



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Trustees Betsy Bechtel • Pearl Cheng • Laura Casas Frier • Joan Barram • Bruce Swenson • Emily Kinner • Stephanie McGee

Board meeting of Jan. 23, 2012

THE HEADLINES

Trustees reviewed and discussed:

- Student Success Task Force recommendations
- The budget outlook for this year and next
- Legislative principles for 2012
- Options for the district data center
- Moving to fully online board agendas and action-only minutes

BOARD STUDY SESSION

STUDENT SUCCESS TASK FORCE

Drawing on his experience serving on the statewide Student Success Task Force, Faculty Association President **Rich Hansen** presented an overview of how the task force report and recommendations evolved in response to public comments. Academic Senate leaders **Karen Chow**, **Coleen Lee-Wheat** and **Dolores Davison** discussed areas of interest and concern to faculty. Many of the task force recommendations are aimed at improving efficiency and could fundamentally alter the nature of the California Community Colleges, Hansen said.

The presenters agreed there is broad consensus that community colleges cannot successfully carry out the task force recommendations without additional funding when their budgets are being dramatically cut. In the absence of proper funding, they said, student success could be hurt more than helped by the proposed changes. The speakers expressed the following comments and concerns:

- Successful developmental math programs such as Math Performance Success at De Anza and Math My Way at Foothill are costly to operate because they involve counseling services and more time in the classroom, but pay off in the long run in terms of student retention.
- It is probably not the best use of counselors' limited time to prepare an education plan for all entering students, particularly given the declining number of counselors and the frequency with which students change their majors.
- English faculty are concerned about moving to a common statewide assessment system that does not include an essay.
- A funding model focused too heavily on basic skills could threaten the rigor and depth of Foothill-De Anza's academic offerings. This would hurt both students, who are well prepared for transfer by such a curriculum, and faculty, who enjoy teaching a diversity of courses. However, having students complete basic skills

classes early in their college careers would contribute to greater academic success.

- Proposed changes to eligibility requirements for the Board of Governors (BOG) fee waiver could result in loss of access for at-risk students if there isn't a system in place that provides support and intervention.
- With many K-12 districts abandoning adult education, adult learners could be entirely shut out if community colleges devalue non-credit courses.
- Although the task force retreated from recommending outcomes-based funding, that issue could arise again in the Legislature. It is not a good time to change the funding model in the midst of a fiscal crisis.
- It is critically important that the task force recommendations not be rushed through the Legislature and enacted before the impacts can be fully analyzed and the proper support systems put into place.

The faculty speakers urged trustees to advocate with legislators for adequately funding the task force recommendations and giving community colleges enough time to prepare for the changes.

Trustee **Bruce Swenson** questioned the idea that there is a fundamental conflict between success and access. He said he believes we can't have success without access or true access without success, so a balance is needed. Board President **Joan Barram** said trustees would carry the faculty concerns forward in upcoming meetings with legislators.

The recommendations of the Student Success Task Force can be found at:
<http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/PolicyInAction/StudentSuccessTaskForce.aspx>

LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

Trustees reviewed and discussed proposed legislative principles for 2012, which they will act on next month. Board members generally endorsed the positions taken and suggested several modifications for clarity and completeness. The principles provide guidance to the chancellor for legislative advocacy throughout the year and are shared with elected representatives. Among other things, the principles include opposing further funding cuts to community colleges; supporting revenue enhancements to close the state budget gap; and lowering the vote threshold for approval of community college parcel taxes from 66 percent to 55 percent.

The principles are developed after surveying the positions of community college advocacy groups at the state and federal levels and reviewing prior-year legislative issues that are likely to continue. To view the draft principles, download the January 23 board packet at the following url, and look for item #2:

http://www.fhda.edu/about_us/ArchivedAgendas

BUDGET UPDATE

Vice Chancellor **Kevin McElroy** presented an overview of Gov. **Jerry Brown's** 2012-13 budget proposal and reviewed the ongoing budget picture for Foothill-De Anza. He reported that mid-year "trigger" cuts the governor recently enacted in response to lower-

than-expected state revenues are expected to leave the district with a \$10.4 million budget deficit in the current year, or a \$9.7 million deficit if a workload reduction is implemented.

Passage of the governor's proposed tax initiative in November would have a major impact on community college funding for 2012-13, he said. But even if voters approve the tax package, the district's budget deficit for 2012-13 is projected to reach \$11.3 million due to rising expenses. If the tax initiative fails, another round of mid-year trigger cuts for 2012-13 would leave Foothill-De Anza with a projected deficit of \$16 million.

A number of variables could alter the deficit projections, such as whether property-tax and student-fee revenues are lower than expected; whether non-resident attendance holds steady; and whether enrollment grows or declines. At this point, Vice Chancellor McElroy said, it may be worth allowing a drop in productivity and offering more classes to gain enrollment because loss of enrollment funding permanently reduces the district's base funding.

