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**TSC President**

*Jesús Roberto Rodríguez, Ph.D.*

**TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE DISTRICT**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

**September 29, 2021**

The Board of Trustees of the Texas Southmost College District convened in open session on September 29, 2021 at 5:39 p.m. Board Members present were Mr. Ruben Herrera, Chair; Dr. Tony Zavaleta, Vice Chair; Ms. Eva Alejandro, Secretary; Mrs. Adela Garza; Ms. Alejandra Aldrete; Mrs. Delia Saenz; and Mr. J.J. De Leon. Also present was Dr. Jesús Roberto Rodríguez, President of Texas Southmost College.

**REGULAR MEETING  
AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Herrera at 5:39 p.m. He called role and confirmed a quorum.

**2. Pledges of Allegiance**

Vice Chair Zavaleta led the United States Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge of Allegiance during the regular meeting.

**3. Public Comment**

Chair Herrera asked if there were any speakers signed up for public comment. There were no public speakers.

**4. President's Report**

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

**Welcome Week**

TSC started the fall semester with in-person classes. Since the majority of instruction has been offered remotely for a year and a half, this was the first time many first- and second-year students attended class on campus. Students were able to participate in two event-filled weeks organized by Student Life. After the Labor Day holiday, TSC pivoted to three weeks of remote instruction in an abundance of caution due to the traditional spikes in cases of COVID-19 following a holiday weekend. Faculty and students returned to in-person instruction Monday, September 27th.

### **AmeriCorps initiatives**

As part of the Welcome Week activities, TSC partnered with the local Walmart on Boca Chica Boulevard to provide 200 bags of groceries to TSC students during the Back-to-School Brain Food event. Funded through a Walmart Community Grant, and matched by the local Walmart, the event was designed to help combat food insecurity among students on campus. Each bag distributed to TSC students included canned goods, fruits, pasta, breakfast items and snacks. The Back-to-School Brain Food event is one of several anti-poverty initiatives TSC is developing through the AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) program.

Another AmeriCorps VISTA initiative underway is the Scorpion Connection mentor program. Last year our TSC Mentor Specialist VISTA conducted extensive research and developed a pilot program to launch the mentor program with 18 mentor-student pairs. At the end of the semester, students reported the program helped them feel supported in their studies. They also said their mentors helped their awareness of key TSC programs and opportunities they would not have known of otherwise. Some students said their mentor helped them identify skills they had that would translate directly to new career pathways they had not previously considered. This semester there are 28 mentor-student pairs connected, and the program continues to grow. President Rodríguez extended his thanks to Dr. Angela McCauley, who is helping to lead the TSC AmeriCorps VISTA program effort.

### **Remembrance Day Message**

TSC posted a 9/11-- 20th anniversary Remembrance Day message on TSC's Facebook page and YouTube platform. President Rodríguez thanked the Multi-Media and Student Services departments for their agility in putting together the thoughtful video that paid tribute to the victims of the attacks and honored the thousands of survivors.

### **SpaceX**

As part of the college's ongoing community engagement efforts, TSC's 21st Century Community Learning Center took 50 BISD students on the first of two SpaceX Starbase tours on September 25th. The tour provided students with a unique educational experience in rocket science, engineering, mathematics and many other fields of study. TSC's 21st Century Community Learning Center program is funded through a grant from the Texas Education Agency.

### **Legislative Trip**

President Rodríguez accompanied Board Chair Herrera, Past Chair Garza, and Trustee De Leon, to a Legislative visit in Washington, D.C. During the trip they met with Senator Ted Cruz, as well as the Chiefs of Staff and representatives from the office of Senator John Cornyn, Congressman Filemon Vela, and Congressman Vicente Gonzalez. In addition, they met with U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland. The TSC delegation provided information regarding the college's strategic initiatives and thanked the elected officials for their continued support of TSC.

### **Workforce Training Donation**

The TSC Foundation received a generous donation from Steven De La Garza on September 8th when he presented a check for \$30,000. This was his second gift to TSC, and he indicated there would be more to come. As an entrepreneur and employer, Mr. De La Garza said he understands how earning a college education in workforce trades provides a direct pathway to economic prosperity for families. The donations will support full student scholarships for workforce training programs such as welding, industrial scaffolding, plumbing, and commercial roofing.

**TSC Men's Soccer**

The TSC Men's Soccer Team kicked off the 2021 season with a three-game undefeated streak. The Scorpions opened the season September 18th with a 2 to 0 home opening victory over St. Edward's University. The next weekend, the team played back-to-back games on the road, defeating Trinity 5 to 4 and playing UTSA to a 3-all tie. The next home game is Saturday, October 2nd at 11 a.m.; TSC will host Baylor University at Scorpion Field.

**TAMUK Trip**

A TSC delegation attended a Texas A&M University-Kingsville football game at the invitation of President Mark Hussey. President Rodríguez, Past Board Chair Adela Garza, Board Secretary Eva Alejandro and several of TSC administrators enjoyed the Javalina hospitality while strengthening the partnership between the two institutions.

