

The Board of Trustees of the Howard County Junior College District met for an executive session and regular board meeting in the Fireplace Room of the Student Union Building at the Big Spring campus of Howard College on Monday, November 13, 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  
Brenda Claxton, Chief Financial Officer  
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  
Nick Cantu, Director of Sports Information and Social Media  
Kyle Cooper, Athletic Director/ Head Men's Basketball Coach  
Terry Deatherage, Security  
Christi Fenter, District Dean of Students  
Luci Gabehart, Campus Dean of Instruction & Health Professions/ADN Director  
Terry Hansen, Chief Special Projects Officer  
Jonathan Hickman, Assistant Men's Basketball Coach  
Jenee Higgens, Dean of eLearning and Instructional Design  
John Ishee, Head Women's Basketball Coach  
Justin Jenkins, Head Rodeo Coach  
Dave Kerfman, Program Chair, Criminal Justice  
April Langehennig, Associate Professor of Theater  
Taylor Lavery, Men's Assistant Basketball Coach  
Belinda Lendermon, Program Chair, Dental Hygiene  
Dee Lindsey, Dean of Workforce Development  
Sharli MacDonald, Assistant Rodeo Coach  
Kaeona Marquez, Assistant Women's Basketball Coach  
Renee Porter, Interpreter  
Cindy Smith, Dean of Student Success/Public Information Officer  
Trevin Sonnier, Head Baseball Coach  
Shannon Stuteville, Executive Assistant to the President  
Kelby Vise, Campus Dean of Arts and Sciences Big Spring and Agricultural Sciences Program Chair  
Mark Watt, Associate Professor of Music

Special guests present were:

George Bancroft, Executive Director, Big Spring Area Community Foundation  
Juan Delgado, District Director, Texas State Senator Sparks  
Laura Fowler, Chair, Fowler Family Foundation  
Bobbi Hanson, West Texas Regional Director, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz  
Robert Hoofman, CEO, Fowler Family Foundation  
Andreia Medlin, Big Spring Herald  
Drew Mouton, Board Member, Big Spring Area Community Foundation

Damian Rains, Howard College student  
Mrs. Rains, spouse of Damian Rains  
Richard Steele, Board Member, Big Spring Area Community Foundation  
Debbye Valverde, Executive Director, Big Spring Chamber of Commerce

Chairman Dr. John Freeman called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m. Shortly after calling the meeting to order, the Board moved into Executive Session to discuss personnel/organizational changes. Upon conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board recessed for a tour and lunch. The regular meeting was open to the public in the Fireplace Room on the Big Spring 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.

As part of this focused meeting's purpose, board members, administration, and special guests then took a tour of the Big Spring campus, which included the Rodeo grounds, the McKinney Building, the Horace Garrett Center, the Women's dorm, and other areas.

At the conclusion of the tour and after a short recess for lunch, Trustees convened for the regular meeting.

Chairman Freeman reconvened the meeting at 12:52 p.m. Mr. Barr led the invocation.

Dr. Sparks recognized the various guests that were present, noting that many would be acknowledged later in the meeting.

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 Big Spring campus, students, and operations. Since the Big Spring campus is located within the taxing district, this meeting would include the regular business for the month of November. Dr. Sparks remarked that the focused meetings had been a beneficial experience for all involved.

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 October 23, 2023, Special Meeting on November 1, 2023, checklist for October 2023, personnel matters, and an internal audit report. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the routine matters. The motion was seconded by Mr. Marquez. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

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

Next, Dr. Sparks received permission to address certain agenda items out of order so as to accommodate coaching staff who needed to depart for games. To that end, Executive Vice President Dr. Amy Burchett presented the State of the Big Spring Campus address. Dr. Burchett acknowledged and introduced various student groups and their coaches/sponsors.

**Men's Basketball:** Head Coach Kyle Cooper and Assistant Coaches Taylor Lavery and Jonathan Hickman shared the team's excitement for the season, emphasizing the talent within the roster and pre-season national rankings.

**Women's Basketball:** Head Coach Ishee and Assistant Coach Kaeona Marquez discussed program improvements and anticipated a successful season despite injuries. They highlighted the team's outstanding academic achievement as the highest GPA in the state for the last 3 years. Coach Ishee presented a team workout suit to Dr. Sparks.

**Baseball:** Head Coach Trevin Sonnier expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming baseball season and noted the addition of new faces to the team.

**Softball:** Dr. Burchett related that the softball team was on the road.

Rodeo: Head Coach Justin Jenkins and Assistant Coach Sharli MacDonald reported positive developments in the HC Rodeo program. They noted students ranking in the top 10 in a competitive Southwest Region and having the top bull riding student. They anticipate multiple students reaching the college finals this year.

