



**LAREDO COLLEGE DISTRICT**  
Laredo, Texas

The regular meeting of the Laredo College Board of Trustees convened on Tuesday, December 15, 2020, beginning at 6:07 p.m. in the Samuel A. Meyer Board Room located at the Elpha Lee West Building Room 105 at the Fort McIntosh Campus. Due to health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 Coronavirus and pursuant to Governor Greg Abbott's Temporary Suspension of Open Meetings Laws issued on March 16, 2020, some of Laredo College Board members participated via Zoom videoconference.

**ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mercurio Martinez Jr, President  
Jackie Leven-Ramos, Vice President  
Henry S. Carranza, Ph.D., Secretary  
Cynthia Mares (*participated via Zoom beginning at 6:28 p.m.*)  
Jorge "JD" Delgado  
Lupita Zepeda  
Esteban Rangel  
Michelle De La Peña (*participated via Zoom*)  
Tita C. Vela\_ (*participated via Zoom*)

MEMBERS ABSENT

—

OTHERS

Ricardo J. Solis, Ph.D.  
Rusty Meurer  
Michael Gonzalez  
Roberto J. Santos (*participated via Zoom*)  
Heriberto Hernandez  
Sandra Cortez (*participated via Zoom*)  
Raquel Pena (*participated via Zoom*)  
Fred Solis, Ed.D. (*participated via Zoom*)  
Prakash Mansinghani (*participated via Zoom*)  
Cesar E. Vela Jr.  
Eli Mendoza (*participated via Zoom*)  
Carolyn Schmies

**CALL TO ORDER**

Judge Martinez called the meeting to order. Dr. Carranza called the roll. A quorum of the members was present.

**APPROVAL OF THE  
MINUTES FOR REGULAR  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING OF OCTOBER 29,  
2020 AND CANVASSING AND  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
OF NOVEMBER 13, 2020**

Mr. Delgado moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Leven-Ramos; motion carried.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Judge Martinez provided information from the Board Policy BDB(LOCAL) to clarify the topics presented under public testimony.

"An individual's comments to the Board shall not exceed three minutes per meeting. When there are six or less speakers scheduled, the Board President may extend each speaker's time to five minutes. Time may not be ceded from one speaker to another. The Board President may also limit the total amount of time for public testimony but not to less than thirty minutes. The speaker may not speak on personnel or student matters that refer to individuals by name or by title. After a speaker's comments, the Board President shall make whatever response, if any, or take whatever action, if any, is deemed appropriate to handle the matter. Such response or action may include the following: 1) referring the matter to the College President for action or for further recommendations, 2) referring the matter to a later meeting or to a Board committee for further discussion or study, and 3) indicating that the matter shall be taken under advisement. If the Board President determines that a person has not attempted to resolve a matter administratively,

the person shall be directed to the appropriate policy for attempted resolution before bringing the matter to the Board.”

Mr. Michael Gonzalez, Senior Director of Strategic & External Affairs, read aloud one comment that was received via email from Mr. Ricardo de Anda, who expressed his support of Agenda Item 8.J. - *Approval of Resolution of the Laredo College Board of Trustees Regarding Cessation of Litigation and Construction of the Border Wall along the Border of the United States and Mexico.*

**APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION OF THE LAREDO COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGARDING CESSATION OF LITIGATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE BORDER WALL ALONG THE BORDER OF THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO –**  
*JUDGE MERCURIO MARTINEZ, JR.*

Judge Martinez asked for a motion to move up Agenda Item 8.J. - *Approval of Resolution of the Laredo College Board of Trustees Regarding Cessation of Litigation and Construction of the Border Wall along the Border of the United States and Mexico* for formal approval. Dr. Carranza so moved. Ms. Leven-Ramos seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING MR. ROBERTO J. SANTOS, UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT –**  
*LAREDO COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES/MR. JORGE “J.D.” DELGADO*

Mr. Delgado made a motion to move up Agenda Item 8.I. - *Approval of Resolution Recognizing Mr. Roberto J. Santos, United Independent School District Superintendent.* Ms. Leven-Ramos seconded the motion; motion carried.

Mr. Delgado read aloud the resolution.

***RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF LAREDO COLLEGE HONORING RETIRING UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT MR. ROBERTO J. SANTOS***

***WHEREAS***, Laredo College wishes to honor a valued member of the Laredo, Texas community, retiring United Independent School District (“United ISD”) Superintendent, Mr. Roberto J. Santos;

***WHEREAS***, Mr. Roberto J. Santos is a native Laredoan who attended local schools and received his high school diploma from Martin High School;

***WHEREAS***, upon graduation, and with a strong commitment towards continuing his education, Mr. Roberto J. Santos received an athletic scholarship to St. Edward’s University where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree, and thereafter continued his studies at the University of Texas-Pan American where he completed a Master of Science Degree in Education;

***WHEREAS***, throughout his career, Mr. Roberto J. Santos has served United ISD in various capacities which include: Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Director of Human Resources, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, Associate Superintendent for Student Support Services, and finally Superintendent for the past sixteen (16) years;

***WHEREAS***, Mr. Roberto J. Santos will be retiring from United ISD after having served the District for thirty-eight (38) years;

***WHEREAS***, throughout his tenure as United ISD Superintendent, Mr. Roberto J. Santos has been instrumental in advocating for dual enrollment programs between United ISD and Laredo College, which serve as an important bridge for students to a higher education;

***WHEREAS***, during the fall of 2015, under Mr. Santos’ leadership, Laredo College became the exclusive educational provider to United ISD dual enrollment programs; in the fall of 2015, approximately 1,243 United ISD dual enrollment students were served, and the number of students has increased to 2,333 during the fall of 2020;

***WHEREAS***, Mr. Roberto J. Santos supported the establishment of our first Early College High School for United ISD and Laredo College at LBJ High School; currently, LBJ High School has two early college high schools, Biotechnology & Life Sciences Innovative Academy (BLSIA) and Early College High School (ECHS); collectively over 1,000 students have been impacted by both United ISD Early College High Schools;

***WHEREAS**, throughout his career as Superintendent, Mr. Roberto J. Santos supported Laredo College endeavors by participating in the Laredo College Presidential Search Committee, as well as Laredo College leadership programs, strategic planning, and any other initiatives that has required our school district partner's involvement;*

***WHEREAS**, Mr. Roberto J. Santos supported the Laredo College's most recent bond election to finance the Facilities Master Plan, Phase 3 construction projects;*

***WHEREAS**, during his career, Mr. Roberto J. Santos's philosophy of education has been highly recognized and applauded by the Laredo community, securing him numerous awards including: Laredo Next Generation Rotary Club "Unsung Heroes Award"; Membership in the Latin American International Hall of Fame; Imaginarium "Image Award", among others;*

***WHEREAS**, Mr. Roberto J. Santos will step down as United ISD Superintendent in June of 2021, and his excellence and life-long commitment to education have and will continue to improve the lives of both students and residents of the City of Laredo;*

***WHEREAS**, Mr. Roberto J. Santos's energy, wisdom, and strong work ethic has enriched those fortunate enough to have worked alongside him, including members of the Laredo College family.*

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the governing Board of Trustees of Laredo College adopts this resolution honoring, recognizing, and acknowledging all of Mr. Roberto J. Santos services and contributions described above to Laredo College.*

***EXECUTED AND APPROVED BY THE LAREDO COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2020.***

Mr. Delgado moved to approve the resolution recognizing Mr. Roberto J. Santos, United Independent School District Superintendent. Ms. Leven-Ramos seconded the motion; motion carried. Mr. Santos thanked the Board and Administration.

**RECOGNITIONS,  
COMMUNICATIONS,  
INTRODUCTIONS OF  
PERSONNEL, AND NEW  
PERSONNEL ACTIONS FOR  
THE MONTH**

Dr. Ricardo J. Solis, President:

- recognized Ms. Michelle De La Peña for her six years of service as a Board member. Mr. Michael Gonzalez presented a token of appreciation.
- Announced the following staff promotions - Ricardo Barrera, HVAC Foreman; Raul Gonzalez, HVAC Technician; Mario Perez, Carpenter; and Derrick W. Crooks, Interim Faculty Secretary Law Enforcement Academy.
- Announced that Laredo College is the recipient of \$1 million from TicTok - Heroes in Healthcare, which will be used for scholarships, equipment, recruitment of new faculty in health areas, and development of new health related courses.

Mr. Heriberto Hernandez, Dean of Workforce Education, indicated that the Homeland Security Studies program has received accreditation approval from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges. He thanked Dr. David Arreazola, Dr. Veronica Martinez, and Dr. Marisela Rodriguez for their help in the process. Currently, there are 13 students registered and 10 in the process of completing their registration criteria.

