

**Minutes of the Study Session of the Board of Trustees  
San Mateo County Community College District  
August 17, 2016, San Mateo, CA**

**The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.**

**Board Members Present:** President Dave Mandelkern, Vice President Thomas Mohr, Trustees Maurice Goodman, Richard Holober and Karen Schwarz

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF CLOSED SESSION ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

President Mandelkern said that during Closed Session, the Board will (1) hold a conference with real property negotiator as listed on the printed agenda, (2) hold a conference with agency labor negotiator; the employee organizations are AFT, AFSCME and CSEA, (3) hold a conference with legal counsel regarding one case of existing litigation as listed on the printed agenda, and (4) consider the personnel item listed as B.1 on the printed agenda.

**STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS ONLY:** None

**RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION**

The Board recessed to Closed Session at 5:03 p.m.

**RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION**

The Board reconvened to Open Session at 6:11 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** President Dave Mandelkern, Vice President Thomas Mohr, Trustees Maurice Goodman, Richard Holober and Karen Schwarz, Student Trustee Dennis Zheng

**Others Present:** Chancellor Ron Galatolo, Skyline College President Regina Stanback Stroud, College of San Mateo President Michael Claire, Cañada College President Jamillah Moore, District Academic Senate President Leigh Anne Shaw

**Pledge of Allegiance**

President Mandelkern said the Board was sad to hear of the deaths of Val Goines, former professor in the Early Childhood Education Departments at Cañada College and Skyline College, and Mary Griffin Ramseur, former Millbrae City Council member and former member of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. He asked that this meeting be adjourned in their memory. The Board agreed to do so.

**DISCUSSION OF THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF REPORTABLE ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION**

President Mandelkern reported that the Board unanimously approved the personnel item listed as B.1 on the printed agenda.

**MINUTES**

It was moved by Vice President Mohr and seconded by Trustee Schwarz to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 27, 2016. The motion carried, all members voting Aye.

**STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL ITEMS: CHANGES IN ASSIGNMENT, COMPENSATION, PLACEMENT, LEAVES, STAFF ALLOCATIONS AND CLASSIFICATION OF ACADEMIC AND CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL (16-8-1A)**

It was moved by Trustee Holober and seconded by Vice President Mohr to approve the actions in the report. The motion carried, all members voting Aye.

**APPROVAL OF RESPONSE TO THE 2015-2016 CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT ON SAFETY, SECURITY, AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ON THE SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUSES (16-8-100B)**

It was moved by Trustee Schwarz and seconded by Vice President Mohr to approve the response as presented. Trustee Holober said he believes the response is very well researched and written, acknowledging and addressing in depth the points raised in the Grand Jury report. Vice President Mohr said the response addresses all of the issues needing improvement. He said he was particularly struck by the plan to improve awareness among students and to provide emergency protocol/procedure information to them. President Mandelkern said he believes the response is well-written. He said the response expresses appreciation for the work of the Grand Jury and addresses all of the Grand Jury's recommendations. After this discussion, the motion carried, all members voting Aye.

**INFORMATION REPORT: THE IMPACT OF RACE AND CLASS ON EQUITY, OPPORTUNITY AND THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS (16-8-1C)**

President Mandelkern said Dr. Mark Figueroa, Associate Provost and Assistant Professor at Lewis & Clark College, will facilitate the discussion. President Mandelkern called on Vice President Mohr to make introductory remarks. Vice President Mohr introduced the topic as follows:

