

**Minutes of the Study Session of the Board of Trustees
San Mateo County Community College District
July 8, 2020 – San Mateo, CA**

This was conducted remotely via Zoom. A video recording of the meeting can be accessed at: <https://smccd.edu/boardoftrustees/meetings.php>.

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

Board Members Present: President Karen Schwarz, Vice President Thomas A. Nuris, Trustee Maurice Goodman, Trustee Richard Holober, Trustee Dave Mandelkern

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CLOSED SESSION ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

President Schwarz said that during closed session, the Board will take up items as listed on the printed agenda, including: (1) Hold Conference with Labor Negotiators for Employee Organizations: AFT and CSEA; (2) Hold a Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation: Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Gov. Code, § 54956.9, subd. (d)(2): Three cases; (3) Consideration of Action in Connection with a Student pursuant to Ed. Code § 72122; and (4) Consideration of Ratification of May and June 2020 Confidential District Warrants.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS ONLY

None.

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

The Board recessed to closed session at 5:02 p.m.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

The Board reconvened to open session at 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: President Karen Schwarz, Vice President Thomas A. Nuris, Trustee Maurice Goodman, Trustee Richard Holober, Trustee Dave Mandelkern; Student Trustee Jade Shonette

Others Present: Chancellor Michael Claire, Chief Financial Officer Bernata Slater, Skyline College Interim President Jannett Jackson, College of San Mateo Acting President Kim Lopez, Cañada College President Jamillah Moore, District Academic Senate President Jeramy Wallace

ANNOUNCEMENT OF REPORTABLE ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION

(Time Stamp: 02:00)

None.

DISCUSSION OF THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

(Time Stamp: 02:06)

There were no modifications to the order of the agenda.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

(Time Stamp: 02:16)

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Personnel Items: Changes in Assignment, Compensation, Placement, Leaves, Staff Allocations and Classification of Academic and Classified Personnel (20-7-1A)

[*\(Time Stamp: 02:41\)*](#)

Motion to Approve by: Trustee Holober

Second by: Trustee Mandelkern

Action: Approved unanimously, all members voting Aye

Summary of Discussion: No discussion.

Public Comment: None.

Consideration and Approval of Skyline President Employment Agreement (20-7-2A)

[*\(Time Stamp: 03:26\)*](#)

Motion to Approve by: Trustee Mandelkern

Second by: Trustee Goodman

Action: Approved unanimously, all members voting Aye

Summary of Discussion: Human Resources Director David Feune reported that the contract for Dr. Melissa Moreno was a three-year agreement, that she would receive 225 hours of vacation annually and can cash out up to 10 days of vacation annually, that she will receive one day per month sick leave, and the same benefits and post-retirement benefits as generally provided to management personnel.

Board members and Chancellor Claire welcomed incoming president Melissa Moreno. They also thanked interim president Janett Jackson and the Skyline president screening committee.

Public Comment: None.

STUDY SESSION

A Discussion on Addressing the Obligation Gap (20-7-1C)

[*\(Time Stamp: 15:02\)*](#)

Summary of Discussion: Chancellor Claire introduced the panel of presenters: Dr. Jeramiah Sims, Dr. Jennifer Taylor-Mendoza, Dr. Tabitha Conaway and Jeremy Wallace. The panelists are SMCCCD colleagues who have written a book titled *Minding the Obligation Gap in Community Colleges and Beyond* (which is currently Amazon's #1 new release in Education) and have been conducting a series of webinars on the topic.

Dr. Conaway framed the obligation gap discussion and spoke of racist practices, policies and actions and the impact on people of color. Explained that there is a nexus between racism and neutral policies and noted that colorblind practices are not colorblind and that they are privileging white culture explicitly and are negating the identity and culture of our students. She noted that our public education system is established on white, middle-class norms and reinforces assimilationism that forces students to abandon language and culture. Further, she suggested that the District must be willing to interrogate its practices and be explicit in its policy goals.

Dr. Taylor-Mendoza discussed the need for brave leadership where disparities are named and there are shared accountabilities, where an equity agenda is used in hiring and evaluating employees, where there is an implementation of a mission and purpose that are designed to inspire change in others and where the psychological cost of silence is understood. She further explained that and organizational inertia is a natural barrier to implementing strategic and impactful change because it does not allow for new perspectives to penetrate the structure. She also noted how common understanding and definitions establish a baseline of cultural competence and fluency, provide rich opportunities for institutional reflection and dialogue.

Dr. Sims further framed the discussion with guiding presuppositions, including that (1) the SMCCCD Board wants to prioritize real, transformative anti-racist work, (2) the current stated mission of the SMCCCD Board does not reflect the requisite principals of an anti-racist educational approach, and (3) the SMCCCD leadership at all levels needs to audit/review/reimagine policies/practices/pedagogies in order to push towards an educational atmosphere that is anti-racist.

