date for the agreement is October 1 and will be in effect for two years.

**A motion was made by Secretary Zavaleta to approve the proposed articulation agreement between Texas Southmost College (TSC) Associate of Science in Computer Science and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and authorize President Rodriguez to sign the agreement. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Herrera and carried with five votes and two absences.**

**c. Consideration and possible action on approval of matching grant support for the 19th Annual Binational Literary Conference Letras en el Estuario**

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, was called on to present the item, and she asked Dr. Fuentes to present the item. Dr. Fuentes reported that this would be the college's 19<sup>th</sup> year to host the conference, which is scheduled to take place in February. The funding organization, Humanities Texas, requires matching funding for the grant. Dr. Fuentes said the college's proposal includes a funding match in the form of providing facility space for the conference and marking support.

**A motion was made by Secretary Zavaleta to approve the allocation of matching grant support in the amount of \$2,287 for marketing and \$1,457 in-kind cost sharing for facilities and AV support, contingent on the Notice of Grant Award from Humanities Texas for \$1,086.39 and authorize President Rodriguez to execute the related documents, as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro and carried with five votes and two absences.**

**d. Consideration and possible action on approval of whiteboards purchase for student classrooms**

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, was called on to present this item. She said the proposed purchases are part of the teaching and learning spaces project the board approved in February 2019. To determine the need for updates on campus, staff inventoried chalkboards and whiteboards in every classroom in North Hall, South Hall, Tandy Hall, SETB, and Rusteberg Hall. The new whiteboards would replace 106 chalkboards and outdated whiteboards. Instructors tested the proposed whiteboards and were satisfied with their quality.

**A motion was made by Secretary Zavaleta to approve whiteboards purchase for the "Teaching and Learning Spaces-Furniture and Media Upgrades" project in the total amount of \$52,854 directly from Egan Visual/West Inc. through the purchasing cooperative contract as presented and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the purchases. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro and carried with five votes and two absences.**

**e. Consideration and possible action on award RFP 20-16 for "Welding Gas and other Consumables"**

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, was called on to present this item. She asked Dr. Figueroa to describe the RFP process. Dr. Figueroa presented the RFP timeline, and Dr. Fleishman discussed the description of services. He explained that students will use a wide array of consumables for the welding program.

Dr. Zavaleta asked if the \$804 estimated for consumable supplies was a fee students would pay for the course. Dr. Fleishman explained the cost of the consumables is already built into the course cost.

Dr. Figueroa reported that four proposals were received in response to the RFP. Matheson Trigas received the highest score from the committee.

A motion was made by Secretary Zavaleta to award RFP 20-16 for “Welding Gas and other Consumables” to Matheson Trigas and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the Purchase Order contract, as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Herrera and carried with five votes and two absences.

## 7. Student Services Committee

Chair Garza called on Mr. Rendon to present the report.

### a. Consideration and possible action on approval of furniture purchase for the Oliveira Student Services Center Second Floor

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, and Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Administration and Finance, were called on to present the item. Dr. Figueroa presented the project’s schedule of events, beginning in December 2019 when the Board of Trustees approved project funding. She also presented a floor plan illustrating the spaces to be furnished. She noted the furniture fabrics proposed are hospital grade; they are durable and may be disinfected frequently.

Mr. Rendon said the committee had a very thorough discussion of the proposal.

Chair Garza said she is very impressed with the renovated space, which, she said, is well-planned. The feedback from the students was very constructive and the architects did an excellent job of designing the space.

**A motion was made by Mr. Rendon to approve the furniture purchase for the “Oliveira Student Services Center Second Floor Renovation” project in the total amount of \$391,960 directly from furniture manufacturers through the purchasing cooperatives contracts as presented and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the purchase order contracts. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro and carried with five votes and two absences.**

## 8. Budget Committee

Chair Garza called on Vice Chair Herrera to make the report.

### a. Update on grants awarded to Texas Southmost College for the month of August 2020

Dr. Angelica Fuentes, Associate Vice President of Academic Success, was called on to present the update. She reported on the grants awarded to Texas Southmost College in August.

The item was for information only. No action was taken.

