

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL RETREAT OF THE GOVERNING BOARD****January 29, 2021****1. Call to Order / Open Session****A. Flag Salute**

President McKean called the annual retreat of the Board of Trustees to order at 9:01 am and led the flag salute.

Board members present:

Mark McKean, President  
Jeff Levinson, Vice President  
Nina Oxborrow, Clerk  
Steve Cantu  
Martin Maldonado  
Salvador Raygoza  
Crystal Jackson

Board members absent:

Alma Rangel, Student Trustee

Administrators present:

Stuart Van Horn, Chancellor  
Richard Storti, Deputy Chancellor  
Kristin Clark, President, West Hills College Lemoore  
Brenda Thames, President, West Hills College Coalinga  
Sam Aunai, Vice President of Educational Services, West Hills College Coalinga  
James Preston, Vice President of Educational Services, West Hills College Lemoore  
Kyle Crider, Director of Accreditation, Institutional Effectiveness, and Planning  
Alex Perez, Executive Director of West Hills Community College Foundation  
Brian Boomer, Director of Grants

**B. Public Comments**

There were no public comments made at this time

**2. Information / Discussion Items****A. Welcome Remarks**

Dr. Stuart Van Horn welcomed the Board of Trustees. He stated that the past 18 months have been difficult. We were faced with challenges but overcame the obstacles and are well prepared for whatever comes our way in the future. He discussed the significance of the journey and organizational sustainability. Dr. Van Horn referred to the COVID vaccination, stating that it may be possible for students to return to the classroom in Fall 2021 but that our regional needs to see significant public health improvement before realizing that commitment.

The presentation today includes plans to recapture enrollment growth, optimize funding increases, and opportunities to change how we deliver education to students. Our strategic plan embraces various responses to serving students in a digital world. Our grants team is repositioning internal operations to escalate federal grants. The college's accreditation midterm reports will show what has been done since the visits in 2017 and how we've changed ourselves to serve students even better. The Foundation report will share how staff is focusing on delivering critically needed funds, technology, and other services to our students.

Dr. Van Horn provided a perspective of the lessons that have been learned due to the pandemic including registration barriers; virtual advising; financial aid; and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

He explained that in April 2019 the district was notified by the State Chancellor's Office of funding reductions as a result of the failed implementation of the new Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) which explained that the state had miscalculated total revenue owed to the district, resulting in an initial shortfall of nearly \$7 million dollars anticipated in our 2018-2019 adopted budget. This issue, and later the pandemic-fueled recession in the 2019-2020 academic year, presented a crisis. We were hit hard because our reserve standards were insufficient, we had few liquid assets, and we faced very difficult choices. Our budget practices were changed, layoffs and furloughs were our only option, and we reorganized, decentralized, stalled hiring, and cut our costs. An emergency resolution was adopted by the Board of Trustees who were faced with difficult and unfavorable choices. Last spring, administrative recommendations were compiled into a document of key changes that were necessary to ensure organizational sustainability. While there are a couple of remaining steps in 2021, we've done an incredible job of insulating ourselves from the volatile financing

methods in use by the state. Dr. Van Horn referred to the attachment on the agenda titled "Fiscal Forecasting Decisions and Key Changes" and reviewed the updates noted in the document.

Trustee Oxborrow questioned the next step with regard to the lease of the former District Office property. Dr. Van Horn explained that we were unable to come to an agreement with the interested party because of the necessary assurances in the lease agreement which was developed in consultation with the district's legal counsel. We will attempt to secure another bid for a lease. If that is not successful, we will try to sell the property.

Brief discussion took place on virtual advising and the need for counseling services. Dr. Van Horn explained that the job of the counselor has not changed. Virtual advising is just an additional modality that is being used. He discussed incumbent workers and virtual services, stating that there are some advantages and disadvantages, but it depends on the demographic of the student. President McKean commented on disenfranchisement and the culture of students, stating that they aren't being welcomed person to person. Dr. Van Horn responded that virtual advising will not replace virtual or face to face counseling. It is in addition to what we are already doing. President McKean stated that it is extremely important that we get back to face to face contact and recruiting when we are able. There needs to be a balance. Dr. Van Horn stated that he doesn't want to diminish what we have done. He reported that he will follow up on the services being offered and provide a summary as to how we will approach what has been done.

