

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD RETREAT
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

February 2, 2013

Minutes

The Board of Trustees of Houston Community College held a Special Meeting (Board Retreat) on Saturday, February 2, 2013 at the Houstonian, 111 North Post Oak Lane, Houston, Texas.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bruce Austin, *Chair*
Sandie Mullins, *Vice Chair*
Eva Loreda, *Secretary*
Leila Feldman
Yolanda Navarro Flores
Herlinda Garcia
Christopher W. Oliver
Carroll G. Robinson
Neeta Sane

ADMINISTRATION

Renee Byas, Acting Chancellor
Art Tyler, Deputy Chancellor/COO
Charles Cook, Vice Chancellor, Instruction

OTHERS PRESENT

Jarvis Hollingsworth, System Counsel, Bracewell & Giuliani
Narcisa Polonio, Facilitator, Association of Community Colleges Trustees (ACCT)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bruce Austin, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:28 a.m. and declared the Board convened to consider matters pertaining to Houston Community College as listed on the duly posted Meeting Notice.

Mr. Austin acknowledged the retreat facilitator, Dr. Narcisa Polonio with the Association of Community Colleges Trustees (ACCT). Dr. Polonio welcomed the new Trustees and apprised of the scheduled agenda for the day. She noted that each Trustee was contacted prior to the retreat in order that an agenda could be developed according to their input. Dr. Polonio informed that the efforts of the retreat are to gain common grounds and set clear priorities.

Dr. Polonio provided an overview of the agenda schedule and requested that the Trustees review to add any topics that may not be included for review.

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Mrs. Sane requested that the focus be on the priorities of the college regarding how to maintain public trust, student success, and faculty empowerment. She apprised that the goals should be set.

Mr. Austin informed that his reasoning for outlining the retreat in such a manner is to make certain the Board participates in team building. Mr. Austin presented information regarding the focus of the Board as it relates to the budget process and policy. He apprised that the objectives should be adequately planned. He noted that other organizations were reviewed to identify a commonality throughout every agency. He informed that there are not enough students in joint programs, developmental courses, workforce development and corporate training.

Dr. Polonio summarized that the budget is a document to set objectives. She apprised that the document provided could be used as a resource to support policies and priorities.

Ms. Mullins noted that her priority is completion numbers (transfers, graduates, etc.) and apprised that the college needs to be known for completion.

Ms. Loreda noted that student success and working with the faculty are important. She informed that there are times when direct contact with the faculty is needed. She apprised that there should be an effort to get a true picture from the faculty perspective.

Dr. Polonio noted that part of leadership is creating opportunity so that it happens naturally and comfortably. She informed that the concern of Ms. Loreda is transparency.

Mr. Robinson apprised that his concern is accountability. He informed that there must be trust with the Board and leader of the administration. He apprised that the leader of administration has accountability to the Board. He noted that there should be clear divides with shared governance between the Board and administration.

Mr. Robinson informed that the Board has to be willing to slow down and walk through all the possible permutations around decision-making.

Mr. Robinson apprised that security and graduation rates are imperative. He noted that the Board needs to have a real conversation as to the changes in education. He noted that the Board needs to have a conversation regarding the partnerships and revenues, as they are essential.

Dr. Polonio noted that the Board needs to be both strategic and tactical.

Mrs. Flores informed that student services needs to be reviewed. She apprised that there are issues regarding the counselors. She noted that there are concerns regarding enrollment and graduation rates as well.

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Dr. Polonio informed that enrollment has a major effect on everything. She apprised that administration has to be accountable to the Board in all expenses and the budget. She noted that a foundation regarding the budget is needed.

Mrs. Feldman informed that trust is critical including the public trust as well as that of the Board and administration. She apprised that there is little information regarding the agenda items. She noted that communication is also imperative. Mrs. Feldman emphasized customer service mindedness is important and providing the opportunity to respond to the customer.

Dr. Polonio informed that what is missing and what is not known are important questions that the Board should be asking.

Mrs. Garcia apprised that as a veteran educator, high standards, high expectations and student success are essential to her. She informed that trust is critical and noted that unity is imperative. She noted that the administration can only function when they know what is expected from the Board. She informed that it should be known that instruction is what drives the college budget.

