

The Board of Trustees of the Howard County Junior College District met for an executive session and regular board meeting in the Board Room of the Student Union Building at the Big Spring campus of Howard College on Monday, April 29, 2024.

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

Dr. John Freeman, Chairman  
Adrian Calvio, Secretary (by Zoom)  
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, Provost, SWCD  
Pam Callan, Provost, San Angelo  
Monica Castro, Executive Dean, Lamesa  
Brenda Claxton, Chief Fiscal Officer/Controller  
Eric Hansen, Chief Technology Systems/Data Security Officer  
Brad Keller, Chief Institutional Research Officer  
Rhonda Kernick, Chief Human Resources Officer  
Brenda Madore, Chief of Staff/Institutional Advancement Officer - recorder  
Fabian Serrano, Chief Operations and Safety/Security Officer  
Cindy Smith, Chief of Student Success/Public Information Officer  
Steve Smith, Chief Business Officer/Internal Auditor

Others present were:

Danny Campbell, Interpreter  
Ricky Creswell, Security  
Phil Furqueron, Architect  
Luci Gabehart, Dean of Instruction  
Terry Hansen, Consultant  
Renee Porter, Interpreter  
Shannon Stuteville, Executive Assistant to the President

Chairman Dr. John Freeman called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. with Dr. John Freeman, Dr. Marisha Beck, Raul Marquez, Mark Morgan, Ben Zeichick, and Dr. Cheryl Sparks located in the Board Room of the SUB on the Big Spring campus. Adrian Calvio participated via Zoom.

Shortly after calling the meeting to order, the Board moved into Executive Session in accordance with Texas Government Code Section, 551.074 to discuss personnel matters. Upon conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board recessed for lunch at 12:06 p.m. The regular meeting was open to the public in the Board Room on the Big Spring Campus and through remote connection utilizing a toll-free number. The regular meeting was recorded but due to technical difficulties not received to be posted on the website. Minutes will be available on the website.

After a brief recess for lunch, Chairman Freeman convened the regular meeting at 12:46 p.m. Mr. Zeichick led the invocation.

Next, Dr. Freeman welcomed attendees and noted the absence of special guests.

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 March 25, 2024, the Financials for March 2024, monthly reports of auxiliary services, personnel matters, and an internal audit report. 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, the Facilities Master Plan 2024 Update was shared by Phil Furqueron, Terry Hansen, and Dr. Sparks. They communicated that updates have been made to include possible funding sources in the document since the last report to Trustees as well as feedback related to projects needed. The final input deadline had been set for May 1 and was announced to faculty and staff at the All-District meeting. Dr. Sparks reiterated that phasing can be adjusted over time depending on institutional need and funding availability. The deferred maintenance spreadsheet, driven by the Facilities Master Plan, is crucial for regular campus maintenance. Phil outlined updates to each of the campus phasing plans. Dr. Sparks also discussed planned large future expenditures. SouthWest College for the Deaf (SWCD) has had significant additions to the plan based on input from staff members at that location, which includes the ongoing dorm and dental lab work. There was a discussion about the possible addition of EV charging stations at the various campuses. Phil and Terry related that the phasing of those was tied to the dorm projects. It was determined to consider EV projects at the Big Spring and SWCD campuses in Phase 1. Trustees were informed that they will receive both an electronic and printed copy of the final version of the Facilities Master Plan once it is complete. The final presentation will be made at an upcoming meeting.

Next, Dr. Sparks discussed the scheduling of future board meetings with the Trustees. She referred them to a list of proposed meeting dates for the rest of the calendar year, which included some brief explanatory notes about why those dates are being recommended. The dates included focused meetings that the Trustees determined to conduct each year at each off-site campus, as well as regular meetings. Currently, three possible dates in June have been listed for the regular meeting that month, the selection of which will be impacted by interest from contractors in the SWCD Residence Hall project. There was a discussion about the factors affecting the possible June meeting date. The discussion then turned to the focused meetings. Those meetings have been tentatively scheduled to coincide with other meetings that include community stakeholders at the respective campuses, such as the San Angelo Foundation Board Meeting, the Lamesa Directorate Meeting, and the SWCD Advisory Council Meeting.

Next, Dr. Sparks discussed the Howard Central Appraisal District Reappraisal Plan 2025-2026 and Public Hearing. She complimented the Appraisal District on how they are informing the taxing entities of important information. She updated Trustees that we were recently notified of the following: As per Texas Property Tax Code Section 6.05 (i) concerning the Reappraisal Plan 2025-2026, the Howard Central Appraisal District will hold a Public Hearing during their regular meeting on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. Trustees had received a copy of the plan in their materials. Dr. Sparks also told Trustees that late last week we received additional information on the 2024 estimate of value and additional information about the hearing. She and Brenda Claxton will attend the public meeting to find out more about the new Circuit Breaker Limitation law. The Appraisal District had shared that our projected value will increase approximately \$300 million, which is significantly less than the approximate \$700 million it would have been before the new law was implemented.

Next, Dr. Sparks updated Trustees on Senate Bill 17 (SB17). In the last legislative session, Governor Abbott signed Senate Bill 17 into law, "Responsibility of Governing Boards Regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives," which amends Texas Education Code 51.5325 effective January 1, 2024. Under this law, public institutions of higher education cannot engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion activities.

