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TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE DISTRICT

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

March 25, 2021

The Board of Trustees of the Texas Southmost College District convened in open session via videoconference and in person on March 25, 2021 at 5:30 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, 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 Herrera at 5:30 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 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:

ADDY Awards

TSC's Media and Marketing department were recognized with 12 American Advertising Awards by the American Advertising Federation for graphic design work, enrollment campaigns, and videos produced in 2020-2021. The team earned five gold, two silver and three bronze ADDYs. They were also awarded Best of Video and Best of Online ADDY's.

President Rodríguez congratulated the entire Advancement and Communications team on the well-deserved awards, stating their efforts strongly support TSC's continued growth and visibility.

Online Orientation Award

TSC's Student Life department was selected as the winner of the 2020 Innovative Educators Online Orientation award for the Fall 2020 virtual Scorpion Success Orientation. Designed for first-time college students and their families, the Scorpion Success Orientation introduces them to TSC and promotes college services. This was the first TSC student orientation that was delivered 100% online.

Innovative Educators was so impressed with TSC's innovative use of media in the Educators Go2orientation platform, the TSC orientation site is now the organization's featured demo provided to all schools across the United States.

President Rodríguez congratulated the Student Life team and all who contributed to the achievement.

Charro Days Video

TSC kept the spirit of Charro Days alive this year by celebrating with a Charro Fest at Home video. Hosted by Student Life and produced by the Multimedia Department, the video was featured on TSC's Facebook and YouTube channels. This year's Charro Fest production included a welcome from the Board of Trustees and was emceed by Student Government Association President Angelique Treviño.

President Rodríguez thanked the Board of Trustees and all of the students and staff who supported the event.

Dr. Seuss Birthday Reading

TSC's Child Care Center hosted a Read-Along on March 2nd to commemorate Dr. Seuss' Birthday as part of the National Read Across America Day. President Rodríguez and Dr. Gisela Figueroa, TSC Vice President of Finance and Administration, enjoyed their time reading to the children.

President Rodríguez extend his thanks to the Child Care Center staff for the great work they are doing in educating the college's youngest Scorpions.

EMS Program & Respiratory Care Science Program Update

President Rodríguez called upon Associate Vice President of Instruction-Academic Success, Dr. Angelica Fuentes, to provide an update on the EMS and Respiratory Care Science programs.

Mr. Scott Nelson, Emergency Medical Science Program Director, reported out on efforts to increase the national certification pass rates for paramedic program graduates. Mr. Nelson has held 21, 2- to 3-hour, review sessions for graduates. Recordings of the sessions are provided to all graduates so they may review the various topic area and sample questions. The goal remains for the 2019 and 2020 graduates to test by May 1.

Dr. Fuentes announced the search continues for a full-time program director for the Respiratory Science Care program. The committee has interviewed several qualified candidates.

Schwickert's Press Conference

TSC has launched a new Roofing Pre-Apprentice program in partnership with Schwickert's Tecta America, which was announced at a press conference on March 3rd at TSC's Performing Arts Center. Through the partnership, TSC developed a new Roofing Pre-Apprentice program—the first of its kind in the Rio Grande Valley.

The 80-hour, two-week program is being offered free to the first 20 qualified participants, with the first cohort expected to begin training on April 5th. The company intends to hire all graduates at a starting salary of \$18 to \$20 per hour. After three years of employment, TSC graduates will become full-fledged roofing journeymen, which will double their pay on many projects.

President Rodríguez extended his thanks to Chair Herrera, and Trustees De Leon and Aldrete for participating in the press conference, as well as the entire board for their support. He also congratulated Dr. Joseph Fleishman, Associate Vice President of Workforce Development, for his work in establishing this partnership.

Women in STEM Day

TSC hosted the second annual Women in STEM Day, on March 12th. This year's virtual event for high school and college students was themed "STEM is your Superpower." It was designed to raise awareness about opportunities for women in STEM-related fields. Panelists included scientists, engineers, architects, STEM education specialists, professors, and technology managers and programmers.

