

The Board of Trustees of the Howard County Junior College District met for a regular board meeting in the Auditorium of the Maddux Student Union Building at the SouthWest College for the Deaf on Monday, October 23, 2023.

The following members of the Board and District Administration were present:

Dr. John Freeman, Chairman  
Maxwell Barr, Vice-Chairman  
Adrian Calvio, Secretary  
Dr. Marisha Beck  
Raul Marquez  
Mark Morgan  
Ben Zeichick

Dr. Cheryl T. Sparks, Ed.D., President  
Dr. Amy Burchett, Ed.D., Executive Vice-President  
Jeff Anderson, Interim Provost, SWCD  
Pam Callan, Provost, San Angelo  
Monica Castro, Executive Dean, Lamesa  
Eric Hansen, Chief Technology Systems/Data Security Officer  
Rhonda Kernick, Chief HR Officer  
Brenda Madore, Chief of Staff/Institutional Advancement Officer - recorder  
Fabian Serrano, Chief Operations and Safety/Security Officer  
Bryan Stokes, Chief Institutional Effectiveness Officer  
Steve Smith, Chief Business Officer/Internal Auditor

Others present were:

Stephanie Bissonnette, Interpreter  
Shannon Creswell, Director of Student and Administrative Services SWCD  
Jessica Fontana, SWCD student  
Sonia Gonzales, Academic Advisor/Library Supervisor SWCD  
John Green, Director of Outreach SWCD  
Terry Hansen, Chief Special Projects Officer  
Jennifer Key, Assistant to Director of Student and Administrative Services  
Andreia Medlin, Big Spring Herald  
Teresa Minchew, Instructor/Interpreter Training Program SWCD  
David O'Donnell, District Tech Support III/Media SWCD  
Renee Porter, Interpreter  
Rod Rodriguez, Security  
Cindy Smith, Dean of Student Success/Public Information Officer  
Shannon Stuteville, Executive Assistant  
Maydee Vande Hey, Coordinator of Residence Education SWCD

Prior to the meeting and as part of this focused meeting's purpose, board members, administration, and special guests gathered for a tour of the SouthWest College for the Deaf (SWCD), the dedication of the Danny Campbell Classroom in the Burke Administration Building, and the proclamation of Deaf Awareness Week in Big Spring by Mayor Robert Moore.

After a short recess for lunch, Trustees convened for the regular meeting.

Chairman Freeman called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. The regular meeting was open to the public in the Auditorium of the Maddux Student Union Building on the SWCD Campus and through remote connection utilizing a toll-free number. The regular meeting was recorded and will be available on the website. Minutes will also be available on the website. Mr. Calvio led the invocation.

Next, Dr. Sparks provided an overview of the focused meeting's purpose, referencing the self-evaluation completed by the Board in strategic planning earlier in the year. During that planning they determined to increase Board presence at each of the four campuses in the district. Dr. Sparks explained that the meeting held today would provide a focus on the SWCD campus, students, and operations. However, since the SWCD campus is

located within the taxing district, this meeting would coincide with the regular business meeting for the month of October. The Board would conduct regular business and take action on several items in addition to receiving information specific to SWCD.

Next, the public was invited to address the Board. There were no comments.

Next, Trustees considered routine matters, including the minutes of the regular meeting on September 25, 2023, checklist for September 2023, monthly report of auxiliary services, and personnel matters. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the routine matters. The motion was seconded by Mr. Morgan. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees moved to New Business Visioning/Future Directions.

Next, SWCD Interim Provost Jeff Anderson delivered the State of SWCD Campus address. During the address, Jeff highlighted ongoing infrastructure improvements and renovations that are occurring, and efforts to enhance relationships with external entities like the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas School for the Deaf. Additionally, he addressed the decline in SWCD enrollment caused by the pandemic but pointed towards the ever-improving enrollment numbers that are now occurring. The faculty and staff at SWCD are concentrating on interventions to boost enrollment and support students. Jeff also acknowledged the generous donors who have contributed financial support for students and services, which have had a significant impact on student outcomes. Dr. Sparks noted that the renovation projects Jeff spoke about were those that were previously budgeted for. There was also a short discussion on the challenges of hiring qualified instructors at SWCD and the HR strategies that were employed to recruit those specialized individuals.