I want to compliment and express my admiration for the members of this governing board for setting as one of their major goals for the academic year the discussion of race and its impact on equity and the educational process. It's not an easy conversation. Race and Racism is endemic in American Society. Race and Racism is an inherent part of American civilization privileging white individuals over people of color in most areas of life, including all levels of education. Race penetrates and affects deeply every dimension of the educational enterprise, both in the classrooms and throughout student life, during the long years of preparation and readiness preceding college, to ease of access to higher education, to components of student support, to the nuances and modalities of teaching itself. Even the mindset of the individual student regarding the ability to develop academic strength and skill is profoundly affected by race and racism in American society. Race and Racism is in and of the system of education as education has historically been viewed as a property right rather than a human right. Scholars studying higher education explain that there are aspects of higher education in America designed to preserve wealth, power and privilege for those who already possess it. And there are other major intersections of factors affecting the delivery of equity and empowerment i.e. sex, class, national origin and sexual orientation. We are having this discussion today because we are the ones ultimately responsible for the delivery of equity. This duty compels us to strive to understand as much as we can how all of this plays out in the educational setting. The more we strive to understand these complexities through objective analysis, shared perceptions and open and honest discourse, the better equipped we are as a board, partnered with the college communities, to invest where it really matters... in curriculum, student support, great teaching and the further development of college culture that sets aside as much as possible the obstacles of race, class and privilege.

Most importantly...we, the Trustees of the District made an open, manifestly written commitment to Success, Equity and Social Justice. We materialized that commitment through the adoption of a Strategic Plan, the Board's plan for giving direction to the district. Most of those directions are closely associated with the improvement of success and completion rates for all students. We said specifically that measures would be taken to close the inequitable success and completion gaps between the ethnic groups of the colleges. The more we study and learn about race and the other factors, the better we become in setting effective policy and asking the right questions about everything we invest in with the public's treasure...from curriculum to programs to great teaching, etc.

And this board is committed to looking at the metrics that help us understand what the questions should be and what progress we are making in addressing the whole question of equity for all students.

Dr. Figueroa said he has led many discussions on this topic and this is the first time he has seen a governing board initiate a discussion on equity. He said this speaks volumes about the commitment of the Board and the leadership at the Colleges. Dr. Figueroa said community colleges represent the only option for some individuals to break the cycle of poverty and lack of success. He said it is important to recognize that not all students are dealing with the same factors in their lives. He invited those present to discuss their understanding of the experiences of students in the District.

Board members and representatives from each of the Colleges discussed their perceptions of the impact of race and class and potential actions to improve equity and opportunity, with many sharing their personal stories. Discussion points included:

- Providing opportunities for students to talk with instructors and peers about their experiences regarding race is a way to promote understanding. Students are sometimes judged on the way they dress, how prepared they appear to be for class, etc. If instructors understood the students' stories, they would have different responses. Administrators and faculty should be brave enough to share their stories as a model for students.
- Policies and procedures can disproportionately affect students who come with different experiences. Using multiple measures for placement can remove barriers and faculty need to be better informed on this issue. It is imperative that data regarding completion and success be available for the discussion and that the data also be shared with the Board.
- Suggestion to reexamine the concept of consistency at all campuses because underlying racial dynamics are the reason for some of the differences. Policy of dropping students for unpaid fees also has underlying racial and class dynamics. It was noted that the Board responds to comments from the community and should be informed of issues in order to explain policies and procedures.
- Curriculum indicates what really matters to an institution, along with support services outside of the classroom. Success has a great deal to do with the content of courses. Instructors and counselors need better training; no training in pedagogy is required at the higher education level. Professional development should be provided.
- There is a need to be intentional about providing opportunities for students to succeed with whatever definition that is for each student. It is difficult for many students who do not know how to register, navigate the campus, etc. Proprietary, for-profit colleges sometimes prey on students by making enrollment easy and focusing on what students want in terms of training and jobs.
- Gaps in education and in economics continue to exist because the status quo is maintained. There is a need to have conversations among the Board, administrators and faculty regarding ways to break down barriers. Conversations should also take place across systems, i.e. middle schools and high schools.
- There is a greater awareness regarding the importance of using data; this has led to initiatives such as Puente, Umoja, and Project Change. More can be done to help faculty to recognize who their students are and where they come from. Expect students to be successful and offer help so that they can be successful.
- Need for outreach to address student needs early on and offer support and follow-up, e.g. bridge programs.
- Understand family norms and cultural values and cast a broader net to attract young learners through middle college and early college concepts.
- Need to work with Human Resources to do a better job of hiring people who mirror the student community.
- Get to know students while they are in high school and guide them to touchstone programs – EOPS, Puente, Umoja, athletics, student government, etc. – and then help them venture out from the programs.
- Recognize the role of the Board as an ally with final decision making authority. Continue to consider the “Trustee Success Grant” program as outlined at a previous meeting.

