RCCD | RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

MORENO VALLEY COLLEGE | NORCO COLLEGE | RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE

Board of Trustees - Special Board Meeting
Thursday, June 22, 2023 4:00 PM
District Office, Conference Room 309
3801 Market Street, Riverside CA 92501

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pledge of Allegiance

Board members, the Chancellor, faculty, management and classified professionals offer gratitude and respect to the land's Indigenous caretakers and affirm the District's intentions of maintaining the land's integrity and the Tongva (Gabrieleno), Cahuilla, Payómkawichum (Luiseño), Serrano and Cupeño tribes' legacy. We promise to honor the continued guardianship of the land, water and air — all of which are inseparable. We are indebted to the caretakers of yesteryears and the stewards of our institutions will honor the opportunity to live and educate upon these homelands.

Public access to the in-person meeting will begin 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

Submission of Public Comments

1. Anyone who wishes to make a presentation to the Board on an agenda item in person is requested to complete a "REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES" card, available from the Executive Administrative Assistant to the Chancellor/Board of Trustees. Please make sure that the Secretary of the Board has the correct spelling of your name and address to maintain proper records. Comments should be limited to five (5) minutes or less. (This time limit will be doubled for members of the public utilizing a translator to ensure the non-English speaker receives the same opportunity to directly address the Board, unless simultaneous translation equipment is used.)

2. Written public comments may be sent to WrittenPublicComments@rccd.edu, which will be read during the public comment portion of the meeting. Submissions by email must be received prior to 4:00 pm the day of the meeting to be included.

Anyone who requires a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in any meeting should contact the Chancellor's Office at (951) 222-8800 as far in advance of the meeting as possible.

Any public records relating to an open session agenda item that is distributed within 72 hours prior to the meeting is available for public inspection at the Riverside Community College District Chancellor's Office, 3rd Floor, 3801 Market Street, Riverside, California, 92501 during regular business hours or online.

I.COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Board invites comments from the public regarding any matters within the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees. Due to the Ralph M. Brown Act, the Board cannot address or respond to comments made under Public Comment.

II. BOARD OF TRUSTEES RETREAT

Welcome and Introduction provided by Bill Hedrick, Board of Trustees President

III.CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

III.A. Inland Empire Technical Trade Center
Information Only
IETTC_May_BoardRetreat_Slides

III.B. District Strategic Planning Council, Committees, and Sub-committees Operational Guidelines and Structure
Information Only
Presentation DSPC Structure - Board Retreat June 22, 2023
DSPC Operational Guidelines and Structure (DSPC Approved 022423)

III.C. District Construction Procurement
Information Only
Presentation - Construction Procurement Process

III.D. General Obligation Bond
Information Only

III.E. A Case for RCCD's Regional Vision
Information Only
Presentation - IE Educational Capacity & Econ Development 06.22.2023

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Discussion led by Dr. Jose Leyba, ACCT Facilitator
- Board Roles and Responsibilities Refresher (Presentation)
- Guide to Board Roles and Responsibilities (Activity)
- Board Mini Self-Assessment Accreditation Purpose (Activity)
- The Making of a Community College Trustee (Article)

V.GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Discussion led by Dr. Jose Leyba, ACCT Facilitator
- Board Survey Results and Monitoring Goals/Priorities Progress

VI.CLOSED SESSION

VI.A. Pursuant to Government Code 54957.6
Public Employee Performance Evaluation
Title: Chancellor
To Be Determined

VII.ADJOURNMENT

RCCD Board of Trustees

Refresher: Roles and Responsibilities

Of Trustees: ”…leave with the same understanding of our roles.”

Outcomes:

1. Trustees will review Refresher PPT
2. Trustees will complete Board Self-Evaluation
3. Trustees will complete the Mini-Self Assessment
4. Trustees will review “The Making of A Community Colle
5. Trustees will review Survey Priorities
6. Trustees will review the Chancellor’s Evaluation
7. Trustees will complete ACCT Evaluation

BOARD SELF- EVALUATION: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

CHARACTERISTICS
OF AN EFFECTIVE & EFFICIENT BOARD

- ✓ **Clear board goals and values**
  - ❖ *"How do students benefit from this decision?"*
- ✓ **Common voice to key questions**
  - ❖ *Why do we care? Why do we exist? What is our dream? How do we behave? What are we willing to risk?*
- ✓ **Live by a strong *Code of Ethics***
- ✓ **Clear role of board president & strong board/Chancellor relationship**
- ✓ **Clear role of individual trustees**
- ✓ **Participate in professional development**

<u>A JOB DESCRIPTION *FOR INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEES*</u>

- Possess a sincere desire to provide a public service
- Carryout the legal, ethical, and moral obligations of a trustee
- Freely donate service and time to the District
- Represent all the interests of the community and State
- Do not speak for the board

A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR *THE BOARD*

- Meet legal requirements (Brown Act, Policies & Procedures)
- Should be representative of community
- Demonstrate commitment and unity in carrying out the mission of the District
- Identify new and emerging educational and social needs of the country
- Strive for quality
- Employ a competent Chancellor
- Draft position description for Chancellor
- Evaluate and support the Chancellor
- Support efforts to obtain financial support
- Bring about meaningful change and viable educational programs
- Channel all issues/concerns through the Chancellor

THE ROLE OF TRUSTEES

Governance	Responsibilities
• Leadership	• Statutory
• Oversight	• Fiduciary
• Challenge	• Coordinating
• Directs	• Motivating
• Supports	
• Protects	
• Advocates	
• Guides	

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY VS. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD IS TO GOVERN, NOT MANAGE THE DISTRICT, BY:

1
- Conducting the business of the governing board

2
- Establishing policy

3
- Running effective meetings to achieve that objective

- Provide the Chancellor with clear expectations
- Understand Board Roles & Responsibilities
- Recognize the difference between setting policy and manage operations
- Refer complaints and suggestions to the Chancellor
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality
- Recognize the Chancellor and other college staff and fellow Trustees

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE TEAM: THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

- A team is a group of individuals with diverse skills and roles who align their energy and efforts to achieve a common purpose.
- A team is not "My way or the highway"
- A team has a purpose and goals that are shared by all
- A team is not micromanagement: "When an individual steps out of their role"
- A team has positive team Norms
- A team does not micromanage: "Some is easy to detect, other actions are harder to detect, and it may be a difference of opinion between a Trustee and Chancellor".
- A team "searches for alignment, respects different perspectives, engages in dialogue, learning and commits to truth"
- A team recognizes the Chair/President of the Board is the Facilitator, who encourages communication, establishes positive norms

WHAT A TEAM IS

ACCT CHAIR ACADEMY, CINDRA SMITH

Speak With One Voice

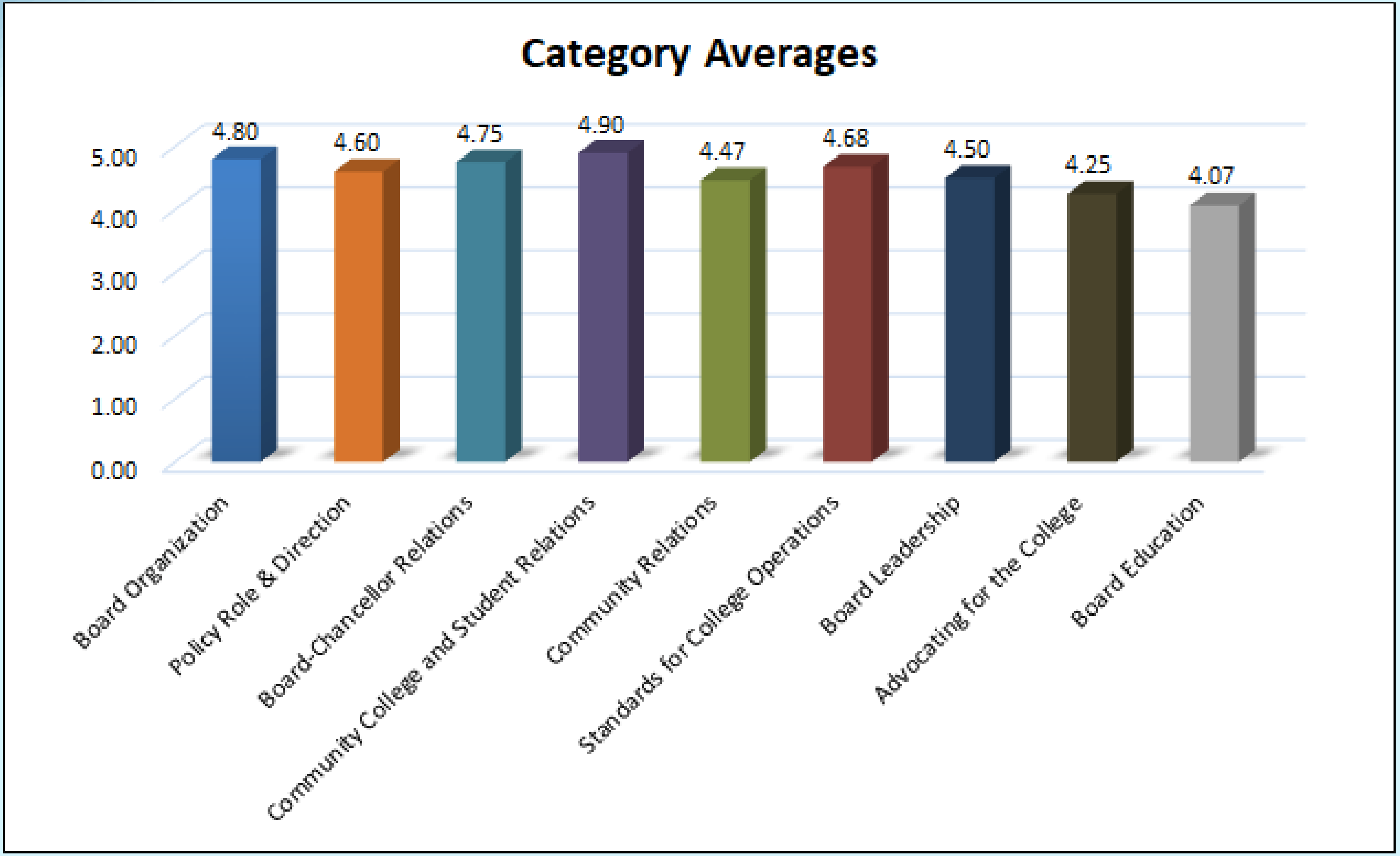
Agree to Disagree Respectfully

Establish Clear Communication Protocols & Norms; consistently Revise & Review

Board Self-Assessment/Mini Self Assessment

Effective boards engage in a continuing process of self-assessment or evaluation of their performance.