Next, Jeff introduced SWCD student Jessica Fontana to Trustees. Jessica is a second-year Dental Lab Technology student set to graduate in December. She discussed her involvement in student government, active participation in student roundtables, and her role as a Resident Assistant. She expressed deep gratitude for her instructors and everyone at SWCD for providing her with a wonderful educational experience. Jessica also shared that she has already secured a job after graduation, underscoring the tangible benefits of her time at SWCD.

Next, continuing with the SWCD campus focus and in alignment with Board strategic priorities, Dr. Sparks reviewed the most recent SWCD Roundtable results. She gave Trustees background information on student roundtable procedures and the care that is taken to respond in a timely way to student comments and concerns. She then discussed specific comments brought up by students at the SWCD campus.

Next, Trustees considered a nomination for professor emeritus designation for the SWCD site for 2023. Six letters of nomination had been submitted for Danny Campbell, who retired in May of 2023 after spending more than four decades serving SWCD and Howard College in various capacities, including many years as a beloved faculty member. Dr. Sparks explained that this designation is being voted on a little earlier than normal but is in alignment with the focused meeting's purpose. The designation will be recognized at the May graduation. Danny and his wife Shirley were in attendance for the dedication of the Danny Campbell classroom and mayoral proclamation. The Board expressed their appreciation for all Danny had done in service to SWCD and Howard College. Dr. Beck made a motion to approve the nomination. Mr. Barr seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, continuing the focus on the SWCD campus, Terry Hansen provided the Trustees with an update on the Facilities Master Plan and shared specific findings related to the SWCD campus. Terry began with a concise overview of the Master Plan work, emphasizing that the Trustees had received more detailed briefings on multiple occasions during previous meetings. He reported that progress on the work was moving quickly, and they had received an impressive 436 responses to the survey, a substantial improvement compared to the last survey distribution in 2007. This valuable data will be analyzed to inform recommendations in the final report. Additionally, Terry supplied each Trustee with a QR code for the Facilities Master Plan survey, allowing them to provide their input for the SWCD campus.

Next, Trustees considered four resolutions thanking various individuals and entities and a request for the naming of a room on the Lamesa campus.

1. Resolution, Fowler Family Foundation: for continued support of numerous scholarships over the years and most recently the creation of an innovative paid internship program scholarship that will begin in the Spring semester. This resolution will be presented at the Big Spring Campus focused meeting on November 13, 2023.
2. Resolution, Big Spring Area Foundation: for financial support of scholarships benefiting students at the Big Spring and SWCD campuses. This resolution will be presented at the Big Spring Campus focused meeting on November 13, 2023.
3. Resolution, Carol Adams: for the generous financial donation that made possible the extensive renovation and restoration of the Music Building. This resolution will be presented at the dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony on January 17, 2024.
4. Resolution, Lamesa Community: for the COVID response of entities within the Lamesa community, which benefited Howard College students, faculty, staff, and the entire community. This is similar to resolutions that have been passed thanking entities in San Angelo and Big Spring and will be presented at the Lamesa Campus focused meeting on November 1, 2023.
5. Naming of the Dr. Wayne C. Smith Distance Learning Classroom: Dr. Smith was an instructor at the Lamesa campus for several years, as well as an administrator, and a strong advocate for Howard College in Lamesa from its inception. A plaque is being placed outside of the distance learning classroom and will be recognized at the November 1, 2023, meeting in Lamesa.

