



Board of Trustees

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TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE DISTRICT

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

November 19, 2020

The Board of Trustees of the Texas Southmost College District convened in open session via videoconference on November 19, 2020 at 5:33 p.m. Board Members present were Ms. Adela Garza, Chair; Mr. Ruben Herrera, Vice Chair; Dr. Tony Zavaleta, Secretary; Mr. J.J. De Leon; Ms. Eva Alejandro; Mrs. Delia Saenz; and Ms. Alejandra Aldrete. Also present was Dr. Jesús Roberto Rodríguez, President of Texas Southmost College, Mr. Frank Perez, Legal Counsel and Mr. Ruben Peña, Legal Counsel.

**REGULAR MEETING
AGENDA**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Garza, at 5:33 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 were no public speakers.

4. President's Report

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

Spring 2021 Enrollment Update

Enrollment for the spring semester has been underway for approximately six weeks. Currently, 1,923 students have enrolled for the semester, which is a 21% decrease from the same time last year. President Rodríguez said the lower enrollment is indicative of current enrollment trends nationally due to the pandemic.

Introduction of the Director of Foundation and Community Outreach

Mr. David Tumlinson IV has been named the new Director of Foundation & Community Outreach. Mr. Tumlinson has a strong background in operations, strategic plan development, and resource development-including grant writing and fundraising. He also has a distinguished record of local community service as a Rancho Viejo Alderman and board member of the Amigo Association, Moody Clinic, United Way of Southern Cameron County, and Leadership Brownsville. In addition, Mr. Tumlinson has been active in higher education, serving as an Adjunct Professor at UTRGV (2016-2018) and the last four years at Sam Houston State University (online).

Mr. Tumlinson earned his master's degree in Criminal Justice Leadership and Management from Sam Houston State University and his undergraduate degree in Political Science from St. Mary's University.

Introduction of Interim Executive Director of Human Resources

Dr. Eugene Connors was named Interim Executive Director of Human Resources. Dr. Connors previously served at TSC as a consultant for almost three years. He has an extensive background in education, including service as an inner-city high school teacher, school administrator, and assistant superintendent.

Dr. Connors received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida and became a well-published and respected professor of educational administration. He has served in numerous positions in higher education and has worked for large, multinational corporations, such as W.W. Kellogg.

Dr. Connors thanked the President and the Board for the opportunity to serve the college again.

Industrial Insulation Class & Graduation

TSC's Workforce Training and Continuing Education division graduated its first Industrial Insulation class on November 6th at the ITEC Center. Nine students participated in the first class and all were offered employment by BrandSafway, the college's industry partner who also has hired all of TSC's Industrial Scaffolding students. The next class begins on November 30th.

Forensics Macro Photography Class

Last month, TSC held its first Forensics Macro Photography class with three members of the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol's Missing Migrant unit. The agents will use their knowledge of the new technique to aid in reunifying migrant families. The course is taught by Thomas Kimbriel, a retired military, U.S. Border Patrol agent, and FBI task force officer.

Students enrolled in the course are trained in photography, photography lighting, post-mortem cleaning, and post-mortem documentation processes. The second cohort will graduate from the course on November 20, 2020.

Childcare Center Red Ribbon Week

TSC's Raul J. Guerra Early Childhood Center participated in Red Ribbon Week October 26th through October 30th. The theme was "Our Lil' Scorpions are SMART, BRAVE, AMAZING, and STRONG!"

Families and staff had the opportunity to express their creativity in a fun and safe manner, and the children wore different attire and had an activity promoting a theme each day. The week concluded with a superhero nature stroll along the Paseo.

Trick or Treat Drive Thru

TSC held a Trick-or-Treat Drive-Thru for students, faculty, staff and their families on October 30th at the Oliveira Student Services parking lot. During the event, participants were treated to TSC swag and treats. It was a great turnout with students and families showing off their Halloween costumes and decorated vehicles.

Winter Mini-mester

TSC is launching its first December Mini-mester this year. The Mini-mester is a four-week semester that is scheduled between the fall and spring semesters. Classes will be offered remotely, with a variety of general education core courses to choose from, including Biology II, Introduction to Criminal Justice, Composition II, U.S. History II, Elementary Statistical Methods, and General Psychology.

Students can accelerate their time to graduation by taking mini-mester courses, which are eligible for Financial Aid. As of November 19th, 62 students were enrolled for the Mini-Semester courses.

Community Engagement

President Rodríguez reported that TSC has been active in the community, while taking care to observe CDC guides and practice social distancing protocols in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Rodriguez shared a video presentation that highlighted the following events: Industrial Insulation program graduation, Forensic Macro Photography program launch, Childcare Center Red Ribbon Week, and the Trick-or-Treat Drive Through.

Dr. Rodriguez thanked the board for their continued support as the college continues spring enrollment activities and prepares for winter graduation. He also thanked the faculty and staff for their continued efforts.

