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Texas Southmost College District

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

February 21, 2019

The Board of Trustees of the Texas Southmost College District convened in open session on February 21, 2019, at 5:33 p.m., in the Gorgas Board Room at Texas Southmost College. Board Members present were Ms. Adela Garza, Chair, Mr. Trey Mendez; Vice Chair, Mr. Ruben Herrera, Secretary, Ms. Eva Alejandro, Mr. Art Rendon, and Mr. J.J. De Leon, Jr. Absent was Dr. Antonio Zavaleta. Also present was Dr. Jesús Roberto Rodríguez, President of Texas Southmost College.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Adela Garza at 5:33 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Art Rendon led the United States Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comment.

There were no speakers.

4. Consideration and possible action on the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 31, 2019

**Consideration and possible action on the
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 31, 2019**

A motion was made by Mr. Mendez to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 31, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rendon and carried with six votes in favor and one absent.

5. President's Report

Chair Garza called on President Rodriguez to give his report. Dr. Rodriguez reported on the following items.

- **Spring 2019 Enrollment**

The college's total enrollment for the spring 2019 semester is 7,550 students. This represents an approximate 12.4% increase over last year's spring enrollment. Furthermore, on-campus enrollment is 3,447 students, a 1.6% increase over the spring 2018 on-campus enrollment. Dual and Early College High School enrollment is 4,103 students, a 22.37% increase over the spring 2018 enrollment.

The spring 2019 enrollment sets the record as the highest enrollment for Texas Southmost College since we reopened in the fall of 2013.

Dr. Rodriguez thanked the Board of Trustees for their leadership and everyone from the campus community and community partners for their efforts and support in growing the college.

- **SACSCOC Reaffirmation Update**

The SACSCOC Compliance Certification document is in the mail and on its way to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee members. The Off-Site Committee must receive this Compliance Certification by March 1st. The President thanked all who were involved in putting together the report. Special recognition was given to Mr. Oscar Hernandez, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Compliance and SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, and to Dr. Angelica Fuentes, Associate Vice President for Instruction – Academic Success, for their support in this endeavor.

- **Upcoming Events**

A list of upcoming meetings and events was provided to the Trustees. President Rodriguez made special note of the TSC Amigofest, which is scheduled to take place on February 28, 2019, at 11 a.m., at the TSC Performing Arts Center.

- **Video Presentation**

The President concluded his report by sharing the month's video presentation, which highlighted several events and activities that occurred since the last Board Meeting. He thanked everyone for their hard work and commitment during the start of the spring semester.

6. Executive Session

The Board convened in Executive Session at 5:45 p.m.

The Board reconvened in Regular Session at 6:56 p.m.

7. Action on Executive 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**

No action was taken in open session.

8. Report on marketing efforts for new student recruitment

Chair Garza called on Dr. Rodriguez to introduce the item. Dr. Rodriguez remarked that since his arrival at TSC approximately a year and a half ago, he has been working very diligently with the faculty, staff and administration to create a welcoming environment that provides a sense of belonging for our students and community. He added that the marketing and recruitment efforts are focused on creating awareness about the college and the multiple educational opportunities available to them in their own backyard, here, at Texas Southmost College.

President Rodriguez introduced Dr. Larry Rideaux, Vice President of Student Services, Ms. Melinda Rodriguez, Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Community Relations, and Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, to make a presentation on the efforts each of their areas are undergoing for the purposes of marketing and recruitment at the college.

This item was for information purposes only. No action was taken.

9. Academic Committee Report

Chair Garza called on Ms. Eva Alejandro to make the report. Ms. Alejandro stated that the committee met Thursday, February 14th and discussed several items. Dr. Zavaleta, who serves as the Chair of the Academic Committee, was unable to attend.

