

The Board of Trustees of the Howard County Junior College District met for a special meeting in Room 5 of the Lamesa Campus at Howard College in Lamesa on Monday, October 6, 2025.

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

Dr. John Freeman, Chairman
Maxwell Barr, Vice-Chairman
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
Brenda Claxton, Chief Fiscal Officer/Controller
Dr. Hanna Carter, Chief High School Partnerships Officer
Eric Hansen, Chief IT/Data Security Officer
Laurie Kincannon, Chief Human Resources Officer
Dr. Brenda Madore, Ed.D., Chief of Staff/Institutional Advancement Officer - recorder
Fabian Serrano, Chief Operations and Safety/Security Officer
Cindy Smith, Chief Student Success/Public Information Officer
Steve Smith, Chief Business Officer/Internal Auditor

Others present were:

Jessica Chavera, Academic Advisor/Student Success Specialist
Michael Contreras, Director of Library Services
Terry Deatherage, Director of Safety & Security
Billy Flores, EMS Instructor
Julian Franco, Director of Facilities & Fleet Maintenance
Dr. Amber Kelly, District Director of Institutional Accreditation and Effectiveness
Dee Lindsey, Dean of Workforce Development
Crecia Little, Enrollment Navigator
Ashtin Sifuentes, Lamesa Site Assistant
Homer Stewart, Division Director, San Angelo Campus
Shannon Stuteville, Executive Assistant to the President
Mick Sudano, District Web Administrator/Marketing Director
Renee Porter, Interpreter
Stephanie Bissonnette, Interpreter

Special guests present:

Mary Adams
Erma Almos, Dawson CAD, Business Manager
Dora Armendariz, Lamesa Chamber of Commerce, Director
Amy Baker, Counselor, Lamesa High School
Abigail Bara
Mary Ann Bara, former HC student
Christopher Bara
Melody Breen, Lamesa Rotary Club, Member
Terry Bryant, United Supermarkets
Melissa Cazeraz, LISD, Board Member
Monica Castro, HC Retiree
Jeanie Coor, State Farm, HC Foundation Board Member
Mona Ferguson, Executive Director, Lamesa EDC
Jaime Galindo, Lamesa EDC, LEAP Board Member
Irene Garza
Nate Gensler, Principal, Lamesa High School
Jacklyn Gomez, Lamesa Chamber of Commerce, Office Coordinator
Bobby Gonzalez, LEDC/LEAP President, Lamesa City Council
Tracey Hernandez, Hernandez Christian Academy, Teacher
Jill Hernandez

Ruth Hernandez
Lora Toscano Iglesias
L.A. Lewis, Dawson County Juvenile Probation Dept., JPO Chief
Rick Lopez
Teresa Morales
Foy O'Brien, Dawson County, Judge
James Pettitt, Littlefield USA
Kalliope Pettitt, Littlefield USA
Russell Pettitt, DMA, Littlefield USA
Joanne Rocha
Delia Rodriguez, Dawson County Public Library, Director
Analissa Saenz, Dawson County Public Library, Children's Librarian
Hope Salinas
Raul Salinas
Joe Sanders, UTPB, Chief Compliance Officer
Carter T. Schildknecht, District Judge retired
Josh Stevens, City of Lamesa, Mayor
Kallie Weaver, LPC, Firestorm Counseling
Donna White, Howard College Foundation, Board Member
Rachel Young

The Board of Trustees of the Howard County Junior College District met for a special meeting in Room 5 of the Lamesa Campus at Howard College in Lamesa on Monday, October 6, 2025.

Prior to the meeting, trustees, administration, and special guests enjoyed lunch together.

Chairman Dr. John Freeman called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. The meeting was open to the public both in Room 5 and via Zoom. It was recorded, and both the recording and meeting minutes will be available on the college website.

Next, Dr. Sparks recognized guests in attendance and welcomed the large crowd, noting that due to the number of attendees, introductions would not be held individually. She provided a brief history of Howard College, founded on November 17, 1945, in Howard County, and explained the structure of the college's taxing district, which provides a key source of funding along with state, federal, and donor support.

Dr. Sparks highlighted the important role of Dawson County, which has consistently supported the college in Lamesa. She noted that Dawson County funds the campus facilities and utilities, as state funds cannot be used for buildings and infrastructure. She expressed appreciation for the support of Judge Foy O'Brien and in addition, the Weaver Foundation, particularly for their funding of recent bathroom renovations.

She also shared that Howard College serves a 13-county area, and the Board has committed to holding focused meetings at each campus. This meeting was held at the Lamesa campus as an informational session in support of that site, with special recognition for the recently retired Provost Monica Castro and new Provost, Lupe Sudano.

Next, Dr. Sparks provided an overview of the focused meeting's purpose, referencing the self-evaluation completed by the Board in strategic planning in 2023. 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 Lamesa campus, students, and operations. However, since the Lamesa campus is not located within the taxing district, the board would not conduct any regular business.

Trustees moved to New Business, Visioning/Future Directions.

