

**PRESIDENT'S CABINET MEETING**  
**August 11, 2020**  
**MINUTES**

**CALLED TO ORDER**

9:05 am

**ADJOURNED**

10:45 am

**MEMBERS PRESENT – VIA GOOGLE MEETS & IN PERSON**

Bob Austin; Kevin Ball; Tamara Clunis; Cara Crowley; Cheryl Jones; Russell Lowery-Hart; Chris Sharp; Joe Bill Sherrod; Denese Skinner; Mark White

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

N/A

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Joy Brenneman; Danny Smith, Collin Witherspoon

**DISCUSSION:**

1. COVID DATA	Witherspoon
<p>Mr. Witherspoon presented a new model for predicting COVID cases. The old model was based on a peak followed by a decrease in cases, however after a decrease, Texas began to see a spike in cases again around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July requiring a new model which was reset to July 4. This spike is beginning to come down statewide and Amarillo is level with an average of 40 new cases per day. The best case scenario puts the peak as of today's date with about a 24% infection rate. The most likely scenario puts the peak on August 27 with a 14% infection rate, dropping to 5% by October 15. If 7-day averages begin to drop, then the peak is now; if not, then the second scenario is most likely. Whichever the case, Amarillo College can expect that there will be infected students on campus when school re-opens. Amarillo's incidence (positivity) rate is currently at 12% which is high and puts the area at level orange based on the city's markers; red being over 15% and yellow less than 5%. Incidence rates are determined by dividing all confirmed cases by the number of tests done. If the college follows the City's markers for determining how to hold classes, it could move into and out of remote learning many times during the semester. With opening of the college and AISD, positive cases can be expected to increase if testing is done.</p> <p>Cabinet discussed the low enrollment for Fall which is down 20-30% and the effect of COVID on this. Options are available for students to choose online, hybrid, or face-to-face courses for the Fall. Caps on some online courses have been raised twice and those have immediately filled while some hybrid and face-to-face courses may be cancelled due to lack of enrollment. Contributing factors to lack of enrollment likely include lack of childcare because AISD has pushed back their start date, uncertainty surrounding the AISD schedule, and loss of employment. Financial Aid can cover tuition, books, and fees but not living expenses and some may feel they cannot afford to return this Fall. Part-time enrollment is down more than full-time.</p> <p>Dr. Lowery-Hart called an emergency Cabinet meeting for August 12 at 7:30 am to include Becky Burton, Sadie Newsome, Shane Hepler, Maria Juarez, and Ernesto Olmos. The purpose of this meeting will be to determine how the college re-opens on August 24, if a return to remote learning is in the best interest of students, and if the remote learning lasts two, four, eight weeks or longer. In order to make an informed decision supported by data, the following information was requested:</p>	

- Analysis on online enrollment indicating it is at or near the 5-year average high (Austin)
- How many, and which, face-to-face or hybrid courses may be canceled due to lack of enrollment (Dr. Clunis)
- Comparison of the number of students with dependents enrolled in Spring vs. now (Witherspoon)
- A modified Fall schedule (if remote) that would allow faculty to bring their students to campus a few times during the semester (Burton)

Amarillo College is in a better position to support remote learning and manage labs than it was in the Spring. Student Services is now set up to support students 100% in person with social distancing in place. Face-to-face courses facing cancellation will be left open for now and could be flipped to remote learning if that decision is made. If it is determined that the college cannot provide sufficient safety protocols and social distancing to protect students and faculty and decides to move to remote learning, faculty and staff will remain on campus working from their offices to be available to students. Faculty have been prepped for this possibility.

Ms. Skinner's staff will contact students whose schedules have planned courses for which online options have not been available.

**Action Items:**

- Austin, Clunis, and Witherspoon will have analysis ready for the 7:30 am meeting and will provide Dr. Lowery-Hart a rough draft before 4:00 today.
- Depending on decisions made in the morning, the Town Hall scheduled for Thursday may need to be moved to Wednesday afternoon to begin this shift. Much work has been done by faculty and staff to get ready for a face-to-face opening but circumstances may require this to change.
- Distribution of Cares Act funds may need to happen differently than originally planned.