**a. Consideration and possible action on
approval of a Clinical Affiliation Agreement with
Valley Doctors Clinic in Brownsville for
the EMS, LVN, and ADN programs**

A motion was made by Ms. Alejandro to approve a Clinical Affiliation Agreement with Valley Doctors Clinic in Brownsville for the EMS, LVN, and ADN programs and authorize the President to sign the agreement. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and carried with six votes in favor and one absent.

b. Consideration and possible action on the submission of letters of assurance in support of Brownsville Independent School District's Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) designation renewal application for two of their comprehensive Early College High Schools

A motion was made by Ms. Alejandro to authorize President Rodriguez to sign the letters of assurance in support of Brownsville Independent School District's Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) designation renewal applications for two of their comprehensive Early College High Schools. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and carried with six votes in favor and one absent.

c. Consideration and possible action on approval of a new Associate of Applied Science in Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology (AAS.IMMT) degree

Ms. Alejandro called on Dr. Joanna Kile, Vice President of Instruction, and Dr. Murad Abusalim, Dean of STEM/CTE, to present the item. Dr. Abusalim gave an overview of the data collected for the development of the proposal for a new Associate of Applied Science in Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance degree at TSC. The information included the proposed curriculum, statistics for job availability, and the resources needed to implement the proposed degree.

Mr. Herrera raised a question about the requirement of a speech and composition courses due to the nature of this technical degree. Dr. Abusalim explained that this type of course is required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to assist the students in the development of soft skills, such as interpersonal communication.

Dr. Kile explained that the proposed curriculum has been approved by the college's curriculum and instruction committee and the program's advisory committee. If approved by the Board, the proposal would next go to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and finally to SACSCOC for approval. The earliest anticipated date that the program would be offered is the spring of 2020.

Mr. Rendon asked how many students were expected in the first cohort. Dr. Abusalim responded that they are planning to start with a cohort of 15 students, conservatively speaking, but if more students register, the department is prepared to accommodate them.

Mr. Mendez asked about the sufficiency of the budget request for the faculty portion of the proposal. Dr. Abusalim confirmed that the proposal is to hire one person for this program. This new faculty member would teach everything that is specific to industrial maintenance. This is achievable because other courses required in the degree can be taught by instructors who are already teaching the subject matter in other programs.

Mr. Herrera added that the funding request for this item, in the amount of \$633,000, when combined with other agenda items being presented at the meeting, is part of an approximately \$10 million budget request that the administration is proposing. He also stated that the proposed program is excellent; however, he urged his fellow board members to pay attention to the budget amounts.

A motion was made by Ms. Alejandro to approve the proposed new Associate of Applied Science in Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology (AAS.IMMT) degree. The initial implementation of proposed degree is spring 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon. Mr. Herrera abstained. The motion carried with five votes in favor, one absent, and one abstention.

10. Budget and Finance Committee Report

Chair Garza called on Mr. Herrera to present the items. The committee met on February 18th to discuss several items.

**a. Consideration and possible action on
acceptance of \$35,797 from Region One Educational Service Center
for GEAR UP Year 8 activities**

Mr. Herrera called on Ms. Melinda Rodriguez and Dr. Larry Rideaux to present the item.

Mr. Mendez asked if the in-kind amounts had been reviewed by GEAR UP. Ms. Rodriguez affirmed that the amounts allocated had already gone through the process and have been approved.

A motion was made by Mr. Mendez to accept the award for the GEAR UP Year 8 program in the amount of \$35,797 from Region One Education Service Center and authorize President Rodriguez to execute the related documents. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and carried with six votes in favor and one absent.

**b. Consideration and possible action
adoption of a bank resolution for signature card authorization**

Dr. Gisela Figueroa explained that the purpose of the resolution is to list the officers that the College will authorize to open CD accounts at banking institutions.

A motion was made by Mr. Rendon to adopt the resolution for signature card authorization. The motion was seconded by Mr. Herrera and carried with six votes in favor and one absent.

**c. Consideration and possible action on
adoption of the 2019 Historic Preservation Plan**

Mr. Herrera called on Ms. Myrna Leal, Planner I from the City of Brownsville, to present the 2019 Historical Preservation Plan. Ms. Leal provided an overview of the plan, including the adoption process, related ordinance, and the adoption schedule.