Theater: Associate Professor of Theater April Langehennig thanked the Board for new lighting and discussed the success of the play "Greater Tuna." She announced a joint performing arts holiday extravaganza on December 5, 6, and 7. April recognized certain students as official Texas Education Theater Association Interns who traveled to Galveston. She then presented Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Awards to students Joshua Menfee, Marcus Slater, Addison Smith, Matthew Aceves, Audrey Turnbough, Emma Gamoneda, and Ollie Davidson for performances and work related to the production "Greater Tuna".

Band and Choir: Associate Professor of Music Mark Watt highlighted improved enrollment in band and choir post-COVID. He noted upcoming competitions and introduced students who received All-State honors from the Texas Two-Year College Choral Directors' Association. Mason Sandoval (Bass 1), Addison Smith (Soprano 2), Krista Coffman (Soprano 1), and Robert Fierro (Bass 2).

Agriculture: Campus Dean of Arts and Sciences Big Spring and Agricultural Sciences Program Chair Kelby Vise spoke about the livestock show team. They have been doing well in competitions and recruitment to the team has improved since they transitioned to the show team type. He expressed appreciation for the support the department and team receive.

Further Recognitions: Dr. Burchett acknowledged the recent achievements of the Dental Hygiene program, ranked #11 in the state, and highlighted the ACEN accreditation for the Nursing program, which received an exemplary review and a 100% pass rate expected for both LVN and ADN Programs. She also told Trustees that the ADN program recently ranked #3 in the Southwest of the United States.

Rural Promise Program: Dr. Burchett informed the group about the progress of the Rural Promise Program, including recently approved grant funding for technology and a dedicated position. Brenda Kay Madore provided some additional overview of the program.

Next, Dr. Sparks discussed the importance of donors to the success of Howard College. The Big Spring campus has had tremendous support from generous individuals and entities since its inception more than 75 years ago. One of the more recent partners has been the Big Spring Area Community Foundation (BSACF). Dr. Sparks then read a resolution, which the Board passed on October 23, expressing gratitude to the Big Spring Area Community Foundation for their ongoing support of SWCD and Big Spring campus students. The BSACF currently sponsors the First Flight scholarship for the initial dual-credit course taken by any Howard County high school student. They also provide scholarships for SWCD students and have established the Greg Henry New Horizons Memorial Scholarship, benefiting non-traditional students. Chair Dr. Freeman presented a framed copy of the resolution to BSACF Executive Director George Bancroft and two BSACF Board members along with a signature Howard College chocolate bar for each.

Next, Dr. Sparks continued the recognition of kind donors by reading a resolution, also passed at the October meeting, expressing appreciation to the Fowler Family Foundation. The foundation, led by long-time college attorney Laura Fowler, has generously donated to scholarships over the years and has recently established an innovative new internship program that will launch this spring. Dr. Freeman presented a framed copy of the resolution to Laura Fowler and husband Robert Hoofman along with a Howard College dark chocolate bar.

Next, Dr. Burchett introduced Damian Rains, a student at the Big Spring campus. Damian, a criminal justice student and Coahoma High School graduate, shared a compelling account of his educational journey with Trustees. Despite initially entering the workforce in the plumbing and electrical fields right after high school to support his young family, Damian dreamed of becoming a state trooper in the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Upon reaching out to Howard College, Damian was connected with Criminal Justice Program Director Dave Kerfman by advisors. With Dave's assistance, Damian was linked with a recruiter at DPS who guided him through the extensive hiring process. Damian expressed gratitude to his instructors and the staff at Howard

College, acknowledging their role in his success. He enthusiastically announced that he would be joining DPS in January. He has achieved his dream with the help of Howard College.

Next, continuing with the Big Spring campus focus and in alignment with Board strategic priorities, Dr. Sparks reviewed the most recent Big Spring and Virtual Roundtable results. As in past focused meetings 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 Big Spring campus and in the virtual meeting.

Based on student feedback from the roundtable meetings, there was a short discussion among Trustees about signage on campus. Trustee Zeichick additionally noted that there needs to be better directional signage for the Cactus Room in the SUB. Many community members use that venue, and some have reported challenges in finding it on campus.

Next, continuing the focus on the Big Spring campus, Terry Hansen provided the Trustees with an update on the Facilities Master Plan and shared specific findings related to the Big Spring campus. Terry began with a brief overview of the Master Plan work. He reported that they are nearing completion of certain aspects of the work such as the inspections of all buildings and facilities. They continue to receive responses to surveys and have received an impressive number of responses. Terry offered the attendees a QR code for the Facilities Master Plan survey, allowing them to provide their input for any of the campuses if they had not already done so.