2. TEMPORARY COVID-19 POLICY FOR UNPAID LEAVES OF ABSENCE	Jones
<p>Ms. Jones and her staff have been working with faculty and staff on time off during the pandemic. She is requesting that a temporary policy for unpaid leaves of absence be presented to the Regents for approval at the August 25 Board meeting. This temporary policy would provide some cover and job protection for employees who have used all of their leave but are still unable to return to work. Reasons for this leave could include employees with compromised immune systems, those who are caregivers, or those with child care issues. This policy would follow FMLA guidelines and allow for a limited leave. If an employee has vacation it would run concurrently and would not be stacked onto the leave. Ms. Jones expects that this will not affect a great number of employees but would provide some coverage for a limited period of time for those who cannot telework. This policy also provides protection for the college by providing a restricted time period for these leaves of absence.</p> <p>This would be an unpaid leave of absence after FMLA and vacation leave have been exhausted, and the employee's position would be held for this period of time. If the employee is unable to return to work at that time, the position will no longer be held. The policy would be in effect through December 31, 2020 and would give the President the authority to extend, revise, or cancel the policy without further Board approval.</p>	
<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Jones will send a draft of the policy to Cabinet and schedule a meeting with the Board Policy Committee in time to get this on the August 25 agenda.</li> </ul>	

<b>3. BOND PROJECTS UPDATE</b>	<b>Lowery-Hart Sharp</b>
<p>Ms. Sharp and Danny Smith presented options for moving the Art Department from Russell Hall to the CUB basement. Dekker, Perich &amp; Sabatini looked at the square footage in Russell and prepared four possible schematics for the CUB basement based on the needs of the department. Square footage in all four is similar. The main differences between the proposals are in the allocation of space between classrooms, storage space, and offices. Scheme D has a curved hallway running through the space which contains display cases for artwork. Artwork could also be displayed in the stairwell to the basement from the AC Café/Coffee shop which could generate some foot traffic through the area to look at the art. All scenarios include a courtyard for the kilns off the loading dock on the south and east sides of the building which would be at the same level as the dock. A covering to protect this courtyard from the elements was suggested for this area which is also protected by trees and the building.</p> <p>Other options that have been discussed, but which are less desirable, are moving the Art Department to the new space which will be built in the old JC Penney building or to the West Campus. Mr. Smith and Mr. Sharp have presented this information to Jill Gibson and Dr. Clunis and will meet with the Art Department today. Once a design has been selected, an RFQ will be done for an architect.</p> <p>Mr. Sharp reported that other projects are progressing well. He and Mr. Smith have revisited the Master Plan. Some projects originally in the plan have been removed since some programs from the East and West Campuses will move to the JC Penney building space. They will present this information to Cabinet in the next few weeks. The purchase of the JC Penney building will be presented for Board approval at the August 25 meeting.</p>	
<b>Action Items:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	
<b>4. ASPEN TRAINING</b>	<b>Lowery-Hart</b>
Not covered.	
<b>Action Items:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>	
<b>5. OTHER DISCUSSION</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Skinner requested approval to post the replacement position for Ruth DeAnda in advising. Mr. Austin moved, seconded by Mr. Sherrod to approve. Motion carried unanimously.</li> <li>• Mr. Sharp requested approval for the open police officer position. Mr. White moved, seconded by Mr. Sherrod to approve, Motion carried unanimously.</li> <li>• Dr. Clunis had several positions, all replacements or part-time. Part-time CE positions can be hired contingent on need. If part-timer not needed, then not paid. Dr. Lowery-Hart suggested moving forward with the other requests.</li> <li>• Ms. Jones is working on a better process to approve new or replacement positions. The Cabinet approval process will be suspended until a better solution is in place.</li> <li>• Cabinet discussed the request for the Law Enforcement Academy Graduation to be held in person at the Oasis Church on August 27, 2020. It was determined that this request be denied and the graduation held virtually as have the nursing and other graduations during this time.</li> </ul>	