Trustee Oxborrow commented on the importance of physical presence being the priority with virtual services only supplementing what we are doing.

## **B. Board Policies and Administrative Procedures Annual Update**

Dr. Van Horn provided an update on Board Policies and Administrative Procedures that were reviewed in 2020. He reported 66 Board Policies and Administrative Procedures were developed or revised and 19 Board Policies and Administrative Procedures were eliminated. The review schedule for 2021 was also provided for information.

## **C. District Strategic Plan**

Mr. Kyle Crider provided an overview of where the district has landed with proposed strategies and core commitments for the next cycle of the District Strategic Plan. He discussed plan development, explaining that there has been involvement from administrative, faculty, classified staff, and student leaders from both colleges and the District Office. In Fall 2020 a districtwide survey was conducted which vetted strategies and core commitments.

Mr. Crider discussed the goals of The Vision for Success which include completion of degrees and certificates; transfer to four-year institutions; lowering cost and time to completion; preparing students for employment; and reducing equity gaps among underrepresented student groups.

Trustee Levinson questioned The Vision for Success goal of the focus on cost and completion. Mr. Crider Kyle briefly discussed class availability, stating that it is more of a question of building demand and reaching students.

He continued by discussing the four strategies of access, communication, community engagement and partnerships, and student support and engagement. Trustee Levinson questioned fiscal sustainability which includes prudent fiscal planning, etc. and asked what transparency means. Mr. Crider responded by stating that we need to make sure those pieces are out there. Trustee Levinson commented on focusing on legality and fiscal sustainability. Mr. Crider stated that it is a fair point and there is room for conversation.

In summary, Mr. Crider explained the next steps for the District Strategic Plan which are to finalize the plan in the spring; parallel the development of college plans; and identify the alignment of existing initiatives to strategies and core commitments.

## **D. Accreditation Midterm Reports**

Mr. Crider reported that the colleges' accreditation midterm reports are provided for review as a first reading. He explained the seven year accreditation cycle, stating that a comprehensive review of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) and site visit was conducted in March 2017; and a follow up report was completed in October 2018. The colleges' midterm reports are due in March 2021 and the next comprehensive review will be held in Spring 2024 and will likely follow the ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges) new formative/summative review model.

The compliance recommendations were addressed in the 2018 follow up reports. All deficiencies were addressed and the ACCJC reaffirmed accreditation at both colleges through 2024.

With regard to the midterm report development timeline, the process of assessing and outlining began in Fall 2019, followed by sharing, writing, and revising in Spring 2020. The draft reports were finished in Summer 2020 and the final

revisions and college approvals occurred in the Fall 2020.

Dr. Kristin Clark introduced Mr. James Preston who provided information on the West Hills College Lemoore accreditation midterm report. Mr. Preston explained the six college improvement recommendations and the two action projects which include enhancing the use and understanding of data, outcomes, and assessment for continuous improvement, resource allocation, and strategic planning; and improving internal and external communication.

Trustee Levinson questioned Action Project 1 and the jump from 3000+ to 8000+ students enrolled in ZTC (Zero Textbook Cost) sections. Mr. Preston explained that the current course schedule has about 50% of coursework that is ZTC and there are a number of students taking one or more of those courses. Mr. Preston also discussed the use of Microsoft Teams and decentralization which are included in the list of activities for Action Project 2.

Ms. Brenda Thames commented on the accreditation midterm report for West Hills College Coalinga, and the nine college improvement recommendations and two quality focus projects. The focus projects include institutional effectiveness and educational pathways. She explained that the primary theme is developing a systematic process of evaluation and improvement of college effectiveness, focusing on professional development, resource allocation, and integrated planning and outcomes evaluation and communication.