Ms. Sandra Cortez, Dean of Community Education, provided an update on the Laredo Cares program. She thanked her staff for their work. A virtual job fair is scheduled for January 20.

Ms. Leven-Ramos provided information on the Trading Station (online pantry store and a fundraiser that partnered with Laredo College Alumni Association which will provide \$70 gift cards to 75 students). She thanked all the staff who helped. Ms. Raquel Pena, Associate Dean of Students, provided information on the fundraiser – Helping Hands

Project. Dr. Fred Solis, Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment, mentioned that Chief Castro started an initiative to collect toys as well and through the efforts of Physical Plant staff and Ms. Pena were able to prepare fruit bags from the grove on campus.

Dr. Fred Solis provided a Wintermester update.

**FACULTY SENATE REPORT**

Mr. Prakash Mansinghani, Faculty Senate President, thanked Ms. De La Peña for her service to the college. He reported on: 1) departments working during the pandemic and 2) faculty work during the pandemic (success rate and retention rate).

**ASSOCIATED STUDENT ORGANIZATION REPORT**

No report.

Ms. Mares moved to approve all of the following items under Consent Agenda.

- Item 8.A. - Annexation of New Property which has been Annexed by the City of Laredo
- Item 8.B. - Annual Review and Adoption of Laredo College Board Policy CAK(LOCAL); Appropriations and Revenue Sources – Investments
- Item 8.D. - Approval to Extend Collection Agency Contract
- Item 8.G. - Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with Laredo Theatre Guild International

Ms. Vela seconded the motion; motion carried.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

**APPROVAL OF LAREDO COLLEGE EMPLOYEE VOLUNTARY SEPARATION PLAN – MR. CESAR VELA**

Mr. Cesar Vela, Chief Financial Officer, presented the proposed Voluntary Separation Plan and answered questions from the Board. He asked that the Board approve to use the \$479,00 balance left from the \$1.5 million previously approved to fund the 2020 voluntary separation plan as presented. Ms. Mares moved to approve as presented. Dr. Carranza seconded the motion; motion carried (*Mr. Rangel was not present for the vote*).

**STATUS OF LAREDO COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS' REQUIRED TRAINING AS PER TEXAS EDUCATION CODE, SECTION 61.084, LEGAL POLICIES BBD(LEGAL); BOARD MEMBERS ORIENTATION AND TRAINING AND BI(LEGAL); REPORTS – DR. RICARDO J. SOLIS**

Dr. Ricardo J. Solis noted for the record that all Board members have completed their required training.

**APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION OF THE LAREDO COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REQUESTING A LEGISLATIVE CHANGE TO THE TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION CODE §130.082(G) – MR. MICHAEL GONZALEZ**

Mr. Michael Gonzalez asked that the Board adopt the resolution requesting a legislative change to the Texas Higher Education Code specifically Texas Higher Education Code §130.082 and Texas Higher Education Code §130.092 thereby avoiding a significant financial burden for the college by eliminating run-off Board elections. Mr. Delgado moved to adopt the resolution presented. Mr. Rusty Meurer, college attorney, noted that the resolution supports the idea of eliminating run-off elections but the legislature needs to approve and the Governor needs to sign. Ms. Leven-Ramos seconded the motion; motion carried.

**FY 2020 AUDITED  
FINANCIAL REPORT – MR.  
CESAR VELA**

Mr. Vela thanked the finance office staff members for compiling information needed to complete the audit. He introduced Mr. Eli Mendoza, partner from Garza, Gonzalez & Associates. Mr. Mendoza went over the financial report and audit findings in accordance with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board standards and rendered an unmodified report. Dr. Carranza moved to acknowledge the report. Ms. Mares seconded the motion; motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF  
MEMORANDUM OF  
UNDERSTANDING WITH  
CONSEJO MEXICANO DE  
COMERCIO EXTERIOR DEL  
NORESTE, A.C. (COMCE  
NORESTE) – DR. RICARDO J.  
SOLIS**

Dr. Ricardo J. Solis reported that Consejo Mexicano de Comercio Exterior del Noreste, A.C. is the largest Mexican non-profit exporting company and is looking at creating their first office in the United States. He asked the Board to authorize him to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Consejo Mexicano de Comercio Exterior del Noreste (COMCE) to offer office space temporarily for one-year, look to hire LC students, and the college will provide training for their members. Discussion followed. Judge Martinez called for the vote. Ms. Leven-Ramos moved “that the Laredo College Board of Trustees find that the Memorandum of Understanding with COMCE accomplishes a public purpose consistent with the college mission, that Laredo College has sufficient public control over the subject property to ensure the public purpose is accomplished and that Laredo College will receive a return benefit. I further move that the Laredo College Board of Trustees approve of the Memorandum of Understanding with COMCE”. Mr. Delgado seconded the motion; motion carried (*Ms. Mares and Ms. Vela voted against*).

