

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING DEL MAR COLLEGE DISTRICT

March 4, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Regents of the Del Mar College District convened on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 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:

Present:

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

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; 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.

RECOGNITIONS:

- Del Mar College was awarded the Bellwether Finalist and Best in Showcase awards in the Workforce Development category at the 2025 Bellwether Community College Futures Assembly in San Antonio, TX on February 25, 2025..... Dr. Leonard Rivera (*III: Cultivate, Goal 2: Optimize the Viking Student Experience*)

Dr. Rivera stated the College was recognized as a finalist in the 2025 Bellwether Awards. He acknowledged Mr. Paul Creacy, Ms. Rachel Benavides, and Ms. Rebecca Salinas. The College was a finalist in the proposal for stackable awards under Workforce Development category. He provided further background information and then introduced Mr. Creacy.

Mr. Creacy provided further detailed information regarding the stackable credentials proposal which came from looking at what students need and identify which pathway they need to take and how the credentials stack up in their educational plan based on their dreams.

- Selection of Students to Texas Two-Year College All-State Choir and All-State Band for Performances at Texas Music Educators Association Convention and Student Rufino Medado, Freshman Tuba Player, won the Concerto Competition.

..... Dr. Jonda Halcomb
(III: Cultivate, Goal 2: Optimize the Viking Student Experience)

Dr. Halcomb recognized the College's students who were selected to the Texas Two-Year College All-State Choir and All-State Band for Performances at Texas Music Educators Association Convention. She introduced each student and the instrument they played. She also introduced Dr. Mirae Lee, Dr. Raphael Rada and Professor Cynthia Longoria for their dedication and commitment to the students to prepare them for this competition.

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

- February 18, 2025: TACC CEO Monthly Call
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect Beyond the College)

Dr. Escamilla attended the Texas Association of Community Colleges CEO monthly call. These calls are made to stay in close contact with the association leadership.

- February 9-12, 2025: National Legislative Summit, Washington DC
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Dr. Escamilla attended the National Legislative Summit in conjunction with the Association of Community College Trustees with Chair Carol Scott, Regent Anantha Babbili, and General Counsel Augustin Rivera, Jr.

REGENT'S REPORT:

- February 9-12, 2025: National Legislative Summit, Washington, DC
..... Ms. Carol Scott and Dr. Anantha Babbili
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Chair Scott reported that she and Dr. Escamilla met with Representative Cloud. They spoke about legislative priorities which included an impact statement of federal dollars at our campus. She advised that ACCT is sending a weekly law alert and suggested the Board sign up to be kept abreast of quickly changing information.

- February 9-12, 2025: National Legislative Summit Meetings.....Dr. Anantha Babbili
ACCT India-US Workforce Development Partnership Coalition

(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Dr. Babbili stated he was appointed to the ACCT Finance and Audit Committee and provided information of the committee's work. He and Mr. Rivera met with Senator John Cornyn and discussed their concerns regarding federal funding and Pell Grants. He stated the initiative Cognizant Philanthropies, an IT company based in India that has a major presence in the United States fund the initial phase of the partnership between them and the US. The partnership looks at how students and faculty find some common elements that launch them into the future – what happens in 10, 20 years from now.

Mr. Augustin Rivera, Jr., General Counsel, stated he helped facilitate a community college roundtable discussion regarding AI and that he and Dr. Babbili met Senator John Cornyn in a meeting with the Texas delegation. Mr. Rivera stated that Senator Cornyn spoke about community colleges and his first words were, "I'm a big supporter of community colleges because of two things. You all are affordable and you're relevant. You provide relevant education to students." Another positive note, Senator Cornyn stated he was a fan of dual credit. He has a personal connection with Del Mar College in that his father, a World War II veteran, graduated from Del Mar College.