- Self-assessment helps boards to identify where they are performing well, and where they might improve.
- Self-assessment provides an opportunity to discuss board roles and responsibilities.
- Self-assessment can strengthen communication and understanding among board members, and can lead to stronger, more cohesive working groups.
- Self-assessment serves as a model for the rest of the institution. It indicates that board members take their responsibilities very seriously.



2019 RCCD BOARD OF TRUSTEES SELF ASSESSMENT AVERAGES

Please complete prior to Board Retreat. Expectations Activity: Instructions: In order to achieve optimal board effectiveness, the board and the chancellor must be clear on what they expect from each other. Use the lines below to list what the board expects from the chancellor (left side) and what the chancellor needs from the board (right side).

Chancellor

What the board expects from the chancellor

____

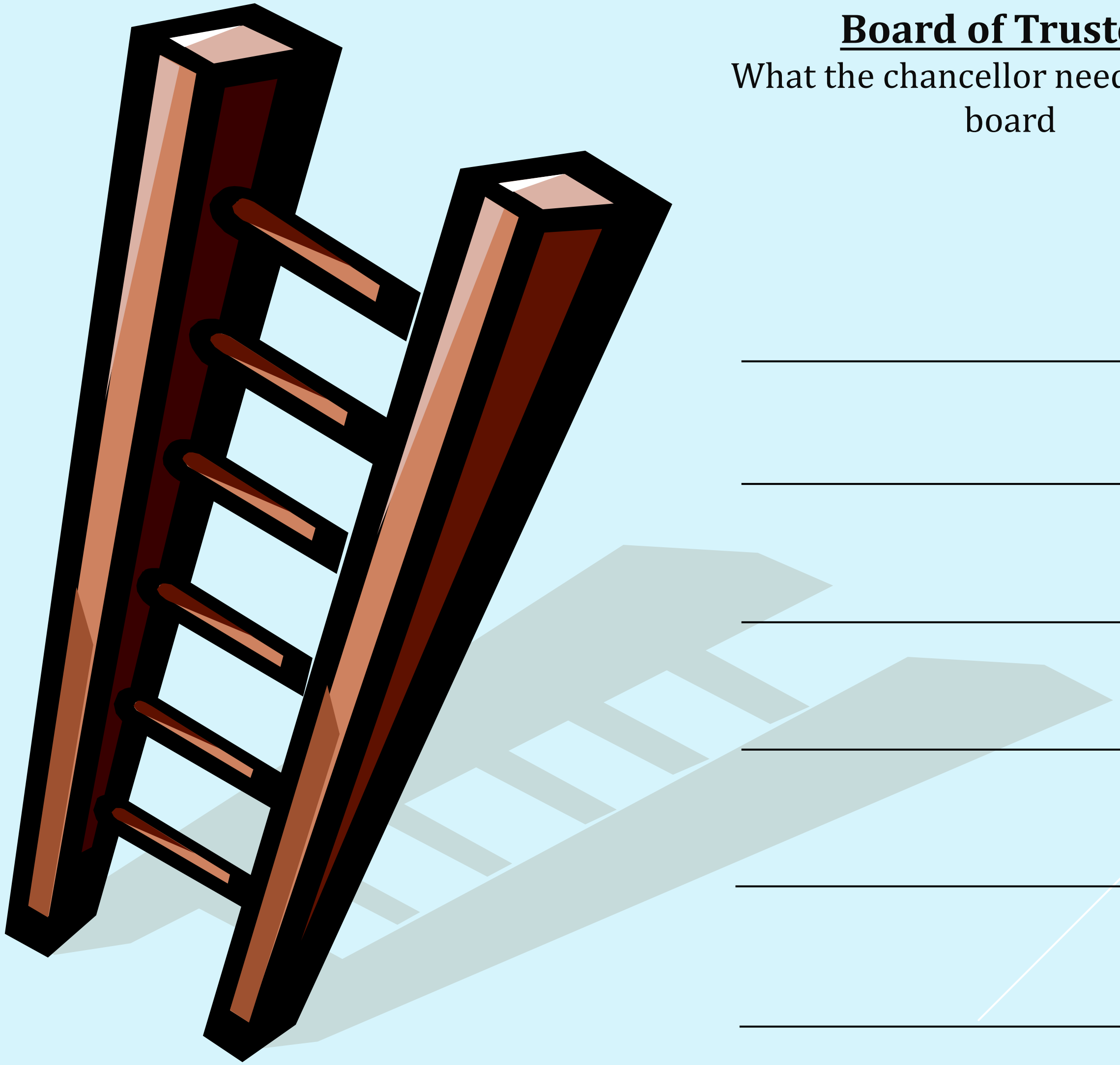
____

____

____

____

____



Board of Trustees

What the chancellor needs from the board

____

____

____

____

____

____

…the biggest strength of the RCCD Board is: "all are here to serve the district." 2019 Board Assessment Comments

- Covered, Concerns, Outcomes:
- Professional Courtesy Norms
- Succession Planning
- Roles & Goals
- Not responding to “ALL”
- Positive meeting tone “perception”
- RCCD Emergency response
- Cohesive Board, affirmation of goals
- Leaving with same understanding of ”Roles”

- Top Three Priorities:
- Enrollment increase*
- Financial stability *
- Technical Trade Center*
- Student Housing*
- Media Outreach*
- Passing Bond***
- Chancellor Search*
- Pride Events*
- Faculty diversity*
- Strategic Plan*

RCCD 2023 BOARD SURVEY PRIORITIES

- *Remember, the only difference between the words* ***"UNIT"*** *and* ***"UNITY"*** *is the* ***"Y".***
- *The UNIT is ME thinking, and the*
- *UNITY is WE thinking.*
- *To that end,* ***the "Y" (WHY) matters***

- *It's important to remember the* ***"WHY"*** *of strong board-superintendent relationships before even mentioning the* ***"HOW".***
- ***Were coming together to "Do Right", and not be "right".***

REFLECTION

From me to we: Why strong board-superintendent relationships are important, District Administration, May 18, 2023

“Until we meet again”

CHANCELLOR EVALUATION

Evaluating the Chancellor is one of the central functions of the Board of Trustees.

A mutually agreeable evaluation process creates a proactive forum where the leadership needs of the institution, and the new and emerging leadership role for the board and Chancellor, can be considered.

Strengthen relationship & set expectations

SAMPLE OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN PREPARATION FOR 2023-24 EVALUATION

- What initiatives/projects should the chancellor focus on over the next year?
- Identify performance goals for 2023-24?

Board Self-Evaluation: A Practical Guide

Instructions:

Step 1: Rate yourself and your Board on each Board performance item by using the scale below (1 representing the lowest rating, and 4 representing the highest rating).

Step 2: Add the numbers and find your final score in the range below.

SCALE: **1. Poor** **2. Adequate** **3. Good** **4. Outstanding**

YOU	YOUR BOARD	
_____	_____	1. The Board operates as a unit and honors Board decisions.
_____	_____	2. The Board understands that its constituency is the entire community.
_____	_____	3. The Board recognizes the difference between its policy role and the operational role of the President.
_____	_____	4. The Board operates ethically.
_____	_____	5. Board members treat staff and each other respectfully.
_____	_____	6. Board decisions are based on the best interests of students.
_____	_____	7. The Board and the President have a cooperative relationship.
_____	_____	8. The Board refers constituent concerns to the President.
_____	_____	9. The Board ensures all board members follow board policies.
_____	_____	10. The Board builds a positive image of the college.
_____	_____	**TOTAL**

If your board scored:

40-35: Your board is an outstanding, well operating machine! How do you ensure that?

34-29: Your board is in good shape—it needs some fine-tuning, but overall, it does a good job! What areas require some attention?

28-20: Your board is doing ok but you need to pay attention to some red flags. On which areas do you need to focus?

19-10: Your board may not be doing the best job to serve your college. What should be included in your improvement plan?

