

## Executive Cabinet Meeting Notes

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

9:00 a.m.

**Present:** Dr. Carlos Hernandez, President; Ben Telesca, VP for Student Affairs; Dr. Suzanne Harris, Dean of Students; Amanda Workman, Athletic Director; Natalie Sandoval, Executive Director of Enrollment Management; Betse Esparza, Director of University Communications; Dr. Eric Funasaki, Dean; Dr. Bernardo Canteñas, Executive Vice President and Provost; Michelle Lancaster, Director of Academic Affairs; Bonnie Albright, VP for Finance and Operation; Dr. Barbara Tucker, Dean; Dr. Louis Harveson, Associate Provost of Research and Development; Dr. Bonnie Warnock, Dean; April Aultman Becker, AVP Institutional Effectiveness; Janice Espinoza-Valenzuela, recorder

**Remote:** Dr. Jorge Garza, VP for Administrative Services and COO; Dr. Sarah (Sally) Roche, Dean; Dr. Sumantra Sengupta, Dean; Dr. Laura Payne, Dean

**Absent:** Paul Herring, Vice President of Advancement

**Start Time:** 9:02 a.m.

### Outside Employment

- Dr. Tucker brought forth the outside employment policy.
  - The challenge is an employee having another full-time job. The form does not have the number of hours an employee may work.
  - The form should be completed before they begin another job because the form requests permission from your current employer to work outside of your full-time job.
  - An idea is to add it to the hiring process, and it must be completed every academic year.
  - Dr. Tucker usually only approves an employee to work up to 20 hours a week at an outside job.
- President suggests that Deans meet with Bonnie Albright and HR to discuss changes to policy.

### College Vine Demo

- Allie McCrady and Vinay Bhaskara presenters.
- AI Recruiter-a call was made to Natalie's cell phone to give us a demo on the AI Recruiter. We asked several questions, and the AI gave us answers.
- Assists with FAFSA
- Allie mentioned that every school's data is their own.
- Way to train-4 to 6 weeks for launch. Depends on staff, bandwidth. 10 to 15 hours a week. We would give the AI PDFs and content to read. College Vine would upload the info.
- Two to three hours with our OIT team to set up.
- Is this an interaction tool for recruiting only? It is the start of it. And then it goes to admittance and can go all the way through the retention process.
- President asked at what point in the recruitment lifecycle does this transition from this solution to whatever we have now? Is it when the student is admitted? Or Registers?
  - Allie said when we train our AI Recruiter, we configure where we want it to live. We can configure it as we want it. We can have it from the application to the admit phase, and this is where the AI would stop communicating with students.
  - The deeper into the funnel, the more integration we will have to build into our existing systems, including Financial Aid, Registrars, correct? Allie said for data and insights, yes.

- Are we able to add to the caller ID Sul Ross State University. Allie said that they are able to add an area code. On the road map, at the end of Q4 is where we can have Sul Ross name pop up. We would be able to choose a phone number, and we would be able to name it.
- President asked Allie to please identify the schools in Texas that have already adopted this. Allie will work with Natalie.
- April mentioned that it is only as good as the information we put in. Everyone agreed.
- We will need to find out the following: Data ownership, data storage, how do they share data, how will the system learning be shared through the enterprise?
- Do we purchase names? No, we do not. They are based on SAT and ACT and are very expensive. We will get names from the direct admissions process.
- President Hernandez said that we will first need the price tag for this AI Recruiter.
- If we want to do this, we want a timeline.