**INFORMATION ITEMS  
STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND  
FUTURE PROGRAMS – DR.  
RICARDO J. SOLIS**

No report.

**RENEWAL OF LEASE  
AGREEMENT WITH STATE  
OF TEXAS HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVE TRACY  
O. KING AS PER LAREDO  
COLLEGE LOCAL POLICY  
CAL(LOCAL):  
APPROPRIATIONS AND  
REVENUE SOURCES - SALE,  
TRADE, OR LEASE OF  
COLLEGE-OWNED  
PROPERTY – DR. RICARDO J.  
SOLIS**

Dr. Ricardo J. Solis informed the Board that this item and Item 9.C. - *Renewal of Lease Agreement with State of Texas House of Representative Richard P. Raymond as per Laredo College Local Policy CAL(LOCAL): APPROPRIATIONS AND REVENUE SOURCES - SALE, TRADE, OR LEASE OF COLLEGE-OWNED PROPERTY* are renewals of lease agreements and are being presented for information purposes. Mr. Meurer indicated that pursuant to Board policy, lease agreements can be entered by the College President.

**RENEWAL OF LEASE  
AGREEMENT WITH STATE  
OF TEXAS HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVE  
RICHARD P. RAYMOND AS  
PER LAREDO COLLEGE  
LOCAL POLICY CAL(LOCAL):  
APPROPRIATIONS AND  
REVENUE SOURCES - SALE,  
TRADE, OR LEASE OF  
COLLEGE-OWNED  
PROPERTY – DR. RICARDO J.  
SOLIS**

**MARKETING AWARDS – MS.  
CAROLYN SCHMIES/MR.  
OBED GUERRERO**

Ms. Carolyn Schmies, Dean of South Campus, indicated that Marketing is managed by Mr. Michael Gonzalez and Mr. Obed Guerrero. Mr. Gonzalez presented the 11 awards that Marketing has received. He thanked the Board, Dr. Ricardo J. Solis, Ms. Carolyn Schmies, and Mr. Obed Guerrero for their support.

**UPDATE ON FALL 2020  
REVENUE AND PROPOSED  
EMPLOYEES SALARY  
ADJUSTMENT COSTS – MR.  
CESAR VELA**

Mr. Vela went over the revenues for Fall and will provide another update in January. Ms. Leven-Ramos asked for the tax collection report before any discussions continue.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Dr. Ricardo J. Solis asked if the executive session Agenda Item 10.A. - *Closed Session Discussion for Consideration and Possible Acceptance of Real Property Donated to Laredo College, Pursuant to Texas Government Code Sections 551.071, 551.072 and 551.073* can be discussed in open session. Mr. Meurer indicated that the item may be discussed in open session; therefore, the Board went on to Agenda Item 11.A. - *Consideration and Possible Acceptance of Real Property Donated to Laredo College.*

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE  
ACTION  
CONSIDERATION AND  
POSSIBLE ACCEPTANCE OF  
REAL PROPERTY DONATED  
TO LAREDO COLLEGE**

Dr. Ricardo J. Solis indicated that a taxpayer is interested in donating a tract of unimproved land to Laredo College; there are no conditions of acceptance of the land. The land is situated at 1012 Vidaurri Avenue. Ms. Mares moved to approve. Mr. Delgado seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORTS  
CAMPUS POLICE,  
PERSONNEL, TRAVEL, AND  
OTHER REPORTS**

The reports were provided for information purposes.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

Judge Martinez noted that the next meeting date is Thursday, January 21, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – Regular Board of Trustees Meeting.

Mr. Michael Gonzalez noted that Board Swearing-In Ceremonies for newly elected Board of Trustees are scheduled for January 13, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. (Ms. Tita Vela), 3:00 p.m. (Ms. Karina Elizondo), and 5:30 p.m. (Ms. Jackie Ramos).

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:25 p.m., Dr. Carranza moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Delgado seconded the motion; motion carried.