- February 27-28, 2025: Board of Trustees Institute, Austin
.....David Loeb and Dr. Anantha Babbili
((I: Communicate, Goal 1: Collaborate across the College))

Mr. Loeb echoed Dr. Babbili's previous sentiments and stated there was a general sense that Del Mar College is a step or two ahead of a lot of other schools. He stated there was discussion regarding barriers and how students didn't feel like they belonged. He stated that to continue to be successful, the College must continue to work on making sure that everyone feels welcome. DMC has a huge advantage in that the student body matches our population and believes the College should continue to build on that.

STAFF REPORTS:

- Legislative Update Dr. Natalie Villarreal
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Dr. Villarreal presented a high-level overview of Del Mar College's advocacy efforts, emphasizing the importance of staying informed, building relationships with legislators and their staff, and focusing on key legislative priorities, particularly those related to House Bill 8 and its implementation at both the federal and state levels.

For the federal level – She addressed the speculation about the future of the Department of Education under the new administration. The two main functions of the Department of Education: policy making to support student success and financial management of federal dollars (grants and loans). She stated that the College is closely monitoring communication from the White House regarding changes to the Department of Education.

For the state level – She emphasized the importance of advocacy for community colleges which have over 700,000 students in Texas. Focus is being put on communicating and educating new legislators, Senator Adam Hinojosa and Representative Denise Villalobos, regarding House Bill 8 and the College's appropriations.

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

- Property Tax Collection Assessment Mr. Raul Garcia
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Mr. Garcia reported that the College has historically monitored external factors to identify risks to property tax revenue which includes tax collections, property valuations, legislative changes, and property tax litigations and appeals.

Mr. Garcia highlighted the importance of property taxes to Del Mar College, noting that they account for 62% of the College's three combined funding sources. He contrasts this with other Texas community colleges that are more reliant on state funding or, in one unusual case, tuition and fees.

Mr. Garcia provided specific trends in property valuations, focusing on single-family homes, which represent a significant portion (48% in 2024) of the total property valuations. He notes the growth in single-family home valuations since 2020. The College also experienced a spike in valuations in 2023, leading to an increased number of valuation protests, particularly from petrochemical companies. These protests were settled in 2024, resulting in a slight decrease in overall property valuations.

Ms. Jackie Landrum discussed property tax collection rates, focusing on the collection rate based on the College's budget, which accounts for lawsuits, protests, tiffs, and penalties/interest. She reported that as of the end of January, the collection rate was slightly lower than the previous year, but by the end of February, it reached 98.2%, consistent with historical trends.

Ms. Landrum also connects the fluctuations in taxable property valuations with the number of appeals filed. The significant increase in property valuations from 2022 to 2023 led to a substantial rise in appeals. However, the subsequent decrease in valuations in 2024 resulted in fewer appeals.

PENDING BUSINESS:

Status report on requested information was discussed.

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:
Called Meeting, January 14, 2025
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)
2. Acceptance of Investments for January 2025
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)
3. Acceptance of Financials for January 2025
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Regent Crull made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda.
Regent Babbili 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 9-0, with Regents Scott, Adame, Averyt, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor.

REGULAR AGENDA

4. Discussion and possible action related to Award of Contract for Request for Competitive Sealed Proposals, RCSP #2025-04, Del Mar College Workforce Development Center, Aransas CountyMr. John Strybos
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Agenda Item No. 4 was tabled.

5. Discussion and possible action related to Annexation Adopted by the City of Corpus Christi – London Towne 10Mr. John Strybos
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Mr. Strybos explained that Texas Education Code, Section 130.066, Automatic Annexation of Certain Territory, allows Del Mar College to annex property as the City of Corpus Christi annexes new property. On February 18, 2025, the City of Corpus Christi approved an ordinance to annex 63.239-acre tract of land located along the east side of

County Road 33, London Pirate Road. Staff recommended annexing the property annexed by the City of Corpus Christi on February 18, 2025.

Regent Garza made a motion to adopt the annexation. Regent Babbili 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 9-0, with Regents Scott, Adame, Averyt, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor.