Dr. Polonio informed that Mrs. Garcia comments are a good introduction to the first exercise. She summarized the concerns and comments as follows:

- Trust is important and public trust is critical
- Student Success
- Budget (should support priorities and policy)
- Strategic and Tactical
- Transparency and Accountability
- Security
- Partnerships and Revenues
- Communication/Image
- Image

Dr. Polonio introduced an exercise to have the Board to identify priorities from three perspectives:

- 2 months (February-March)
- 3 months (April-June)
- 5 months (July-Nov)

The meeting recessed at 10:35 a.m. and reconvened at 10:43 a.m.

(Trustees present: Austin, Feldman, Flores, Garcia, Loreda, Mullins, Robinson and Sane)

Dr. Polonio provided a summary of the Board's priorities for the next two-months (February-March):

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- Revision of Bylaws
- Leadership Transition
- Bond Implementation
- Security
- Track
 - Graduation/Success
 - Recruitment Plan
 - Enrollment
- Relationship Building
- Collaboration/Transparency with Administration
- Bylaws and policies

Mrs. Garcia apprised that the issue must be resolved by the Board regarding follow-up. Dr. Polonio informed that the Board needs to adopt a calendar of review to make certain items are reviewed and reports are provided.

Mr. Robinson apprised that there is a need as a Board to decide if the culture will be to accept the recommendation from administration or to allow amendments to the recommendation received from administration.

Mrs. Sane noted that the issue is beyond culture and noted that the policy is that there are no surprises at the table. Dr. Polonio informed that Robert's Rules will indicate that amendments are allowable.

(Mrs. Flores and Mr. Robinson stepped out at 11:17 a.m.)

(Mrs. Flores returned at 11:18 a.m.)

The Board continued to discuss the two-month priorities.

Dr. Polonio inquired if there needs to be revisions to the Board bylaws. Mrs. Flores expressed that there needs to be revisions. Dr. Polonio suggested an independent review of the bylaws as a first step.

(Mr. Robinson returned at 11:21 a.m.)

Mrs. Garcia apprised that committees have not been formed for the year. She noted that the Board needs to set the example for administration.

Mr. Austin informed that committee assignments will be made prior to the next scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting on February 14, 2013.

Ms. Mullins inquired if the consensus is that Dr. Polonio will review the bylaws. Mrs. Flores apprised that she is amicable to Dr. Polonio reviewing the bylaws and noted that if possible, insight should be provided within a week. Dr. Polonio noted that there will be highlighted recommendations of what needs to be done regarding bylaw revisions.

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Dr. Polonio inquired of the charge to the Board Governance committee regarding the bylaws revisions. She summarized that the review is to see if the bylaws give more authority to the administration than the Board.

Mrs. Garcia informed that her concern is to ensure that there is follow-through when a Trustee inquires of certain items.

Mrs. Garcia informed that if a Trustee declines a committee, the request should be honored. Dr. Polonio apprised that it is part of the Board's job description to serve on committees.

Mrs. Sane noted that the bylaws denote that the Trustees are required to attend the COTW and Regular meetings. Mr. Hollingsworth informed that the expectation is that every Trustee should assist in the work of the Board; however, it is not a policy or bylaw mandate.

Ms. Loredo apprised that if the Trustees do not serve on the various committees then all the questions will be delayed to the COTW and the Regular meeting.

- Security

Dr. Polonio noted that security denotes that the effort is to build trust and noted that instructions must be given from the Board.

(Mr. Oliver joined the meeting at 11:37 a.m.)

Mr. Hollingsworth informed that he would draft a resolution for the Board to consider regarding security.

(Ms. Loredo stepped out at 11:38 a.m.)

Dr. Polonio summarized that a report is expected from administration by March 2013. She apprised that the report needs to be substantive.

(Mr. Robinson stepped out at 11:38 a.m.)

Dr. Polonio noted that by March 2013, the administration should present a report regarding the assessment conducted. She informed that the confidential discussion regarding security takes place in closed session; however, the public trust statement should relate to what has been put in place.

- Bond Implementation

Dr. Polonio apprised that bond implementation brings much attention. She noted that the assumption is that corruption is in place when the Board has money. She informed that there is normally an assumption that some Trustees will benefit over others. Dr. Polonio apprised that it is critical to have safeguards in place.