She explained that every year in August, she signs certain certifications stating that Howard College is compliant with various mandated requirements. SB17 has a similar requirement. She also explained that since the passage of this law, the College has been engaged in a review of policies, procedures, scholarships, trainings, and other practices as well as seeking guidance and information from other entities in the state on SB17. She related that previous to the passage of the bill we had already updated the discrimination statement in anticipation of this type of legislation. Our policies are already written broadly but in consideration of the emphasis that is being placed on this topic, we believed it prudent to create a new policy to specifically address compliance with SB17. She told Trustees that the new policy would be considered for approval in the handbook and catalog updates later in the meeting.

She also told Trustees that as part of SB17, the State Auditor has been instructed to conduct a compliance audit of each institution of higher education to determine whether the Institution has spent state money in violation of Texas Government Code. If violations are found, institutions have 180 days to remedy it. We are not scheduled for audit this year. There are two upcoming documents to submit. First, we are required to answer questions related to this compliance by April 30. And then, by August 31, she will need to sign a certification statement that we are in compliance along with several certification letters required each August to get state funding. Funding

can be impacted if violated. In addition, each college could be asked to testify before legislative committees to verify the institution is in compliance.

Next, Dr. Burchett and Luci Gabehart gave an update on the Emergency Medical Services Program. Based on changing regional needs, the program is being transferred from the San Angelo campus to the Big Spring campus. It will still serve the San Angelo area plus it will serve the Lamesa campus. Luci has completed much work to move the program through the accrediting process.

Next, Brenda Kay Madore and Jeff Anderson provided Trustees with an update on the marketing and recruiting initiative that has been occurring at SWCD. They related that SWCD has been completing a comprehensive strategic planning process this spring. As part of that work, and with a focus on short term increases in enrollment for the Fall semester, they have developed and deployed a marketing/recruitment strategy that is currently underway. The strategy includes a statewide webinar that will be broadcast from the new media room at the Anthony Hunt Library as well as targeted ads and other measures. They also showed Trustees a short video showcasing student testimonials that will be utilized during the webinar.

Next, Trustees moved to Performance Measures/Outcomes.

Next, Brenda Kay Madore presented an introduction to the Rural Promise program. She reminded Trustees that Howard College had participated in a research and development course last year and it had been determined to move to the implementation phase. She shared various data relevant to degree and certification attainment by high school graduates in the service area as well as the basics of the program. This is an initiative that will bring together all of the many things Howard College is already doing to benefit students and harness them to even more powerfully transform the communities we serve.

Next, Trustees considered the Small Class Report. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the report as presented. Mr. Marquez seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Dr. Sparks reviewed the Student Roundtable Reports by campus. Student Roundtables were held on schedule in the spring. Students provided valuable feedback, which campus administrators addressed and integrated.

Next, Trustees considered the Quarterly Investment Report. Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve the report as presented. Dr. Beck seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees moved to Monitoring.

Next, Steve Smith gave a brief update on RFP #24-005 Software Consulting for Thesis CAMS Enterprise System Software. Trustees had given Dr. Sparks authority to complete the RFP and that had been done. Only one company submitted a proposal. 3D Technologies continues to provide support for the customization of CAMS.

Next, Trustees considered Handbook and Catalog changes (see attached), including the previously discussed policy related to SB17. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the Handbook and Catalog changes as presented. Mr. Marquez seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees considered faculty contracts of those faculty members who have been recommended for contract renewal according to policy. Faculty members will receive a letter that will also address that employment is contingent upon funding. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to approve the faculty contracts as presented. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees considered a retirement resolution for Janice Whipple, a developmental English faculty member located on our San Angelo campus who is retiring after 32 years with Howard College. Trustees also considered giving Dr. Sparks authority to complete resolutions for any additional faculty retirements that she may be notified of prior to graduation. Dr. Beck made a motion to approve the resolution for Janice Whipple and give Dr. Sparks authority to complete additional resolutions. Mr. Marquez seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees considered a Professor Emeritus nomination for Rhonda Watson, a retired faculty member from the San Angelo campus. Dr. Sparks noted that Danny Campbell had already been approved for the designation for the SWCD campus earlier in the year. Mr. Marquez made a motion to approve the nomination. Mr. Zeichick seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Trustees considered Memorandums of Understanding with each of the three Howard College Foundations. No changes had been made from the previous year and the Memorandums had already been approved by each of the Foundation Boards. Mr. Zeichick made a motion to reaffirm the Memorandums of Understanding with the Howard College Foundation, Howard College Foundation at San Angelo, and SouthWest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf Foundation. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. All Trustees present voted in favor of the motion.

Next, Dr. Sparks gave Trustees an update on the planned renovations of the SWCD Residence Halls and the Dental Lab Technology space. A cross-sectional team has been hard at work planning the work.

Next, Dr. Sparks gave Trustees a brief update on the San Angelo Electrical/Plumbing Lab. The project is on time and making good progress.

Next, Dr. Sparks recognized student athlete Joey Madimba for his selection to play in the NJCAA All-Star game in Las Vegas.

Next, Dr. Sparks reviewed upcoming events with Trustees. Graduation and Pinning ceremonies were discussed.


Next, Dr. Sparks commented on various legislation enacted in the last session that is being reviewed along with SB17.

Next, Dr. Sparks related that the Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT) Conference is September 12-14 in Amarillo. There was a discussion about possible schedule conflicts.

Next, Dr. Sparks informed Trustees that the annually required cybersecurity training was coming up. They would be able to log in and take the training in June and July.

There being no other business, the Trustees adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

  
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Dr. John Freeman, Chairman

  
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Adrian Calvio, Secretary  
By Brenda Madore