Mr. Marquez made a motion to approve all the resolutions and the request for naming the classroom at the Lamesa campus as presented. Mr. Zeichick seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Bryan Stokes presented the Fall enrollment update. He explained that with changes in reporting due to the implementation of HB8 plus the 8-week semester inclusion into the regular 16-week term it has been a challenge to create an "apples to apples" comparative report. Dr. Sparks noted that Bryan had found a great format being used by Blinn College that we are adapting for that purpose. This will result in five enrollment reports to the Board each year, which will include preliminary and final findings. This is being incorporated into the Accountability Calendar. Bryan led Trustees through a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the impacts that COVID and slow enrollment by certain dual credit sites have had on enrollment reporting over the last several years. In the end, preliminary enrollment totals look to be up approximately 4%.

Next, Fabian Serrano provided a brief update on the federally mandated annual security and safety reports, which are readily accessible on the website for public viewing. He then highlighted that the Emergency Operations Plan is a dynamic document continuously updated in response to threat assessments and the latest information from national, state, and local agencies. This plan encompasses various responses to potential emergency situations, aiding the institution in preparing for a wide range of scenarios. Fabian mentioned that our plan is notably more intricate than that of a local school district because our campuses are situated in various towns and spread across many miles. A portion of the discussion centered on alcohol, identified as a source of some reported issues in the security reports. Trustees and administrators discussed strategies in place to address underage drinking among students residing on campus.

Next, Trustees considered six items related to purchasing.

1. Request to affirm an RFP for Snack Vending. Trustees had previously given Dr. Sparks permission to accept this item once a suitable vendor was identified.
2. Request for permission to give Dr. Sparks authority to accept a proposal once a suitable vendor is identified on an RFP for Drinks Vending. She would then report back to the Board.
3. Consider a bid for camera server replacement. This is an item that was approved in the budget process.
4. Consider a bid for SWCD Dorm and Kitchen exhaust fans. These items were approved in the budget process.
5. Consider a bid for a SWCD bus. This item was approved in the budget process.
6. Consider a bid for office furniture for several locations throughout the district. These items were approved in the budget process.

Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve all the requests and bids as presented. Mr. Barr seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees considered two interlocal agreements presented by Steve Smith.

1. Region 17 Education Service Center 2023-2024 West Texas Food Service Cooperative Interlocal Agreement
2. Region 19 Education Service Center Allied States Cooperative Agreement

Steve explained that interlocal agreements allow for efficient use of federal funds and comply with EDGAR regulations. He also related that the College tries to participate in these agreements in part, because of the rebates they provide, which can be substantial. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the interlocal agreements as presented. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Fabian Serrano provided a brief update on the Big Spring buses purchase. He reported that the buses are currently in the United States but have been delayed due to a lack of material for seat covering. The College has opted to wait for the material to become available again instead of moving forward with an alternative material, which was deemed to be less desirable. This is expected to delay delivery until the end of November.

Next, Trustees considered handbook and catalog changes (see attached). Dr. Sparks explained that pending adjustments are being made to dual credit tuition due to the College's determination to participate in the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) Program that was brought into being by HB8. Dr. Sparks outlined the history of the decision-making process of participation in FAST for Trustees and noted that while it is believed that we will enter that program in the Spring of 2024, that may be delayed until the Fall of 2024 based upon feedback from our dual credit school district partners. There will be superintendent meetings coming up on November 14 and 15 to gain that feedback and discuss the program with them. It is possible the tuition change will not take place until Fall 2024. After meetings with the school districts, Dr. Sparks will update the Board on the final outcome at the December Board meeting. There was also a request for a small adjustment to the enrollment fee for the installment payment plan. Mr. Barr made a motion to approve the handbook and catalog changes as presented. Mr. Zeichick seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Dr. Sparks informed Trustees that the audit would begin on November 6. Brenda Claxton and team are hard at work preparing.