**CCATT Annual Conference**

President Rodríguez and the Board of Trustees attended the Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT) Annual Conference held from September 16th to the 18th in Austin. Conference topics focused on student success, diversity and equity, COVID-19, accreditation, enrollment and managing change. The event provided participants with an excellent opportunity to explore best practices and collaborate and exchange ideas with colleagues across the state. During the working sessions, the team reviewed performance indicators that will be used to inform ongoing strategic planning.

**Industry-focused activities**

It was an active month for engagement with TSC economic development and industry partners. President Rodríguez participated in a roundtable session with Cameron County business and civic leaders during U.S. Senator John Cornyn's visit to the Rio Grande Valley earlier this month. During the event, President Rodríguez shared TSC's extensive experience in working collaboratively with industry to build customized training programs to address their workforce needs. He also pointed out that TSC's affordability—as the most affordable institution of higher education in the Rio Grande Valley—has increased student's access to college. In addition, he emphasized the advantage of having local decision-makers in the TSC Board of Trustees.

President Rodríguez also participated in a press conference announcing the partnership between TSC and Paragon VTOL Aerospace. The Greater Brownsville Incentive Corporation (GBIC) hosted the event on September 20th at the Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport. As Paragon's preferred higher education and workforce training partner, TSC will provide workforce training in the construction of micro grids and aircraft assembly, cybersecurity, and software infrastructure.

President Rodríguez said TSC is beginning to see the positive outcomes of the Board's investments in the college's infrastructure, curriculum, equipment, and campus improvements. He thanked the faculty, staff, and administration who are working relentlessly to make TSC the destination for regional workforce training.

The Board engaged in a discussion of the positive impact of board attending the CCATT annual conference together, and Chair Herrera recognized Mr. Oscar Hernandez, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Compliance and Interim Associate Vice President of Student Services, for his

exceptional work in ensuring TSC meets all Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) standards for accreditation.

**5. Consideration and possible action on the minutes of the following meetings:**

**a. Regular Meeting – August 26, 2021**

**Vice Chair Zavaleta made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on August 26, 2021. Secretary Alejandro seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**6. Academic Committee**

Chair Herrera called on Past Chair Garza to present the report.

**a. Consideration and possible action to approve the Clinical Affiliation Agreement with Valley Baptist Medical Center – Harlingen for the Health Professions programs**

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, and Dr. David Pearse, Dean of Health Professions, were called upon to present the agenda item. Dr. Kile said the proposal is for a renewal of the affiliation agreement with Valley Baptist Medical Center – Harlingen for the Associate Degree Nursing, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Emergency Medical Services, Medical Laboratory Technology, Radiology Technology, Respiratory Care Sciences and Vocational Nursing programs.

**A motion was made by Past Chair Garza to approve the clinical affiliation agreement with Valley Baptist Medical Center – Harlingen for the Health Professions programs and authorize President Rodríguez to sign the agreement. Mr. De Leon seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.**

**b. Consideration and possible action on the Academic Agreement for the award of dual credits between Texas Southmost College and Out-of-Service Area school districts**

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, and Mr. Jose Arambul, Executive Director of High School Programs and Services, were called upon to present the agenda item. Dr. Kile said Administration is seeking approval for an Academic Agreement specific to Out-of-Service Area school districts. These partners would include school districts outside the geographic areas of Cameron and Willacy counties. The agreement is the same agreement as those made with in-district school district partners.

**A motion was made by Past Chair Garza to approve the Academic Agreement for the award of dual credit between Texas Southmost College and Out-of-Service Area school districts and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the agreement, as presented. The motion was seconded by Secretary Alejandro and carried unanimously.**

## 7. Finance Committee

Chair Herrera called on Past Chair Garza to present the report.

### a. Monthly Financial Statement Report for the month ended July 31, 2021

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called upon to present the agenda item. She introduced Mr. Carlos Pecero, Controller, who presented the monthly financial statement report for the month ended July 31, 2021.

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

### b. Update on grants awarded to Texas Southmost College for the months of August 2021

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Dr. Angelica Fuentes, Associate Vice President of Instruction-Academic Success, were called upon to present the item. Dr. Fuentes reported on the grants awarded to Texas Southmost College for the month of August 2021 as well as a summary of grants awarded during FY 2020-21.

Chair Herrera asked Dr. Fuentes to provide information on the percentage of grants awarded to workforce and academic programs in a future report.

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

### c. All Institutional CARES expenditures report

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. She reviewed expenditures to date from the institutional portion of federal CARES Act funding.

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

### d. Consideration and possible action on approval of matching grant support for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Texas Reskilling and Upskilling for Education (TRUE) Institutional Capacity grant

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, and Dr. Angelica Fuentes, Associate Vice President of Instruction-Academic Success, were called on to present the agenda item. Dr. Fuentes said THECB TRUE grant aims to accelerate the number of high value credential opportunities offered to students that is urgently needed for economic recovery due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a future competitive workforce in Texas. TSC will lead the submission of a proposal in a consortium with Houston Community College and San Jacinto College, which are all located by ports and aerospace industries. This consortium proposal will support the industry cluster of transportation, distribution, and logistics. The grant proposal will fund start-up costs for TSC programs in heavy diesel mechanics and logistics, including equipment, faculty credentialing, and curriculum development. If funded, TSC would receive up to \$650,000 through this grant opportunity requiring a 25% match of up to \$162,500.