A motion was made by Mr. Herrera to adopt the resolution granting certain tax exemptions to eligible historic sites under the 2019 Historical Preservation Plan, as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alejandro. Mr. Mendez abstained. The motion carried with five votes in favor, one absent, and one abstention.

**d. Consideration and possible action on
award of RFP 19-02 for "Campus General Building Construction Services"**

Mr. Herrera called on Dr. Gisela Figueroa, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Mr. Ariel De La Fuente, Executive Director of Facilities and Physical Plant, to present the item. Dr. Figueroa stated that throughout the fiscal year, the college has the need to outsource minor construction services below the threshold for board approval. Board approval of this item would help maintain preservation and operation of campus facilities as needed, as well as avoid accumulation of projects that total over the \$25,000 threshold. This item does not prevent any items that meet or surpass the \$25,000 threshold to be brought before the board for approval.

A question was posed as to why the choice was made to select five of the participating bidders. Dr. Figueroa explained that this would give the college the ability to negotiate and also ensure availability for more time-sensitive projects.

Further discussion ensued regarding the evaluation process and committee for the RFP. A recommendation was made to have evaluators review the RFP separately and score the bidders separately, and then come together with the committee to share their evaluations. Furthermore, having a more diverse group of evaluators was suggested when selecting a review committee. Dr. Figueroa later explained that the committee was comprised of the field operators, supervisors and directors because they are the subject experts in the field and have a clearer grasp in the area of need.

Additionally, discussion was raised regarding the ambiguity of the scoring criteria labeled as "other". Dr. Figueroa explained that this specific criterion is for any other item that the committee finds relevant for the purposes of the RFP.

A question was posed as to whether or not the process could be re-done or if there was any pending urgent items hinging on the outcome of this decision. In response, Dr. Figueroa stated that it could be re-done and that there are no existing projects that would stall if the process was re-done.

Dr. Figueroa was asked what would change if this process was re-done. She responded that a more diverse evaluation committee could be gathered to evaluate the bids. Following her response, a question was posed as to whether other evaluators would have the expertise to make a reliable decision. A comment was made that these directors and supervisors were hired and put in place for their expertise and to make decisions of this nature.

A motion was made by Mr. Herrera to table the item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mendez. Ms. Alejandro abstained. The motion was declined with two votes in favor, three votes Nay, one abstention, and one absent.

A motion was made by Mr. De Leon to award RFP 19-02 for “Campus General Building Construction Services” to Holchemont, LTD, JD & Associates, SpawGlass Contractors, Inc, Signs & More, and Ziwa Corporation for the period of February 2019 to August 31, 2020 and authorize the President to execute purchases as needed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rendon. Mr. Herrera and Mr. Mendez voted Nay. The motion carried with four votes in favor, two votes Nay, and one absent.

**e. Consideration and possible action on
Budget Amendments for the allocation of funding for
the improvement of learning spaces, including the
first year construction and equipment costs associated with the
Welding, Electrical, Pipefitting, Plumbing, Industrial Mechanics
and Maintenance Technology and Criminal Justice Institute program**

Mr. Herrera called on Dr. Joanna Kile, Dr. Gisela Figueroa, and Dr. Joseph Fleishman to provide a presentation of the item.

Mr. Herrera stated that this funding request totals over \$2 million and it includes the \$633,000 for the new associate degree program that was approved by the Board earlier in the meeting.

Dr. Fleishman stated that the LNG companies are forecasted to begin operations in the third quarter of 2019. He explained that TSTC and STC offer similar programs; however, the relationship that the college has established in meeting with these companies has put TSC in a position to be the catalyst for regional training. However, it will take all of the resources of the entire region and more to meet this need.

Mr. Rendon asked about the proposed location of the training site for the law enforcement program and whether it was sufficient space for the intended purpose. Dr. Fleishman explained that the site will be located in the ITECC facility and confirmed that it would be sufficient for its purpose.