Ms. Thames introduced Mr. Sam Aunai who discussed in more detail the quality focus project activities and implementation.

Trustee Cantu questioned meta majors and Mr. Aunai explained that they are basically a collection of degrees and certificates that have similar courses. Within those majors, students are taking like courses. This can be done as a cohort or peer support component.

Mr. Crider stated that the colleges' midterm reports will be presented for approval at the February Board meeting. He discussed the District's role and the Board's role in accreditation, specifically referring to Standard IV.C.

Trustee Levinson questioned if the comprehensive visit will happen in Spring 2024, citing potential delays due to the COVID pandemic. Mr. Crider responded in the affirmative, stating that delays are not anticipated at this time. The ACCJC is currently discussing virtual site visits and they are also changing some of the processes. Mr. Crider explained that he thinks the comprehensive visits will still occur on time and on schedule but will likely look different than in past years. Trustee Levinson questioned if virtual visits will occur in the future. Mr. Crider responded that he does not think they will be completely virtual, but will contain some virtual components.

Trustee Levinson questioned the meaning of creating a positive climate. Mr. Crider responded that it is giving the room, authority, and resources to build student success. That would be the starting point.

## **E. Growing Enrollment Plans**

Ms. Thames explained that the West Hills College Coalinga strategies for enrollment focus on three questions. She asked Mr. Aunai to address each one.

Mr. Aunai discussed area high school student enrollment data for 2018-2019 through 2020-2021. The West Hills College Coalinga feeder schools include Avenal, Coalinga, Firebaugh, Kerman, Mendota, and Tranquillity. Trustee Levinson questioned if anyone is looking at what happened to the students and where they went. Ms. Thames responded that Mr. Crider tracks that data. Many of the students do transfer, some enter the workforce in part time employment, and some don't continue on doing anything. Trustee Levinson stated that it seems like we should find out what they are doing and if there is any way to bring them back. Ms. Thames commented on the students' dual enrollment status and that they have attained their degree when they graduate from high school. The area high school student enrollment data provided is for all dual enrollment students. This should have been made more clear.

Mr. Aunai discussed supporting community needs and expanding high school career pathways through Strong Workforce. He discussed why noncredit education is so important to the college. Ms. Thames commented that it provides a missing link for upskilling and reskilling working adults. Vocational ESL (English as a Second Language) is a link to bridge immediate work skill needs. This was a foundational element that was missing.

Mr. Aunai discussed the inmate education program. Trustee Levinson commented on the news he has heard about five prisons closing in California. Ms. Thames commented on responding to increased occupancy and needs that the prison wardens have communicated. Trustee Oxborrow questioned how many other community colleges provide services at these prisons. Ms. Thames responded that we are the only one at this time.

Ms. Thames commented on shorter term courses leading to greater retention and completion and discussion took place. Trustee Levinson commented on the hope being we are back to school in person in Fall 2021. He discussed growing enrollment and how this will be done for the future as it is a wild card issue at this time. Ms. Thames stated that we are focusing on growing enrollment now, as well as recovering enrollment that was lost. In summary, the college is

expanding high school pathways, offering courses/programs to meet community needs and applicable industry, and working on transfer requirements. With regard to student retention and student support, the college is providing schedule options, clear paths, connections, and student resources. Wrap around services and holistic student support also assist with completion and career/transfer transition and support.

With regard to FTES, Ms. Thames explained that the college anticipates an additional 87-110 100 FTES.

Dr. Clark discussed the future directions in strategic enrollment management for West Hills College Lemoore, explaining that it includes product, demand, investment, risk, market share, and retention. The class schedule is the product and the demand comes from students and employers. The investment occurs with faculty, technology, facilities, professional development and grant procurement. The risk and market share include both modality diversification and market share diversification. With regard to retention, Dr. Clark explained that 49% of students say "self doubt" is a major challenge to pursuing their education. Trustee Levinson questioned the statement of "self doubt" and Dr. Clark stated it is one of the responses provided by students when their educational challenges are questioned. Half of the students who responded to a Gallup Poll indicated that they doubted their abilities to balance their work and home life. This is not solely attributed to West Hills College students, but students across the nation.