### **Alumni Scholarships**

- Dr. Payne and Natalie have been researching our graduating students to see where we can grow.
- Graduate students: 94 undergraduates have applied for fall graduation; we will be losing 35 of our graduate students because they have applied for fall graduation.
- Great opportunity to incentivize and carry over in the fall and into the spring with an alumni scholarship.
- Dr. Payne has a great idea to create a certificate to go into their diploma as a graduation gift of \$1,000.
  - Can be split into \$500 each semester.
  - Great incentive to grow our graduate numbers
- EC recommended:
  - We can move forward in designing a plan.
  - Spread over two semesters and take it as a discount, \$500 per semester and have minimum hours (6 hours fall, 6 hours spring).
  - Another limit to academic year graduates: undergraduates that are completing their degree within that academic year. Because if we call it a general Alumni Scholarship, then someone that graduated 10 years ago could apply. Or should we offer it more broadly?
    - Natalie feels we should offer it to all alumni, regardless of when they graduated.
    - President asked Dr. Tucker if she would admit graduating students into leadership program since there are professional experience requirements. Dr. Tucker said yes, that is correct.
    - They must have 2 years' experience.
  - Natalie asked if it could not be a discount and could be funded. President said that we don't have a resource to fund it.
  - Natalie also mentioned that we could ask Alumni to fund it.

### **Updates by Dr. Bernie Canteñs**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> candidate David Berry will be here on Friday, 9/13.
- APC will meet on 9/20.
- Celebration for tenure and promotion on 9/19.
- A lot of good candidates for service and scholars' awards

### **Updates by Michelle Lancaster**

- Updates for faculty handbook for post tenure review
- CIP Code project has been passed along to Greg and Registrar's office.

- They have gone through all courses on all campuses.
- They will begin the cleaning.
- President would like to know how many courses and how many were reclassified.
- \$100,000 additional revenue per semester.
- Committee to start academic calendar for 26-27
- Curriculog-We will experiment with Dr. Basibuyuk's courses first.
  - Acalog was the catalog for modern campus and curriculog is the curriculum management software.
  - When finished with one phase (dept. chair and dean approval), then it is moved to curriculum council.
- President asked if she had statistics on opt out from Follett? Michelle said there were none yet, as they have until tomorrow.

### **Updates by April Aultman-Becker**

- Working on EdD. SACS submission; waiting for THECB to approve
- Core curriculum on Friday
- Academic program reviews; started new cycle
  - 5 programs that will be reviewed this semester and turned into THECB.
- Watermark program to assist with administrative assessments.
- APM updates. She will be sending emails every month to those that require updates.
  - She will bring in all updates in December or February.
  - After that, they will be sent to legal and then published on the website.
- Kayla presented the RNL student satisfaction results at the faculty meeting.
  - Strengths: advisors are strong, approachable and knowledgeable in their field. Lobo Den only advises freshman, so this is good news for our faculty.
  - Challenges-adequate financial aid is not available, can't register for classes easily, food availability.
  - This survey is across all campuses. They can aggregate by campus level.
  - April will send the link, but we can find it under the Institutional Research website.
  - 67% are very satisfied, which is about 15 points higher than the national average.
  - 69% would enroll again if they could.

### **Updates by Dr. Louis Harveson**

- PPOHA \$7.5 million was funded
  - PhD in Natural Science; establish curriculum in water science
  - Assist in funding the Anthropology Bachelor of Arts program
  - Funding for Spanish for professionals
  - Certifies dual credit
  - Does not appear that the Eagle Pass programs were approved at this time. President will check into it. Education Leadership and business programs at Eagle Pass. If not approved, they will try next year.
- Working on legislative appropriation requests-BRI is squared away.
  - Draft for West TX Water Research Center. Working with the committee before the draft is presented to the president.
- Has a policy that he would like to present to EC for approval. He should email it now and then everyone can review now. Depending on the impact of the policy regarding changes.
- The science seminars start tomorrow at 3:30 in Warnock Science Building. Social Hour at the Ritchey afterwards.

- November 15-Research Forum for Humanities and Natural Sciences

#### **Updates by Dr. Jorge Garza**

- Successful soccer game-girls won 3 to 1.
  - Amanda, President attended. First three minutes, the other team scored and then they didn't score again. A lot of good vibes at the event.
  - President mentioned that he and Dr. Garza met with the county judge and the mayor and other community constituents. They expressed their gratitude that we brought that event to the community and were happy to attend the event.
- Working with Natalie on plan of action with the business with CC Wynn in Eagle Pass.
  - Planning a fair and requesting the Deans and Bernie to come to the fair
- Working with Dr. Underwood, the junior college provost. This is where the career paths are created with the junior college and us. They are our feeder school, and we want to go back and work with them. Dr. Tucker has some career paths that are very important.
- President mentioned providing the constituents a general update with the university project.
  - \$800,000 gap between where we are and where we need to be with the contract execution and moving into design. County judge stated that he has included that entire amount in his budget priorities.

