

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
DEL MAR COLLEGE DISTRICT**

March 5, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Regents of the Del Mar College District convened on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 1:00 p.m., 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, Ms. Libby Averyt, Mr. Carl Crull, Mr. Rudy Garza, Jr., Mr. David Loeb, and Dr. Laurie Turner.

Mr. Bill Kelly joined the meeting in progress.

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 Kolahdouz, 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; Ms. 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; Ms. Mary McQueen, Vice President of Advancement and Government Relations; 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 made for this meeting.

RECOGNITIONS:

- Chair Scott recognized Ms. Mary McQueen, Del Mar College’s Foundation Executive Director and Vice President of Advancement and Government Relations who announced her retirement. Chair Scott thanked Ms. McQueen for her service to Del Mar College.
- Merit Badge College and Council coordinated meeting presented by the South Texas Council of the Boy Scouts of America at DMC Windward Campus on February 17, 2024Mr. Augustin Rivera, Jr.
(Goal 5: *Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy*)

Mr. Rivera began by introducing Mr. Mike Jones and Ms. Amy Jones, both with Del Mar College, and Mr. Martin Sepulveda, Scout Executive with South Texas Council of Boy Scouts of America. Mr. Sepulveda began by stating he valued the College as a community partner in their mission to develop young people to be the best leaders for our communities. He spoke about an Eagle Scout class reception honoring 68 Eagle Scouts at an event at the Oso Creek campus with over 200 people attending. He also thanked the Board for allowing their events to take place at College campuses to introduce more and more people to higher education.

Mr. Jones stated he and Ms. Jones served as co-chairs for the Merit Badge College here at Del Mar College. He thanked all involved for helping set up the event which included Del Mar Catering and Valdar. The scouts who attended came from five different councils from the South Texas and surrounding areas with local television stations providing media coverage for the Scouts and the College.

Ms. Jones thanked the Board for their support and stated the ages of the Scouts being awarded are about ages 10 to 17, and that Scouting offered some of these Scouts their first opportunity to visit a college campus.

Chair Scott thanked the Del Mar family including the instructors who worked with the Scouts earning their merit badges.

Mr. Rivera concluded stating the adults as well as the Scouts are able to benefit from the program. He also stated there were numerous compliments regarding the College facilities and thanked the Board for their support.

- Government Financial Officers Association’s (GFOA) Triple Crown Award recognizes governments that have received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. Del Mar College received the Triple Crown Award for receiving all three financial reporting awards for Fiscal Year 2021 and anticipates receiving this award for Fiscal Year 2022.....Mr. Raul Garcia (*Goal 6: Financial Effectiveness and Affordability*)

Mr. Garcia recognized and congratulated Mr. John Johnson, Dr. Catherine West, Ms. Jackie Landrum, Ms. Christina Gonzalez, Mr. Mike Bratten, Ms. Melinda Eddleman, Mr. Jeff Olsen, and their respective team members for earning the Government Financial Officer’s Triple Crown Award. This award is in recognition for excellence in the College’s three annual financial reports which include the audit report, budget report, and annual financial report.

- Kristy Urbick, Chairperson and Assistant Professor of Kinesiology, awarded a Pathways Project Fellowship by the Texas Success Center to assist in developing credential map

guidelines for statewide use and engage collaboratively with the Texas Success Leadership and other fellows.....Dr. Jonda Halcomb
(Goal 3: Academic Preparedness and Student Learning)

Dr. Halcomb recognized Ms. Kristy Urbick, Chairperson and Assistant Professor of the Kinesiology Department was awarded a Pathways Project Fellowship by the Texas Success Center. Ms. Urbick will assist in developing credential map guidelines for statewide use by the 50 Texas community colleges as well as collaborate with Texas Success Leadership. These maps will be clear guides for students in their path to future job goals. She will conduct student focus groups to gather student perspectives on community college credential maps. The goal of the fellowship is to design credential templates, that better reflect the principles of Guided Pathways. Our Pathways team nominated Ms. Urbick for this fellowship based on her being a strong, academic leader. She is also a current doctoral student in the Roueche Community College Leadership Program and is a dedicated community college practitioner and educational researcher with expertise in community college leadership.