President Rodríguez thanked the TSC's STEM planning committee, the Office of Student Services, and the Marketing and Multimedia departments for their collaboration on this successful event.

Latina Leadership & Empowerment Summit

As a reminder, tomorrow, March 26, TSC's Office of Student Life is hosting a Virtual Latina Leadership and Empowerment Summit from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

The summit will focus on the importance of education, leadership skills, and career development. This Woman's History Month event will feature an all-female panel, including Past Chair Garza, who will share her experiences as a Latina in leadership and servant leader.

Vaccination Clinic Drive Thru

TSC will host its sixth COVID-19 vaccination clinic drive thru March 26 at the TSC ITEC Center, in partnership with the City of Brownsville and the Brownsville Independent School District. The vaccination clinic is exclusively for those who are receiving their second dose. To date, 7,443 vaccinations have been administered at clinics held at the ITEC Center.

National Community College Month

April is National Community College month. TSC will take part in the celebration through a social media campaign aligned with the Texas Association of Community Colleges. The campaign will feature local and state-wide factoids highlighting how TSC and other community colleges make a great impact in their communities.

Video Presentation

President Rodríguez shared a video highlighting college activities since the board last met.

DOE Update

President Rodríguez called on Mr. Luis Villarreal, Vice President for Information Technology to provide us with an update on the Department of Education Desk Review.

Mr. Villarreal reminded the board that in March 2019 the Department of Education conducted an on-site review of TSC's financial aid department and disbursement of student federal aid funds. Approximately one and a half years after the review, the DOE issued the program report. After the President and Executive Cabinet reviewed the report, Mr. Villarreal began leading a task force to address several items that required further information or data, working with the DOE, the National Clearing House, and National Student Loan Data System staff. The task force did submit the required responses to the DOE by the February and March deadlines, and Mr. Villarreal feels confident the task force comprehensively addressed each item in the report.

President Rodríguez concluded his report by thanking the entire Scorpion family for their continued commitment to students and the communities TSC serves.

5. Consideration and possible action on the minutes of the following meetings:**a. Regular Meeting – February 25, 2021**

Mr. De Leon made a motion to approve the minutes for the Regular Meeting on February 25, 2021. Ms. Aldrete seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. Finance Committee

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

a. Monthly Financial Statement Report for the Month Ending of January 31, 2021

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the agenda item. She introduced Mr. Carlos Pecero, Controller, to report out on the monthly financial statement report for the month ending January 31, 2021.

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 February 2021

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. She introduced Dr. Angelica Fuentes, Associate Vice President of Instruction-Academic Success, who reported on the grant awarded to Texas Southmost College in February.

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

c. Consideration and possible action on adoption of the 2021 Historic Preservation Plan Resolution granting tax exemptions to eligible historic sites listed in the 2021 Historic Preservation Plan adopted by the City of Brownsville

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. She shared the City of Brownsville's request for TSC District tax exemptions for 99 eligible historic sites in Brownsville. She said the resolution would result in \$26,610 in exemptions for the district.

Chair Herrera called upon Mr. Juan Velez, Historic Preservation Officer, to provide more information regarding the exemptions. Mr. Velez, explained the rationale for the Historic Preservation plan, criteria for qualifying for the exemption, and the process for approving the preservation plan. He highlighted several examples of renovated buildings.

A motion was made by Mrs. Garza to adopt the 2021 Historic Preservation Plan Resolution granting tax exemptions to eligible historic sites listed in the 2021 Historic Preservation Plan adopted by the City of Brownsville. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and passed unanimously.

d. Consideration and possible action on award RFP 21-08 for "Advanced Birthing Simulator Mom and Baby"

Dr. Angelica Fuentes, Associate Vice President of Instruction-Academic Success, was called on to present the item. She noted the proposed equipment would be purchased with grant funding. Dr. Fuentes and Ms. Mary Beth Kasprisin, Director of Associate Degree Nursing, reviewed the RFP scope of work, proposed equipment, review committee members, pricing tabulation, and the budget and financial impact.