ACCT-MINI Board Self-Assessment for Planning

Part 1

Please rate the Board in key functional areas using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree; You may also select Don't Know

1 Board Organization

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
1. Board meetings are conducted in such a manner that the purposes are achieved effectively and efficiently.	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. Board members are given timely and adequate background information on the issues they are requested to make decisions about.	○	○	○	○	○	○

2 Policy Role & Direction

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
3. The Board understands that the primary function of the Board is to establish the policies by which the institution is to be administered.	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. The Board has clarified the difference between its policy role and the roles of the Administration and staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○

ACCT-MINI Board Self-Assessment for Planning

Part 1

Please rate the Board in key functional areas using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree; You may also select Don't Know

3 Community Relations

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
5. Board members keep the CEO informed of community contacts.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
6. The Board assists in developing educational partnerships with K-12 school districts, colleges/universities, community agencies, businesses and local government, where appropriate.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

4 Standards for College Operations

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
7. Decisions about budget allocations are based on evidence of program effectiveness and linked to plans to increase rates of student success.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
8. The Board is aware of the College’s funding structure.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

ACCT-MINI Board Self-Assessment for Planning

Part 1

Please rate the Board in key functional areas using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree; You may also select Don't Know

5 Board Leadership

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
9. The Board is willing to take a stand for what it believes is right for students and the community.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
9. The Board bases its decisions upon all available facts in each situation.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
10. Once a decision is made, Board members cease debate and uphold the decision of the Board.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
11. I am comfortable expressing my own opinions during Board meetings.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

6 Advocating for the College

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
12. The Board helps educate the local community about community college needs and issues.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
13. The Board actively supports the College's Foundation and fundraising efforts.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

ACCT-MINI Board Self-Assessment for Planning

Part 1

Please rate the Board in key functional areas using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree; You may also select Don't Know

7 Board Education

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
14. The Board is knowledgeable about major social and economic trends and issues that affect the institution.	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. Sufficient resources are allocated for Board members to attend conferences and community events upon invitation.	○	○	○	○	○	○

ACCT-MINI Board Self-Assessment for Planning

Part 2

In Part 2, please assess your own level of knowledge and confidence with information related to the College, and your level of satisfaction with board meetings, board materials and engagement with one another and the president.

Please use the following scale to rate your performance/satisfaction/confidence on each of the following statements/topics.

5=Strongly Agree/Very Confident/Very Satisfied - I feel my voice is heard and respected among my peers.

4=Agree/Somewhat Confident/Somewhat Satisfied - I am able to participate knowledgeably on board matters or ask questions for clarity.

3=Neither agree nor disagree; neither confident nor unconfident; neither satisfied nor unsatisfied.

2=Disagree; Not as Confident as I'd like; Not very satisfied- I am not familiar with this area and would like more information and training

1=Strongly Disagree; Not confident at all; Not at all satisfied - I'm not comfortable with the content or I don't feel my opinion is valued

8 Planning Process

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
16. I understand the Board's role in the strategic planning process.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

9 Board Structure

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
17. I am assigned to a committee on which I can make contributions effectively.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

10 Board Operations

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
18. I am familiar with the role of the board chair and the selection process.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
19. I understand and adhere to parliamentary rules as set forth by Robert's Rules of Order.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

11 Trustee Satisfaction

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
20. I am prepared for Board meetings by reviewing materials in advance.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
21. I am comfortable providing my input during board meetings.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
22. I feel respected by my fellow board members.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
23. I respect and value the contributions of my fellow board members.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
24. Once a board decision is made, I cease debate and stand with the board decision.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
25. I am comfortable with the time commitment relative to my board service.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

ACCT-MINI Board Self-Assessment for Planning

Part 3-Open Ended Questions

12 As a trustee, I am most pleased about:

13 As a trustee, I have concerns about:

ACCT-MINI Board Self-Assessment for Planning

Mini Board Self-Assessment

Thank you for taking the time to complete this assessment.

THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE: CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIENTATION EXPERIENCE IS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF FICTITIOUS TRUSTEE PAM SCHIER.

BY EDUARDO MARTI

DURING MY TENURE AS A COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT, I OFTEN WONDERED HOW TO best serve the board of trustees. Presently, I serve as a trustee of Teachers College at Columbia University, which has given me insights into higher education boards from both sides now — as a board member, and as the chief executive who reports to the board.

This article is the first of a series that will take the reader through the eyes of a fictional community college trustee, Pam Schier. Informed by my own experiences and those of peers, the series will explore typical scenarios, including a new trustee's thoughts about experiences as they occur, and will conclude with questions for personal consideration and board discussion. The series is intended to inspire mindfulness among board members, new and experienced, about the full life cycle of trusteeship, from onboarding through transitioning off the board. All scenarios and characters are fictitious, though inspired by real-life experiences.

Chapter One: Orientation

It all started with a phone call. Pam Schier received a call from the Fillmore County executive to determine if she was willing to place her name in nomination for the board of trustees of Fillmore County Community College. She was intrigued.

"What is my commitment?" she asked.

"The appointments are for seven years. The board meets once per month except in the summer. The meetings are usually two to four hours long. You will be asked to serve on one or two committees. The committees meet prior to the full board meeting. Here is where the real work is conducted. Technically, all meetings are open to the public and the press, but the only ones where the press is usually present is the full board meeting," the county executive replied.

"Is this a political appointment?" Pam inquired. "You know that I abhor politics."

"Well, you would be one of five trustees appointed by the county legislature, and you would serve with four others appointed by the governor. One student trustee is elected on an annual basis. In a sense, this a political appointment; however, as a trustee, you would owe allegiance to the institution. You will have been entrusted by the public through its representatives to act in the best interest of the college. So, generally, politics are left at the door."

"What would my duties be?" continued Pam.

"You must regularly attend and participate in board meetings and committee meetings. You'll need to read, review, and inquire about materials that involve the institution, especially board minutes, annual reports, other reports, plans, policies, and any literature that involves the institution. You have a fiduciary responsibility for the assets, finances, and investments of the college. And you and your fellow trustees formulate all the policies governing the institution." answered the county executive. "I know that this sounds pretty ominous, but really, Pam, all this means is that you will represent your fellow county residents in ensuring that the college functions well and to the benefit of the community."

"Yes, it does sound weighty. Let me think about it and I will get back to you," Pam said as she bid goodbye to her old friend.

After some thought and discussion with her family, Pam decided to place her name in nomination. Her husband was supportive, and she was excited about being able to make a major contribution to the well-being of her community. Her nomination sailed through the county legislature, and she was appointed as a trustee right before the board's June meeting.

The Orientation

Shortly after her appointment, Pam received a phone call from the president of the college. Pam was looking forward to having a conversation about what was expected of her.

"Hello, Ms. Schier, this is Dr. Albert Pendleton, the president of Fillmore County Community College. I wonder if you have few minutes to talk?"

"Of course, Dr. Pendleton. I am very excited about serving as trustee and I have a thousand questions to ask you."

"Great. First of all, allow me to express my congratulations on your appointment. I would like to invite you to come to campus and meet the chair of our board, Chuck Frasier, and some of the members of the staff. How does next Monday at 10 a.m. sound to you?"

"That will be great. I will be there."

Pam's first impression was not very positive. Dr. Pendleton seemed more interested in securing her attendance at this meeting than answering her questions.

That Monday morning, while walking from the parking lot to the office of the president, Pam observed the campus. Funny, she had been there many times before, but today she saw the half-full trash bins and the cracks on the sidewalk. She was now a stakeholder.

She arrived at the president's office and was immediately struck by its relatively luxurious accommodations, as compared with the rest of the campus. As she sat down, coffee was brought to her by Dr. Pendleton's assistant along with a thick binder labeled "Trustee Orientation Materials." How in the world was she going to be able to digest all of this before the first meeting?

After some small talk, President Pendleton began by giving Pam a description of the college. "The college was founded in 1969 and serves about 4,000 full-time-equivalent students with 230 full-time faculty members and 500 adjuncts. The total population of the college is about 12,000 students. The college provides a pleasant suburban campus setting, with 10 buildings on 273 acres. About 1,500 students graduate every year. These are Fillmore County's first responders, accountants/bookkeepers, teachers, and business people in this community of 500,000 residents."

Chuck Frasier picked up the conversation, which seemed to Pam as if had been rehearsed. "We are a very friendly bunch here, Pam. May I call you Pam?" said Chair Frasier. "You can call me Chuck. Everyone does. We are pleased with your appointment. You see, the truth of the matter is that we need you to help Dr. Pendleton and me take this fine college to the next level. In the folder we gave you, you will find all the information you need. The most important fact for you to understand is that full board meetings are open, and whatever we say is scrutinized by the public, the faculty, and staff unions. Therefore, we must present a unified front. The place to have frank discussions is at the committee level. By the way, we are thinking of asking you to join the human resources committee. Would you give that some thought?"

Pam was told by the chair that the budget was tight because enrollments were declining and the county was not willing to provide additional assistance. The collective bargaining

PAM WENT HOME WITH HER HEAD SPINNING. HER FIRST IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE CHAIR WANTED SMOOTH PUBLIC MEETINGS, THE PRESIDENT AND HIS STAFF WERE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE, AND THAT THERE WAS A POTENTIAL TOXIC ENVIRONMENT THAT LEADS TO MANY GRIEVANCES. SHE NEEDED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INNERWORKINGS OF THE COLLEGE IN ORDER TO CONTRIBUTE.

units were in the middle of negotiations and there was some dissatisfaction among the workers. The faculty union was very active in litigation, with 22 pending grievances. To top it all off, because state contributions were contingent upon FTE-driven enrollment and enrollment was declining, this revenue stream was declining as well. Pam was trying to remember if anyone had told her what FTE means.

She left the meeting feeling that she had been talked at. Her first impression was that she had joined a college with serious difficulties and with leadership that needed people who agreed with them rather than someone who would contribute new ideas and assist the board in making meaningful policy. Perhaps the administration was so stressed that there was no time for niceties. She was willing to give them a chance.

At lunch, she met with members of the administration's senior staff. They proceeded to tell her how wonderful the school is and how, in spite of poor funding, there were amazing things being done by dedicated faculty and the staff members. Student retention was something everyone was concerned about, but compared to other community colleges in the state, FCCC was not doing too badly, she was told. A long and exhausting tour of the campus followed the lunch. Pam went home with her head spinning. Her first impression was that the chair wanted smooth public meetings, the president and his staff were under great pressure, and that there was a potential toxic environment that leads to many grievances. She needed to learn more about the innerworkings of the college in order to contribute.