The district's stability fund for 2011-12 is expected to dwindle to \$4.5 million by the end of the fiscal year. These remaining funds, when combined with \$4 million in stability funds set aside for use in 2012-13 plus a projected carryover balance of \$8.5 million from the colleges and Central Services, would give the district about \$17 million to close the 2012-13 budget deficit, he said.

Both campuses and Central Services will bring proposals to the board next month that are designed to achieve a total of \$10.4 million in budget savings. A portion of the reductions will be implemented in June 2012. Additional reductions will depend on the governor's final budget and the size of the district's operating deficit and would be implemented no later than the end of the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Concerned about a drop-off in enrollment, Trustee **Betsy Bechtel** suggested the district address a perception among community residents that there is no opportunity to take classes for personal enrichment because the focus is now on transfer and vocational training. Vice Chancellor McElroy noted that enrollment may continue to drop off when the state enacts higher student fees. He said the increase in the student fees do not come back as increases to the colleges, a fact that Foothill Student Trustee **Stephanie McGee** suggested is worthy of student protest.

De Anza President **Brian Murphy** spoke about the difficulty to trying to maintain enrollment while state funding cuts are forcing reductions in course section and student support services.

DISTRICT DATA CENTER

Chancellor **Linda Thor** reported on developments regarding plans to build a new data center and associated ETS office building on Foothill's parking Lot 1-E, next to the district office building. Because the contractor estimated construction costs would run \$6 million over budget, she asked Vice Chancellor of Technology **Fred Sherman** to look at reducing the project's costs and to explore alternatives.

Vice Chancellor Sherman reviewed the three options that are being evaluated: renovating the existing data center on the De Anza campus; proceeding with construction of a new data center; and collocating district information servers off-site in commercial or shared facilities with another entity. He indicated that there is no perfect option at this point.

The current data center at De Anza is not a safe environment for IT equipment and has other significant shortcomings, he said. It is not cost-effective to renovate the building to an "essential services" construction standard, which would produce a data center designed to withstand a moderately severe earthquake and still be safe to occupy.

He said the Santa Clara County Office of Education is currently renovating a data center at its offices in San Jose. It may have enough excess space to accommodate Foothill-De Anza and could provide managed services for the data center. However, the building may not meet the essential services construction standard. If the district chooses this option, ETS staff would remain housed in the district and would operate the center remotely.

Plans for constructing a new data center and adjoining ETS office building on Lot 1-E have been redesigned. A new data center could be built to an essential services standard at or near budget, but not to the desired level of redundancy for all critical systems.

Vice Chancellor Sherman said the cost of an off-site commercial collocation lease versus the cost of building a new data center would break even over about 10 years. However, after paying for 10 years on a commercial lease, the district would not own any facilities.

The total budget for the data center and ETS office building is \$10.5 million, funded through bond Measures E and C. If the data center were renovated or moved off-site, Chancellor Thor said, centralized office space still is needed for ETS staff. And whatever decision is made will have a bearing on how much funding is available for the district office building renovation.

After asking a number of questions, trustees expressed appreciation for the thoughtfulness of the approach and supported continued evaluation of options and tradeoffs.

For more details, download the January 23 board packet at the following url, and look for item #4:

http://www.fhda.edu/about_us/ArchivedAgendas

BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS

Chancellor Thor proposed several changes related to the Board of Trustees. These include moving away from printed board agendas and supporting documents to providing them electronically, which would save staff time and support the district's commitment to environmental sustainability. To facilitate the move to electronic agendas, the district would loan laptops or iPads to trustees as needed, and would provide training in such tasks as how to annotate and mark up documents and navigate between documents.

The chancellor also has proposed moving from "sense" minutes, which record the discussion in detail, to "action-only" minutes. She noted a number of municipalities are using action-only minutes including Los Altos and Mountain View. The district's attorney has advised that the district is only required to record actions taken, not take minutes. She said Board Highlights provides some background on the discussions that take place.

Board members agreed to try the new approaches on a trial basis. They also accepted her suggestion of a trial starting in 2013 of soliciting input for the board's self-evaluation

from the Chancellor's Advisory Council, the Foothill-De Anza Foundation board chair and the community members who serve on the Audit & Finance Committee and the Measure C Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee.

NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Feb. 6 at 6 p.m. in the district Board Room. Agendas generally are posted 72 hours in advance at: http://www.fhda.edu/about_us/board/agenda/. Please check the agenda to verify time and location of the meeting.

Board Highlights is designed to communicate board meeting news to faculty and staff across the district. This publication is not the official minutes. The official minutes are available at http://www.fhda.edu/about_us/board/minutes after their approval at a subsequent board meeting. Please contact Becky Bartindale at bartindalebecky@fhda.edu or (650) 949-6107 with comments or questions about *Board Highlights*.