Mr. Preston discussed strategies related to enrollment management. The product example of the TGIF College – which is attending college one day a week – has seven cohorts built out. The demand strategy includes program redesign, increasing OER/ZTC degrees, stackable short-term certificates, certifications with a focus on critical skills, work-based learning, and credit for prior learning.

Trustee Levinson questioned the nursing program reorganization and Mr. Preston explained that this is the first year it is being implemented. The number of units students need to take has been reduced. This change addresses community needs, long term care, etc. Discussion took place regarding making the program shorter, more viable, and more in line with what industry wants. There is also a focus on four year transfer. Mr. Preston commented on completion and partnerships with Grand Canyon University and University of Phoenix. Trustee Jackson questioned the lottery system for the nursing program. Dr. Clark explained that the partnerships with the universities don't require the lottery system. There are others that utilize lotteries and pool and it is a competition for students, but the memorandums of understanding with the current partners do not turn students away. Dr. Clark briefly commented on discussions being held with several universities to offer baccalaureate programs on campus.

Mr. Preston provided additional comments on the nursing program lottery question, stating that there is still more demand than availability and this is an area where we can grow.

Mr. Preston discussed the investment strategy highlights FTEF, concurrent classrooms, professional development, and procurement of grants.

Dr. Clark discussed the Lemoore is More campaign, highlighting the unique attributes that set West Hills College Lemoore apart from other community colleges. She provided brief data on no show rates during this time of virtual learning, stating that the no show rate for face to face classes was 27%, but the rate for virtual classes was 7%. This is attributable to convenience for students. Virtual is not a replacement, it's just a different modality. Work continues to try to find ways to blend both in person and online modalities.

Trustee Levinson commented on first time, first generation college students relying on family who have never been to college for advice. Dr. Clark encouraged the Board to take a look at the LinkedIn account for the alumni series which brings a different perspective. Students want to hear from others who have attended West Hills.

## **F. Foundation Philanthropy**

Mr. Alex Perez provided information on the Foundation's philanthropy efforts and showed data comparing 2020 to 2021 fundraising. Donor analysis was discussed with regard to donors by unique donor and donors by dollar amount. Mr. Perez reported on the focus on access and support to students which includes providing hotspots and laptops; providing food to students; awarding scholarships; securing funds from Chevron; securing grants for Finish Line Scholars; and providing student support to West Hills College Coalinga and West Hills College Lemoore.

Mr. Perez provided a brief summary of current Foundation Board members, upcoming Board meetings in the spring, and the work being done with the campus athletics, financial aid departments, and individual departments. He reported on the Finish Line Scholars Program, stating that funds will be coming in the beginning of February. Online forms will be used to identify need and a process will be developed with the financial aid offices for awarding funds. Work will also occur with marketing to notify students of the Finish Line Scholars program and the award code will track students for reporting on completion rates.

Trustee Oxborrow questioned some of the concerns of donors. Mr. Perez responded that there are two types of donors: corporate and individual. Corporate donors are concerned about support for students and individual donors are focusing

on the North District Center, Firebaugh. A general concern is what things will look like when we are back on site and in the classroom.

### **G. Fiscal Update: 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 Budget**

Dr. Storti provided a presentation on the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 budget. He explained that since the time of COVID, the economy has been extremely volatile. We have seen a planned surplus of \$5.6 billion decrease to a deficit of \$54.3 billion. We are currently looking at a rebound in economic performance. Dr. Storti summarized the Governor's proposed budget and the projected surplus and shortfalls.

President McKean questioned how the state can justify deferrals with the way things are improving. Dr. Storti stated that they can't. We are footing the bill while other programs are being funded. The state is using us as a credit card.