The day was the extent of her orientation. Pam, as the owner of a small insurance company that employs 15 people, would never think about onboarding an employee with such a flimsy orientation.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. How would you rate Pam's orientation on a scale of one (poorest) to 10 (best)?
2. Who is responsible for orienting new trustees? The president? The chair? Other trustees?
3. Were Pam's duties and responsibilities explained realistically by the board chair and president?
4. Does Pam have enough information to go on in order to make a sound decision about whether to participate?
5. What, if anything, was left out?
6. How many questions should Pam begin with? What sorts of questions should the president and board chair anticipate? How can they guide Pam in tempering her ambitions and excitement while also satisfying her curiosity?
7. How might the college president have made a better first impression on his newest trustee?
8. If you were the board chair, what would you have done to improve the process?
9. What are the longer-term implications of Pam's first impression?
10. What are the pros and cons of the ways by which Pam was welcomed by the board chair and the college president?
11. How does this compare with the way by which your college welcomes and acclimates new board members?
12. Did Pam receive too much, too little, or the right amount of information during her first meeting?
13. Could similar information be delivered to her in a less alarming way?
14. How could the college president and board chair have prepared her for this experience?

The next article in the series will follow Pam to her first committee and board meetings. Visit www.acct.org for more information for new trustees.

Eduardo Marti, Ph.D., is a trustee at Teachers College at Columbia University, and former president of Queensborough Community College (CUNY), Corning Community College (SUNY), and Tompkins Cortland Community College (SUNY).

THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE: CHAPTER TWO

FICTIONAL TRUSTEE PAM SCHIER ATTENDS HER FIRST COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEETINGS — AND COMES AWAY WITH MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS.

BY EDUARDO MARTI

DURING MY TENURE AS A COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT, I OFTEN WONDERED HOW TO best serve the board of trustees. Presently, I serve as a trustee of Teachers College at Columbia University, which has given me insights into higher education boards from both sides now — as a board member, and as the chief executive who reports to the board.

This article is the second of a series that will take the reader through the eyes of a fictional community college trustee, Pam Schier. Informed by my own experiences and those of peers, the series will explore typical scenarios, including a new trustee's thoughts about experiences as they occur, and will conclude with questions for personal consideration and for board discussion. The series is intended to inspire mindfulness among board members, new and experienced, about the full life cycle of trusteeship, from onboarding through transitioning off the board. All scenarios and characters are fictitious, though inspired by real-life experiences.

Chapter 2: The First Committee and Board Meetings

THE COMMITTEE

Recently appointed to the Fillmore Community College Board of Trustees, Pam Schier had met with the board chair and the college president. From Pam's perspective, the two leaders gave her a crash course of some board meeting dos and don'ts, some troubling information about the college, and after receiving some contradictory and more positive information about the college from staff, she was left bewildered about her orientation process.

Nevertheless, Pam looked forward to her first meeting as part of the human resources committee. The committee was composed of two other trustees and the assistant dean for human resources, Margorie Cunningham. During the meeting, a staffing comparison report was presented. It showed that 35 percent of the instruction was delivered by adjunct professors, compared to the state average of 45 percent. The chair of the committee, Bud Johnson, requested that additional information be presented at the next committee meeting before a presentation to the full board. A report on a 25-question online sexual harassment test administered to all college employees was discussed. Eighty-five percent of the faculty and staff had taken it. The rest did not and were required to attend a two-hour workshop on the topic. The assistant dean reported that a grievance was filed by the faculty union, arguing that the faculty members who attended the workshops must be paid as this is beyond the scope of work defined in the contract. She noted that there was no report on the progress of the other 22 grievances filed by the union. Johnson, the committee chair, called for an executive session.

Assistant dean Cunningham reported on the collective bargaining negotiations and the demands of the faculty union. She reported that the union is asking for a 10 percent increase in salary spread over three years (2 percent the first year, 3 percent the second year, and 5 percent the last year). The college is offering a 5 percent package (1 percent the first year, 2 percent the second year, and 2 percent the last year). The negotiations were tense but not to the point of impasse, Cunningham said. The college had acquired the services of outside legal counsel, who is leading a negotiating team composed of the VP for administration, Roger McNamara, and Cunningham on behalf of the college.

Pam wondered to what extent she should become involved in the process. She asked how to respond to press inquiries and questions by outside constituents while the negotiations are in progress. The assistant dean for human resources insisted that only the legal counsel should address inquiries. Pam left the meeting feeling uncomfortable with the legal responsibility bestowed upon her without the training to address it. She had zero experience in collective bargaining. Thankfully, her husband was a lawyer, she thought.

THE FIRST BOARD MEETING

At her first full board meeting, getting to know the other trustees was Pam's first order of business. She looked around the room. There were six white males, an African American gentleman, a Hispanic woman, and a student in her thirties. She tried to figure out how to find the "functional circles of power" in this group. She decided that after the meeting, she would invite each trustee individually to lunch. In this relaxed setting, she would find out the issues that drive the board and those that are left to the administration.

The board members seemed earnest and engaged. After the niceties of a friendly welcome, the meeting was called to order by Chuck Frasier, the board chair. The gallery was full of guests and reporters from the local newspapers. The minutes were approved, and the committee reports followed. Finance was the first. A number of resolutions for contracts and equipment purchases were passed unanimously. Pam's first vote as a trustee was done without one iota of knowledge of what she was voting on. She didn't feel that abstaining would send a good message at a public meeting. The human resources committee report was next. Academic affairs followed. The release of funds to hire adjuncts for the first summer session was approved. Two new full-time faculty members were introduced to the board of trustees. Vice President Donna Steed gave a presentation on the college's attempt to increase the NCLEX passing rates for nurses. Steed reported that the passing rate of the nursing graduates in the class of 2018 was 77 percent. The college's goal was to place in the high nineties. Steed said she was hopeful that the next class would do better. Many questions were directed at her about the effectiveness of hiring tutors and creating a practice lab for student nurses to prepare themselves for the next exam. Pam felt that the questions had been staged for the benefit of those present at the meeting. Finally, there was a report from the vice president of student affairs, Jack Jones, on the off-campus activities enjoyed by the students. He asked for assistance in the form of more counselors. A report on an "active shooter" drill was made as well. The board then called for an executive session to discuss personnel matters, with no action to be taken at the end. The public meeting was adjourned.

As Pam drove home, she pondered the dynamics of the board meeting. Efficiency seemed to be the order of the day. Was the chair too concerned with keeping to the agenda? Did he stifle discussion? Was the meeting a show for the public rather than a thoughtful discussion?

Her thoughts then shifted to the board materials she had been given. How in the world was she going to read all of it? The materials were written in English but, for all intents and purposes, could have been written in Chinese. The academic language, with all its acronyms, was difficult to master in one meeting.

As she arrived home, Pam's lingering questions revolved around effective trusteeship, fiduciary responsibilities, how to propose or analyze proposed policies, the board/CEO relationship and

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the role of individual trustees in nurturing the relationship, the role of the chair, how to improve diversity and equity, how to evaluate the performance of the president, how the board can evaluate its own performance to improve how it functions, how to assess student success, and accreditation. She had heard about accrediting bodies but does not know how the board is involved.

Pam had heard about the Policy Governance model in another setting and wondered if it would be useful. She Googled it and found that the model separates issues of organizational purpose (ends) from all other organizational issues (means), placing primary importance on those ends. Policy Governance boards demand accomplishment of purpose, and only limit the staff's available means to those which do not violate the board's pre-stated standards of prudence and ethics. Pam decided to investigate how the model could be used by the FCC board.

Many boards and college CEOs assume that a new trustee comes well informed, or they invest little or sometimes even no effort to acquaint new trustees with the knowledge they need to serve on a community college board. Even the most experienced board members who have served on other non-profit and for-profit boards need to familiarize themselves with the nuances of the college and, just as importantly, with how that particular board operates.

The public nature of a community college trustee, whose actions are carefully scrutinized by students, faculty, staff members, politicians, and the public at large, makes functioning in an effective manner a difficult task. The chair needs to influence the college and fellow trustees to provide the new member all the necessary tools for a successful tenure. The president needs to be very clear with the new trustee about the delicate pressure points at the college, the consequences of action and inaction, the laws that govern the college, and the collective bargaining agreements. But the president also must understand that the new trustee is part of a group of stakeholders who was hired to carry out the policies established by the board. Boards should be provided with good information pertinent to the institution, and not in a selective manner for the intention of advancing an administrative agenda by limiting important considerations that may not support that agenda. The board's agenda belongs to the board of trustees. The fellow trustees need to work cooperatively with this new colleague and try hard not to influence her thinking while providing all the information that she needs.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. What could Pam's board and president have done to prepare her for her first committee and board meetings?
2. Can you relate to Pam's first experience with her committee? How does the onboarding of new trustees and new committee members compare at your college? What three changes to your process might improve new members' first impressions and abilities to contribute in a meaningful way?
3. Should Pam have voted during the board meeting? How could the board chair and president have better prepared her for this vote at her first meeting?
4. How does your board determine the right amount of institutional information to present to new board members?
5. Regardless of how much and what information is relayed to new board members, how can new board members be onboarded in such a way that they don't feel alienated and overwhelmed by board discussions?
6. Pam wants to introduce a specific governance model to her new board. What are the most appropriate ways for her to do this, and what are the appropriate ways for the board to address her recommendations?

Visit www.acct.org for more information for new trustees.

Eduardo Marti, Ph.D., is a trustee at Teachers College at Columbia University, and former president of Queensborough Community College (CUNY), Corning Community College (SUNY), and Tompkins Cortland Community College (SUNY).

THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE: CHAPTER THREE

BOARD CHAIR CHARLES FRAZIER EXPLAINS THE NUANCES OF BOARD SERVICE TO NEW TRUSTEE PAM SCHIER.

BY EDUARDO MARTI

THIS ARTICLE IS THE THIRD IN A SERIES THAT WILL TAKE THE READER THROUGH THE eyes of a fictional community college trustee, Pam Schier, and her colleagues at the fictional Filmore County Community College. Informed by my own experiences and those of peers, the series will explore typical scenarios, including a new trustee's thoughts about experiences as they occur, and will conclude with questions for personal consideration and board discussion. The series is intended to inspire mindfulness among board members, new and experienced, about the full life cycle of trusteeship, from onboarding through transitioning off the board. All scenarios and characters are fictitious, though inspired by real-life experiences.

Chuck Frazier has been chair of the board of trustees of Fillmore County Community College for nearly 10 years. He followed the founding chair, who served 28 years until his health forced him to resign. Frazier has been a member of the board of trustees for 15 years and has enjoyed seeing the college grow. He owns a number of McDonald's franchises in the county and holds a degree in industrial psychology from the University of Michigan. His employees are generally happy, as he pays great attention to their advancement and provides assistance to those who are interested in higher education.

As he was chair when President Al Pendleton was hired, Frazier feels invested in his success. To ensure clear lines of communications, he meets with him every Monday morning for coffee. At these meetings, they discuss matters affecting how the president is doing in advancing the key performance indicators (KPIs) agreed to at the last board retreat. Also, he serves as a sounding board for the president. During the last meeting, Frazier and Pendleton discussed the new trustee, Pam Schier.

"Chuck, Pam Schier needs to feel part of the team," Pendleton told Frazier. "I sense that she was not happy with our orientation. It's not that we want to stifle her enthusiasm, but an uninformed trustee can be disruptive. Would you speak with her?"

"Oh, don't worry about Pam, Al," said Frazier. "From all that I hear, she is a good person who cares deeply about our community. I have confidence in her ability and want to give her the necessary tools to help us in advancing the college's agenda. I'm sure that she will make a good trustee. I will reach out to her."

"Well, we'd better do this before the union or the faculty tries to influence her thinking," Pendleton responded. "As we are entering negotiations, the last thing we need is someone who doesn't understand the process. Coming from the private sector, she might not understand the nuances of negotiations in this sector. Also, we're currently formulating our budget proposal to the county. We don't want to disrupt either event."

"If it makes you feel better, I will set up a meeting next week and discuss it with her," Frazier said.

Despite all of Frazier's experiences at the college, every time a new trustee is appointed to the board, he must find a way to engender their trust and explain the parameters of board members' prerogatives. This is no easy task. It can be misconstrued by a new trustee as the chair trying to minimize any dissent when what he really is trying to do is to ensure that disagreements among board members take place in an orderly manner that does not affect the institution by airing them out in a public meeting.

Shortly after his breakfast with the president, Frazier went to his office and placed a call to the new trustee, Pam Schier. As he placed the call, he pondered how to approach her. He wanted to help her without appearing manipulative.

"Hello?"

"Good morning, Pam. Is this a good time to talk?"

"Yes, I was just getting ready to go to my office. The kids just left for school. I have a few minutes."

"Great. Well, I wanted to speak with you because I felt that our first meeting at Dr. Pendleton's office was not as effective as I would have wanted it to be. Also, it appears to me that you were thrust into a meeting of the board of trustees with little preparation. I want to see how I can facilitate your understanding of the college and the board's priorities and how we can use your considerable talents to help the college."

Well, well, this is a surprise, Schier thought. After the meeting, she never would have anticipated this conversation. [*Editor's note: See the Fall 2019 issue of* Trustee Quarterly *for chapters one and two.*]

"I would like to set up a meeting with you to discuss these matters at length. When do you think you would be available to have a thorough discussion with me?"

"Well, let's see…how about next Wednesday afternoon. Does that work for you?"

"Perfect, I will meet you at the college's board room at 2 p.m."

Frazier was glad that Schier agreed to meet. He was at the board room when she arrived.

"I am so glad you could make it," he said, greeting her with a warm smile. "This meeting is very important to me and to the rest of the board of trustees."

"Glad to be here," Schier said.

"As you know, my role as chair is to run effective meetings and maintain parliamentary procedure. That's why I prefer to have in-depth discussions of the topics at hand at the committee level and just bring reports and resolutions to the board meetings."

"Sorry to interrupt," Schier said, "but this is one aspect that I don't feel comfortable with. Are you saying that I can't speak my mind at the board meetings?"

"No," he said, "No. What I am asking is that…we all have to be aware that whatever we say at the board meetings is public information. So, sensitive matters should be discussed at the committee level, where there is more of a chance to resolve any conflict without negative repercussions."

"OK. But please be assured that I will speak my mind when I think it is necessary."

"That is your prerogative, Pam," said Frazier.

"Chuck, why is it that I get the feeling that, in your mind's eye, the perfect board meeting is quick, with all the resolutions and reports unanimously accepted? Are you looking for a 'rubber stamp' board?"

"No, Pam," Frazier said. "Not at all. That is not the point. The point is that we are a group of people trying to coordinate our efforts for the good of the college. So, it's best to use the committee system to air out our differences and come to the full board meetings prepared. But, of course if you or any other board member objects to what the committee proposes, then, by all means, speak your mind."

"What if I have a conflict with other board members? What procedure should I use?"

"As chair, I am responsible for ensuring that all opinions are heard. When two or more board members disagree vehemently, I meet with them, hear them out but, in the end, I must rule. I want to ensure that disagreements do not overflow to the personal animosity arena. I don't always succeed, but I try."

"That is fair. On another matter, I heard that it's frowned upon for a trustee to roam the college asking for information. Is that true?"

"As a trustee, you should feel free to go to the college whenever you want. However, you should be aware that while you have a great deal of influence, as an individual trustee, you have no authority. That authority rests on the board as an entity; this entity exists only when the board is in session. Also, you should be are aware that persons of the many constituencies we serve will try to enlist your support for items being considered by the board and that sometimes these actions are truly not in the best interest of the college."

"Oh, Chuck, what do you take me for? I'm not naïve. I know when someone is trying to take advantage of me."

"No, Pam, you misunderstand me. I'm well aware of your experience and reputation," Frazier said. "I just also know based on my experience on this particular board that you cannot be aware of the intricacies of our college's governance from a distance. Until you are well versed in our operating procedures, you may want to be careful. That is all that I am saying."

"As chair," he continued, "I make sure that all members of the board of trustees feel comfortable and that their voices are heard. As you know, many board members are powerful individuals used to having their way. Fortunately, most board members are experienced in either not-for-profit or for-profit boards. Therefore, they are familiar with how boards operate. Like most boards, we focus on the fiscal and human resources used by the college to meet stated goals. However, community colleges by nature are different than private businesses in that we serve various constituencies, each with its own level of authority. To advance our agenda, we must engage in consultation and seek collaboration with various influential groups. These constituencies are the students, the community at-large, the elected officials, donors, and the businesses served by the college. Also, our faculty is unionized, so all conditions of employment agreed upon must be adhered to. In addition, the faculty governance bodies have an important role in managing the curriculum. The authority of the board is restricted by the principles of academic freedom, and we must ensure that intellectual debate ensues at all levels at the college without fear of censorship or retaliation. While it appears that our authority is restricted by numerous factors, let me assure you that, as a board, we have a great deal of authority on matters affecting our college. A helpful analogy is to think of our board as a town government rather than as a private corporation."

"How about issues of sexual harassment? Racial equity? Free speech?"

"These are perfect examples of the delicacy with which we exercise our authority," Frazier answered. "Our first responsibility is to keep a safe and open environment for our students. This entails our board members being ever vigilant of anything that can jeopardize the safety and well-being of our students or staff members. For more dicey situations, we rely on our legal counsel for advice. But we are ultimately responsible and, thus, we must adjudicate as best we can within the legal parameters."

"This is very helpful, Chuck," Schier said. "So, to summarize, what you are saying to me is that my first order of business is to learn how we have done things in the past and when I see opportunities to improve, I should discuss suggestions with the appropriate committee. Once discussed and agreed upon, we then send them to the full board for approval. And once the board has voted, the suggestions become the 'law of the land.' Am I reading your message correctly?"

"Perfectly, yes," he said. "That's it. Look," Frazier said, "our work is difficult, and trusting one another is important. I think the best way to engender such trust is to have clear channels of communication. Don't you think? But we know blind trust is not healthy. We must make sure that we question each other and that we question all actions taken by the college to make sure that we operate in an ethical manner. In addition to being supportive of our president, we must carefully monitor how he accomplishes what he said

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we would do. As a body, we are ultimately responsible for all actions. Finally — but not least! — the most important task of a board of trustees is that of hiring a president, monitoring their performance, and dismissing them if we are not satisfied with the performance.”

“All right,” Schier said, “I understand. This is…a lot of information, but I get the delicacy and intricacy of the position.”

“I hope that this chat has been helpful to you. We didn’t cover everything,” Frazier admitted, “but the reality is that learning the ins and outs of our roles here takes time. In time, serving on the board will become second nature. Please call me anytime, day or night, if you have additional questions or concerns about what is happening at the college.”

“Chuck, you can rest assured that I will. I want to be a productive trustee and advance the strategic objectives that the board has agreed to. I really appreciate this time we have spent together, and I feel much better about our relationship. Frankly, at first I thought that you were trying to sway me in a manner that felt patronizing, but it seems that we’ve turned a page.”