**b. Report on the Monthly Financial Statement for the Month Ending July 31, 2020**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the update. She provided a detailed report for the Board.

The item was for information only. No action was taken.

**c. Consideration and possible action on approval of the updated Tuition and Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2021**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. She stated they were not proposing any changes in tuition, only to fees. The proposed changes included:

- Remove the Foreign Insurance fee
- Add the new Industrial Maintenance and Mechanic program to the liability insurance requirement
- Add testing certification fees for prior learning assessment fees (work portfolio and industry certification)
- Add an additional Workforce Program fee schedule

Vice Chair Herrera stated the committee met with the administration to review the proposal thoroughly and asked many questions.

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Herrera to approve the proposed Tuition and Fee Schedule effective Fall 2020. The motion was seconded by Secretary Zavaleta and carried with five votes and two absences.**

Mr. Rendon excused himself from the meeting at this time. Mr. Perez confirmed there was still a quorum and the board could continue with the agenda.

**9. Facilities Committee**

Chair Garza called on Vice Chair Herrera to give the report.

**a. Facilities project updates**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. She presented updates on the Workforce Training labs including the welding program.

Chair Garza asked Dr. Fleishman to explain the commissioning process for the equipment. Dr. Fleishman said industry representatives have reviewed the systems, and all pipes, valves, dampers, and other aspects of the equipment, and all have been certified as safe. Dr. Figueroa continued presenting updates on the Plumbing, Pipefitting, Electrical, Industrial Maintenance, and Criminal Justice programs.

Mr. Ariel De la Fuente reported on the status of the roofing renovations and the Oliveira Student Services renovations.

Dr. Zavaleta asked if there is an alert system if the exhaust systems in the welding booths fail. Dr. Fleishman said yes, there is an automated system that would shut down the system if there is failure and an alarm sounds to alert faculty and students.

The item was for information only. No action was taken.

**b. Consideration and possible action on award RFQ 20-23 for “Architect/ Engineer Professional Services for Campus Parking Lot Improvements”**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. Dr. Figueroa discussed the Request for Qualifications timeline and a description of the services TSC is seeking. The college received six responses to the Request for Qualifications. Funding for the work will come from the parking lot fund. Dr. Figueroa stated the selection committee was confident any of the three highest rated companies could successfully complete the project.

Vice Chair Herrera said the committee recommended the contract be awarded to Ambiotec Civil Engineering Group, Inc., which is a local company so the funding for the project can stay in Brownsville.

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Herrera to award RFQ 20-23 for “Architect/ Engineer Professional Services for Campus Parking Lot Improvements” to Ambiotec Civil Engineering Group, Inc. and authorize President Rodriguez to negotiate and execute the contract, as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro and carried with four votes and three absences.**

**c. Consideration and possible action on award RFQ 20-22 for “Architect/ Engineer Professional Services for ITECC Roof Renovations”**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. She discussed the RFQ timeline and scope of work. The college received eight responses to the Request for Qualifications. Dr. Figueroa stated the selection committee was confident any of the three highest rated companies could successfully complete the project. Initial expenses will be funded through the current fiscal year budget.

Vice Chair Herrera said the committee discussed the item thoroughly and recommended the contract be awarded to a local company, Gomez/Mendez/Saenz, Inc.



Ms. Alejandro asked for clarification on why Gomez/Mendez/Saenz, Inc. was recommended even though they were ranked third highest. Vice Chair Herrera said since the companies were equally qualified to provide the services, the committee recommended to keep the assets in Brownsville.

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Herrera to award RFQ 20-22 for “Architect/ Engineer Professional Services for ITECC Roof Renovations” to Gomez/Mendez/Saenz, Inc. and authorize President Rodriguez to negotiate and execute the contract, as presented. The motion was seconded by Secretary Zavaleta and carried with four votes and three absences.**

**d. Consideration and possible action on award RFP 20-14 for “Internet Protocol (IP) Based Surveillance Camera and Door Access Control Systems”**

Mr. Luis Villarreal, Vice President for Information Technology, and Mr. Jaime Salazar, Executive Director of Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management, were called on to present the item. Mr. Villarreal said because of the advancement in technologies, TSC was able to combine what, in the past, would have been two RFPs into a single solicitation that would allow for a contact with one company to provide services for surveillance cameras and integrated door access control systems. Mr. Salazar presented the RFP timeline and scope of work. Mr. Villarreal said the upgrades are anticipated to last for 8-10 years. Eight vendors submitted proposals in response to the RFP. The committee conducted conferences via Zoom with the four highest-ranked companies. Johnson Controls Security Solutions was the company that earned the highest-ranking by the committee because of their expertise, warranty coverage, project management and fiscal stability.

