

**MINUTES OF THE CALLED MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE DEL MAR COLLEGE DISTRICT**

January 14, 2025

The Called Meeting of the Board of Regents of the Del Mar College District convened at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at the Center for Economic Development, 3209 S. Staples, Room 106, Corpus Christi, Texas, with the following present:

**From the Board:**

Ms. Carol Scott, Dr. Nicholas Adame, Mr. Carl Crull, Mr. Rudy Garza, Jr., Mr. Bill Kelly, Mr. David Loeb, and Dr. Laurie Turner.

Absent:

Ms. Libby Averyt and Dr. Anantha Babbili.

**From the College:**

Dr. Mark Escamilla, President and CEO; Ms. Lenora Keas, Executive Vice President and COO; Mr. Raul Garcia, Vice President and CFO; Mr. Ali Kolaoudou, Vice President and Chief Information Officer; Dr. Jonda Halcomb, Vice President and Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Tammy McDonald, Vice President of Administration and Human Resources; Dr. Patricia Benavides-Dominguez, Vice President for Student Affairs; Ms. Cheryl Sanders, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs; Mr. Augustin Rivera, Jr., General Counsel; Mr. John Strybos, Vice President and Chief Physical Facilities Officer; Mr. Matthew Busby, Vice President of Development and Donor Advising; Ms. Delia Perez, Director of CEO Office and Board Relations, and other staff and faculty.

**CALL TO ORDER/QUORUM CALL**

Chair Scott called the meeting to order with a quorum present. She requested a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Del Mar College Vision Statement.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS** – The public was given the opportunity to provide public comments (both general and specific to any agenda item).

There were no public comments.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:**

1. Discussion related to the Freshman Tuition and Fees Waiver Pilot Program  
*(II: Elevate, - Goal 1: Increase completion for all students)*

Dr. Escamilla opened the discussion, emphasizing the program's alignment with the College's vision of empowering communities and addressing challenges regarding Governor Abbott's tuition freeze mandate and the performance-based funding structure of

House Bill 8. He highlighted the high percentage of part-time students (70-75%) and the data showing improved matriculation rates for full-time students. He also thanked Mr. Garcia, Ms. Keas, Mr. Pallemoni, and the staff involved in developing the proposal.

Mr. Garcia presented that the proposed plan is modeled after similar programs at Austin and Alamo Community Colleges but customized for Del Mar's student population. Ms. Keas outlined the program's goals: increased student retention and reduced time to completion, leading to higher graduation and overall enrollment rates. The discussed goals directly support House Bill 8 and the College's strategic plan. The goals of the Pilot Program include 1. To provide freshmen tuition and fees at no cost; 2. To increase retention of students for academic year; 3. To reduce the time to completion of students; 4. To increase graduation rates of students; and 5. To increase student enrollment.

Mr. Pallemoni presented demographic data on Del Mar College students, showing a predominantly female, Hispanic student body with a high percentage (over 70%) under 25 years old and a significant increase in dual enrollment students (approximately 30% of the student body). He also noted that the majority of students are part-time, balancing work and education.

Ms. Keas explained the program's design. The pilot program will waive tuition and fees for a defined cohort of students (initially estimated at 541, based on the 2023-2024 academic year's first time in college students, with projections for growth), who commit to full-time enrollment (minimum 12 credit hours per semester) for three consecutive years. The program uses a "First Dollar In" model, leaving Pell Grants and other financial aid untouched for students to use towards other expenses. This raised questions about how the program will interact with existing scholarships specifically designated for tuition and fees. The Board discussed potential issues to encourage students to remain in the program, and adjusting the program as well.

Mr. Garcia presented the financial model, emphasizing that the State's performance-based funding will cover a majority of the costs if students persist and complete their degrees within two to three years. The model includes a significant contribution from the Del Mar College Foundation, leveraging existing funds and potentially seeking additional support in future years. The Board extensively discussed the assumptions and projections in the financial model, particularly concerning the cohort size, the definition of "freshman" (including dual enrollment students and those returning after an interruption), and the sustainability of the program given the uncertainties of future State funding. They also discussed the need for enhanced student support services, the potential need for additional staff, and the communication strategy to reach prospective students, especially those eligible for dual enrollment.

Discussion was held which included questions and clarifications regarding the program's criteria, eligibility, funding sources, and potential impact on existing scholarship programs. The Regents requested expressed more detailed documentation and a clearer understanding of the financial implications, including contingency plans for lower-than-expected completion rates. The meeting concluded with a commitment to revisit the

proposal with more detailed information in February, and an agreement to potentially include additional cohorts in future years.

2. CLOSED SESSION pursuant to:

- A. **TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.071**: (Consultation with Legal Counsel), regarding pending or contemplated litigation, or a settlement offer, and seeking of legal advice from counsel, with possible discussion and action in open session.

The Board of Regents did not go into Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

MINUTES REVIEWED BY GC: /s/ARjr