“Thank you, Pam. That was never my intention at all; it’s just my responsibility as chair to properly orient any new board member and clarify roles, responsibilities, and limitations so that we don’t start off on the wrong foot. The truth is, I’m excited to work with you because I know how much energy and insight you’re going to bring to our board. And your questions show that you’re already invested in what we do. That’s what makes a great trustee. I look forward to many years of fruitful cooperation.”

By the time the next new trustee met Schier, she was chair of the human resources committee and eventually would become a member of the board’s executive committee. But these advances only happened over time, as Pam, like all trustees, still had a lot to learn.

Questions for the board:

- What is the role the chair in maintaining parliamentary procedure?
- Should the chair delegate conflict resolution among the staff?
- What is the role of the chair in ensuring that the college operates in an atmosphere where academics thrive and are celebrated?
- Describe the role of the chair vis-à-vis the president.
- Is there any ideal way by which a chair should orient a new board member?

Eduardo Marti, Ph.D., is a trustee at Teachers College at Columbia University and former president of Queensborough Community College (CUNY), Corning Community College (SUNY), and Tompkins Cortland Community College (SUNY).

THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE: CHAPTER FOUR

NEW TRUSTEE PAM SCHIER PLAYS A KEY ROLE AS THE COLLEGE NAVIGATES CHALLENGES INVOLVING FREE SPEECH AND CAMPUS DISRUPTIONS.

BY EDUARDO MARTI

TRUST IS THE CURRENCY OF GOOD GOVERNANCE. IT IS NURTURED EVERY DAY THROUGH every action. In order to nurture trust among fellow trustees and between the board and the various communities served, there must be good channels of communication. So it is important that new and veteran trustees are very clear as to the procedures used by the board to resolve conflicts and find common ground to better the college. This is especially important during times of conflict. In the past three articles, we have seen Pam Schier grow in her role of trustee. She is now a valued member of the board, and her relationship with the chair and her fellow trustees is excellent. Based on this level of trust, Pam wanted to know how well prepared the college is to address the turbulence of our times.

Schier asked Chuck Frazier, the board's chair, how the college would handle campus disruptions. Other board members asked if the college has a prepared statement regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. Had the board made its position of support clear to the communities they serve? Members of the executive committee asked Frazier to charge the governance committee with reviewing existing policies governing free speech on campus and to ask President Pendleton for a carefully crafted document regarding the Black Lives Matter movement for board consideration.

After careful review, Jonas Martin, the chair of the governance committee, reported that while there was a policy regarding campus demonstrations, the committee found it to be too general. The existing policy simply stated that the college would protect free speech according to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. However, Martin added that this statement addresses only the freedoms of a teacher to conduct research and to make statements within the classroom walls.

At the next executive committee meeting, Chair Frazier reviewed the existing policy. He reminded the rest of the members that the role of the board is to set policy and that since the existing policy clearly states that the college will protect free speech on campus, that was sufficient. It is up to the college president, he reminded trustees, to institute procedures to ensure that the policy is carried out appropriately.

The chair asked President Pendleton for a report on how he was readying the campus for activities around issues affecting the nation. President Pendleton, realizing the delicacy of the request, engaged the faculty senate and administrative bodies to formulate a policy recommendation on how to address the issue of free speech on campus, freedom of assembly, and campus disruptions. The urgency of the request demanded prompt attention. President Pendleton requested a recommendation by no later than the end of the semester, but preferably sooner.

The chair of the faculty senate, professor Joseph Quincy, established a faculty committee of three individuals to work with the President's cabinet (Vice President for Academic Affairs Judith Marshall, Vice President for Student Affairs Robert Jones, and Vice President for Administration Mary Worth) and three student government senators. The charge of this ad hoc committee was to come up with a procedure to ensure freedom of expression at the campus with minimal disruption to the academic endeavor.

The ad hoc committee met twice per week, and after one month of deliberations it decided that the college should adopt a positive response to any demonstration sponsored by a campus organization. The only requirement was that the vice president for administration be informed prior to the activity. The office of the vice president for student affairs also was charged with assigning counselors to hold "open mic" sessions at the central quad. Students would be encouraged to express themselves for periods of 10 minutes each. Members of the student government would be asked to serve as timekeepers to assure that all who want to speak have an opportunity to do so. Whenever possible, the faculty would use the campus discussions as a teaching moment.

This procedure was rooted in the principle that mutual respect engenders trust among all parties and that, so long as a college organization sponsors the activity, the campus community is bound to facilitate the discussion of the topic. It also was based on the idea that the trust engendered by the actions of the president and the board will help defuse emotional expressions of anger and frustration. President Pendleton and Quincy presented this proposal to the faculty senate.

The campus debate became intense. Some members of the faculty were adamant in their position that, as an academic institution, the college must be a safe haven for free speech and that anyone who wants to express a position, no matter how distasteful, must feel free to do so. Other members of the faculty were concerned that complete freedom of expression could be disruptive to the learning process and demanded that parameters be set for any demonstrations on campus. The state's legal department was consulted, and it was noncommittal, referring only to the body of law around the First Amendment.

At the end of the second month of deliberations, the faculty senate voted to reaffirm the proposal of the ad hoc committee. While some members of the faculty were not pleased, they were content in knowing that their voices and objections had been noted. This led them to trust that the ad hoc committee and the administration had no hidden agenda.

Concomitantly, the board passed a resolution indicating its support for the Black Lives Matter movement and encouraging the president and the entire academic community to institute a campus-wide series of discussions around the injustices of our country.

Questions for the Board

1. Do you think that the board acted in an appropriate manner? Why or why not?
2. Do you think the board would have passed the resolution if the new trustee, Pam Schier, had never asked how the college would handle board disruptions?
3. By involving the campus, did President Pendleton open a "can of worms" needlessly, or was he honoring his commitment to the community?
4. What if you are a board member who does not agree with this approach? How would you attempt to influence the decision? How would your fiduciary duties to the board, the college, and the community affect your actions?
5. Once a board makes a collective decision, all board members are obligated to support that decision. How can a dissenting board member reconcile their own beliefs while also honoring their commitment to support board decisions?

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THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE:

CHAPTER FIVE

TRUSTEE PAM SCHIER'S COMMITTEE DUTIES CHALLENGE HER LEADERSHIP DURING A FINANCIAL CRISIS.

BY EDUARDO MARTI

PAM SCHIER WAS SITTING AT HER KITCHEN TABLE WONDERING IF 2021 WAS going to be a better year. Her service as a trustee was almost always rewarding but, at times, taxing. This was one of these times. The COVID-19 crisis and the resulting economic situation had made guiding and supporting President Al Pendleton a more challenging task.

As the recently elected chair of the human resources committee, Schier will be receiving President Pendleton's recommendation on personnel reduction decisions as the college prepares for the spring semester. The state just announced a 5 percent reduction in the per-full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment allocation, and the college had experienced a 12 percent decline in fall-to-spring enrollment. As a result, the $55 million that was originally budgeted for the spring semester is now only $50 million. The reduction must come primarily from personnel cuts, as the discretionary funds available are only 2 percent of the budget. Moreover, the faculty union contract expired, and negotiations for the next contract must commence under less than ideal circumstances.

Pondering the situation facing her, Schier decided to call Board Chair Chuck Frazier and seek some direction.

"Hello, Chuck," she said. "This is Pam. I hope that you had a great holiday season and that you and your family are well. This issue with the COVID-19 virus is horrible, isn't it?" She liked to talk with Frazier. He was a good man who was wise about the workings of the college, and he was someone whom she could trust.

"Pam, it is so nice to hear from you," Frazier replied. "All these Zoom meetings feel so cold and distant. I was thinking about reaching out to all the members of the executive committee to discuss our predicament. Also, I have been in communication with Al Pendleton and asked him to formulate a plan to reduce the spring budget by $5 million. He is to get back to me within a week."

"Chuck, as chair of the human resources committee, I believe that I am responsible for serving as a sounding board to President Pendleton regarding personnel cuts. I hope that we can make these cuts without having to declare retrenchment of full-time faculty. We need to work with the union to ensure that we keep morale at a reasonable level. Hopefully, as the vaccines are rolled out, our enrollment picture will improve," Schier said with sincere optimism. "We are about to go into negotiations for the new contract, and it would be good if we could extend the present contract until the fiscal situation improves." She paused, unable to gauge his reaction. "It is going to be delicate to convince the union, but I believe that if we are transparent and forthright with all the facts, they will understand. Frankly, this is one of those instances that make or break the trust among the stakeholders of the institution."

"Well, Pam," responded Frazier, "what exactly are you proposing? I am at a loss to provide clear guidance."

"I volunteer to assist Al Pendleton in any way that he wants. It's important that, in this time of crisis, we work in partnership with our president and provide him with a mechanism to bounce off ideas. What do you think?"

"Pam, I think that this is a good idea Let me call Al and let him know that you want to work with him during this difficult period."

President Pendleton reacted positively to the suggestion. However, he expressed some reservation about having a trustee directly involved in the formulation of a plan. He felt that Pam could be used in a better way by reacting to the proposals formulated by the administration.

He met with Pam in his office.

"Pam, I trust that you and yours had a good respite over the holidays," he said with a warm smile. "I appreciate your willingness to help and I welcome your suggestions. I do ask, however, that you let me handle the meetings and that I use you as a sounding board as we formulate the plan of action to meet the demands of the crisis."

"Here is what I propose," Pendleton continued. "First, we must keep the lines of communication open with the county, the administration, and the collective bargaining unit. Transparency is essential. You and I can meet with the county fiscal committee chair and explain our situation. Secondly," he added, "we need to preserve all the good will that we have developed over the last five years under my presidency. As I meet with the various campus constituencies, I will keep you informed so that I can forthrightly communicate to everyone that the board will support my recommendations. If we do this, we will get through the fiscal crisis and prevent a crisis of trust that could be created by actions seen as arbitrary and capricious."

