

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

February 3, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Regents of the Del Mar College District convened on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 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:

Chair Carol Scott, Dr. Nicholas Adame, Ms. Libby Averyt, 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; Mr. Augustin Rivera, Jr., General Counsel; 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; Ms. Patricia Benavides-Dominguez, Vice President for Student Affairs; Mr. Matthew Busby, Vice President of Development and Donor Advising; Mr. Jeff Olsen, Chief of Staff and Vice President of Communication and Marketing; Ms. Delia Perez, Director of CEO Office and Board Relations, Mr. Conrado Garcia, Superintendent in Residence, 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.

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

- January 21, 2026: TACC Quarterly Board Meeting (Virtual)
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Dr. Escamilla virtually attended the Texas Association of Community Colleges quarterly Board meeting. The CEO of AACC, Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard was in attendance and spoke regarding the state of community colleges and the attention Texas is getting from its financial model.

- January 27, 2026: F2D 2.0 Principal & Counselor Meeting, Oso Creek Campus
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Dr. Escamilla participated in the Freedom to Dream 2.0 principal and counsel meeting. He thanked Mr. Garcia and team for their very informative presentation explaining the nuts and bolts of the 2.0 plan.

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

STAFF REPORTS:

- The Jed Foundation JED Campus Program Update.....Ms. Cheryl Sanders
(III: Cultivate, Goal 2: Optimize the Viking Student Experience)

Ms. Sanders presented details concerning the College's new strategic partnership with the Jed Foundation's JED Campus program, a national initiative focused on young adult mental health. The goal is to integrate mental health support into the core of the student experience, recognizing it as a critical factor for student success, retention, and completion, rather than solely a clinical concern.

Ms. Sanders highlighted the critical importance of the mental health of college students and provided data details from the 2024-2025 Healthy Mind Study, which surveyed over 84,000 students from 135 institutions. This study revealed widespread mental health challenges, including significant levels of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and loneliness, all of which have direct negative impacts on academic performance, help-seeking behavior, and student retention.

The College's journey toward this partnership is presented as a progression of existing commitments with recommendations from this initiative including establishing a formal committee to lead mental health assessment, messaging, and strategy, and pursuing participation in the JED Campus program.

The JED Campus program is a four-year collaboration with the Jed Foundation. The foundation, established by the Phil and Donna Satow family after the loss of their son Jed to suicide, aims to provide a blueprint for suicide prevention and mental health advocacy in educational institutions. The program requires the formation of a multidisciplinary campus team, representing various departments like student affairs, academic affairs, counseling services, and campus police, to assess and strengthen mental health, substance misuse, and suicide prevention systems.

The College has committed \$20,000 to the four-year program, with a JED Campus scholarship covering the remaining \$42,000 of the \$62,000 cost. The initiative is expected to improve student wellbeing by fostering resilience, stress management, and a strong support network across the campus community.

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

- January 27, 2026: F2D 2.0 Principal & Counselor Meeting, Oso Creek Campus
.....Dr. Patricia Benavides-Dominguez and Mr. Ali Kolahdouz
(*I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College*)

Dr. Escamilla provided introductory remarks and thanked the team for their preparation. Dr. Benavides-Dominguez reported that they have identified several enhancements to strengthen student support, increase persistence, and better align the program with institutional goals.

The data presented covers half of the academic year, with a commitment to provide end-of-semester and full academic year data later, potentially as late as September. There was a 12.5% increase in headcount from Spring '25 to Spring '26. The FTE increase was even stronger at 20.6%, indicating higher student engagement and progress towards completion. A strong 82% persistence rate, exceeding the initial goal of 70%. This 70% was a model based on research and a fiscal model for program sustainability. Sixty-two percent of Cohort 1 students maintained a GPA of 2.0 or higher. A 6% increase in college readiness from fall to spring, suggesting improved academic skills and confidence.

Dr. Benavides-Dominguez stated students needing developmental education and remediation were identified as a group that struggled with the full-time status. The new version (2.0) will incorporate a slower, more guided entry into coursework for these students to better prepare them for full-time instruction. The importance of focused support services, including mental health, is critical, especially for returning students (non-dual credit). Discussions around GPA policies are ongoing. The approach is individualized, focusing on intervention for students below 2.0 through an academic recovery program with personalized plans. The goal is to err on the side of providing opportunities for success, understanding that many students face significant barriers.

Mr. Kolahdouz provided details regarding the success and persistence by Freedom to Dream group and stated high persistence rates were observed across non-traditional, non-dual credit senior, and dual credit senior groups. Success rates where GPA was above 2.0 were also strong, with dual credit seniors showing particularly high success. College-ready students persisted at 78% for our non-traditional students, and 86% for our dual credit seniors. Transfer students persisted at 80% and non-transfer students at 82%. Success rates were 59% for transfer and 69% for non-transfer students. Females had a slightly higher persistence rate (82%) than males (81%), but males had a higher success rate of 64% that maintained a GPA of 2.0 compared to 60% of females. This breakdown aligns with the overall gender distribution (60/40 female/male). The 2.0 GPA metric discussed is cumulative. The committee is examining semester GPA to better capture progress for students who may be improving but not yet above 2.0 cumulatively.