Next, Terry Hansen gave an update on the Library and Music Building projects. They are both nearing completion, except for lighting systems commission in both buildings. Those are upcoming. Fabian gave a brief update on improvements to the grounds around both buildings, everything is on schedule there. Dr. Sparks related that the dedication for the Library will be December 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. She had also confirmed with the donor that the Music dedication would be rescheduled to January 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

Next, Trustees received an update on the John Weeks Press Box project. Dr. Sparks shared that the previous Saturday had been the dedication and ribbon cutting for the project. Several others were honored at that event including former Coach Britt Smith, who had been inducted into the WJCAC Hall of Fame along with John Weeks; former Coach J-Bob Thomas, whose number will be retired at the end of the season; and former Coach Jack Giese who recently passed, whose number will be retired at the end of the season. Dr. Sparks thanked the many employees and community members who had made the event a success.

Next, an update on the student information system project implementation was presented by Eric Hansen, Bryan Stokes, and Dr. Amy Burchett. The project continues to make progress, with regular meetings held each week involving various offices. Replacing the day-to-day processes that had been developed in POISE over nearly 20 years is a time-consuming task. Dr. Burchett emphasized that CAMS provides users with more readily available data, and training efforts are underway to encourage users to take ownership of generating their own reports. The integration successfully navigated its way through the first semester start, and now the focus is on fine-tuning the system. Dr. Sparks expressed gratitude to Eric for his leadership during this extensive project.

Next, Dr. Sparks provided the President's Report by providing an overview of the Board calendar, highlighting significant events. The Howard College Foundation Meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 30 at 11:30 a.m. A Special Lamesa Campus Focused Board Meeting is set for November 1. She also mentioned the upcoming music recital and fall music concert, as well as the commencement of the basketball season. The Regular Board Meeting is slated for November 13.

Next, Dr. Sparks highlighted the achievements of our Dental Hygiene and Respiratory Therapy Programs and provided information about the recent evaluation visit by ACEN for the A.D.N. Program on the Big Spring campus. All those programs operate at high levels of excellence. She also shared news of the entertaining comedy theater production, "Greater Tuna," performed by our Theater students last week on the Big Spring Campus. In addition, Chairman Freeman presented Trustee Calvio with his well-deserved 10-year pin.

Next, Dr. Sparks briefly reviewed legislative and general updates. She will be meeting on November 3 with State Senator Sparks and the presidents of Midland and Odessa Colleges.


Next, Trustees considered revisions to the purchasing process and an associated update in the Board Handbook. Dr. Sparks explained that these proposed changes were aimed at streamlining operations and had been thoroughly examined by legal counsel. These modifications include adjusting the thresholds for mandatory quotes, all in accordance with state regulations, and eliminating the need for annual re-bidding of certain contracts. Mr. Barr made a motion to approve the revisions and update as presented. Mr. Calvio seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustee Marquez, Trustee Zeichick, and Trustee Calvio provided an update on the 2023 Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Annual Conference, which took place in Las Vegas from October 9th to 12th. Trustee Marquez expressed his opinion that the conference sessions showed improvement compared to the previous one. He expressed interest in holding a Board retreat in the future to focus on strategic planning. Trustee Zeichick discussed a session he attended that emphasized industry partnerships with community colleges for job training and raised concerns about the declining enrollment of males in higher education. Trustee Calvio mentioned a session highlighting the significance of using infrastructure to create safe and conducive spaces for students to learn and express their creativity, including spaces that foster emotional intelligence. They also discussed the recognition received by Rachel Deller Smith, a San Angelo student, who was selected as the New Century Workforce Scholar for Texas and was honored at a special ceremony at the ACCT Conference.

Next, Dr. Sparks told Trustees that the ACCT National Legislative Summit will be February 4-7 in Washington D.C. There had been some possible interest from Trustees to attend.

There being no other business, the Trustees adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

  
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Dr. John Freeman, Chairman

  
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Adrian Calvio, Secretary  
By Brenda Madore