**A motion was made by Past Chair Garza to approve the allocation of matching grant support in the amount of \$162,500, contingent on the Notice of Grant Award from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Zavaleta and carried unanimously.**

**e. Consideration and possible action on approval of Budget Amendment 22-001 to recognize Fall 21 lost revenue**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. During the Fall 2021 semester, TSC collected \$521,798 less in tuition compared to the Fall 2019 semester. The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERFII) allows institutions to claim the lost revenue. Following grant guidelines, TSC is able to claim the lost revenue of \$521,798, which is presented as a proposed budget amendment.

**A motion was made by Past Chair Garza to approve Budget Amendment 22-001 for Fiscal Year 2022 as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Saenz and carried unanimously.**

**f. Consideration and possible action on agreement for legal services with Mr. Ruben R Peña**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. The proposal is to continue to contract with Mr. Ruben R. Peña for legal services.

**A motion was made by Past Chair Garza to approve a new agreement for legal services with Mr. Ruben R. Peña and authorize President Rodríguez to sign agreement, as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Zavaleta and carried unanimously.**

**8. Facilities Committee**

Chair Herrera called on Trustee Saenz to present the report.

**a. Consideration and possible action on approval of three commercial rooftop HVAC units purchase for the International Technology, Education, and Commerce Center (ITECC) building**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Mr. Jaime Salazar, Associate Vice President of Operations, were called on to present the item. Mr. Salazar said TSC is in need of three cooling/heating commercial rooftop units for Praxedis Orive Technical training Center area at ITECC. The purchase would be made through the Buyboard purchasing cooperative.

**A motion was made by Trustee Saenz to approve the purchase of three commercial rooftop HVAC units for ITECC building in the total amount of \$91,483 from Trane through BuyBoard purchasing cooperative contract 631-20 and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the purchase order contract, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and carried unanimously.**

**b. Facilities update**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Mr. Jaime Salazar, Associate Vice President of Operations, were called on to present the item. Mr. Salazar reported out on the status of the JC Penny's roof repair, Dillard's roof, parking lot project, and courtroom project.

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

**9. Student Services Committee**

Chair Herrera called on Vice Chair Zavaleta to present the report.

**a. Presentation on Student Services REK Improvements**

Mr. Luis Villarreal, Vice President of Information Technology and Interim Vice President of Student Services was called upon to present the agenda item. He reported out on a list of facility improvements including deep cleaning and painting, and the repair or replacement of equipment such as drinking fountains, pool lights, boiler, and water backflow valve.

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

**10. Policy Committee**

Chair Herrera called upon Trustee Alejandro to present the report.

**a. Consideration and possible action on approval of local policies (update 41) DEC (LOCAL) Compensation and Benefits Leaves and Absences, DLB (LOCAL) Employment Performance: Suspension, DMAA (LOCAL) Term Contracts: Termination Mid-Contract, DMAB (LOCAL) Term Contracts: Nonrenewal, and ECC (LOCAL) Instructional Arrangements: Course Load and Schedules**

**LOCAL:**

**Section D – Personnel**

DEC (LOCAL) COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS: LEAVES AND ABSENCES

DLB (LOCAL) EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: SUSPENSION

DMAA (LOCAL) TERM CONTRACTS: TERMINATION MID-CONTRACT

DMAB (LOCAL) TERM CONTRACTS: NONRENEWAL

**Section E – Instruction**

ECC (LOCAL) INSTRUCTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS: COURSE LOAD AND SCHEDULES

Mr. Ruben Peña, College Legal Counsel, was called on to present the agenda item. Mr. Peña said he reviewed the proposed updates, which are in compliance with state and federal laws.

**A motion was made by Trustee Saenz to adopt local policies from update 41 DEC (LOCAL) Compensation and Benefits Leaves and Absences, DLB (LOCAL) Employment Performance: Suspension, DMAA (LOCAL) Term Contracts: Termination Mid-Contract, DMAB (LOCAL) Term Contracts: Nonrenewal, and ECC (LOCAL) Instructional Arrangements: Course Load and Schedules as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Aldrete and carried unanimously.**

#### **11. Executive Session**

The Board convened in Executive Session at 6:43 p.m.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:37 p.m.

#### **12. 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**

- Consideration and possible action on the Salary Schedule

**Trustee Aldrete made a motion to accept the FY 2020-21 salary schedule as presented in executive session. The motion was seconded by Trustee Saenz and passed unanimously.**

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

- a. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, October 21, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.**  
**b. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.**

#### **14. Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Past Chair Garza. The motion was seconded by Trustee Saenz and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.**





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Mr. Ruben Herrera  
Chair, Board of Trustees



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Ms. Eva Alejandro  
Secretary, Board of Trustees

The video recording of the Regular Board of Trustees meeting held on September 29, 2021, is available on the TSC.EDU website. These minutes were taken and transcribed by Dr. Angela K. McCauley, Director of Special Instructional projects. Videotaping of the Board of Trustees' meetings began on April 11, 1996.