

THE OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Big Bend Community College Board of Trustees held a Special Board Meeting Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. in the ATEC Hardin Community room in Building 1800 on the Big Bend Community College campus.

1. Call to Order

Present: Anna Franz
Jon Lane
Stephen McFadden
Juanita Richards
Thomas Stredwick (via Zoom)

2. Personnel

At 4:00 p.m., Chair Stephen McFadden announced that the Board would adjourn to executive session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss items provided for in RCW 42.30.110 (1): (g) to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee. The Executive Session was extended for ten minutes, extended again for ten minutes, and then extended for five minutes. The meeting reconvened at 4:55 p.m. with no action taken.

3. COVID-19

Dr. Leas shared the strategies the college is employing in response to COVID-19. The first strategy includes focusing on the welfare and safety of students and employees. This crisis requires extreme measures at a high cost, including canceling events, moving classes online, providing flexibility and financial support to employees and students, postponing travel, and perhaps even closing the campus. Unfortunately, other alternatives would place employees and students at greater, unacceptable risk. Administrators are focusing on what we can control and conducting extensive scenario planning for things we cannot control. Each functional area of our college is planning under different assumptions regarding the duration and effects of the crisis.

Dr. Leas and staff members are communicating with our campus stakeholders by balancing reality with hope and empathy. While crises create anxiety, informing people helps reduce doubt and stress. Toward this end, we are using email, posters, table tents, BBCC website, videoconferencing, and social media in an effort to establish a rhythm of communication that responds to the different needs among our community members in terms of frequency, format, and modality of communication, and remain open and transparent.

The college is seeking feedback to learn how we are doing and how we can improve. Monitoring social media to learn how others perceive us provides opportunities to respond to concerns and impacts decision making and messaging. Dr. Leas went on to say BBCC is also tapping into the extensive knowledge base and experience from other

colleges in our system and around the country, higher education associations, regional accreditors, and local, state, and federal officials.

The vice presidents described what is happening in instruction and student services, human resources and labor relations, and the administrative and financial areas of our college.

VP Bryce Humpherys thanked the deans, faculty, and staff for their tireless efforts to find solutions regarding safety. The spring quarter start date has been moved from March 30 to April 6 for most classes allowing faculty to convert classes to online. Social distancing will be exercised on campus. There are externally mandated hours and directives for some programs such as aviation and nursing that are being impacted. Instructors are contacting students to help them understand what to expect. The Director of Library Resources & eLearning Tim Fuhrman is providing technology training to staff and faculty. Some performance classes like Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu are being cancelled. The testing center staff are prioritizing BBCC students to ensure test-proctoring integrity. Study areas with computers are open to students while practicing social distancing and protecting keyboards with disposable plastic wrap between users. Laptops are being checked out to students and employees. Technology supporting lecture capture is being used along with training, additional zoom licenses and document cameras. Student support services are available online, via Zoom, telephone, and Canvas to reduce human interaction. Furniture is being used to create space for social distancing. New student orientation is delivered online. The BBCC Food Pantry is open for students to submit a list of items needed, then they are provided a bag of supplies. The preschool is open but not accepting new students; except siblings of current students.

Services are being moved online to ensure students have access to support. Many events and activities have been cancelled such as spring sports, use of the gym, campus tours, CBIS training, club and ASB events, and the library is closed to the general public. BBCC is continuing to work with school districts during this ever-changing situation.

VP Kim Garza shared what is being done to help employees, including student employees. Human Resources (HR) is in regular contact with state HR officials with additional information being shared regarding the Governor's proclamations. The goal is to keep employees in pay status. BBCC is taking a very liberal view of telework with flexible schedules. Any employee who wants to telework is being supported through the process. There are also multiple online trainings that can be accessed from home. Twelve people are currently approved to work remotely. Many employees are inquiring about telework and flexible scheduling. VP Garza is offering zoom meetings to share telework information.

VP Garza also shared that student employees are impacted by the closures of K-12 schools and in some cases being relocated to the BBCC campus. Payroll staff have determined how to process payroll remotely in preparation for working from home. Staff

are donating to an emergency shared leave pool to provide to employees who cannot work remotely to stay in pay status. AAG Jason Brown is reviewing the telework policy and procedure. Interviews are being cancelled, and the last installment of Nash Training is rescheduled to later this spring.

VP Linda Schoonmaker shared updates from administrative services which includes 50 full-time and 15 part-time employees. More than half of these employees are core function staff. BBT staff can work remotely, security will remain active on campus, and the residence halls staff will work with 60-80 students in the dorms. M&O staff monitor facilities, and custodial staff will continue to clean. The business office will remain open to accept money, process mail and deliveries, pay bills, and draw down federal funds. The bookstore staff will take orders online and prepare packages for pick up. 15 full-time and 6 part-time employees will work on campus full time, and 10 employees will come to campus occasionally. Sodexo is closed through spring break due to the Governor's proclamation and cancelled events. Contract work continues at WEC. Students in the residence halls cook for themselves or eat take out, and they have access to the food pantry if needed. Students are not being charged if they have left for spring break. Express check out for students provides an alternative to personal contact; student lounges are closed to minimize social activity.

Dawnne Ernette, Faculty Association Representative, shared that faculty members are working hard to help each other learn how to teach online.

Employees provided public comments. The safety and health of staff and community is compromised when normal services are provided. Every hour student services is open to the public is an increased risk to employees. Staff reported they are prepared for services online, and requested administrators reevaluate limiting public access. Staff said staying open is endangering lives of staff and families and asked why BBCC is waiting for a confirmed case of COVID-19 before closing campus when most functions can be accomplished online. In student services, there are 15 employees who cannot serve students while practicing social distancing due to the set-up of the space. Many other colleges around the state are closing.

Dr. Leas stated there is a team in place, including Cabinet members and Director of Safety, Security and Emergency Management Kyle Foreman, Director of Residence Halls and Residential Life Luis Alvarez, and Registrar Starr Bernhardt meeting regularly. The team reviews current information to make recommendations.

VP Bryce Humpherys and Dean André Guzman shared that student services can be delivered online, via Zoom, or telephone. He is assembling a team to determine how to move student services completely online to protect the frontline staff. Staff must take care of themselves. Individuals again questioned why BBCC is waiting for a confirmed diagnosis to close the campus. Dr. Leas said we were balancing the health risks with the need to continue operations for students. VP Humpherys stated that to reduce the spread of the virus, BBCC is beginning to exercise social distancing by moving all classes online and encouraging students to use the phone or online interactions with

student services. Given that Governor Inslee's directive did not prohibit the public from coming on campus, we are uncertain regarding the risks to employees and students. BBCC is also offering telecommuting to employees to reduce interaction with the public. VP Humpherys stated he is working on moving advising and counseling into empty classrooms, or Zoom, to allow people social distancing space.

Another employee commented that implementing strategies may not be fully integrated yet. It is important to remember that counseling 6 feet away is not effective regarding mental health.

Board Chair Stephen McFadden stated leadership decisions are fluid and being adjusted with new information. The state may be taking stronger additional steps. College leadership want employees and students to be safe. We are all at some level of risk. Board Chair McFadden urged Dr. Leas to expand communication to trustees and campus and expedite decisions regarding safety. He also stated Dr. Leas will lead us through the process and make the right decisions with the information at hand. Board Chair McFadden advised employees to make personal decisions about their safety as they are compelled.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Stephen McFadden, Chair

ATTEST:

Terry Leas, Secretary