Dr. Rodríguez read the following letter former trustee, Mr. Arturo Rendon asked to be shared with the TSC community:

November 15, 2020

Dear Fellow Board of Trustees:

I have completed my term as a TSC Trustee. It has been an honor for me to have served the college district, students, and staff during these past 6 years.

To the TSC family, please accept my deepest gratitude for the courtesies extended to me while I served on the board.

Serving in public office is neither easy nor necessarily comforting. It is about giving of your time, energy, and heart— for causes that sometimes go unnoticed. But in return, it is gratifying knowing that the community is better off because of your service.

I leave with many personal memories of my service to TSC and will miss my colleagues, workshops, board meetings, and especially the black coffee that aided me in staying alert as we focused on agenda items and a multitude of various documents.

Six years ago, my wife Nora, and I were enjoying the freedom of an empty nest when the grandchildren began to arrive. We now have four with a new one expected next month, and I need more than black coffee to stay up with them.

I will continue to follow TSC news, and Nora and I will become members of the TSC alumni organization.

I wish the board of trustees, Dr. Rodriguez and his staff nothing but success as you continue your journey in making TSC the best community college in Texas.

*Respectfully,
Art Rendon*

Chair Garza thanked Mr. Rendon for his dedicated service.

5. Administering Oath of Office to Elected Member

Chair Garza announced the swearing in of Mrs. Delia Saenz to the TSC Board of Trustees and shared her biographical highlights, which included her status as an alumna of TSC, her 30-year career in education, and her robust record of public service.

Cameron County District Attorney Luis V. Saenz administered the Statement of Elected Officers and the Oath of Office to Mrs. Saenz. Before doing so, he emphasized the significance of working on behalf of the people as a public servant and acting in the best interest of the students, community, and TSC.

Mrs. Saenz thanked the Board for their patience as she joined them as a new board member. She thanked the voters for the trust they put in her to serve.

She also congratulated President Rodríguez for the work that led up to earning accreditation. She pledged to be a good steward of taxpayer funding, and she pledged to ensure students have affordable to high-quality, affordable education.

6. Recess-Reception in the Performing Arts Center Lobby and in accordance with the CDC Guidelines

The board recessed at 5:59 p.m.

7. Board Reconvenes in the Performing Arts Center Auditorium

The board reconvened at 6:41 p.m.

8. Consideration and possible action on the minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 22, 2020.

A motion was made by Mrs. Saenz to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on October 22, 2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro and carried unanimously.

9. Academic Committee

Mr. Herrera called on Secretary Dr. Zavaleta to make the report.

- a. **Consideration and possible action on an amended Clinical Affiliation Agreement between Valley Baptist Medical Center and Texas Southmost College for the Associate Degree Nursing, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Emergency Medical Science, Licensed Vocational Nursing, Medical Laboratory Technology, Nurse Assistant, Radiologic Technology, and Respiratory Care programs**

Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, was called on to present the item. She stated the affiliation agreement with Valley Baptist Medical Center before the board for consideration included an amendment to the original agreement. The amendment includes updates to section 1G, training, and section 7D, privacy of information.

A motion was made by Secretary Zavaleta to approve the Clinical Affiliation Agreement between Valley Baptist Medical Center and Texas Southmost College for the Associate Degree Nursing, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Emergency Medical Science, Licensed Vocational Nursing, Medical Laboratory Technology, Nurse Assistant, Radiologic Technology, and Respiratory Care programs and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the related documents. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and carried unanimously.

10. Budget and Finance Committee

Chair Herrera gave the report.

- a. **Monthly Financial Statement Report for the Month Ending September 30, 2020**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the monthly financial statement report for the month ending September 30, 2020. There were no questions from the board.

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

- b. **Update on grants awarded to Texas Southmost College for the month of October 2020**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. She reported on the grants awarded to Texas Southmost College in October.

Mrs. Garza asked what the total amount for the Texas 21st Century Community Learning Center grant is. Dr. Figueroa said the Texas Education Agency awards TSC \$1.5 million each year of the grant. The grant has been extended from three to five years, so the total award is now \$7.5 million.

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

11. Facilities Committee

Mr. Herrera gave the report.

a. Facilities project updates

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. She updated the board on the progress of the Criminal Justice Institute simulation screen, Automotive Shop project, roofing renovations, and the Oliveira Student Services renovations.

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

12. Policies Committee

Chair Garza called on Ms. Alejandro to give the report.

a. Consideration and possible action on approval of local policies DIAA Local -Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Sex and Sexual Violence and FFDA Local - Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Sex and Sexual Violence**Section D – Personnel**

DIAA Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation - Sex and Sexual Violence

Section F - Students

FFDA Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation - Sex and Sexual Violence

Judge Felix Recio and Dr. Eugene Connors were called upon to present the item. Dr. Connors said the policies were recommended as a result of new national education policy. He said while there may be additional policy updates in the future, he recommends approval of these policies at this time.