Ms. Urbick thanked the Board and the team for their recognition and support.

- Del Mar College earned the prestigious National Bellwether Finalist Award for its Innovative and Best Practices “Continuing Education to Credit” Stackable Credentials model for growing a skilled workforce.....Dr. Leonard Rivera
(Goal 3: Academic Preparedness and Student Learning)

Dr. Rivera recognized the College’s award for the prestigious National Bellwether Final Award for its Innovative and Best Practices “Continuing Education to Credit” Stackable Credentials model for growing a skilled workforce. He stated this award is for being one of ten community colleges in the country to receive this award. Dr. Rivera thanked Dr. Mark Escamilla, Board of Regents, Ms. Lenora Keas, Dr. Jonda Halcomb, and Mr. Jeff Olsen and his team. He specifically thanked his team which includes Mr. Paul Creacy, Mr. Davis Merrell, Ms. Elizabeth Zamora, Ms. Rachel Benavides, and the Division of Continuing Education and Off Campus programs. The team works very hard as well making sure the College is at the forefront of leading in the Continuing Education area. After reviewing the many deserved awards received by the Continuing Education department over the past few years, he thanked his team and the Board of Regents for their hard work and support.

Dr. Escamilla provided commentary about attending the award ceremony and stated he spoke with some of the judges who provided words of respect, admiration for the Continuing Education team’s innovative program.

- Jessie Chrobocinski, Digital Services Specialist, won the American Advertising Federation’s Big Wigs 2024 – Best Social Media Manager/Content Creator AwardMr. Jeff Olsen
(Goal 2: Recruitment and Persistence)

Mr. Olsen recognized Ms. Jessie Chrobocinski, Digital Services Specialist for receiving the American Advertising Federation’s Big Wigs ’24 Award for Best Social Media Manager and Content Creator. Chair Scott and Dr. Escamilla congratulated Ms. Chrobocinski. Ms. Chrobocinski provided of her collegiate background and words of gratitude.

- Sofia Jimenez, DMC student, selected to participate in a virtual student panel titled The Impact of Innovation: Student Perspectives on Digital Advancement on Campus conducted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s Digital Learning Team.....Ms. Cheryl Sanders
(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy)

Ms. Sanders recognized Ms. Sofia Jimenez, current student, and Student Government President as one of three students who participated in a virtual student panel titled “The Impact of Innovation: Student Perspectives on Digital Advancement on Campus” for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Ms. Jimenez stated it was an honor to be able to share student voices, and was grateful for the opportunity.

- Sofia Jimenez, DMC student and Alberto Martinez, recent alumnus, were selected for the 2024 Texas Community College Student Advisory CouncilMs. Cheryl Sanders
(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy)

Ms. Sanders also recognized Ms. Jimenez and Mr. Alberto Martinez for being selected for the 2024 Texas Community College Student Advisory Council. The Council is a paid virtual remote fellowship program to learn about state and local policy related to community colleges. Ms. Jimenez stated she was honored to be one of over a thousand people that applied, and was grateful for the opportunity.

- Gabby Chavera, Outreach Aide, TRIO Educational Opportunity Center Grant program, was selected by the Council for Opportunity in Education to serve as a National Student Leadership Congress Counselor for the 34th National Student Leadership Conference at American University in Washington D.C. on June 8-13, 2024.....Ms. Cheryl Sanders
(Goal 2: Recruitment and Persistence)

Ms. Sanders recognized Ms. Gabby Chavera, Outreach Aide for Del Mar College TRIO Educational Opportunity Center Grant program. Ms. Chavera was selected to serve as a National Student Leadership Congress Counselor for the 34th National Student Leadership Conference at American University in Washington D.C. Ms. Chavera thanked the Board for the honor and stated she was very excited to be chosen.