Vice Chair Herrera asked how many cameras were recommended for purchase. Mr. Villarreal said 285 cameras were proposed. Vice Chair Herrera asked how many doors would be included in the control system. Mr. Villarreal responded the contract would cover door access control systems for 580 doors. Vice Chair Herrera asked who would be responsible for ensuring the project works. Mr. Villarreal said the vendor, the IT Division, and Mr. Salazar would be responsible. Vice Chair Herrera asked who will man the 285 cameras. Mr. Villarreal said most of the cameras will be monitored via recording, however, Mr. Salazar’s office will monitor the cameras on a rotating basis – focused on high traffic areas during peak times.

Secretary Zavaleta asked if all cameras are being recorded, how long are the recordings saved, and how long can they be accessed. Mr. Villarreal said camera video is recorded and stored in the cloud. The college will negotiate the length of time the video will be stored, which will most likely range from 30-60 days. Secretary Zavaleta asked if other agencies can access the video. Mr. Salazar said other agencies do not have access to the video recordings directly, however, we can exchange data when needed. Secretary Zavaleta asked if we are guaranteed that the vendor will assist when there is a problem with the system. Mr. Villarreal said he has experience with several of the top-ranked vendors and he has been very pleased with their support response time. Secretary Zavaleta asked about the security of the system. Mr. Villarreal said the system would be very difficult to hack. He said in terms of risk management, he would rather accept that risk, rather than the risk of not having a comprehensive system.

Ms. Alejandro said she is glad these upgrades are being proposed and thanked the staff for the thorough research.

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Herrera to award RFP 20-14 for “Internet Protocol (IP) Based Surveillance Camera and Door Access Control Systems” to Johnson Controls Security Solutions, LLC and authorize President Rodriguez to negotiate with the selected vendor and execute the Purchase Order contracts upon final negotiations. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro and carried with four votes and three absences.**

## **10. Executive Session**

The Board convened in Executive Session at 7:24 p.m.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:47 p.m.

## **11. Action on Executive Session Matters**

- a. Consultation with Attorney on Pending or Contemplated Litigation, Section 551.071 Texas Government Code**

No action was taken in open session

- b. Consultation with Attorney on Pending Real Estate Issues, Section 551.072 Texas Government Code**

No action was taken in open session

- c. Deliberation on Personnel Matters, Section 551.074 Texas Government Code**  
**i. Consideration of the TSC Strategic Priorities for FY2021**

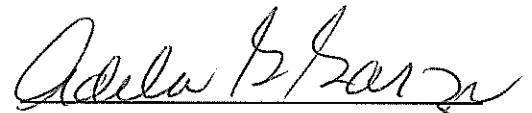
**Vice Chair Herrera made a motion to approve moving forward with the TSC Strategic Priorities for FY 2021. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro and carried unanimously.**

## **12. Announcement of Proposed Meeting Dates**

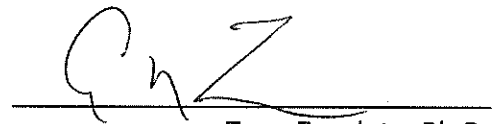
- a. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.**  
**b. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.**

**13. Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Vice Chair Herrera. The motion was seconded by Secretary Zavaleta and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.**



Ms. Adela G. Garza  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Tony Zavaleta, Ph.D.  
Secretary, Board of Trustees

The video recording of the Regular Board of Trustees meeting held on September 24, 2020, is available on the TSC.EDU website. Final version of the minutes presented by Claudia Cortina, Interim Chief of Staff and Board Liaison. Videotaping of the Board of Trustees' meetings began on April 11, 1996.