Mr. Kolahdouz also provided information regarding enhancements for Cohort 2. There will be a utilization of tools like Civitas for early student engagement and retention. A dashboard will provide real-time data for quick decision-making and timely actions. Strategic outreach to parents and students, and strengthened partnerships with ISDs, acknowledging fewer dual credit graduates enrolled than initially expected. Our CRM, Element 451, continues to be an invaluable resource and is now being leveraged at its

highest capacity. For Cohort 2, students will have access to the additional continuing education options, ensuring that they can obtain training needed to meet workforce demands and better align with business and industry needs. He also wanted to point out that today's Request for Information is at 1,078, according to our CRM.

Dr. Benavides-Dominguez, Mr. Kolahdouz, and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

PENDING BUSINESS:

Status Report on Requested Information

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:
Workshop, December 9, 2025
Regular Board Meeting, December 9, 2025
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)
2. Acceptance of Quarterly Investment Report Ending November 30, 2025
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)
3. Acceptance of Investments for December 2025
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)
4. Acceptance of Quarterly Financial Report Ending November 30, 2025
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)
5. Acceptance of Financials for December 2025
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Regent Babbili made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda. Regent Crull 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

6. Discussion and possible action regarding a tuition rate change for the 2026-2027 academic year.....Mr. Raul Garcia
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Dr. Escamilla provided introductory remarks and introduced Mr. Garcia. Mr. Garcia stated they are bringing back the second and final update on student charges for fiscal year 2026-2027.

The first area discussed is the external and internal factors affecting the ability to balance next year’s budget. External factors include potential legislative changes regarding property taxes, modifications to the HB8 dynamic funding model, inflation, potential tariff impacts on operating costs, and the governor's directive to freeze tuition fees. Internal factors include expanding the "Freedom to Dream" initiative and related services, growth in dual credit enrollment, and the backlog of deferred maintenance needs. Capacity planning due to enrollment trends driven by initiatives like "Freedom to Dream" is also a concern, potentially necessitating infrastructure investments.

Second area of discussion is the affordability compared to peer groups. Del Mar College consistently ranks as the lowest-cost option among its peer group. Student charges for Fall 2024 were the lowest in the peer group. Del Mar students receive more grants and scholarship aid than their peers. The average student loan debt at Del Mar College is the second lowest within its peer group. For a typical part-time, in-district student taking seven credit hours, student charges rose modestly from \$848 (2022-2023) to \$990 (2024-2025). Approximately 70-73% of students are eligible for or receive Pell Grants. The College has implemented measures to encourage students to fill out forms to receive state aid like the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG) to avoid returning unawarded funds to the state.

Mr. Garcia provided information regarding tuition rate changes and inflation. Over the past five years, student charges have increased by only 5%, while Texas CPI increased by over 22%. This is attributed to a strategy of steady, modest increases. A \$3 per credit hour increase would cost a part-time student about \$42 more annually (2.4% change), with the rate change generally staying below inflation. Revenue generated from tuition increases is modest compared to the total annual budget (around \$130 million), but

significant when considering the portion directly from student charges (around \$27 million).

Mr. Garcia, Dr. Benavides-Dominguez, and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

Regent Kelly made a motion to set the tuition rate and basic charges at zero increase for the '26-'27 academic year. Regent Loeb seconded the motion. There was further discussion from the Board regarding future revenue avenues, budget challenges, and business model. 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.

- 7. Discussion and possible action of reappointment of Del Mar College Regent to Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #3 BoardMs. Carol Scott
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Chair Scott asked the Board to reappoint Regent Rudy Garza to the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone No. 3 (TIRZ #3) (downtown area).

Regent Loeb made a motion to reappointment Regent Garza to TIRZ #3. Regent Babbili seconded the motion. There was no further discussion from the Board. A vote was taken by show of hands, and the motion carried 8-0, with Regents Scott, Adame, Averyt, Babbili, Crull, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor. Regent Garza abstained from voting.

- 8. Board of Regents Annual Ethics UpdateMr. Augustin Rivera, Jr.
(I: Communicate, Goal I: Collaborate across the College)

Mr. Rivera thanked the Board for the opportunity to facilitate the Board's annual ethics update and review. He assured the Board that although ethics updates might seem repetitive or "boring," boring is good because it signifies a stable, well-managed, and principled environment.

Mr. Rivera provided information regarding the historical commitment of the Board to update their ethics and bylaws which lead to a public commitment to ethical conduct. In 2021, led by Regent Averyt, a more in-depth review resulted in additional self-imposed duties and obligations for the Board.

Mr. Rivera stated ethics are important because they honor the public trust and should be an ingrained value, not just a line in a strategic plan. It's vital to consider ethical values before facing difficult dilemmas. While ethical statements don't guarantee ethical behavior, they serve as reminders for leaders to guide their actions.

