

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Southwest Technical College**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**

Thursday, January 4, 2024 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
Southwest Tech Boardroom

**Board of Trustees in Attendance:** Darin Gifford, Kristie McMullin, Roger Howard, Eric Packer, Garrett Cottam, Sharon Corry, Paul Terry, Melinda Pfundstein, and Beverly Burgess

**USHE Guests:** Jared Haines (virtual)

**Southwest Tech Attendees:** President Brennan Wood, Scott Leavitt, James Mullenaux, Clarissa Crosby, Neal Mason, and Shari Feehan (recorder)

**I. Agenda Items by Darin Gifford, Chairperson**

**A. Call to order**

A quorum was confirmed. Chair Gifford called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Gifford led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. Approval of the Agenda**

Chair Gifford asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Kristie McMullin motioned to approve, and Melinda Pfundstein seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. Approval of the November 2, 2023 Minutes**

Chair Gifford asked for a motion to approve the November 2, 2023 meeting minutes. Eric Packer made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Melinda Pfundstein seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**II. Action Items:**

**A. Approval of Surgical Technology Program - Scott Leavitt**

Scott Leavitt provided an overview of the revised surgical technical program. The initial proposal, presented to the board in September, outlined a program of 1300 hours and 30 credits. However, subsequent discussions with faculty members from other colleges revealed a desire for shorter programs, leading to a reconsideration of the curriculum.

The current proposal aims to realign the program, reducing it from the previous 38 credits and 35 clock hours to 24 credits and 9 clock hours. The primary focus is on aligning with the preferences of other colleges and meeting industry needs.

Chair Gifford inquired about the changes made to the program, to which it was clarified that the focus was on shortening the duration of courses rather than removing them entirely. The objective is to maintain alignment with existing programs while adapting to regional variations in faculty preferences.

The discussion touched upon the unique challenges posed by regional differences, citing examples such as firefighters' training requirements varying based on regional needs. Scott highlighted that the flexibility provided by alignment allows for adjustments based on regional demands without compromising the overall program quality.

President Wood emphasized the importance of aligning programs with industry needs, considering regional variations in faculty preferences and employer expectations. Scott and others acknowledged that these changes aim to strike a balance between program length, affordability, and workforce readiness.

Questions were raised about the impact on program efficacy and employability. Scott Leavitt reassured the group that the emphasis remains on meeting industry standards and adjusting as needed to ensure high placement rates.

The conversation concluded with an exploration of how changes in program hours affect competition among technical schools. Eric Packer, representing an employer perspective, suggested that the demand for positions in the field outweighs concerns about program hours, emphasizing the need to attract interested candidates.

Garrett Cottam motioned to approve the Surgical Technology program. Beverly Burgess seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion passed.

#### B. Approval of Phone Use and Reimbursement Policy - Clarissa Crosby

Clarissa Crosby presented a significant revision to the cell phone use and reimbursement policy. She explained that the changes made resulted in essentially an entirely new policy.

The focus of the updated policy is on aligning with IRS guidance regarding cell phone reimbursement. Clarissa removed the previous cell phone use endorsement policy and introduced a more comprehensive approach. She highlighted key points, including the need for employees to pay for any overages or additional charges on personal phones used on campus.

The policy delves into the reimbursement process for work-related charges on employees' cell phone plans. It specifies that the reimbursement is not a fixed amount but can be up to \$50 per month, with executive staff possibly eligible for up to \$100 per month, depending on the college's plan needs.

Addressing concerns about monitoring costs, Clarissa assured that the \$50 monthly reimbursement wouldn't require constant tracking, relying more on an honesty system. Supervisors play a role in ensuring that the business need justifies the reimbursement amount, with initial determinations made during the setup process.

The policy also outlines employee responsibilities, emphasizing the need for sufficient minutes, data, or texting on the plan to support business activities. Employees are required to disclose their cell phone on their college business card and directory for contact purposes. Currently there are 20-25 people who use the cell phone plan, mostly executive staff and directors.