Dr. Fuentes said the Texas Board of Nursing allows 50% of required student clinical hours to be met by using high-fidelity manikins, such as the one proposed. Ms. Kasprisin said the grant award exceeds the purchase price for the equipment, so the balance can be used for other items for the program.

A motion was made by Mrs. Garza to award RFP 21-08 for "Advanced Birthing Simulator Mom and Baby" to CAE Healthcare, Inc. in the amount of \$96,777 and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the Purchase Order contracts, as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Aldrete and carried unanimously.

e. Consideration and possible action on approval of Cisco Meraki Hardware

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the item. Dr. Figueroa stated the proposed hardware would be purchased using funding awarded to TSC through the federal CARES Act. The new infrastructure hardware will support new pedagogy required as a result of the pandemic and replace end-of-life hardware on campus. Mr. Villarreal said the college will receive a 50% discount by purchasing through the State of Texas Department of Information Resources Reseller Contract.

A motion was made by Mrs. Garza to approve the purchase of Cisco Meraki hardware from CDW Government in the amount of \$702,370 through Texas DIR contract and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the Purchase Order contracts, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Saenz and passed unanimously.

f. Consideration and possible action on approval of computer equipment purchase from Dell Marketing, LP

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Mr. Luis Villarreal, Vice President of Information Technology, were called on to present the item. Dr. Figueroa said the proposed purchase would also be funded through the CARES Act and would also be discounted by purchasing through State of Texas Department of Information Resources Reseller Contract. Mr. Villarreal said the proposal is to acquire a number of new computers to replace those that are no longer supported through software updates because of their age and additional computers that will provide faculty with flexibility in the classroom.

A motion was made by Mrs. Garza to approve the purchase of computer equipment not to exceed the total amount of \$750,000 directly from the manufacturer—Dell Marketing, LP—through the Texas DIR contract and authorize President Rodríguez to execute the Purchase Order contracts, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and passed unanimously.

7. Facilities Committee

Chair Herrera called upon Mrs. Saenz to present the report.

a. ITECC Building Space Update

Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, was called on to present the agenda item. Dr. Figueroa introduced Mr. Ariel de la Fuente, Executive Director of Facilities and Physical Plant, who provided the board with an update on the ITEC Center. He reviewed the building layout and building usage. He distinguished space in use by TSC, in use by tenants, vacant, and unusable. He said space is considered unusable when it has serious roofing problems and/or a lack of HVAC.

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

8. Policy Committee

Chair Herrera called upon Ms. Alejandro to present the report.

a. Consideration and possible action on adoption of LOCAL policies CF, DC, DEC, and DMAA

Section C – Business and Support Services CF Purchasing and Acquisition

Mr. Ruben Peña, TSC legal counsel, was called upon to present the item. He said the changes proposed are for the fiscal levels that the board would authorize for different purchasing methods. Mr. Pena said the proposed changes would allow the college to be more nimble in purchasing goods and services. Additional proposed changes include professional services and electronic bids or proposals that were suggested by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB).

Ms. Alejandro said the packet includes two options for purchasing thresholds for when the purchasing method would require a formal solicitation process and a contract would require board approval. Option A establishes the threshold at \$49,999, and option B establishes the threshold at \$24,499. The board engaged in a discussion of the options presented.

A motion was made by Mrs. Aldrete to approve the purchasing thresholds in Option B, remove the additions on page two regarding professional services and add the section on page three regarding electronic bidding. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and passed unanimously.