STUDENT SUCCESS REPORT

- Stone Writing Center.....Mr. Cody Gregg
(Goal 2: Recruitment and Persistence)

Mr. Gregg began by thanking the success of the Stone Writing Center (SWC) because of the staff. He provided background information regarding the SWC and stated that each campus currently has a Center. He reviewed some of the services the SWC provides including 30-minute in person tutoring consultations and online consultations available 24/7. The SWC conducted a survey in 2023 which found 97% of students were satisfied with the help they received, over 90% of students were satisfied with the time it took to receive feedback online, and 96% believed the tutoring session improved their writing skills. He also acknowledged Ms. Linda Eubank and the assistant instructors present and thanked them for their unwavering commitment to student success. Dr. Escamilla provided commentary about his own experience using the services provided and thanked the SWC team for their determinations to benefit the students.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT’S REPORT.....Dr. Mark Escamilla

- February 20, 2024: TACC Legislative Committee Meeting
(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy)

Dr. Escamilla attended the TACC Legislative Committee meeting on February 20, 2024 and stated they are preparing for the next legislative session.

- February 21, 2024: Community 2 College Connection Career Expo, Richard Borchard Fairgrounds
(Goal 2: Recruitment and Persistence)

Dr. Escamilla attended the Community 2 College Connection Career Expo and thanked the team for organizing this event. He stated the event was well attended by staff, faculty members, and employers.

- February 27-28, 2024: Texas Success Center’s Board of Trustees Institute, Lakeway, TX
(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy)

Dr. Escamilla attended the Texas Success Center’s Board of Trustees Institute’s conference.

REGENTS REPORT:

- February 27-28, 2024: Texas Success Center’s Board of Trustees Institute, Lakeway, TX
.....Chair Scott and Dr. Babbili
(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy)

Chair Scott stated she and Dr. Babbili attended the Texas Success Center’s Board of Trustee Institute. She also stated she and Dr. Escamilla gave a presentation on strategic planning related to the changes of House Bill 8. The Board of Trustees Institute makes data informed decisions and looks at data as an undercurrent. The Aspen Institute made a presentation on the role of the Board of Trustees in looking at post-completion outcomes. Chair Scott provided commentary about the Aspen Institute presentation she attended.

STAFF REPORTS:

- Property Tax Assessment and Collections.....Mr. Raul Garcia
(Goal 6: Financial Effectiveness and Affordability)

Dr. Escamilla provided introductory remarks. Mr. Garcia stated the Colleges’ major source of funding is property taxes which was affected by the property valuation lawsuits from major petrochemical industries in our district. The College had to change last year’s budget from \$118 million to \$115 million because of these lawsuits. For Fiscal Year 2023, property taxes provided nearly \$66 million dollars. Property valuations are sensitive to pending valuation litigation.

The increasing of interest rates has driven up the cost of finance for single family homes and a reported 30-year fixed mortgage rate by Freddie Mac as of December 2023 is 6.61% in comparison to December 2020 low of 2.6%. Single family homes are one of the few asset categories that performed very well during the pandemic. Since 2019, valuations for single family homes have been in an upward trajectory reaching an all-time high of \$17.8 billion in 2023, representing an increase of 36% for the five-year period reported. What is not certain is if this upward trend will continue in the future.

Mr. Garcia responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

Mr. Garcia reviewed four data points regarding the single-family housing activity in the Corpus Christi area which included YTD sales transactions, YTD dollar volume, YTD new listings, and YTD new single family resident permits before moving on to property tax collection rates history on adjusted tax levy for the five months ending January 2024. The Business Office monitors property tax collection activity throughout the year to identify any unusual trends that may have a material effect on our property tax revenues. The College collected 67% of the tax assessed valuations. The largest decline occurred in collection activity from 2022 to 2023 attributed in part to the petrochemical companies contesting their valuations.

