

THE OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Big Bend Community College Board of Trustees held a study session Thursday, March 7, at 9:00 a.m. in the ATEC Hardin Community room in Building 1800 on the Big Bend Community College campus.

Call to Order

Present: Jon Lane
Anna Franz
Stephen McFadden
Juanita Richards
Thomas Stredwick

Board Chair Jon Lane announced that board study sessions are for the purpose of focused attention, study, and training on specific topics outside the context of regular board meetings; specifically, today's meeting is focused on the Employee Focus Group Report (EFGR) submitted by Dr. Clark and trustee goals 2 and 3. No action will be taken.

1. **Ends Statement 6 Inclusion & Climate**

Trustee Anna Franz stated important concerns were shared in the report about administration and the board not listening to BBCC employee groups. She reiterated the importance that BBCC serve its communities and the board serve BBCC with the mission in mind. Trustee Franz said the board's role is to support the president in correcting the issues reported in the report.

At 9:04 a.m., Board Chair Lane announced a 30-minute executive session 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. He asked President Leas and VP Kim Garza to stay in the executive session.

At 9:34, Board Chair Jon Lane extended the executive session for five minutes. At 9:39, the study session was reconvened. Board Chair Lane stated the trustees are a policy governance board, and it is the board's job to adopt budgets and policies, approve tenure and supervise the president. During the executive session, the board discussed the allegations in the EFGR about inappropriate use of Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Federal Grant funds and hiring practices.

President Leas stated allegations of misappropriation of federal funds are very serious. He has been corresponding with AAG Jason Brown about the lack of specificity in the allegations and the need for official action. The allegations are vague and the specific grant involved and the date(s) of the alleged misappropriation were not shared. Dr. Leas explained that each time a grant is awarded, the budget is approved as proposed. Budgets are dynamic and during the course of the grant, the budgets may be adjusted through approval by the program officer. All budget changes are documented. BBCC currently has a contract with Ramona Munsell and Associates to provide guidance and oversight of the federal HSI grants. An independent third-party program reviewer performs an annual review with the grant

director and staff looking for compliance issues. This oversight significantly reduces the risk of a violation. Dr. Leas checked with VP Linda Schoonmaker and Executive Director of Business Services Charlene Rios, and they assured that their internal controls are well designed and match operating procedures for federal grants. VP Schoonmaker explained that she was trying to reach the Office of the State Auditor to learn how to respond to these allegations.

Dr. Leas shared that he has scheduled four "Dialogue with Dr. Leas" sessions to provide opportunities for communication and listen to employees' concerns. Information in the report shared broad allegations about hiring practices and use of federal grant funds. It is difficult to move forward without specifics. VP Linda Schoonmaker reported we are following the general practices prescribed that other community colleges follow. The trustees expressed the desire to balance between ensuring that BBCC is complying with all regulations and causing disruptive workload issues. VP Linda Schoonmaker will ask for the state auditors to review the federal grants to identify compliance issues. Whistleblower laws also provide opportunity for individuals to report issues, and the Human Rights Commissions accepts allegations regarding hiring practices. VP Kim Garza stated it is important for employees to know how they can share concerns.

Trustee Anna Franz shared that the board perspective is focused on the president's executive limitations, and the current process may need to have modifications. Trustee McFadden asked about a third party conducting an employee satisfaction survey as the report by Dr. Clark indicated a lack of trust. Trustee Juanita Richards stated she would like to hear from all employees to have a better understanding of campus culture. Improving culture is essential so that employees' voices are heard.

Trustee McFadden asked about Dr. Leas' response to Dr. Clark's suggestion about creating a faculty Senate. President Leas reported that he met with Faculty Association President Salah Abed and fellow officer Dawnne Ernette. Creating another VP position may not be viable, and the employee groups need to work together to identify options that will meet the college's needs. Instructional Council and Shared Governance Council are mechanisms of communication and governance that could be modified. Dr. Leas has discussed the seven identified themes of Dr. Clark's report with Cabinet members and Shared Governance Council members. He has also held communication sessions and invited all employees to schedule individual meetings with him to share their thoughts. He acknowledged that the report indicated there is a lack of trust on campus, and VP Kim Garza is searching for a respected consultant to facilitate leadership coaching and reconciliation efforts. Dr. Leas also stated that BBCC commissioned the report by Dr. Clark because leadership understood there were issues and concerns from information obtained from employee exit interviews and on-boarding surveys. He also stated when he was hired, his goal was to establish a "culture of inquiry" in which to discuss issues safely, with mutual respect, and while avoiding the assignment of blame. This culture has not evolved yet, and he is seen by some within the college as a weak leader due in part to his efforts to flatten the organization by delegating authority. There is challenge in the midst of changing culture with lots of employee turnover. Dynamics and expectations between employees are changing; improving the employee experience translates into better service to students.

Board Chair Jon Lane called a five-minute break at 10:14 a.m.

The study session reconvened at 10:19 a.m. VP Garza and President Leas said there was a lot of information shared for the study session such as the Employee Focus Group Report (EFGR), ICAT Survey, and administrative surveys to identify the underlying themes of the EFGR and asked if the trustees wanted any additional information. Next steps include sharing the seven themes with all campus members for their input, and finding a facilitator(s) for leadership and group coaching. VP Garza has talked with one potential facilitator, and she will meet with President Leas soon.

The group discussed the challenges around rating Ends Statement 6 "BCC provides and maintains a climate of inclusiveness for students, employees and partners by maintaining a safe learning environment and promoting cultural inclusiveness, understanding, and respect by embracing diversity, access, opportunity, and equity." Indicators for E-6 are difficult to quantify because they consist of mostly qualitative data. A challenge of policy governance is providing the trustees with the macro-level information to make strategic decisions and the employees with the micro-level information to make operational decisions.

The trustees would like to see an ongoing report regarding E-6 in the board reports as a consent agenda item.

2. **Board Goals 2 & 3**

The 2018-19 board goals include:

1. *Continued involvement at the State and Federal Level.*
2. *Development of a timeline to receive meaningful, accurate, and reliable data to determine Board effectiveness.*
3. *Development of an "on-boarding" process for new trustees and others who are in leadership positions.*
4. *Enriching and expanding our relationships with our "workforce partners" to better understand and respond to their needs.*

Trustee Thomas Stredwick reported that he met with Board Chair Jon Lane to discuss policy governance and board goals. He developed a draft trustee onboarding and training schedule which provides a framework to accomplish board goal 3 and provides some guidelines for goal 2. The trustees will consider the draft schedule and discuss further. President Leas stated the finalized version of the schedule may benefit ACT and ACCT as an innovative approach to trustee training.

Meeting adjourned 10:49 a.m.



Jon Lane, Chair

ATTEST:

Terrence Leas, Secretary