6. Discussion and possible action related to Annexation Adopted by the City of Corpus Christi – Padma EstatesMr. John Strybos
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Mr. Strybos explained that Texas Education Code, Section 130.066, Automatic Annexation of Certain Territory, allows Del Mar College to annex property as the City of Corpus Christi annexes new property. On February 11, 2025, the City of Corpus Christi approved an ordinance to annex and rezone land owned by an Anil C. and Vandana A. Patel for the Padma Estates Subdivision, a 19.2-acre track located along the north side of FM 2444. Staff recommended to annex the property annexed by the City of Corpus Christi on February 11, 2025.

Regent Babbili made a motion to adopt the annexation. Regent Kelly 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 9-0, with Regents Scott, Adame, Averyt, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor.

Discussion was held among the Regents regarding annexing the whole London School District.

7. Discussion and possible action on State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) Utility Cost Reduction Measures Loan.....Mr. John Strybos
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Mr. Strybos stated he has been working on the State Energy Conservation Office Utility Cost Reduction Measures loan. The is a \$6 million loan with an 2.5% per annum interest rate for 11 years that's tied into the life of the equipment. The estimated loan repayments, and that's using the \$6 million, 11 years, and 2.5%, is approximately \$624,452 per year, and that would be funded from the operating budget based on the

utility cost reductions. He discussed the projects that would be improved by this loan including upgrading the College's Energy Management System.

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

Regent Kelly made a motion to authorize Administration to negotiate with SECO for the SECO LoanSTAR loan. 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 9-0, with Regents Scott, Adame, Averyt, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor.

8. Discussion and possible action regarding Board Committee Structures Ms. Carol Scott
(I: Communicate, Goal 1: Collaborate across the College)

Chair Scott stated that the Audit Committee is the only established committee, but the Board can add additional committees at a later point in time.

Regent Babbili made a motion to re-establish the Audit Committee and confirm that there are no other Board committees. Regent Averyt 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 9-0, Regents Scott, Adame, Averyt, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor.

9. Board of Regents Annual Ethics Update Mr. Augustin Rivera, Jr.
(I: Communicate, Goal 1: Collaborate across the College)

Mr. Rivera stated the presentation aims to reinforce the importance of ethical conduct and compliance with bylaws, drawing upon established principles from organizations like ACCT, AGB, and SACSCOC. It also highlights the potential pitfalls of unethical behavior in higher education and offers guidance on navigating complex ethical dilemmas.

Mr. Rivera acknowledged the Regents' commitment to ethical behavior and thanked them for participating in the annual ethics review, and the Regents have been performing annual ethics reviews for over 10 years. The current review and

update process is the product of updated rule changes stemming from the 2021 Ad Hoc Committee review.

Mr. Rivera stated Dr. George Boggs' wrote a book about 15 years ago, "Ethical Leadership in the Community College," which highlights the privilege and responsibility of leadership, emphasizing the need to honor the public trust and make ethical behavior a core value to prevent ethical lapses. He reviewed recent headlines that illustrate the consequences of ethical failures in community colleges across the country, including feuds, ethics violations by trustees, controversial spending, conflict of interest concerns, and faculty votes of no confidence. These issues can damage functionality, credibility, and reputation.

Mr. Rivera reviewed the ethical standards from authoritative bodies and discussed Board policy and read the Del Mar College Statement of Conduct and Ethics.

Mr. Rivera connected the ethical review with the College's strategic plan and values – integrity, courage, resourcefulness, community, empathy, and tradition.

Mr. Rivera concluded his presentation and quoted Ms. Barbara Jordan, "being honest, telling the truth, and doing what you said you would do" to reinforce the core of ethics of the Board of Regents.

Each Regent signed and dated the Code of Ethics form at this meeting.

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

14. CLOSED SESSION pursuant to:

- A. **TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.071**: (Consultation with legal counsel), regarding pending or contemplated litigation, or a settlement offer, with possible discussion and action in open session; the seeking of legal advice from counsel, on pending legal or contemplated matters or claims, including the possible designation of litigation counsel in a pending contract matter; and, legal update, with possible discussion and action in open session.

The Board of Regents did not go into Closed Session.

CALENDAR: Discussion was held regarding the Board of Regent's and College's calendar of events.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.