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- Tracking Student Success
The reality is tracking student success takes time.
- Relationship Building
Dr. Polonio recommended that each Trustee interact with the new Trustees one-to-one.
- Communication
Dr. Polonio noted that it is important to maintain collaboration and transparency while working with an Acting Chancellor. The Board should be clear on what it wants; know when to move forward.

Mrs. Garcia inquired what can be done by the Board to ensure that there is consistency in requesting and disseminating information. She inquired as to what can be done to support the Acting Chancellor and to take corrective action.

Dr. Polonio apprised that the position is an Acting Chancellor and noted that the responsibility of the individual is to be caretaker until the Chancellor returns. She informed that it should not overwhelm the individual. She apprised the short-term Chancellor is not going to fix the issues of the college and noted that efforts should be to work with the individuals who are over the various departments.

(Mrs. Flores stepped out at 11:50 a.m.)

Dr. Polonio informed that some of the issues raised are long-term concerns, which must be discussed with the permanent Chancellor.

Dr. Polonio provided an overview of basic facts regarding key principles that have been instrumental in making other colleges either a success or failure.

(Mrs. Flores returned at 11:56 a.m.)

Mr. Robinson informed that a database is needed to see enrollment and growth potential. Dr. Polonio apprised that data needs to be analyzed by the Trustees.

Dr. Polonio reiterated to the Board that their issues are building trust, communication, conflict resolution and future direction. She apprised that the Board needs to keep moving forward with marketing, promotion, one voice and organization.

Mr. Austin asked Dr. Polonio to present the video regarding the Community College in Ohio.

(Mrs. Sane stepped out at 12:23 p.m.)

Mr. Austin noted that the purpose of the video presentation is to depict how other community colleges are doing more than HCC. He informed that there was a study that

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showed that the South is doing poorly in certain areas because of the areas of focus for training.

Dr. Polonio presented a video regarding Cuyahoga College and apprised that the video focused on change and noted that Board policy was the driving force regarding change.

Dr. Polonio elaborated that the role of the community college is different from a K-12 and hospital board. She informed that higher education is odd and foreign. She apprised that the Board has fiduciary responsibility, a shared governance structure, and academic freedom. Dr. Polonio noted that the Board is responsible for setting direction and making certain it is carried-out.

(Mrs. Sane returned at 12:28 p.m.)

Mr. Austin apprised that the next discussion for the agenda was Fostering the Board/Chancellor Relationship.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:29 p.m. and reconvened at 1:05 p.m.

(Trustees present: Austin, Feldman, Flores, Garcia, Loreda, Mullins, Robinson, and Sane)

Dr. Polonio polled the Board regarding the importance of communication, collaboration, and trust. She noted that the difficulty is defining those areas because there are different individuals with different needs. She informed that the definition reflects the background and/or experience of the individual.

Dr. Polonio apprised that the Role of the Board includes:

- Governing the College on behalf of the community
- Represent ownership of the community
- Voice of the public – not volunteer helpers
- Primary relationship is with the Chancellor
- Wisely defining the vision, mission, expectation and standards
- Establish reporting framework to ensure legal and ethical conduct and compliance

Mrs. Garcia inquired of the process for placing an item on the agenda. Dr. Polonio noted that there are three areas driving items placed on the agenda:

- Board Committees
- Administration and the Chair
- Board Priorities

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Dr. Polonio informed that the process should be well defined. Mr. Austin apprised that the Trustee has the option of presenting an item on the agenda by informing the Board Chair or the Chancellor.

Mr. Robinson noted that there needs to be clarity in the process because he asked to place an item on the agenda by presenting it to the past Chair; however, the item was not placed on a committee agenda.

Ms. Loreda informed that now that the process is clear, it should be followed moving forward.

Dr. Polonio inquired of the Board if they feel that they are volunteers. She apprised that they are elected officials placed in office by the voters. She noted that it must be understood that the efforts are done out of service to the community.

(Mr. Robinson stepped out at 1:31 p.m. and returned at 1:32 p.m.)

(Mrs. Flores stepped out 1:32 p.m.)

Dr. Polonio informed that the Board should vote on items as opposed to abstaining because they are elected officials and not volunteers and Board members have a responsibility to cast their vote.

Dr. Polonio apprised that the mission does not speak to student success and completion and should be reviewed by the Board. She noted that the mission statement should reflect what is being said to the community regarding what is being done.