Next Lupe Sudano, Provost of the Lamesa campus, presented the *State of the Lamesa Campus* report, expressing gratitude to all attendees and appreciation for the community's ongoing support since the campus opened in 1972. She shared highlights and progress from the past year, noting that the campus continues to build on the legacy shaped by Monica Castro.

Key accomplishments included the opening of the Hawk Life Center and a \$2,000 donation from United Supermarkets to support the Hawk Good Life program with essential items for students. Additional enhancements include plans for the addition of a lactation station, the hiring of a new CNA instructor, and continued growth in the EMS program led by John Grove.

Looking ahead, Provost Sudano emphasized a focus on engagement for 2025–2026 through expanded social media presence, increased brand awareness, and outreach events led by Ashtin Sifuentes. The campus saw a 10% increase in their HC-LA Facebook followers from 2024 to 2025. She also recognized local ISDs for their partnership in dual credit programs and the Texas Workforce Commission for continued collaboration.

Next, Provost Sudano introduced guest speaker and Lamesa graduate Mary Ann Bara, a former Howard College work-study student at the Lamesa campus. Bara shared how her time at Howard College—and the mentorship of Monica Castro—deeply influenced her life and career. She credited her work-study experience with building her confidence and skills, ultimately enabling her to pursue a bachelor's degree.

Ms. Bara reflected on a pivotal conversation with Monica that changed the course of her life and expressed heartfelt gratitude to both Monica and Howard College. She also shared that her three sons participated in dual credit courses, and each earned an associate degree from Howard College, underscoring the generational impact of the college's presence in Lamesa.

Provost Sudano concluded the Student Story presentation by thanking the Lamesa staff, faculty, and other district support personnel. She also thanked the community. Dr. Sparks noted how proud she was of Mary Ann and gave her a signature dark chocolate bar.

Next, continuing the focus on the Lamesa campus and aligning with Board strategic priorities, Dr. Sparks reviewed the results of the most recent Lamesa Student Roundtable. She provided background on the roundtable process, emphasizing the college's commitment to listening to student feedback and taking timely action. Dr. Sparks noted that student comments vary by campus due to differing demographics, but the feedback consistently informs improvements that enhance the student experience across Howard College.

At the recent roundtable, held eight days prior with seven student participants, students were encouraged to share both positive and constructive feedback. Key themes included the need for affordable childcare, with several students expressing challenges balancing academics and parenting responsibilities. Dr. Sparks noted potential opportunities for partnerships with local organizations such as the hospital and ISD to explore childcare solutions.

Students also expressed interest in more access to personal counseling. While counseling services are available online through the student health plan, participants shared a preference for in-person support on a regular basis.

Additional feedback included requests for increased campus communication and engagement, such as more posters and flyers, continued updates to digital displays, and improved mobile notifications of events. Students also mentioned practical facility suggestions, including repaving and restriping the parking lot, adding cigarette receptacles, enhancing campus cleanliness and scent, updating carpets, providing water bottles, offering more evening classes, and ensuring the Howard College signage stands out.

Dr. Sparks reiterated that students play an important role in shaping the college experience for those who come after them, affirming that "our students are why we exist."

Next, Dr. Sparks presented a resolution passed at the meeting held on September 22, 2025, expressing gratitude to Lamesa ISD for their part in development of a P-Tech school in partnership with Howard College. Following this, a framed copy of the resolution was presented to representatives and Dr. Sparks gave them a Howard College dark chocolate bar.

Next, Dr. Sparks presented special recognitions, beginning with a tribute to Monica Castro for her extraordinary impact on the Lamesa campus. Dr. Sparks shared that Monica has changed the trajectory of countless students' lives through her empathy, connection, and determination to help students overcome barriers. She described Monica as a leader who believes deeply in students and holds them accountable while supporting them every step of the way.

Monica joined Howard College in 2005 after working at Midland College. She first served as Assistant Director of the Lamesa campus, became Director in 2013, Executive Director in 2021, and Provost in 2025. Throughout her 20 years of service, she has been a vital part of the College Cabinet, representing the voice of the Lamesa campus and community. Dr. Sparks highlighted Monica's many contributions and her active involvement in the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and Economic Development Corporation.

As part of the retirement tradition, Monica received a commemorative clock and a certificate for a personalized paver, which will be placed at the Lamesa campus. She is the first retiree from the Lamesa campus to receive this

honor. Based on Board authority, Dr. Sparks also announced that a classroom will be named in Monica's honor, recognizing her lasting legacy and the many ways she has shaped the campus over the past two decades.

Monica expressed her gratitude to the Board, leadership team, faculty, and staff, reflecting on the wonderful memories and experiences she has had at Howard College.

Dr. Sparks also recognized Lupe Sudano, expressing confidence in her leadership as she continues Monica's legacy. Lupe, a Lamesa native, shares Monica's passion for the community and commitment to student success. Dr. Sparks commended both Lupe and her husband, Mick, for their dedication to Howard College and their strong partnership as part of the Lamesa team.

There being no other business, Trustees adjourned at 12:19 p.m. A reception followed in honor of Monica and Lupe.



Dr. John Freeman, Chairman

Adrian Calvio, Secretary