#### **Updates by Dr. Sumantra Sengupta**

- Projects that Bernie accelerated should be completed by October so they may be taken to the November BOR.
- University of Piedras meeting
  - Double degree: double bachelor's degree or a pathway of 4 plus 1.
  - By the end of September, they will send us their map. We will have a month to map it and then hopefully have an articulation agreement.
  - This will open a new stream of students in the border communities.

#### **Updates by Natalie Sandoval**

- She will be in Eagle Pass next week to meet with Cynthia Sifuentes and Aryel to create a calendar of events for fall and spring.
  - Planning a career fair.
- She is shifting from recruitment to dual credit. They are in the finishing stages regarding an email that they will be sending to about 212 high schools.
  - The email will say who we are, what we offer and direct admissions.
  - Looking for script to work on direct admissions. Will reach out to UTPB for assistance with direct admissions.
  - Her team will be focusing on dual credit and trying to get appointments with the high schools.

#### **Updates by Dr. Eric Funasaki**

- We did receive the \$2.5 million earmark for cybersecurity pipeline project with Lamar University.

#### **Updates by Dr. Bonnie Warnock**

- Articulation agreement with Lamar State Colleges; They will have a transfer fair with a focus on Sul Ross.
  - We will be joining virtually

- Will invite their past four years of graduates to attend
- Programs being marked are the BS in Organizational Leadership and BS in Agriculture and Industry.
- She did an analysis of her colleges retention from spring to fall and her colleges enrollment. Pulled information right after the official add/drops: college retention from spring to fall with dual credit students removed was 78%. They have an increase of 83 students with dual credit students removed.
- ARAs funded through Title III grant are having an impact on retention. She has two departments that have traditional admins and two departments that have ARAs. Comparing traditional admins and ARAs, they saw a 6% better retention rate with the departments with ARAs.
- RN to BSN program-proposal planned for 7 students. They have 14 students enrolled in classes.
  - Course development is great to get asynchronous classes developed.
  - Currently have part-time lecturers teaching these classes.
  - Word is out about the price point.
  - Double students from what was planned on the initial proposal.
- President mentioned that one of the community members will reach out to Eric Funasaki for a grant opportunity which focuses on health care. It is similar to the nursing grant proposal that was submitted for programmatic expansion.
  - Dr. Garza will share the information with Dr. Funasaki.
  - President is concerned that SWT will make a push to expand their RN program to BSN. We should try and beat them and establish a BSN program as an extension to our existing BSN because if we have it, then we can object to their application.
  - Dr. Warnock mentioned that the RN to BSN is through RGC already. We would already have the opportunity to file an objection if SWT applies.
  - When we file the intent for a new program with the THECB, the first 30 days are open to file an objection with the THECB. Institutions are limited to a 50-mile radius. Notices automatically generated by THECB by email.

#### **Updates by Amanda Workman**

- Amanda thanked everyone that came to the first football game; the next game is this weekend at 1:00 p.m.
- Dr. Harveson mentioned that he had 100 people at his tailgate; there were no food or drinks leftover. tailgate.

#### **Updates by Dr. Suzanne Harris**

- Student participation is off the chart
  - They saw droves of students attend the HSI event yesterday.
  - Students will also challenge us a bit-It is up to us to keep momentum going.
- She had the opportunity to go to the men's soccer game in Hobbs, NM. We won 3-0. They went to a football game in Portales, NM too. Our football team is doing well
- Housing-dorms are still full. Hope to resolve quadrupling.
  - President Hernandez asked for occupancy stats for this year vs. last year. Dr. Harris will provide the information to the EC.
- Overtime: time for all faculty and staff to meet and mingle at the Railroad Blues. She has been asked when the next event will be.