Dr. Polonio informed that the Board has a choice:

- Burn or build bridges
- Make the institution shine
- Demonstrate visible good will
- Deepen the commitment before asking for support
- Demonstrate respect

Dr. Polonio referenced dual enrollment. She inquired as to what is HCC going to do about the issue. Ms. Loreda mentioned that there was not a deepened commitment before asking for support. Mrs. Garcia apprised that the issue goes back to the Board because the Chancellor was not held accountable.

(Mrs. Feldman stepped out at 1:46 p.m.)

Dr. Polonio informed that others are creating the image and the Board is individually or collectively giving that power to those bodies. She informed that the image of the Board cannot be blamed on the administration.

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Mr. Austin apprised that the Board in the past made an effort to change its image by committing to speak with one voice.

(Mrs. Feldman returned at 1:49 p.m.)

Mrs. Sane noted that the Board needs to continue to be a united front. She informed that marketing and PR are very imperative and need to be a priority.

Ms. Mullins apprised that the Board has to remain focused. Ms. Mullins requested to see improvements regarding public relations on behalf of the college.

Mrs. Garcia noted that the Board is a political entity. She requested to see the contract with the consultant regarding public relations and marketing efforts because there was no information put out regarding HCC safety efforts after the shooting at Lone Star and there should have been.

Mrs. Sane informed that the Board has to move forward and noted that the PR needs to improve to change the image.

Mrs. Flores apprised that it would have behooved the Board to have been proactive regarding the article that was published relating to the Board. She noted that it appears that the consensus of the Board is that something is lacking regarding the PR especially in the case of the Board.

Dr. Polonio noted that individuals refer to the Board as either "the", "my" or "our" Board. Dr. Polonio informed that the response to HCC's Board is often referred to as "the" Board. She apprised the goal is to move towards an "our" Board response because the Board belongs to the institution, not an individual.

Mr. Robinson noted of a situation regarding the relationship between the Board and administration. He informed that there needs to be some clarification. He apprised that there is a division between the Board and the administration as well as the past chairs. He noted that the Chair represents the Board and noted that the Board Counsel and Chair cannot know about issues and not inform the full Board.

Mr. Austin informed that the Board needs to deal with facts, not innuendos. Mrs. Sane expressed the need for a partnership between the Board and administration. She inquired if the Board will move forward with partnership or will the Board give directives to the administration.

Ms. Mullins apprised that at this point in time, a partnership does not exist and recommended that the Board take the lead.

Dr. Polonio summarized the discussion regarding the image of the Board to include:

- Staying focus

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- Political Entity
- Role of Chair
- Moving Forward
- New Beginning
- Respect
- Role Clarification

Dr. Polonio informed that the following will make the best use of Board time and talent:

- Participative but effective (maintaining both order and open discussion)
- Create positive and welcoming atmosphere
- Set a positive tone
- Conduct the flow of business
- Parliamentary procedures
- Assure the Board has meeting ground rules which govern Trustees behavior
- Use the Board's ground rules to handle the "difficult" Trustee who is disruptive to the Board's work
- Assure that ideas generated by the Board have a follow-up plan before the meeting is adjourned
- Assure that the Board operates well within the parameters of the State's open meetings law

ADJOURNED TO CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Austin adjourned the meeting to Executive Session at 2:09 p.m., notice having previously been given and reiterated in accordance with Sections 551.071, 551.072, and/or 551.074 of the Open Meetings Law. Mr. Austin stated that any final action, vote or decision on any item discussed in Executive Session would be taken up in Open Session or in a subsequent Public Meeting.

Mr. Austin reconvened the meeting in Open Session at 3:06 p.m. and entertained motions on pending matters.

(Present: Trustees Austin, Garcia, Feldman, Flores, Loreda, Mullins, Robinson, and Sane)

ENROLLMENT REPORT

Mr. Austin asked Dr. Cook to provide a copy of the enrollment report to include the HCC five-year trends for degrees and awards.

Dr. Cook noted that the college is number two in the nation regarding:

- Number of degrees and certificates
- Enrollment trends and short-term recruitment/completion strategy
- Enrollment (earnings by attainment)

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Mrs. Flores requested a chart on unduplicated enrollment on a year-to-year view.

Mr. Robinson informed that his concern is regarding new student enrollment. Dr. Tyler apprised that new student enrollment increased.

(Mrs. Feldman stepped out at 3:16 p.m.)

Mr. Robinson inquired if there is capability to track the difference between new and returning students and why students are not returning.

