

Minutes of the Amarillo College Board of Regents Board/Budget Retreat of July 21, 2020**AMARILLO COLLEGE BOARD OF REGENTS
MINUTES OF BOARD RETREAT
JULY 21, 2020****REGENTS PRESENT:**

Mr. Johnny Mize, Chair; Mrs. Anette Carlise, Vice-Chair; Mr. Patrick Miller, Secretary; Mr. Jay Barrett; Ms. Michele Fortunato; Mr. Dan Henke; Dr. Paul Proffer; Dr. David Woodburn

REGENTS ABSENT: Ms. Sally Jennings

CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Ms. Ronda Crow, Representative for the Moore County Campus; Ms. Sara Pesina, Representative for the Hereford Hinkson Memorial Campus

CAMPUS REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Bob Austin, Vice President of Enrollment Management; Mr. Kevin Ball, Vice President of Communications and Marketing; Dr. Tamara Clunis, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Ms. Cara Crowley, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives; Ms. Cheryl Jones, Vice President of Human Resources; Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, President; Mr. Chris Sharp, Vice President of Business Affairs; Mr. Joe Bill Sherrod, Vice President of Institutional Advancement; Ms. Denese Skinner, Vice President of Student Affairs; and Mr. Mark White, Executive Vice President and General Counsel

Ms. Joy Brenneman – Exec. Asst., President’s Office/Asst. Sec. to the Board of Regents
Ms. Reagan Hales – Associate Vice President for Innovation and Work-Based Learning
Mr. Danny Smith – Program Manager, Independent Contractor for bond projects

BOARD RETREAT

The Retreat was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Mr. Johnny Mize, Chairman of the Board of Regents. Mr. Mize welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

NO EXCUSES 2025

Dr. Lowery-Hart discussed information he had received in conversations with the state legislature. Although, community colleges were exempt in the first round of budget cuts due to COVID-19, they will not be in the next round. For the upcoming budget, there will be some federal funds to fill in the gaps, but the 2022-23 budget will likely be the most difficult. Amarillo College may need to begin looking at closing programs and eliminating positions.

Mr. Austin provided an enrollment update. Enrollments are beginning to catch up at about 1% per day. Under normal circumstances, students would have already enrolled for the fall. Most enrollment work is happening online with some face-to-face interactions. There are many students in the pipeline for enrollment, and he expects much foot traffic at the last minute. Fall enrollment is still down but summer credit hours were flat. Financial Aid applications are down slightly, but applications for admission are not. There are many unknowns at this time.

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Dr. Lowery-Hart reviewed the No Excuses 2025 Strategic Plan and requested Board input. The focus for the 2025 plan is on changing the economy for the community. He noted that demographics for AISD and Amarillo College reflect the community.

The Board discussed the proposed mission statement and decided on “Transforming our community and economy through learning, innovation, and achievement”. They generally agreed with the vision statement of “80% completion by 2025” and acknowledged that percentages can be broken out for transfer and graduation targets internally. It was noted that in the previous five years Amarillo College improved completion rates from 22% to approximately 56%.

Dr. Lowery-Hart highlighted a few actions and tasks under each goal.

Goal 1: Increase Completion

- Simplify degree and transfer pathways
- Increase adult enrollment
- Create a seamless transition from AEL to college completion

Goal 2: Align Degrees & Certificates with Current and New Labor Market Demand

- Transform the regional economy by scaling the earn and learn model so that 90% of students receive some sort of work-based learning experience in all programs. (This will be piloted with the HVAC program in the fall.)

Goal 3: Increase Student Learning

- Expand online capabilities and degrees. Chairman Mize requested that a task force be created to look at best practices and begin working on this to make AC a national leader in online degrees. A proposed list of task force members will be recommended at the next meeting.
- Leverage Coding as a required course for all students
- Expand the Honors Programs
- Utilize data dashboards

The Board suggested adding soft skills training and education to this goal.

Goal 4: Increase Equity Degree and Certificate Attainment

Regent Miller presented his ideas that might be included in this goal.

- Antiracist/Inclusion training for the Board, Cabinet, and employees
- Integrate culturally responsive teaching into the classroom
- Create diverse student organizations including NAACP and LULAC
- Include an equity focused item on the Status Update; request a quarterly report from the SGA president on their efforts

This goal will be expanded and resented to the Board for approval. Cabinet briefly discussed the differences between antiracist vs. inclusive language.

Goal 5: Financial Effectiveness

Regents generally agreed with the activities for this goal.

MASTER PLAN AND BOND MANAGEMENT

Mr. Smith reviewed the Bond Project Update provided to the Regents in their materials.

Ms. Hales provided an overview of the plans for the Innovation Hub. She reviewed the five main purposes of the hub suggested by the Pegasus consultants which include:

- Help emerging industries innovate and modernize
- Train the future workforce
- Foster a culture of innovation

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- Provide industrial design and innovation lab(s)
- Catalyze the revitalization in downtown Amarillo

Core recommendations include:

- Create a stand-alone entity able to pivot quickly that functions as a business, not an academic organization
- Create revenue streams
- Focus on industry
- Be a gateway for new ideas and practices

She emphasized that tenants such as Sharpened Iron Studios, LLC and Semkhor Productions will utilize the space but that Amarillo College remains the owner of the property and spaces. Ms. Hales also discussed the differences between the hub and the WT Enterprise Center and the possibilities for collaboration between them. She showed the proposed floor plan and pointed out lab space, classrooms, a café and kitchen, the VFX space, and rental space for companies needing a place. Next steps include determining the name, logo, communications plan, and signing all necessary legal agreements by August 31, 2020.