Mr. Mendez asked Dr. Fleishman to confirm that these programs and this item would still have been a topic of pursuit, regardless of the LNG company's involvement. Dr. Fleishman responded that this expansion and growth of educational opportunities would absolutely still be a topic of pursuit, even without the involvement of LNG companies.

Mr. Herrera questioned the job availability data provided for some of the programs, such as welding and plumbing. Mr. Mendez added that the data presented, which projects job demand until 2026, was provided by Workforce Solutions - Cameron, and it is separate from the data provided by the LNG companies. Mr. Herrera mentioned that the job demand information that he has received from Mr. Pat Hobbs, Executive Director for Workforce Solutions - Cameron, does not mention such demand for those programs. He added that he personally believed that there is demand; however, not everyone agrees with the perception of the LNGs and the employment opportunities they will offer. Dr. Fleishman stated that he respects that there is disagreement with the labor projections. He added that there are individuals in the workforce databases looking for plumbing or welding jobs but that lack the formal training to successfully perform those jobs.

President Rodriguez added that TSC has been building our workforce programs and these efforts are geared towards making TSC the destination place for workforce training. He stated that TSC wants to be an active player in the economic and workforce development of this region and to have the facilities in place that will allow TSC to participate requires these types of investments, which will be used to leverage other local, state and federal funding opportunities.

Mr. Herrera remarked that approval of this item would amount to over \$2.5 million dollars to be spent from the college. It was clarified that this figure included the prior items discussed and approved.

A motion was made by Mr. Rendon to move forward with this item as recommended by administration, which includes the approval of the Budget Amendments for the allocation of funding for the improvement of learning spaces, including the first year construction and equipment costs associated with the Welding, Electrical, Pipefitting, Plumbing (\$1,662,304), Industrial Mechanics and Maintenance Technology (\$633,201), and Criminal Justice Institute programs (\$223,212). The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon. The motion carried with six votes in favor and one absent.

**f. Consideration and possible action on
a Budget Amendment for the allocation of funding for the
"Teaching and Learning Spaces-Furniture and Media Upgrades" project**

Mr. Herrera stated that the budget request for this item totaled \$7.5 million dollars and called on Dr. Joanna Kile and Dr. Gisela Figueroa to present the item.

Dr. Kile provided a presentation covering the current condition of furniture and infrastructure, proposed areas to be included in the project, and estimated costs.

Mr. Herrera asked if we currently have students sitting on the floor while they take classes or if the college was turning away students because we cannot fit them. Dr. Kile responded that she doubted the students were sitting on the floor; however, the students are sitting on or using broken equipment. One of the instructors in the audience added that students do sit on the floor in the hallway while studying or waiting for their class. The instructor further stated that the classrooms were built in the 80's and are utilizing 30-year-old furniture, which creates a poor learning environment for our students. Dr. Kile added that the college lacks large classrooms that can fit many students and described a recent urgent request for Dr. Figueroa to remodel two additional classrooms that could facilitate an influx of students for the Spring 2019 semester.

Mr. Herrera asked about the classrooms available in the Science and Engineering Technology Building (SETB). Dr. Kile responded that there are two classrooms with tandem seating in SETB. Mr. Herrera asked Dr. Kile if she would consider this item an emergency. Further discussion defined the term "emergency" as the turning away of students. He restated his question and asked Dr. Kile if students would be turned away if we don't have new furniture today. Dr. Kile responded that students have already been placed for the Spring 2019 semester; however, she stated that the student's learning environment suffers tremendously because of the poor state of the current furniture and equipment and added that it poses a credibility issue with our institution and in attracting students to our college. Ms. Alejandro added that our students deserve better furniture in their classrooms and agreed that an upgrade was needed.