Following additional discussion, Ms. Aldrete withdrew her original motion, and Mr. De Leon withdrew his second. Ms. Aldrete then made a new motion to permit the administration to revise Option B to be more clear and bring it back to the board. Mr. De Leon seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Section D – Personnel DC Employment Practices

Mr. Peña said the proposed change states that salary information will only be disclosed when accompanied by a signed release form from the employee in accordance with the Texas Freedom of Information Act.

A motion was made by Mrs. Saenz to adopt local policy DC, Employee Practices. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and passed unanimously.

DEC Compensations and Benefits – Leaves and Absences

Mr. Peña said the proposed change to local policy DEC is to standardize the start and end period for FLMA leave.

A motion was made by Ms. Alejandro to adopt local policy DEC, Compensation and Benefits – Leaves and Absences. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon, and passed unanimously.

DMAA Term Contracts – Termination Mid-Contract

Mr. Peña said the proposed change brings the policy into compliance with statutory law, which regulates how employees are terminated mid-contract.

A motion was made by Ms. Alejandro to adopt local policy DMAA, Term Contracts— Termination Mid-Contract. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Saenz and passed unanimously.

b. Discussion and review of LEGAL policies

Mrs. Alejandro said since the board does not have jurisdiction to change the legal policies, Mr. Peña suggested the appropriate action would be to acknowledge the updates.

A motion was made by Mrs. Alejandro to acknowledge the updates made to LEGAL policies per TASB update #40 as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and passed unanimously.

c. Consideration and possible action on LOCAL policy Agreements with Texas Southmost College.

Mrs. Alejandro called upon Dr. Joseph Fleishman, Associate Vice President of Instruction-Workforce Development, to review the information he shared during the committee meeting.

Dr. Fleishman said in his experience, he has not found it to be a practice to bring workforce agreements before boards of trustees because agreements are often fast-moving and fluid, as the needs of companies rapidly change.

Chair Herrera said the purpose of the policy is to keep the board informed of agreements that are in progress, and he noted the exemptions allowed in the proposal. The board engaged in a discussion of the proposed policy and its implications.

A motion was made by Chair Herrera to table the item until the policy can be reviewed by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and passed unanimously.

9. Consideration and possible action on the proposed termination of Dr. Jonathan Dotson. At the request of the grievant this will be an open hearing pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act section 551.074 (b)

Mr. Ruben Peña, TSC legal counsel, requested that the item be passed. Chair Herrera confirmed the request from legal counsel to pass the item, which he granted.

10. Executive Session

The Board convened in Executive Session at 7:25 p.m.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 7:53 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

- Update on Real Estate matters

No action was taken in open session.

c. Deliberation on Personnel Matters, Section 551.074 Texas Government Code

- Update on Personnel Matters

No action was taken in open session.

- Consideration and possible action on the FY 2020-2021 Salary Schedule

Mr. De Leon made a motion to accept the salary schedule as discussed in executive session. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Saenz and passed unanimously.

Dr. Rodríguez addressed the board, expressing his appreciation for their feedback. He said the college is fortunate to have an active and involved board that is passionate about what we do at Texas Southmost College, as well as a powerhouse team dedicated to serving the community with integrity and professionalism. He thanked the board for their support.

Chair Herrera thanked President Rodríguez for his dedicated service, and Mrs. Garza acknowledged the magnificent administrative team he's created. Furthermore, she is pleased to be a part of the established 'team of eight.'

12. Announcement of Proposed Meeting Dates

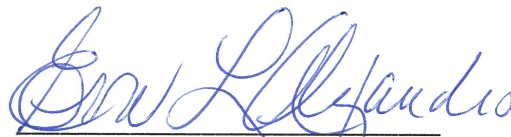
- a. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.
- b. Regular Board Meeting – Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

13. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. De Leon. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Garza and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.



Mr. Ruben Herrera
Chair, Board of Trustees



Ms. Eva Alejandra
Secretary, Board of Trustees

The video recording of the Regular Board of Trustees meeting held on March 25, 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.