Trustee Holober said the conversation has been very worthwhile. He noted that with a participatory governance system in place, the Board does not simply dictate. He asked the educational experts to bring ideas and proposals to the Board, knowing that the Board is supportive. He said that because of the District's community-supported status, there is an opportunity to serve students and potential students in a way that was not possible previously and to help those who most need help.

Trustee Goodman said black and brown males are being emasculated through high school, expecting them to assimilate to a culture that is not their own and asking them to compromise their value or identity in order to be successful. He said students doing the same things are sometimes judged differently based on race. He said it is important to help everyone who has contact with students, including counselors and teachers, recognize the impact this has on students.

Vice President Mohr said some of the best school leaders he has known are those who put race on the table and keep it there. He said the Board is open to asking questions and learning more. He suggested that the Board set aside time to discuss the issue on a regular basis.

Trustee Schwarz said she supports the idea of encouraging instructors to be welcoming and to act as additional counselors because the counselors at the Colleges are not always available. She said the sharing of personal stories can create lasting bonds and understanding. Trustee Schwarz said the Board and administrators are trying to help get students

in and out of college in a timely manner and she believes the Promise initiative and similar programs are steps in the right direction.

President Mandelkern said he is interested in discussing ways to reach students who need help in learning how to navigate the system because they do not have family assistance or resources. He suggested that the discussion be continued at the October 13 study session and that discussion participants bring back ideas for next steps.

Dr. Figueroa said he applauds the work of the Board. He said solutions will not be accomplished in one or two years and will require continued will and stamina.

### **STATEMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Trustee Schwarz said she attended the opening ceremony of the CSEA Annual Convention; she thanked CSEA for the invitation. Trustee Schwarz said she attended the excellent opening day event at Skyline College, She also attended the Districtwide opening day event and said the keynote speaker, Sonia Nazario, made an inspiring presentation. She said she was pleased that an AFSCME representative participated in the event along with the other bargaining units.

Vice President Mohr said he attended the opening day event at Skyline College and was impressed with the engagement of faculty and staff during the presentation by keynote speaker Tom Bailey. Vice President Mohr said he attended the new faculty orientation luncheon at College of San Mateo and was inspired by the excitement of the new faculty members.

Trustee Goodman said he believes the discussion on race and class was excellent. He said he was pleased that his daughters wanted to be present for the conversation. Trustee Goodman said he is appreciative that the conversation will continue. He said the District can become a model for other districts to begin discussing this topic in a safe environment.

Student Trustee Zheng said he appreciates the conversation at this meeting. He said it was clear that the participants care about students. He suggested that students participate in the next discussion in order to get their perspective. Student Trustee Zheng said his participation in the pre-departure orientation while he was in China was a worthwhile experience. He said it provided an opportunity to understand the needs and struggles of the students coming to study at the District's Colleges. He said housing and transportation issues are of utmost concern to the students. Student Trustee Zheng said the student governments at all of the Colleges are up and running. He invited Board members to attend at least one meeting and said he will email the meeting schedule to the Board. President Mandelkern thanked Student Trustee Zheng for being an excellent ambassador for the District while in China. Regarding transportation, President Mandelkern asked for a brief report on the Skyline Shuttle at the next meeting.

President Mandelkern said he attended the opening ceremony of the CSEA Convention. He thanked CSEA for the invitation and for the luncheon. President Mandelkern said he attended the Districtwide opening day event. He said Chancellor Galatolo's remarks were excellent. He said Sonia Nazario, author of *Enrique's Journey*, also made an outstanding presentation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:02 p.m.

Submitted by

Ron Galatolo, Secretary

Approved and entered into the proceedings of the August 24, 2016 meeting.

Thomas Mohr  
Vice President-Clerk