Pendleton paused for a moment, then added, "Pam, I am so very glad that you are the chair of the human resources committee! Your experience leading a successful insurance business and your knowledge of human behavior is, in times such as this, invaluable. Thank you for your willingness to help."

"That is very nice of you to say, Al," Schier replied. "I agree that you, as our president, should conduct all the necessary meetings and I will make myself available to you any time, day or night, to discuss the progress you are making. I think that it is very important that we respect your authority as CEO and that we resist the tendency to micromanage in times such as this. As you know, I love this college and want to do whatever it takes to make this a positive experience for everyone involved and, in doing so, strengthen our college. I will await your calls and meet with you whenever you want."

Chair Frazier organized a meeting of the executive committee that included the chairs of all the committees and President Pendleton. At this meeting, Chair Frazier reiterated the need to support the president and welcomed his desire to preserve lines of communications to engender additional trust during this time. President Pendleton proceeded to lay out his plan of action. The president proposed that he would consult with the chair of the faculty senate, the president of the student government, the president of the union chapter, and the chair of the county commissioners to formulate a plan that will address the necessary reductions in personnel. Upon formulation of the plan, the board would convene in special session to discuss the plan. Finally, upon approval, Chair Frazier and President Pendleton would release a joint statement to college community, the county commissioners, and the press.

As the meetings proceeded, a plan to institute the $5 million reduction began to take form. Fundamental to the plan was the fact that all actions would be reviewed during the summer as the COVID vaccines most likely would alleviate the impact on enrollment. Even with the per-FTE reduction, the expected increase in enrollment could help reduce the deficit.

At the special meeting of the board, President Pendleton proceeded to present his plan:

"Mr. Chair, I hereby submit for your consideration a plan to respond to existing fiscal realities. It is my belief that, along with a freeze in non-essential expenditures, we will ensure the fiscal integrity of our institution during this crisis. However, I must note that every time we affect the lives of faculty and staff, it lessens the fabric of our community. It my hope that these actions are of a temporary nature. But we believe that this is the responsible reaction to a difficult fiscal situation. I am grateful that our board's human resources committee helped in the formulation of this response. Also, I am pleased to report after consultation with fiscal affairs committee of the board, the faculty senate, the student government, and the county commissioners, there was no objection to our plan. Therefore, I recommend:

1. Reduction of $1.5 million in the adjunct budget. This will have a significant impact on offerings for the spring, so we will be furloughing adjunct faculty. It is our hope that most of the adjunct faculty members can be rehired in the fall.
2. Freeze all planned hiring. This will have a temporary and significant impact on faculty offerings, staff, and administration but, again, we are hopeful that we can slowly reinstated the hiring plan during the following academic year. ($100,000 reduction.)
3. Stop all contract work such as cafeteria services and landscape services and reduce security. ($487,738 reduction.)
4. As facilities are not being utilized, lock down buildings and reduce heat and electric services. ($200,000 reduction.)
5. Examine all staff and apply the last-in-first-out formula to furlough non-essential staff. ($300,000 reduction.)
6. Stop all non-personnel (OTPS) expenditures unless deemed essential. ($2.5 million reduction.)

"Mr. Chairman, we have formulated this crisis intervention plan with the input of the administration as well as the faculty. We have informed the county commissioners and the union. We believe that there is understanding of the need to act in this manner and, therefore, I move acceptance of the plan as presented."

The plan was approved by the board with two trustees dissenting.

As Schier drove home from the board meeting, she reflected on everything she had experienced during her tenure as a trustee: "Being a member of the board of trustees is an awesome responsibility. There are times that one must do what is good for the institution and one must distance oneself, as much as possible, from the emotional difficulties of the task," she thought. "Chairing this board committee takes a lot of my time, and many times I feel resentful of this time it takes. But, given what I saw tonight, I understand that putting time into planning and strategy, developing relationships, and meeting with people results in a stronger board, a better relationship between the president and staff, and a stronger institution overall. This experience proves to me that the role of a trustee, while demanding, is valuable and my time was well spent. Now, the hard work begins, and we must support our president."

Questions for Trustees

1. Do you think that Schier and Frazier's involvement in formulating a plan was too intrusive? Did they engage in micromanagement? What would you do in their situation?
2. Should the board have directed President Pendleton to formulate the plan and then present it to the board? What do you think about the board and president partnering in this manner?
3. Consultation in times of crisis is always difficult, and sometimes it is best to have an action presented rather than provide time for dissent. Do you think that Schier and Frazier's consultation process was appropriate?
4. How would your board have handled a similar situation? Is your college facing similar constraints?

Eduardo Marti, Ph.D., is a trustee at Teachers College at Columbia University and former president of Queensborough Community College (CUNY), Corning Community College (SUNY), and Tompkins Cortland Community College (SUNY). He also authored a chapter of the second edition of Trusteeship in Community Colleges: A Guide for Effective Governance *(2020), available at acct.org/publications.*

THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE:

CHAPTER SIX

ZOOM FATIGUE AND POST-COVID CHALLENGES RAISE TENSIONS.

BY EDUARDO MARTI

PAM SCHIER WAS TIRED OF ZOOM MEETINGS. THE DECISION TO RESTORE in-person classes was a welcomed relief. Everything was almost normal again.

When a crisis is finally over, an assessment of the damage done usually takes place. As the chair of the human resources committee, Schier was concerned with the impact remote learning had on the quality of instruction delivered at Filmore Community College. She had tried to place herself in the faculty's shoes. She became convinced that, while the quality of the course content delivery could have been preserved, the role of the faculty member as a mentor and an advisor had been severely impacted by remote learning. This question weighed heavily on her mind because the completion rate at FCCC was low to begin with, and now it could be even lower. The human cost of the crisis could be even more significant.

Schier decided to speak to the chair of the board, Chuck Frazier, and the president of the College, Al Pendleton. Following protocol, she called Frazier first.

"Good morning, Chuck," she said. "This is Pam Schier. How are you doing this lovely June morning? "

"I'm well, Pam," Frazier said, a bit irritated as she interrupted his morning exercise routine, which as a 78-year-old he followed religiously. "To what do I owe the honor of this call?"

"Well, I've been increasingly concerned about the impact that the COVID-19 crisis has had on our college," she said. "Not only have enrollments declined, but I'm sure that the graduation and retention rates will be affected. Luckily, the CARES Act and Coronavirus Response Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act have stabilized our finances, but we still must be concerned with the impact of the epidemic on our students. I think we need to formulate a plan to assess the damage and to help our faculty navigate through the lingering effects of the crisis."

Not quite convinced of the urgency of the matter but being respectful to a fellow trustee, Frazier responded, "Why don't I call for a meeting with the president and we can discuss where we are and what are our next steps?"

"That would be great," Schier said. They hung up, and she returned to her computer to prepare for yet another Zoom meeting about her insurance business. People had become accustomed to the convenience of working from home, and she needed to be sensitive to the needs of her employees as they could easily switch companies. So, as much as she hates Zoom meetings, she continued to hold her management team meeting in this venue.

The following morning, Schier received a phone call from President Pendleton's office. The assistant called to inquire about her availability to attend a Zoom meeting with President Pendleton and Frazier at 2 p.m. Another consequence of technology is that meetings do not need much lead time, she thought to herself. "Sure, I can make myself available," she said. "Thank you and please send me the link."

The meeting was productive in that President Pendleton appeared to have taken into consideration the need to assess the impact of the crisis. He welcomed both Schier and Frazier and was happy to discuss the college's reaction to the crisis and the plans for the fall semester. He indicated that a crisis intervention team composed of Robert Jones, vice president for academic affairs, Judith Marshall, also a vice president for academic affairs, and Steve Hoffman, director of institutional research, had been formed. He charged the team to determine how the crisis had affected student retention, to organize a Post-COVID Counseling Center (PCCC) and to reinforce the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning's efforts to assist faculty re-entry into the "post-COVID work space."

"Excellent," said Frazier. "It is important that we inform the board at the next meeting about the administration's plans."

"I have a few questions, Al," Schier interjected. "First, how firm are the plans? Was there any consultation with the college community, or is this already in place? While reporting to the full board of trustees makes sense, I think we should have a facilitated retreat to fine tune the recommendations of the staff." Schier was a bit out of sorts due to the firmness of the plan without input from the main constituencies of the college. She told herself that this is one of those moments when the trustees must rein in the administration from getting too ahead of itself. After all, collegial governance is needed most during a crisis, she thought to herself.

"I thought you would be pleased with our initiative," President Pendleton said. There was a prolonged silence. Finally, Frazier broke the ice.

"Look Al, we are not trying to micromanage the situation," he said. "I don't want to speak for you, Pam, but I think that you feel the need for greater transparency and consultation before the crisis management team begins to implement its charge." Schier could tell that he had interjected to defuse the tension. He continued, "We can dedicate a portion of our scheduled August retreat to receive a report as to how the college responded to the crisis. But I don't want to delay the implementation of the administration's plan until then. Can you live with that?"

Schier took a deep breath and responded. "I guess I can," she said. "I just want to reiterate my disappointment about the way you went ahead and created the crisis management team without consultation with members of the board. The least you could have done was to discuss it with Frazier before proceeding."

"I'm sorry you feel this way, Pam, but I thought that the management of the post-COVID situation was well within my prerogative as the president of the institution," President Pendleton said. "I fully intended to inform the board at our next meeting. I did not inform Frazier or any other member of the board because of the need for expediency."

After President Pendleton left the videoconference, Schier said to Frazier, "Don't get me wrong, I am the CEO of my insurance firm and I know that in times of crisis, it's natural for a leader to take charge. I still feel that Al jumped the gun on this one. It reminds me of Alexander Haig during the attempted assassination of President Reagan and how he insisted that he was in charge."