Dr. Proffer introduced the AC/AISD Sunset Center alignment noting that the community is much more willing to support joint endeavors. There have been discussions to purchase and use the JC Penny building for AC's First Responders Academy and other training/programs. This would be located adjacent to AISD's new Career Academy and could share faculty, equipment, and training with them resulting in cost savings for both entities. Truck driving and aircraft maintenance would remain on the East Campus but other programs would move into this more accessible location.

Mr. Barrett explained and described the AISD Career Academy which will include Animal Science, Architecture, Construction & Manufacturing, Visual Arts & Communication, Business, Marketing, and Finance, Culinary Arts, Medical Arts, Public Service, STEM & IT, Transportation, and Junior Achievements programs. These programs will create pathways to careers and/or Amarillo College. Entrepreneurship and soft skills will be embedded in all programs. The Center is scheduled to open in August of 2021. The location is the old Hastings building with 196,000 square feet on the first floor. A second floor, scheduled to open in January of 2022, will bring the total square footage to 235,000. The spaces will be open and student centered. The theme for the building is "learning on display." Large television monitors on several outside walls will highlight what is happening inside the building and across the district. Amarillo College could have access to the space for evening classes.

Dr. Proffer presented his recommendations and research on the possibility of bringing athletics back to Amarillo College. He noted that three years of work has been put into this process and included the master planning process which did identify sports as something that would allow the college to be financially responsible and accomplish its goals. Working with others, he did a community youth league and student athlete survey, talked with the community college athlete governing body, NJCAA, and identified some sports options. Surveys of the Youth Club Volleyball League that uses Carter Fitness Center and the West Texas Youth Baseball League netted 65 emails/letters of support from parents, coaches, and supporters. Sports suggested for consideration included cross country, boy's baseball and women's basketball, volleyball, or soccer. 87.3% of 237 student athletes surveyed stated that they would consider coming to Amarillo College if they had athletics with scholarships. Dr. Proffer reviewed some of the benefits of athletics including teamwork, persistence, discipline, school and community pride, higher graduation rates, engagement, community outreach, and enrollment growth. He noted growth in enrollment at WTAMU when they had successful athletic teams. There is local interest. Amarillo College would join the previous conference which has 15 teams.

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The Board discussed logistics of having athletics and reviewed proposals for upgrades and changes to Carter Fitness Center to make it compliant for competitive sports. The facility could be used for sports such as basketball and volleyball. \$5.6M was budgeted in the bond for upgrades to Carter. The current proposals for non-competitive and competitive sports are \$7.7M and \$8.7M respectively. Dr. Proffer is working with Hodgetown on the possibility of using that facility for a baseball team. Hodgetown would be interested in using AC students for AC field management, media, etc. for these games. Introducing sports at this time during a pandemic could have advantages as local student athletes currently have no place else to go. Dorms would not be necessary as many students would be local and already have places to live. Studies reflect that each student athlete brings an additional one or two students to the campus. Dr. Proffer stated that athletics would not be a cost burden to the institutional.

Mr. Sharp provided a proposed income statement for athletics with estimated revenue of \$1,284,150 and expenses of \$1,032,567. The timeline for a decision will be September. The college must make application to the conference and if accepted would be on probation for one year. More information needs to be collected and Ms. Skinner and Dr. Proffer will find out the exact deadline for the application. It is anticipated that sports could start in the Fall of 2021.

Mr. Sherrod explained the connection of the comprehensive campaign and the bond. The master plan identified needs of about \$125M, but the bond is \$89M. The campaign will close the gap between bond funds and other needs. He reviewed the campaign priorities that had been presented to the Board previously and noted that these could change over the next three years as other areas of need might be identified. Specific scholarships requested by donors will be included. The comprehensive campaign will be an agenda item on the August 25, 2020 meeting and the AC Foundation board will ask the Board of Regents for approval.

BUDGET CONTEXT

Dr. Lowery-Hart noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had made budget planning this year difficult as there are still many unknowns. It is estimated that revenue will be higher than expenses due to COVID related reduced expenses in travel and other budget areas if enrollment stays constant. Mr. Sharp plans to put \$500,000 of the overage towards necessary A&I projects for the next year and the remaining amount into reserves.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Mr. Sharp provided an overview of the proposed budget. Considerations taken when preparing this budget included a decrease in tuition, an expected decrease in state allocations, and slightly higher tax valuations. He noted that there has not been an increase in health care costs from the state for three years and he anticipates one in 2021-22. He provided information on the cost of merit raises which now happen in January if the budget allows. Some right-sizing of salaries has been accounted for in the budget. Mr. Sharp briefly reviewed five-year projections and will send that information to the Board. The proposed budget is very conservative and also fluid at this time. The Board Finance Committee will meet to review the final budget before it is presented for approval at the August 25 meeting. The public hearing on the budget is August 11, 2020.

ASPEN PRIZE UPDATES

Dr. Lowery-Hart reported that the virtual site visit will take place September 9 through 11. The committee will want to meet with past and current board chairs, but they might also call or email any board member.

He also announced that General Assembly will be September 11, at Hodgetown from 2:00 to 4:00. There will be plenty of room for social distancing and popcorn and water available from the concession stands.

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CLOSED MEETING

There was no closed meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

No final decision, action, or vote was taken in this meeting. There being no further items for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Patrick Miller, Secretary