A motion was made by Ms. Alejandro to approve local policies DIAA Local -Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Sex and Sexual Violence and FFDA Local - Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Sex and Sexual Violence as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Herrera and carried unanimously.

13. Consideration and possible action on Election of Officers of the Board of Trustees Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary

Chair Garza opened the floor for nominations, and nominated Mr. Herrera as Chair, Secretary Dr. Zavaleta as Vice Chair, and Ms. Eva Alejandro as Secretary. There were no other nominations made.

Chair Garza thanked the board and the President for their service and expressed confidence in the board's continued leadership.

A motion was made by Chair Garza to elect Mr. Herrera as Chair, Secretary Dr. Zavaleta as Vice Chair, and Ms. Eva Alejandro as Secretary. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Saenz and carried unanimously.

Mr. Herrera assumed his position as Chair and said he was humbled by the confidence conferred upon him. He thanked Mrs. Garza for her service.

14. Consideration and possible action to have committee meeting open to the public and to all board members to attend for transparency.

Mr. De Leon was called upon to present the item. He said he has long been an advocate for transparency, and believes the community deserves transparency in all board business. He reiterated that the committee meetings are not mandatory for board members to attend, but he would like all to be welcome.

Vice Chair Zavaleta said he supports Mr. De Leon's call for transparency. He said he consulted with TSC attorneys and they said it is lawful for committee meetings to be open to the public. He suggested the college do more to announce when the meetings will be held. He reminded the board that committee meetings cannot be held with a quorum of the full board.

Mr. De Leon said he also consulted with the TSC legal team to ensure the meetings could be held publically.

Mrs. Garza added that if there is a quorum at a committee meeting, it would result in having several board meetings per month. She said the way meetings are currently held have provided flexibility for board members' schedules. She said the board has always acted in transparency, and she is not in favor of opening committee meetings to the public.

Mr. De Leon said he has served on the board for two years and has not known how many committee meetings are held each month and he wants to be more informed about the board's deliberations.

Mrs. Saenz asked for clarification of what is allowed legally. Mr. Frank Perez said there is board policy that describes what can be done in committee meetings and what can be done in full board meetings. He said during committees, board members can ask as many questions as they would like, and it is the responsibility of all board members to review the information provided in committee meetings. He said this was a very good discussion for the board to have, and he would be available for further consultation and discussion, perhaps in a board workshop on the topic.

Mr. Ruben Pena said the issue that would arise if there is a committee meeting that has a quorum of the full board, the meeting agenda must be posted with 72-hours notice. He said if the meetings are live streamed and only two or three members are in session, then that would be allowable. He said there is flexibility to delay or postpone committee members using that format. He concurred with Mr. Perez that it would be good for the board to hold a workshop with the legal counsel so they can better understand what the board is trying to do.

Mrs. Garza made a motion to table the item so the board could have workshops. Chair Herrera said there was already a motion and a second on the floor for consideration.

Ms. Alejandro asked for clarification as to whether the committee meetings would be open to any board members or open to the public. Mr. De Leon said they would be open to any board member. He said the meeting agendas would have to be posted because there could possibly be a quorum. Ms. Alejandro said it is convenient to have small committee meetings which offers more flexibility for schedules.

Chair Herrera said in the four years he has been serving on committees, nothing has been kept from board members. He said all information is available to all board members and the public in the board packets, which represents full transparency. He said it may not be feasible for all board members to attend seven board meetings per month. He said the purpose of the committee meetings is to thoroughly research issues so they can be fully considered by the board.

A motion was made by Mr. De Leon to have committee meetings open to the public. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Delia Saenz.

Voting for the motion was Mr. De Leon. Voting against were Ms. Adela Garza, Dr. Tony Zavaleta, Ms. Eva Alejandro. Abstained were Ms. Dela Saenz and Ms. Alejandra Aldrete.

The item did not pass.

15. Executive Session

The Board convened in Executive Session at 7:20 p.m.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 8:20 p.m.

16. 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

- **Update on Real Estate matters**

No action was taken in open session.

- c. Deliberation on Personnel Matters, Section 551.074 Texas Government Code
 - Consideration and possible action on the FY 2020-2021 Salary Schedule

Mrs. Garza made a motion to accept the job description and job title in the salary schedule as recommended by administration. Mr. De Leon seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

17. Announcement of Proposed Meeting Dates

- a. Special Meeting Date – Monday, November 30, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.
- b. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, December 17th, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

18. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mrs. Garza. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.



Ruben Herrera, J.D.
Chair, Board of Trustees



Eva Alejandro
Secretary, Board of Trustees

The video recording of the Regular Board of Trustees meeting held on November 19, 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.