Questions for the Board:

1. Was Schier wrong to call for this meeting?
2. What could President Pendleton have done to assuage Schier's concerns during the meeting? Should he have done anything prior to the meeting that could have prevented her frustrations?
3. Did the board chair handle the disagreement in the correct manner? What would you have wanted the board to do in this situation?
4. Was it appropriate for Schier to have disclosed her disappointment with President Pendleton, or would it have been better for her to keep her concerns to herself and follow the board chair's lead?
5. Do you think Schier and Frazier's frustrations with videoconferencing and being interrupted while working at home might have affected the dynamics of their conversations? What can college leaders do to encourage effective and congenial communications as these modes of communication continue into the new academic year?

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THE MAKING OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE: CHAPTER SEVEN

A SHOCKING LOSS OF LEADERSHIP PRESENTS UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES FOR THE BOARD.

BY EDUARDO MARTI

THE POST-COVID SEMESTER STARTED WELL AT FILMORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE. President Al Pendleton's plan to enhance counseling and provide professional development to faculty members was received with enthusiasm by all college constituencies. The August retreat brought all board members up to date, and the union negotiations concluded satisfactorily. The only major ongoing concerns were graduation and retention rates. The September meeting of the board went smoothly, and trustee Pam Schier left the meeting feeling that the college was in good shape. The fall semester proceeded without any major crisis. Then came the bombshell.

The ACCT consultant guided the board in creating an effective advertisement for the position and determining the criteria for selection of a candidate qualified to lead a dynamic, modern community college.

President Pendleton called Board Chair Chuck Frazier to let him know that he had accepted another position and that he would be leaving at the end of the academic year. Frazier called for an emergency meeting of the executive committee to determine what to do.

After calling the meeting to order, Frazier immediately called for an executive session "to discuss a personnel matter." Vice Chair Matthew Fleming seconded the chair's motion. There are four members of the Executive Committee: Frazier, Fleming, Finance Committee Chair Celestina Rodriguez, and Schier, who is chair of the personnel committee.

"I have the difficult task of informing you," Frazier said, "that President Pendleton has accepted the position of President of Kennebunkport Community College in Maine. His last day at Filmore will be June 30." He waited for the news to sink in. The members of the executive committee were totally surprised.

"Did you know that he was looking for another position?" asked Schier.

"No, I did not," Frazier responded. "I need let you to know that he has a three-year contract and that he is in his second year."

"Wait a second. Not so fast. He can't get away with this," said Fleming. "We should ask that he give us more time to search."

Schier echoed Fleming's sentiment, saying, "Look, I run a business and I enter into contracts all the time. If I want to get out of a contract, there is always an exit clause. I don't remember seeing such a clause in Pendleton's contract. Why should we let him renege on his commitment to us without some sort of penalty?"

Frazier appeared unsettled. "And what do you suppose we do, Pam? We can't force him to stay, and we can't ask him for money we have not given him. And if we could force him to stay, we would have an unhappy CEO, and he could do some damage to the progress we have made during his tenure. He has been with us for seven years, and he has done a good job. I would recommend that we release him from his contract and begin a search for his replacement immediately."

After much discussion, it was agreed to let President Pendleton go and to start a new search.

President Pendleton's decision was announced at the September board meeting, and it was big news in town. Frazier announced the formation of a search committee and appointed Schier as the chair of the committee. The search committee was composed of three faculty members elected by their peers, three members of the administration elected by all staff members, and the president of the student council.

The day following the meeting, Schier called ACCT, the national Association of Community College Trustees, to have a consultant help with the search. During the month of January, the ACCT consultant guided the board in creating an effective advertisement for the position and determining the criteria for selection of a candidate qualified to lead a dynamic, modern community college. The ads were placed in the appropriate print and online publications. The responses were screened by ACCT for minimum qualifications, and qualified responses were sent to the search committee members electronically.

The first in-person meeting of the search committee took four hours. Sifting through the resumes, matching them to the criteria, and then assigning weight to the matches resulted in narrowing down the pool to eight semifinalists. Virtual video interviews were scheduled by the consultant and questions were formulated to be used during the interviews. By the end of March, the search committee had narrowed the candidates to four finalists. Each of the four was asked to participate in an in-person interview during the month of April. Careful notes were taken by the ACCT consultant, and two finalists were selected by May 1.

The two finalists were invited to come to campus and meet with different constituencies for an entire day. Both

Schier clearly understood that the process does not end with the appointment. A board retreat was scheduled for August, and Schier suggested to Frazier that the board use this time to establish clear short- and long-term goals for Dr. Morgan and that these goals be used later in the year to determine the progress made toward completion.

met separately with the board at a special meeting. The input from the college community was considered by the board along with the result of the interviews.

The board decided unanimously to make an offer to Dr. Sabrina Morgan. The candidate was vetted and all references were checked. All the reports were glowing. She had attended Howard University and held a Ph.D. in sociology. Previously, Dr. Morgan had served as vice president for academic affairs at East Alabama Community College. She was a good fit for Filmore. Chuck met with her and the two came to an agreement on the terms of the contract and the salary offer.

After graduation in May and all the parties celebrating the seven-year tenure of Dr. Pendleton, Dr. Morgan assumed the office on July 1.

Having established a good relationship with the ACCT staff, Schier clearly understood that the process does not end with the appointment. A board retreat was scheduled for August, and Schier suggested to Frazier that the board use this time to establish clear short- and long-term goals for Dr. Morgan and that these goals be used later in the year to determine the progress made toward completion. In this manner, the board set parameters for the new president and at the same time provided Dr. Morgan with the necessary latitude to operate within these parameters during the difficult first year. The retreat went smoothly, and the board used the college's strategic plan to extract achievable goals for Dr. Morgan's first year. Also, as this was Dr. Morgan's first presidency, Pam suggested that a coach be employed to assist her during the transition. Dr. Morgan felt supported and welcomed the clarification of her duties.

Schier became the liaison between the board and Dr. Morgan. As the first year went by, it became clear that the choice had been a great one. Schier and the board once again felt that the college was going in a good direction.

Schier was having her coffee on a bright and sunny spring morning when she got a phone call from Dr. Morgan. "Hello, Pam, this is Sabrina. I just called to let you know that I was informed this morning that Chuck Frazier had a massive heart attack and died at 5:30 a.m. I am very sorry to have to inform you of his demise. I know how close you were and how you work so well together."

Questions for the Board:

1. Do you think that Schier was correct in her assessment of the terms of the presidential contract? If so, what could the board have done?
2. Does the process used in searching for Dr. Morgan seem reasonable? What, if any, modifications would you propose if you were in the Filmore Community College board's position?
3. Was the onboarding process for President Morgan adequate? Do you use a similar model at your college?
4. What should Schier and the rest of the board do in immediate response to the loss of their long-experienced board chair? Does your college have a succession plan for board and executive leadership?
5. What can the board do to ensure that the college is run smoothly while making up for the loss of important institutional history following the loss of two longtime leaders and simultaneously grieving?

Eduardo Marti, Ph.D., is a trustee at Teachers College at Columbia University and former president of Queensborough Community College (CUNY), Corning Community College (SUNY), and Tompkins Cortland Community College (SUNY).

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
OF JUNE 22, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

President Hedrick called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. in the District Office, Conference Room 309, 3801 Market Street, Riverside, California.

Trustees Present
Mr. Bill Hedrick, President
Ms. Virginia Blumenthal, Secretary (left at 7:50pm)
Ms. Mary Figueroa, Member
Dr. Keri Then, Member (left at 7:40pm)

Trustees Absent
Mr. Jose Alcala, Vice President

Staff Present
Dr. Wolde-Ab Isaac, Chancellor
Mr. Aaron Brown, Vice Chancellor, Business and Financial Services
Ms. Tammy Few, Vice Chancellor, Human Resources and Employee Relations
Dr. Susan Mills, Vice Chancellor, Educational Services and Strategic Planning

Guests Present
Mr. Hussain Agah, Associate Vice Chancellor, Facilities Planning and Development
Ms. Linsey Graff, Planning Leader, DLR Group
Dr. Jose Leyba, Facilitator, Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mike Chavez commented on the IETTC.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES RETREAT

Trustee Hedrick provided a welcome and introductions.

CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Inland Empire Technical Trade Center

Ms. Graff gave a brief overview of the Inland Empire Technical Trade Center project and process. Discussion followed.

District Strategic Planning Council, Committees, and Sub-committees Operational Guidelines and Structure

Dr. Mills gave a presentation on the new District Strategic Planning Council, Committees, and Sub-committees Operational Guidelines and Structure. Discussion followed.

District Construction Procurement

Mr. Agah and Mr. Brown reviewed the District Construction Procurement process for the Board.

General Obligation Bond

Chancellor Isaac provided information to the Board on the General Obligation Bond.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m. and reconvened at 6:37 p.m.

A Case for RCCD's Regional Vision

Chancellor Isaac gave a presentation on the Inland Empire Educational Capacity and Economic Development.

Discussion followed including presenting the information at a regular board meeting and possible joint meetings/convenings of local K-12 and community college boards, businesses and local politicians.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Dr. Leyba led a discussion on the following topics with the Board of Trustees and Chancellor Isaac:

- Board Roles and Responsibilities Refresher
- Guide to Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Board Mini Self-Assessment Accreditation Purpose
- The Making of a Community College Trustee

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Dr. Leyba led a discussion on the Board Survey Results and Monitoring Goals/Priorities Progress

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to Government Code 54957.6 Public Employee Performance Evaluation Title: Chancellor

This item was tabled until a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Official Minutes
Approved on 08/15/2023

Certified By: Tanya Owilson