Next, Trustees considered the Notice to File for the May 4, 2024, Trustee Election. Dr. Sparks explained that this is required by December 18, but we are moving ahead to get it done. This will be posted as required. Precinct 3 and Precinct 4 are up for re-election. Filing for the election will begin January 17, 2024. Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve the Notice to File for the May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Trustee Election as presented. Mr. Zeichick seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees moved to Performance Measures/Outcomes.

Next, Trustees considered both the quarterly investment report and annual investment report. Brenda Claxton also gave Trustees a brief update on the Audit, which had been in progress by relating that the auditors had finished up on campus late on the previous Friday. She explained that there will still be weeks of work to complete but they are cautiously optimistic that everything had gone well. Mr. Barr made a motion to approve the quarterly and annual investment reports as presented. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees considered the Small Class Report. Dr. Sparks explained that this is a report required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board each semester. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the Small Class Report as presented. Dr. Beck seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees moved to Monitoring.

Next, under Purchasing, Trustees considered affirming the selection of a drink vending service provider. Dr. Sparks had been given authority to move forward in the selection of a vendor at the last Board meeting. Steve Smith noted that the vendor selected would not be applicable to the San Angelo campus where a local provider is already serving those needs. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to affirm the action taken by Dr. Sparks in selection of a drink vending service provider. Mr. Barr seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Dr. Sparks briefed Trustees on recent interconnected gas leak issues. The recent occurrence of three gas leaks indicates potential ground shifting or aging infrastructure. These leaks pose safety hazards and are disrupting classes. She explained that in the previous week, the College issued Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the replacement of the aging gas line at the McKinney Building. The RFPs were originally scheduled to open on November 21, but since those were published concerns had increased because of another identified gas leak beneath the concrete area near the building.

In response to the urgent safety concern and the need to resume student lab activities, she explained the need to take immediate action to address the issue. Four bids were received the day of the Board meeting, all exceeding \$50,000. Dr. Sparks emphasized that best value in decision-making would be prioritized. Trustees

considered rescinding the previously published RFPs. Additionally, they considered granting approval to expedite the project through emergency procedures giving the President authority to proceed, recognizing the pressing safety concerns and the impact on classroom activities. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to rescind the previously published RFPs related to the gas leak situation. Mr. Barr seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Marquez then made a motion to grant approval to expedite the project through emergency procedures giving the President authority to proceed. Mr. Barr seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees considered a bid for technology upgrades and cyber security subscription and support. These purchases will all be made through interlocal agreements and were budgeted items. Dr. Beck made a motion to approve the bid as presented. Mr. Zeichick seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees were given information on an agreement for services regarding additional customization for CAMS upon completion of the basic Thesis project. As the system's base implementation nears completion, there are further customizations that need to be integrated. The agreement does not require Board approval since it is under the \$50,000 threshold but was shared for Board awareness.

Next, Trustees considered a catalog update, which aligned the Welding Certificate with the Industrial Trades A.A.S. degree (see attached). Dr. Sparks also commented that organizational changes would be implemented in the weeks ahead as the college responds to the impact of HB8, the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program and Rural Promise implementation. She indicated that the organizational chart would be shared with the Board upon completion. Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve the catalog update as presented. Mr. Barr seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Terry Hansen gave a brief update on the Library and Music Building renovations. Both projects are nearing completion, and plans are in full swing for the upcoming dedications.

Next, an update on the student information system project implementation was presented by Eric Hansen. The project base implementation is nearing its end. They continue to work through business processes and things are progressing. They are currently working on 1098-T creation. Troubleshooting continues along with data validation. Dr. Burchett discussed that state reporting for both Howard College and SWCD adds a layer of complexity. Rebuilding the customization of the day-to-day processes that had been developed in POISE over nearly 20 years is a time-consuming task.

Next, Dr. Sparks provided the President's Report by providing an overview of the Board calendar, highlighting significant events. Superintendent meetings regarding the new dual credit Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program were scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday of the same week as the Board meeting, with two virtual meetings on the same topic for principals and counselors on that Thursday. Athletics are fully underway and Thanksgiving break is the following week.

Next, Dr. Sparks noted that many of the recognitions had already taken place earlier in the meeting. However, Great Western Dining management and staff from both campuses had shown exemplary service during many recent challenges that had been encountered during the facilities issues at the SUB, noting the important role they play in student success. Dr. Sparks thanked the group, who had joined the meeting attendees at this time, and Dr. Freeman gave each of them a signature Howard College dark chocolate bar.


Next, Dr. Sparks gave a brief legislative update. The Texas legislature is moving into an unprecedented fourth special session. Funding for public schools continues to be the topic of discussion.

There being no other business, the Trustees adjourned at 2:31 p.m.



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Dr. John Freeman, Chairman



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Adrian Calvio, Secretary  
By Brenda Madore