Mr. Garcia stated that the Flint Hills Refinery lawsuit was settled nearing \$1.5 Billion, and payment was made to our tax collection agency in the amount of \$800,000.00 in property tax revenues for this year. The College will continue to monitor litigation activity regarding the pending petrochemical lawsuit and will report updates to the Board in the future.

Mr. Garcia and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

- Updates: 2019-2024 Strategic Plan and THECB’s Strategic Plan (Talent Strong Texas).....Dr. Natalie Villarreal
(Goal 3: Academic Preparedness and Student Learning and Goal 4: Learning Environments)

Dr. Villarreal began her presentation by providing an overview of the strategic planning timeline and stated she will be providing a general update regarding Goals 3 and 4. Dr. Villarreal reviewed Goal Three KPIs: Academic Preparedness and Student Learning which

include: 1. Percentage of students who require developmental coursework; 2. Percentage of academically unprepared students who satisfy the TSI within 2 years; 3. Percentage of academically unprepared students completing a college-level course in the subject they entered not ready (math, reading, writing) within 2 years; and 4. Course completion rates: traditional, online and hybrid formats.

A robust conversation was held among the Board of Regents, Dr. Villarreal, Dr. Halcomb, and Dr. Escamilla. Dr. Villarreal, Dr. Jonda Halcomb, and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

Dr. Villarreal continued with review of Goal Four KPIs: Learning Environments which contain 1. Average state compensation rates, comparison to DMC; 2. Annual Safety and Security Report (Clery Act); and 3. Ad/Astra Viking Scheduler space utilization. The KPIs are used to measure whether the College is providing engaging, effective, and student-ready environments with accomplished and qualified personnel to facilitate learning and productivity. The College maintains compensation rates in top quartile of the State averages for community colleges and ranks 8th in Texas for full-time faculty pay as of 2022.

Dr. Villarreal, Dr. Halcomb, and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

Dr. Villarreal reviewed the strategies that the College does day-to-day to ensure we are providing support to our students. The strategies include a Developmental Education Committee which is comprised of faculty, department chairs, deans, and others; learning supports, academic preparedness, and partnerships with independent school districts. She also provided examples of how the College faculty and staff serve to provide support to students.

Dr. Villarreal, Dr. Halcomb, and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

Dr. Villarreal continued her presentation discussing the Strategic Plan for the State of Texas. Goal One of the Coordinating Board is Attainment of Post-Secondary Credentials. By 2030, at least 60% of Texans ages 25-64 will receive a degree, certificate, or postsecondary credential of value. The College's target is to incrementally increase overall postsecondary attainment. Goal Two is Postsecondary Credentials of Value which entails 550,000 students complete postsecondary credentials of value each year and 95% of students will graduate with no undergraduate student debt or manageable levels of debt in relations to their potential earnings.

Dr. Villarreal responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

Goal Three is Research, Development, and Innovation. By 2030, \$1 billion in annual private and federal research and development expenditures and 7,500 research doctorates awarded annually by Texas institutions of higher learning.

Dr. Villarreal and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

PENDING BUSINESS:

Status Report on Requested Information

(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy)

CONSENT AGENDA

Notice to the Public

The following items are of a routine or administrative nature. The Board of Regents has been furnished with background and support material on each item, and/or it has been discussed at a previous meeting. All items will be acted upon by one vote without being discussed separately unless requested by a Board member or a citizen, in which event the item(s) will immediately be withdrawn for individual consideration in their normal sequence after the items not requiring separate discussion have been acted upon. The remaining items will be adopted by one vote.