Paul Terry motioned to approve the policy as presented, and Roger Howard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion passed.

### III. Discussion Items:

#### A. Master Plan Updates- Brennan Wood

President Wood presented the master plan which delved into the history of Southwest Tech, showcasing the institution's growth and current status. He mentioned that some sections, like the program inventory, might require updates due to recent changes, including the introduction of new programs.

The focus then shifted to the rationale behind master planning, with President Wood presenting graphs illustrating the growth in headcount and retention rates. Notably, Southwest Tech has seen high retention rates compared to other institutions, and the presentation included regional forecasts from the McKenzie Gardner Policy Institute, projecting significant growth up to 2030 and beyond.

President Wood pointed out the interesting data on county populations, emphasizing that master planning is crucial for anticipating future growth. The presentation further explored regional contexts, mobility patterns, and zoning maps.

As the meeting progressed, the discussion shifted towards the existing facilities, future plans, and the feasibility study. The board was reminded of their involvement in the master plan process playing a crucial role. Board members were encouraged to review the master plan for more in-depth insights into Southwest Tech's strategic direction.

#### B. Feasibility Study Updates - Brennan Wood

President Wood presented a slide presentation explaining the feasibility study, providing the board with a draft from Method Studio. He emphasized that the document is still unofficial and subject to changes. The feasibility study primarily focused on a new building's potential design, layout, and cost estimates.

The presentation included basic architectural renderings representing the conceptual layout of the building. President Wood explained that these initial designs are essential for understanding spatial requirements and functional needs. Method Studio collaborated with faculty, staff, and students to gather input on necessary spaces, resulting in a draft that considered essential elements such as an ambulance bay and fire truck bays.

The layout considerations were further discussed, including adjustments made based on factors like egress, elevation changes, and property easements. The importance of preserving easements was highlighted, showcasing the complexities of building placement and the need for detailed planning.

Moving to the critical aspect of cost estimation, the board was presented with an estimated cost of \$18 million for the new building. Brennan clarified that this figure includes exterior improvements, utilities, earthwork, and was purposely focused on the essential needs of public safety programs. He acknowledged the likelihood of additional costs being added during the DFCM review, considering factors like insurance and risk management.

Board members raised questions about the potential acquisition of the adjacent property, which Brennan addressed by mentioning a recent appraisal and ongoing conversations with the owners.

In response to a query about the project's timeframe, President Wood explained the submission process to the DFCM, with a potential timeline of three to ten years for funding approval. He expressed optimism about exploring additional funding sources to expedite the project, emphasizing the public safety focus as a potential qualifier for FEMA or Department of Defense grants.

The discussion concluded with a consensus on the importance of moving forward with the project and acknowledgment of the detailed data provided in the feasibility study. The board recognized the need for a purpose-built facility to meet the specific requirements of public safety programs, anticipating positive impacts on capacity and program growth.

#### C. Investment Report - Clarissa Crosby

Clarissa presented the investment report.

#### D. Legislative Update - Brennan Wood

Brennan presented a draft slide presentation for the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, outlining key data points and trends at the institution. The feasibility study for a new building was discussed, emphasizing the collaboration with Method Studio and adjustments made based on faculty and staff input. The proposed building layout and cost estimates were presented, focusing on a specialized facility for public safety programs.

President Wood explained the anticipated budget request, with a caution that the actual allocation might differ due to budget constraints. The presentation showcased enrollment trends, including headcount and FTE, highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on student numbers. Access data, timely completion rates, and job placement statistics were discussed to provide a comprehensive overview of the institution's performance.

Financial aspects, including revenue, expenditures, net position, and tuition changes, were presented. The institution's successful utilization of non-taxpayer investments and partnerships with other institutions, particularly SUU, were highlighted. The presentation concluded with a discussion on student demographics, showcasing the institution's diverse student body.

**IV. Adjourn:** Chair Cottam concluded the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn. Beverly Burgess made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Garrett Cottam seconded the motion.

**Next Board Meeting:** March 7, 2024 at 12:00 pm in the Southwest Technical College boardroom.