Annual ethics reviews, documented through presentations and minutes, provide crucial evidence for accreditation bodies like SACSCOC, demonstrating the Board's ethical practices. In the age of social media, reputations can be built over years and destroyed in minutes. Proactive reputational awareness, which this Board possesses, mitigates this risk.

Mr. Rivera reviewed best practices and governing principles promoted by organizations like ACCT and SACSCOC. He also highlighted key principles from various sources (ACCT, Association of Governing Boards) for trustee conduct which include, integrity, leading by example, acting in the institution's best interest, preemptively disclosing conflicts of interest, and upholding the highest ethical standards.

Mr. Rivera reviewed the impact of new legislation (Senate Bill 37) and how it has altered the Board's roles, granting them more authority over faculty, hiring, and curriculum.

The Board's Bylaws, developed with significant deliberation, establish a framework for governance. They include aspirational goals beyond legal requirements, reflecting the board's values and commitment to cultivating a culture of exemplary ethics. Colleagues from other institutions have expressed interest in obtaining these bylaws and the code of ethics. Mr. Rivera provided an overview of the Bylaws sections and stated the Board's rules of decorum are noted as being a model for other local governmental bodies.

Mr. Rivera included a detailed review of the Statement of Conduct and Ethics, covering expectations such as active participation, independent judgment, respect for academic freedom, student-centered decision-making, confidentiality, and avoiding gifts or inappropriate influence.

Mr. Rivera encouraged the Regents to continue focusing on integrity, positive leadership, and maintaining the strong ethical culture that supports the institution's reputation and effectiveness.

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

There was no action required for this Agenda item.

At 3:14 p.m., the Chair announced that the Board was going into Closed Session.

10. 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; and the seeking of legal advice from counsel on pending legal or contemplated matters or claims, with possible discussion and action in open session;
- b. **TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.087:** (Deliberation Regarding Economic Development), regarding discussion or deliberation of information received from a business prospect with which the College is conducting economic development negotiations and/or the deliberation of an offer of a financial or other incentive to a business prospect, including, a.) the participation of Del Mar College in the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone ("TIRZ") No. 7 proposed by the City of Corpus Christi, (London area); with possible discussion and action in open session; and,
- c. **TEX. GOV'T CODE§ 551.074(a)(I):** (Personnel matters), regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee.

The Board of Regents reconvened in Open Session at 4:24 p.m. with no action taken.

9. Discussion and possible action relating to Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #7Ms. Lenora Keas Lehrman and Ms. Jessica Alaniz (II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Ms. Keas Lehrman stated she would be discussing a proposal from the City of Corpus Christi for Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #7 in the London area, southwest of Corpus Christi to secure participation and funding from Del Mar College.

Ms. Keas Lehrman reviewed the vision and concept which is designed to promote smart growth, including housing, commercial, and retail spaces, by reinvesting tax funding to enhance parks, trails, public spaces, and overall quality of life. It aims to create new tax revenue and support infrastructure development in currently undeveloped areas.

A TIRZ works by establishing a baseline tax year (2026 in this proposal) and capturing any tax revenue generated from increased property values after that baseline. This captured increment is then reimbursed to developers for a specified period, with the expectation that all taxing entities will benefit from the higher valuations after the TIRZ expires.

The territory and subzones in the proposal include areas bordered by London ISD campus, Weber Road, Oso Creek, Staples Street, and Highway 286. Currently, there is virtually no taxable value within the proposed TIRZ boundaries as the area is largely undeveloped agricultural land outside city limits. A primary distinction is that the property is currently outside the city limits of Corpus Christi and not within the Del Mar College taxing district. For developers to participate, they must be annexed by the city and meet or exceed Uniform Development Code standards, including connecting to city sewer systems.

The City of Corpus Christi is proposing a 25-year TIRZ. Nueces County is committed to a 20-year TIRZ through an interlocal agreement. The College is being requested to participate for a 10-year term. The total project costs are estimated at over \$58 million for Subzone A and over \$117 million for Subzone B. The TIRZ projection over 25 years is estimated to generate \$2.8 billion in taxable value, leading to over \$370 million in taxes. The projected tax revenue and distribution over 25 years would be \$198 million to the City of Corpus Christi, \$86 million to Nueces County, and \$86 million to the College.

The College would have a maximum contribution of \$6 million over 10 years and would receive a 45% contribution in tax revenues after development approval and annexation.

The Board of Regents discussed and deliberated the proposal and Ms. Keas Lehrman responded to questions.

Regent Loeb made a motion to decline the proposed participation in TIRZ #7 as presented. Regent Crull seconded the motion. Additional comments from the Board were made regarding potential advantage to Del Mar College and the option of annexing when the City of Corpus Christi annexes in the future. 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 7-2, with Regents Averyt, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Kelly, Loeb, and Turner in favor, and Regents Scott and Adame voting against.

CALENDAR: Discussion and possible action related to calendaring dates.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

MINUTES REVIEWED BY GC: /s/ARjr