CONSENT MOTIONS:

(At this point the Board will vote on all motions not removed for individual consideration.)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

- 1. Approval of Minutes:
 Regular Board Meeting, December 5, 2023
 Regular Board Meeting, February 13, 2023
(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy)

- 2. Acceptance of Financials for January 2024
(Goal 6: Financial Effectiveness and Affordability)

Regent Adame made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda. Regent Loeb seconded the motion. There was no further discussion from the Board. There were no public comments. A vote was taken by show of hands, and the motion carried unanimously 8-0, amongst Regents present, with Regents Scott, Adame, Averyt, Crull, Garza, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor.

REGULAR AGENDA

- 3. Discussion and possible action regarding annexation of London ISD property
Mr. John Strybos
(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy and Goal 6: Financial Effectiveness and Affordability)

Dr. Escamilla provided introductory remarks and introduced London ISD Superintendent Dr. Judy White. Dr. White thanked the Board and stated London ISD loved the partnership with the College and all that is done through dual credit opportunities. Mr. Strybos provided background information regarding the Texas Education Code, Section 130.066, “Automatic Annexation of Certain Territory,” that provides that as the City of Corpus Christi annexes property, the College may also annex the property. He also stated it is recommended the College annex the 82.4 acres of land located in the northwest corner of FM 43 Weber Road and London Pirate Road, formerly County Road 33.

Regent Loeb made a motion to annex the property as annexed by the City of Corpus Christi as presented. Regent Crull seconded the motion. There was no further discussion from the Board. Dr. White provided additional comments welcoming Del Mar College. Regent Crull provided comments regarding the confusion which areas were being annexed. A vote was taken by show of hands, and the motion carried unanimously 8-0, amongst Regents present, with Regents Scott, Adame, Averyt, Crull, Garza, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor.

4. Discussion and possible action regarding the Board’s Annual Ethics Update
.....Mr. Augustin Rivera, Jr.
(Goal 5: Workforce Development, Community Partnerships, and Advocacy)

Mr. Rivera provided the Board with words of appreciation for their commendable ethics standards and commitment to conducting ethics updates annually. He proceeded by providing some history of the Ad Hoc Committee that reviewed the Board’s Bylaws and Statement of Conduct and Ethics which led to annual ethics reviews and updates. He also reviewed critical questions raised by Dr. George R. Boggs, former President, and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in his book “Ethical Leadership in Community College.”

Mr. Rivera answered questions from the Board regarding bidding solicitations, TIRZ properties and boundaries, and abstention from voting.

Mr. Rivera quoted the ACCT’s Guide to Ethical Governance which states "All boards should have a set of standards, a code of ethics or standards for good practice" which includes SACSCOC’s requirement of having a Board Code of Ethics.

Mr. Rivera reviewed the preamble of the Board of Regents Bylaws and continued with an abbreviated review of the categories included in the Bylaws including Board Duties and

Responsibilities, Statement of Conduct and Ethics, Regent Email and Official Communication; Social Media: Posting on Personal Sites; Conflicts of Interest and Prohibited Benefits; Regent Misconduct; Board Elections and Appointments; Board Member Training; Officers, Committees of the Board, Meetings, Public Comment, and Rules of Order.

The Board was asked to read and sign the Code of Ethics form reaffirming their commitment as Board members, as well as their Personal Disclosure forms, and asked it to be returned to his office.

Mr. Rivera responded to questions by the Board of Regents.

At 3:39 p.m., the Chair announced that the Board was going into Closed Session pursuant to:

5. **CLOSED SESSION** pursuant to:
 - A. **TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.071**: (Consultation with legal counsel), regarding pending or contemplated litigation or legal claims, or a settlement offer, with possible discussion and action in open session; and, the seeking of legal advice from counsel, on pending or contemplated legal matters or claims, with possible discussion and action in open session; and
 - B. **TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.074(a)(1)**: (Personnel Matters), regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee, including Board Self-Evaluation, with possible discussion and action in open session.

The Board of Regents reconvened in Open Session at 4:10 p.m. with no action taken.

CALENDAR: Discussion and possible action related to calendaring dates.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

MINUTES REVIEWED BY GC: /s/ARjr