Professor Wallace drew a comparison to the disbanding the police movement and our institutions, noting that even with police wearing body cameras and footage documented on social media, nothing has changed because there is a deeper issue. He noted that dismantling the institution – similar to the institution of law enforcement – higher education has cracks in the foundation that cannot be repaired by making equity and justice an “add on.” He explained that our institutions of higher education were never built for students of color and it is in our DNA to marginalize them when they get to us and that justice needs to be central to our District, not on the periphery. He further concluded that academics tend to gravitate to sanitized language, such as disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and challenged the Board to think about how it uses the “contemporary conversations” agenda item.

Dr. Sims reviewed a tool the Board could use called the IMPACT (Innovative, Mindful, Purposeful, Actionable, Caring, Transformative) Equity Evaluation Grid. The Grid as a tool: (1) was created with an equity lens and one does not need to have a full understanding of equity issues in order to use this grid, just be willing to reflect honestly on the policies/practices/pedagogies present within departments/divisions, (2) can be used by administration to begin addressing climate by looking at policies and practices and can be used by faculty to audit classroom climate, and (3) simplifies the path forward, in that it easily exposes current inequities and provides a starting point for rapid change.

Trustee Goodman encouraged the Board and employee stakeholders to not have ceremonial conversations and to take what was presented and make it actionable. He noted that in-depth discussions are needed to get to the core of the issues and moving the priorities to become an anti-racist District forward. He further questioned how the District shifts from those ready and willing to everyone, a transition to the masses. He said the Board is responsible for setting vision but pondered how that is translated to be part of the DNA of the District.

Dr. Sims said the IMPACT grid was a good tool to start the work and training will be developed around it. Professor Wallace referenced earlier comments of things the Board could do, including: (1) create a vision/position statement that guides the Board’s work, (2) have real dialogue during “contemporary conversation” portion of the agenda, (3) don’t over rely on “race-neutral” or “colorblind” solutions and don’t blame the socio-economic factors off campus, (4) support the constituents as they start to reconceptualize our colleges, and (5) make the changes you can within your sphere of influence. Dr. Taylor-Mendoza noted that the Board sets the direction and the colleges are proficient and equipped to work to implement that direction and vision.

Trustee Mandelkern noted the elegance of the IMPACT tool, complimenting its simplicity to understand but its impact of use. He noted that the District had worked to make changes, citing the example of removing pre-requisite testing/entry testing for courses, which were barriers for students. He encouraged everyone to take more action on the items that have been discussed and move beyond talk to action. He noted his surprise regarding the lack of student-focused language of the District's mission statement, and encouraged work on revising and aligning the statement. He paraphrased former Skyline President Stan back-Stroud in that it is okay not to be perfect in this area as long as you have good intentions.

Trustee Holober noted that recent events demonstrate why it is necessary to take on power structures to make real change, because action shocks the system. He noted that he is concerned about complacent responses from individuals and that he hoped it would not result in people writing checks rather than getting directly involved in action. He suggested that perhaps it would be effective to have curriculum that teaches students how to be street organizers for change, as it is a proven and effective method for shaping outcomes and provides a broad set of skills for students.

Professor Wallace noted the need for ethnic studies and social justice programs districtwide and transformative curriculum, similar to that suggested by Trustee Holober, no matter the class or content area. Dr. Conaway reminded that it is important to empower students to have these conversations and to allow and encourage them to use their strengths and highlight their voices.

Vice President Nuris explained that it is critical to make sure the District is not creating and perpetuating a culture and curriculum that continues oppressive practices. He noted the need to have these discussions, expose them to transformative curriculum and experiences earlier in their academic careers, not just when they get to the District. He suggested that the District cannot work in a vacuum and collaboration with educational partners is important.

President Schwarz thanked the panelist for their excellent presentation and said the Board and District is left with important conversations to have and she encouraged review of the District's mission statement and policies.

COMMUNICATIONS

[\(Time Stamp: 02:10:38\)](#)

None.

STATEMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

[\(Time Stamp: 02:10:40\)](#)

President Schwarz: Commented that she was able to attend the Cañada College EOPS student celebration, via Zoom.

Vice President Nuris: No comments.

Trustee Goodman: Noted that he felt the Board had missed opportunities to provide statements and public assurances to students, employees and members of the community regarding recent events and actions relating to civil unrest, Black Lives Matter, DACA, and international students' circumstances. He recommended the Board president work with administration to bring a statement to the next board meeting.

Trustee Holober: Expressed interest in having an item agendaized to discuss the need for a clear

board policy that prohibits donations and solicitation of vendors for Board candidates by District Form 700 reporters.

Trustee Mandelkern: Addressed the recent federal policy statement regarding international student eligibility to stay in-country only if taking in-person class. He said he also was able to recently tour Cañada Building 1 and believes progress is being made to address issues raised by KAD. He also attended a drive-thru graduation for the Trade Introductions Program drive-thru graduation.

Student Trustee Shonette: No comments.

President Schwarz announced that the next meeting of the Board of Trustees would be on July 22, 2020, conducted via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned by consent at 8:19 p.m.

Submitted by

Michael Claire, Secretary