#### **Updates by President Hernandez**

- Coaches are doing a really good job.

- Best behaved football players he has seen at any of the institutions he has worked at. Self-discipline on the field is unparalleled.
- Students are policing themselves and defusing potential issues.
- This is a different group of students that have bought into the idea of developing a different culture. Keep up the good work!

#### **Updates by Bonnie Albright**

- Glitch in direct deposit process for refunds, so students received checks instead of direct deposits.
- Problems with prior year invoicing. Will be meeting with Ellucian to resolve the problem.
- Had problems with budget loading, but the budget is in. Some have reached out about access.
  - Salaries are in and will test before they run payroll for the fiscal year.
- Interviewed for Purchasing Analyst last week.
- She sent out for students-integrations to banner for SAAS. One for student and one for finance, HR and payroll
- Budget was a bear to get loaded, per president. Sam Houston also stepped up and put in extra effort.
  - We hired consultant, Edgar Smith, retired budget director for Sam Houston, to work to clean up some issues-organizational structure, budget allocations, over the course of fall.
  - In hopes that in spring planning for FY26 budget, position manager, budget development, tools that will give us a smoother pathway to upload the budget next year.
  - We were able to set up so many other items that need to be removed. Sam Houston loaded the budget manually, line by line.
  - They had to manually enter salaries also.
- We are committed to sending compensation letters to the 3% individuals. We are a week late.
  - Be prepared if they come to you with questions. We are directing them to HR or the Provost.
  - There are a few cases where individuals will not get a raise, because of the received adjustments during the preceding fiscal year defined by the time frame that makes them ineligible for a raise or for some other reason. In those cases, please direct them to HR.

#### **Updates by Dr. Barbara Tucker**

- Doctoral program is moving on well.
  - We have an external reviewer, and an internal reviewer set up with Texas State.
  - They hope to have reports completed by the end of September to submit to the reviewers by October and submit to THECB by November.
  - Board motion will be submitted.

#### **Updates by Ben Telesca**

- Katrina is working on Cleary report. She will be sending out emails regarding information requests, so please don't ignore the email.
  - Fines have gone up to \$70,000 per instance.
- Sending out questions to department heads about deferred maintenance in your areas.

#### **Updates by President Hernandez**

- Traveling on Sunday to Austin and testifying before the LBB on Monday presenting our legislative priorities and our budgets. This is a kickoff to the legislative session.
- Submitted two exceptional item requests:

- Degree guiding table for the PhD program. We received monies for the program and other activities.
- \$4 million a year for BRI; \$8 million per biennium to expand the partnership for the Center for Land Stewardship. We have been trying to get this funding since the president has been here.
- Cautiously optimistic that we will get funding.
- Submitted the same item twice, \$10 million at each campus for program development. We don't anticipate receiving \$20 million.
  - Typically, if the legislature funds exceptional items across the board, they fund one exceptional item at each campus. We have the benefit of two campuses. In our case, if they pick the \$8 million for BRI, they won't pick up the \$10 million for program development here. So, he included the same element at Eagle Pass because maybe they will choose that one.
  - The more likely event is that the \$10 million for Eagle Pass will be picked up as a companion solution toward the downward expansion. The argument is that downward expansion will need additional capacity to build the programmatic capacity at a lower level.
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- Will be submitting a third exceptional item request for Alpine. There may be a senator or two that are environmentally minded and might pick up funding for the Water Center.
  - We are asking for \$2 million biennium, \$1 million per year to fund and operate the Water Center. It is a remote possibility that it will be discussed.
- Submitted capital requests. The requests will not get picked up or funded this session, but he must introduce them. We can take this to the next session and remind them that this request was introduced. This session looks more financially positive than the last session.
  - One for Alpine and one for Eagle Pass each at \$70 million dollars to fund a variety of capital projects.
    - At Eagle Pass is building number two on the new campus.
    - Alpine would be an expansion of the ANRS, buildout of the health sciences building (bank downtown) and building of a new home for BRI.

**Adjourned: 11:25 a.m.**