Discussion took place regarding varying COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) rates. Dr. Storti reported that the projected PERS and STRS rates for 2021-2022 are a one year relief for our budget.

Trustee Levinson questioned the new online community college, stating that he has not heard much about them since the beginning of the pandemic. It was stated that they have approximately 500 students.

Dr. Van Horn briefly mentioned efforts with regard to more community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees especially related to industrial technology.

Dr. Storti discussed several new proposals to provide funding for students impacted by the pandemic and to spur the economic recovery through workforce development. Those proposals include COLA for CalWORKs, DSPS, EOPS, and adult education programs; \$30 million to provide services and support to students related to mental health resources and technological support; \$10.6 million for distance education; \$8 million to continue providing broadband access; emergency student financial assistance in the amount of \$250 million for full time students that were previously working full time or the equivalent of full-time, who can demonstrate an emergency financial need; \$100 million for food and housing insecurity ; \$20 million to focus on students they may have withdrawn due to the pandemic; \$20 million to provide online professional development to faculty; \$15 million for ZTC degrees; and \$2.5 million to provide instructional materials for dual enrollment students.

Dr. Storti noted that if the economy downturns again, we could be looking at more deferrals.

Other areas to note are the following new monies: \$372 million for administration of the COVID-19 vaccine; \$777.5 million for a California Jobs Initiative; \$14 billion for economic recovery and relief programs from COVID-19; \$1 billion for forest health and fire prevention strategy; \$1.75 billion for housing and homelessness initiatives; and \$1.5 billion to achieve the state's zero-emission vehicle goals by 2035 and 2045.

### **H. Pursuing Grant Opportunities**

Mr. Brian Boomer provided information on federal grantmaking in 2019 which included health care; income security; education, training, employment, and social services; transportation; and community development. He provided a breakdown of grants throughout the district, reporting that 67% are federal, 32% are state, and 1% are private. The federal grants for the district – a total of \$10.9 million – include Coronavirus funding (CARES); Department of Education; Department of Labor; Perkins; Department of Justice; National Science Foundation; Department of Agriculture; and Endowment for Arts. Dr. Van Horn commented on Perkins funds and career and technical education. Mr. Boomer discussed equity and special populations funds. He stated that the OER grant is through the Department of Education.

Trustee Oxborrow questioned the CARES funding. Mr. Perez explained that students can use the funds obtained through financial aid. There are no restrictions on the funds which can be used for things such as tuition, books, meals, gas cards, housing, and technology. There is really no limit on how students can use the funds. On the institution side, the funds should be delivered within the next week. The colleges have plans for the money. Round 2 funds should be released by late spring, possibly the middle of summer. The colleges can develop their budgets for how the money is spent.

Mr. Boomer briefly summarized planned opportunities for the federal grant funding. He described some of the Great Recession lessons including accelerated program, online instruction, holistic student support, career pathway credentials, and work-based learning. He commented that students in at least one of the areas were 30% more likely to find employment than their peers.

In closing, federal grant trends were shared and those include a post-COVID workforce; economic recover; upskilling and reskilling; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and Coronavirus relief packages in the form of allocations and grants.

### **I. Board of Trustees Self Evaluation**

President McKean reviewed the self-evaluation results with the Board members, discussing each question and allowing for response. The overall responses reflected a general or strong agreement with the statements relating to understanding

roles; comfort level in expressing opinions; opinions being valued; working relationships; effectiveness in leading and overseeing operations; providing direction; reviewing material; community confidence; receiving and investigating concerns; representation of the District; personally rewarding service; and the direction of the District. Responses to open ended questions were discussed as well, which were all generally positive and reflected thoughts about areas of improvement. President McKean commented on the weekly messages sent by the Chancellor. The general consensus is that they are helpful and keep the Board members informed.

### **3. Closed Session**

The retreat was adjourned to closed session at 1:32 pm

#### **A. Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release (as per Government Code Section 54957)**

### **4. Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Board of Trustees, the retreat was adjourned at 2:20 pm.

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