



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Trustees

Betsy Bechtel • Pearl Cheng • Laura Casas Frier • Joan Barram • Bruce Swenson • Etienne Bowie • Thomasina Russaw

Board meeting of March 14, 2011

THE HEADLINES (details below)

The Board of Trustees approved:

✓ Contracting with a new independent auditor

Trustees heard about:

✓ Progress on finding a permanent location for Foothill-De Anza's education center

✓ Efforts to improve degree and certificate completion at the local, state and federal levels

CORRECTION

In the March 1 Board Highlights, the name of Foothill College faculty member **Teresa Zwack** was inadvertently left off the list of those joining the ranks of tenure-track faculty. She was among faculty members the board re-employed for a second year.

ACTION ITEMS

New auditor: The board authorized the district to contract with **Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Co.** to serve as the district's independent auditor. The decision reflects no dissatisfaction with **Perry-Smith**, the auditor for many years. While Perry-Smith has done a good job, the district's Audit & Finance Committee concluded that it would be a sound business practice to rotate in a new auditor, said Trustee **Joan Barram**. The new firm was selected from among six certified public accounting firms that responded to a request for proposals. The Audit & Finance Committee, made up of four public members and two trustees, interviewed three finalists and recommended the new firm to the board.

STUDY SESSION

Educational center property acquisition

Jim Goodell, president of consultant PPV (Public Private Ventures) reviewed the outcome of meetings held in the past 45 days to advance the district's efforts to secure a permanent home for its education center, currently housed in leased space at Cubberley Community Center in Palo Alto (Middlefield campus).

As a result of those meetings, several properties have been identified for further investigation: two city-controlled sites in Sunnyvale and eight acres owned by the city of Palo Alto at Cubberley. In addition, PPV is moving forward with a site-solicitation process to

the broader real estate community. This will be done through a "request for offers" scheduled to come to the board on April 4.

New sites of interest include eight acres within the Sunnyvale Civic Center complex and 18 acres at the former Onizuka Air Force Station, which is being redeveloped with Sunnyvale as the lead agency. Meanwhile, discussions are continuing with Palo Alto and the Palo Alto Unified School District about the possibility of Foothill-De Anza building the permanent center at Cubberley.

While the Sunnyvale Civic Center site is attractive because of its location, it's unlikely that the district would know for several years whether locating there is a viable option and uncertain when the city might be able to move forward with Civic Center redevelopment plans.

By contrast, plans for redeveloping Onizuka are moving fairly quickly; the Air Force is scheduled to close the air station on Sept. 1, 2011 and several parties have expressed interest in portions of the land. The Onizuka site is attractive for a variety of reasons, including its proximity to projected population growth, access to public transportation, a location that could serve as a "regional hub" for collaboration with neighboring districts, and low to zero land-transfer costs. However, the site is within two miles of an active airport, which Goodell indicated could possibly be a stumbling block.

Foothill President **Judy Miner** presented the board with an expanded vision for the education center, pointing out opportunities for model public and private collaboration. Both she and Chancellor **Linda Thor** commented on recent discussions about possible regional collaborations at the center with West Valley-Mission Community College District, and President Miner said the instructional staff from Foothill and Mission colleges would meet soon to continue the discussion. De Anza President **Brian Murphy** said an education center serving students from both Foothill and De Anza would provide De Anza with an opportunity to add new offerings at the center that aren't available on the main campus.

Trustee **Bruce Swenson** stressed the importance of ensuring that the center is based where it would attract enough new students to cover the expenses. Board President **Pearl Cheng** commented that housing and retail would likely follow redevelopment of the Onizuka site. Responding to a question from Trustee **Laura Casas Frier**, Goodell reported that the site is clean and has no toxic chemical problems. Several trustees said they would not want to build on the city-owned land at Cubberley over opposition from the Palo Alto Unified School District.

Foothill-De Anza estimates it needs 50,000 square feet initially for the education center, with capacity to expand to 100,000 square feet. Land and facility costs would be funded through the Measure C bond.

The completion agenda

Chancellor Thor, the college presidents, Institutional Research Director **Andrew LaManque** and campus Academic Senate Presidents **Dolores Davison** and **Gregory Anderson** presented an overview of state and national efforts to increase the number of degrees and

certificates awarded to community college students. They also discussed what Foothill and De Anza are doing to achieve the “completion agenda.” (To get the presentation, click here: <http://fhdafiles.fhda.edu/downloads/aboutfhda/CompletionAgenda.pdf>)

Once first in the world in the percentage of young adults with a college education, the United States now ranks 10th, Chancellor Thor noted. Unless something changes quickly, the current generation of college-age Americans will be the first who are less educated than their parents.

President Murphy discussed the goal laid out by the Commission on the Future, on which he served, to increase degree and certificate completion in California community colleges by 1 million by 2020. Every community college in California would need to increase certificate and degree awards by 13 percent annually to reach that goal, Director LaManque reported.

The only way to make meaningful progress is by closing the participation and achievement gaps among racial and ethnic groups, President Murphy said. That is particularly challenging, he noted, when California is systematically under-educating its population by cutting higher education funding.

Academic Senate President Davison, a member of the statewide Academic Senate, reported on progress toward creating model transfer curriculum to support college adoption of transfer degrees provided for in SB 1440. Academic Senate President Anderson reported on the transfer degrees that De Anza is planning to submit and the importance of scaling effective basic skills practices.

President Miner also noted that both colleges are looking at automatically awarding certificates and degrees to students who meet the requirements but don’t apply, and are re-examining registration priorities with an eye toward supporting degree and certificate attainment. She also reported on the possibility of partnering with private apprenticeship training programs, such as one run by PG&E, to award trainees a degree or certificate if they complete general education requirements at Foothill.

Meeting the various completion goals would be challenging without budget reductions, and is almost impossible with the kinds of cuts the district is making, Chancellor Thor said. However, after an in-depth discussion, the board acted on her recommendation to adopt a resolution supporting the national Association of Community College Trustees’ “call to action” on completion. The resolution commits the district to promoting policies, practices and institutional cultures that will produce 50 percent more students with high-quality degrees and certificates by 2020.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Monday, April 4, at 6 p.m. in the District Board Room. Please check the agenda to verify time and location. Agendas are posted 72 hours in advance at: http://www.fhda.edu/about_us/board/agenda/.

Board Highlights is designed to communicate board meeting news to faculty and staff across the district. This publication is not the official minutes. For more comprehensive information, you may consult the official minutes, which generally are available at http://www.fhda.edu/about_us/board/minutes after their approval at the subsequent board meeting. Please contact Becky Bartindale at bartindalebecky@fhda.edu or extension 6107, with comments or questions about *Board Highlights*.