Mr. Rendon stated that he believed this upgrade is necessary and timely. He asked Dr. Figueroa to elaborate on the funding request. Dr. Figueroa stated that the requested funding for this project would come from unrestricted fund reserves, also called the fund balance. Mr. Rendon asked if spending this amount of money would harm the college and what Dr. Figueroa's overall professional opinion was on this item. She responded that at this point the college has the funds available in the fund balance. Both funding requests, which amount to approximately \$10 million, equate to approximately 18% of the unrestricted funds currently available.

President Rodriguez stated that part of the programs being implemented in the workforce and continuing education department are projected to generate revenue, which will help offset some of the costs. Also, increasing class size will create room for more students to come to the college which will also help in bringing in more funds.

Mr. Herrera stated that he agreed this was a wonderful concept and that the students deserve better; however, he added that it would be irresponsible of him to approve this item at this time when the College has a pending \$13 million judgement. He stated that this is not an urgent request since students are not being turned away and that the College can get by with the current state of furniture and equipment. Ms. Alejandro stated that the judgement is not the students' fault and they should not have to pay for it.

Mr. Mendez added that the College is currently working on its facilities master plan. This plan will likely change the configuration of classrooms and may alter the interior of our

facilities. He added that although it is recognized that an upgrade is needed, the incomplete state of the current master plan is cause for some hesitation in making these purchases at this time.

A motion was made by Mr. Rendon to move forward with this item as recommended by administration, which includes the approval of the Budget Amendment for the allocation of funding for the “Teaching and Learning Spaces-Furniture and Media Upgrades” project in the amount of \$7,506,609 and authorize the President to move forward with the execution of the project. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Leon and carried with four votes in favor and one absent. Mr. Herrera and Mr. Mendez voted Nay.

**g. Report on the Monthly Financial Statement
For the month ending December 31, 2018**

Dr. Figueroa gave an overview of the Financial Statements for the month ending December 31, 2018. This item was for information purposes only. No action was taken.

11. Facilities Committee Report

Chair Garza called on Mr. Trey Mendez to present the item. He stated that the committee met on February 18th and discussed the following items.

**a. Consideration and possible action on
Contract with E3 for the implementation of the
investment Grade Utility Assessment Report**

Mr. Mendez called on Dr. Gisela Figueroa and Mr. Ariel De La Fuente to present the item. Dr. Figueroa was asked when E3 would begin their ground work if the contract was approved. She responded that if approved, the company can begin working immediately on the utility assessment audit and it will take approximately six months to complete.

A follow up question was regarding how soon the college would experience the savings. Dr. Figueroa explained that the process for assessment and implementation of cost saving recommendations is a bit lengthy. Once the assessment is completed, E3 will provide the college with the cost saving recommendations and these will be brought before the board for approval prior to implementation. A project of this magnitude will probably take about a year to complete after the initial assessment is completed. Savings would be seen once the recommendations are implemented.

A motion was made by Mr. Mendez to approve the contract with E3 to develop an investment Grade Utility Assessment in the amount of \$74,998.80 and authorize President Rodriguez to execute the contract as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rendon and carried with six votes and on absent.

b. Facilities Update

Mr. Mendez called on Dr. Gisela Figueroa to present the item. Dr. Figueroa gave an update on the campus master plan, roofing project, Port Mansfield, college lighting project, recycling, and surplus property disposal/sale.

This item was for information purposes only. No action was taken.

12. Announcement of Proposed Meeting Dates

Chair Garza announced the following proposed meeting dates:


Thursday, March 21, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting

Friday, March 29, 2019 and Saturday, March 30, 2019
Board Retreat


Thursday, April 18, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting

13. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Herrera. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mendez and carried with six votes in favor and one absent. The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.



Ms. Adela G. Garza
Chair, Board of Trustees



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

The video recording of the Regular Board of Trustees meeting held on February 21, 2019, is available on the TSC.EDU website. These minutes were taken and transcribed by Iris Birge, Coordinator of Administrative Services. Videotaping of the Board of Trustees' meetings began on April 11, 1996.