Mr. Robinson inquired what does it mean for the college if the city population is decreasing and outlining areas are increasing. Mrs. Byas apprised that an enrollment management plan is underway.

(Mrs. Sane stepped out at 3:23 p.m.)

Mr. Robinson requested that the enrollment plan be grafted on a map. He requested to view the enrollment of schools districts in his district.

Dr. Cook noted that the population is changing in the district's area. He informed that there are efforts to market reduced tuitions and waiving of fees. He apprised that Dr. Tyler has requested plans for increasing distant education.

Mrs. Garcia also requested information of schools in the service area. She noted that more information should be taken to the high schools because a majority of the students need motivation.

(Ms. Mullins stepped out at 3:27 p.m.)

Mrs. Garcia inquired if there are trips for students to visit HCC in middle or high school.

(Ms. Mullins returned at 3:29 p.m.)

Dr. Cook informed that there are professional alignment counsels and that the College needs to have the counselors working with the high school counselors.

(Mrs. Sane returned out at 3:30 p.m.)

Mrs. Garcia apprised that the presidents have to engage the students to learn about the community college. She noted that a hands-on plan would guarantee an increase in enrollment. She requested that the information be presented to the Board so that budget constraints can be reviewed.

Mrs. Garcia suggested that maybe Board members should be at the registration sites to see how students are being treated during registration.

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Dr. Cook informed that the student success course is being channeled down to the 10th and 11th grades. He apprised that the effort is to make certain the students are aware.

Mr. Robinson suggested that a catchy title is developed and marketed. He noted that the message is not being driven home.

(Mrs. Feldman returned at 3:37 p.m.)

Dr. Cook informed that the efforts would need to include more social media.

Mrs. Garcia noted it should be made known that the expectations are increased enrollment and that the presidents should be held accountable.

Mr. Robinson apprised that regarding the budget process there should either be a revenue or cost center.

Mr. Robinson inquired as to who is coordinating the apprenticeship program as it relates to the bond project. Dr. Cook noted that the apprenticeship has not been cut; however, there were unexpended funds.

Ms. Mullins informed that according to Dr. Tyler, there was a group of apprenticeship programs cut. Dr. Tyler apprised that there were funding issues.

Dr. Polonio noted that the Board needs to consider that students drop out and noted that investigation leads to change. She informed that Boards are not so concerned if enrollment is up or down but focus on the continuing student and noted that their needs to be a focus on the current students.

Mr. Robinson apprised that the three-year graduation rate is 6 percent and noted that if a bulk of students are not continuing students, this will become a problem. Dr. Cook informed that the students have to be engaged to become continuing education students.

Dr. Polonio apprised that as the quality increases, the representation improves.

(Mrs. Feldman stepped out at 3:49 p.m.)

Dr. Cook noted that there are expansion schemes that have been identified.

(Mr. Robinson stepped out at 3:51 p.m.)

Mr. Austin referenced the Earnings by Attainment (Enrollment)

(Mrs. Feldman returned at 3:52 p.m. /Mr. Robinson returned at 3:52 p.m.)

(Mrs. Sane stepped out at 3:52 p.m.)

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Mr. Austin inquired as why the information from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) was different. Dr. Cook provided an overview of the Texas Higher Education Accountability System.

Mrs. Garcia stated that it is similar to the Day of Enrollment with HISD. Dr. Cook informed that there are different start semesters to include sixteen, twelve, and eight week starts. Dr. Cook noted that HCC does an end of semester enrollment.

Mrs. Garcia requested a one-on-one discussion with Dr. Cook regarding how enrollment is counted. She also asked that the number of vacancies as well as the developmental classes.

(Mrs. Sane returned at 3:57 p.m.)

Mrs. Byas noted that the college presidents are working on the information and will include it.

Mr. Austin requested that the charts in the presentation material be enlarged for better view.

Dr. Tyler informed that the enrollment is up by .35 percent and noted it will possibly continue to increase over the semester.

Mrs. Sane requested that the information is provided or circulated in the community.

Mr. Austin expressed appreciation to the Board for participating in the retreat. Mr. Austin noted that the items not addressed will be on the agenda for the Committee of the Whole.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business coming before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded, transcribed & submitted by:
Sharon Wright, Manager, Board Services

Minutes Approved as Submitted: April 18, 2013