



LAREDO COLLEGE DISTRICT
Laredo, Texas

The regular meeting of the Laredo College Board of Trustees convened on Wednesday, January 31, 2024, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Samuel A. Meyer Board Room located at the Elpha Lee West Building Room 105 at the Fort McIntosh Campus.

1. CALL TO ORDER Ms. Zepeda called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL Ms. Leven-Ramos called roll.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Lupita Zepeda, President
Jorge “JD” Delgado, Vice President
Jackie Leven-Ramos, Secretary
Erica Benavides Garcia
Cindy Liendo
Esteban Rangel
Karina “Kari” Elizondo
Ernestina “Tita” Cantu Vela (*arrived at 6:02 p.m.*)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mercurio Martinez, Jr.

OTHERS

Minita Ramirez, Ph.D.
Rusty Meurer (*participated via Zoom*)
Horacio Salinas, Ph.D.
Heriberto Hernandez, Ed.D.
Sandra Cortez
Brenda Martinez
Denise Flores
Elizabeth Rodriguez, Ed.D.
Ana Gisela “Gigi” Perez Aleman
Sam Tovar
Diana Y. Ortiz, Ph.D.
Cesar E. Vela, Jr.
Eli Mendoza
Federico Solis, Jr., Ed.D.
Jessica Treviño

Ms. Zepeda announced that a quorum of the members was present, that this meeting was duly called, and that notice of this meeting was posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF DECEMBER 14, 2023

Mr. Rangel moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Delgado; motion carried.

Ms. Zepeda acknowledged the presence of Ms. Vela.

4. PUBLIC TESTIMONY No one signed up for public testimony.

5. RECOGNITIONS, INTRODUCTIONS OF PERSONNEL, AND NEW PERSONNEL ACTIONS FOR THE MONTH

5.A. TEXAS TRANSFER FRAMEWORK FIELD OF STUDY DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC SUBCOMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATIONS SELECTION – DR. HORACIO SALINAS

Dr. Horacio Salinas, Dean of Arts & Sciences, announced that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board selected Ms. Ana Lu Ramirez to serve on the Texas Transfer Framework Field of Study Discipline-Specific Subcommittee for Communications. She was presented a certificate of achievement on behalf of the Board and President.

5.B. PRESENTER FOR TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD (THECB) HIGHER EDGE 2023: LEADING TEXAS’

Dr. Heriberto Hernandez, Academic Affairs Division Lead, announced that Dr. Elizabeth Rodriguez was selected by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to present at their conference, which was held in December. Her presentation focused on the transformational progress being made at Laredo College by integrating Open Education

**FUTURE CONFERENCE,
TOPIC WAS LEVERAGING
THE POWER OF TEXAS
THROUGH OPEN
EDUCATION – DR.
HERIBERTO HERNANDEZ**

Resources into courses. She was presented a certificate of recognition on behalf of the Board and President.

**5.C. THECB PROGRAM
CHAIR SELECTION TO
2024 OPEN EDUCATION
CONFERENCE – DR.
HERIBERTO HERNANDEZ**

Dr. Hernandez announced that Dr. Elizabeth Rodriguez was appointed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Digital Learning Department to chair the program review committee for the upcoming 2024 Open Education Conference. She was presented a certificate of recognition on behalf of the Board and President.

**5.D. TEXAS WORKFORCE
COMMISSION ADULT
EDUCATION AND
LITERACY AWARD – MS.
SANDRA CORTEZ**

Ms. Sandra Cortez, Dean of Community Education, announced that the Adult Education and Literacy program was awarded \$75,000 for being a Best in Class program.

**5.E. THECB TEXAS
RESKILLING AND
UPSKILLING THROUGH
EDUCATION (TRUE)
GRANT AWARD – MS.
SANDRA CORTEZ**

Ms. Cortez announced that the Continuing Education Department was awarded \$248,000 through the TRUE grant. Ms. Brenda Martinez, Director of Continuing Education, briefly went over the programs that will benefit from the grant.

**5.F. WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT CENTER
- RIO SOUTH
TEXAS/COSTEP
FOUNDATION GRANT –
MS. SANDRA CORTEZ**

Ms. Cortez announced that the Workforce Development Center was awarded a \$132,515 grant. Ms. Denise Flores, Workforce Development Center Director, indicated that with this grant the center will provide training for patient care technician, dental assistant, professional truck driving, bookkeeping and payroll certification, office management, and QuickBooks programs.

**5.G. SELECTION OF
QUALITY MATTERS
ACADEMIC ADVISORY
COUNCIL MEMBER – DR.
ELIZABETH RODRIGUEZ**

Dr. Elizabeth Rodriguez, Dean of Academic Innovation & Technology, announced that Ms. Alicia Reed was selected to serve on the Quality Matters Academic Advisory Council for three years. She provided a brief background of the council.

**5.H. INTRODUCTION OF
PERSONNEL/
PERSONNEL ACTIONS –
DR. MINITA RAMÍREZ**

Dr. Minita Ramírez, President, introduced the new hires and promotions for the month: Monica Molina, Veteran Services Coordinator; Kassandra Vela, Instructional Assistant Continuing Education; Elizabeth R. Barrera, Payroll Manager; Ricardo Tanguma, Patrol Officer; Elaine Almanza-Ortega, L.E.A.D. Activity Director; and Manuel J. Maciel, Homeland Security & Emergency Management Director/Homeland Security Studies Instructor.

6. FACULTY SENATE REPORT – MRS. JULIANA KELLEY

No report.

7. LAREDO COLLEGE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT – MS. ANA GISELA "GIGI" PÉREZ ALEMÁN

Ms. Ana Gisela "Gigi" Pérez Alemán, Student Government Association (SGA) President, thanked the Board and Administration for canceling classes during January's inclement weather for the safety of the students. She reported on: welcome week activities, student organization council meeting, SGA meeting and Region 6 meeting, upcoming travels, participation at WBCA parades, Fun Fest, and Esports tryouts.

8. CLASSIFIED STAFF COUNCIL REPORT – MR. SAM TOVAR

Mr. Sam Tovar, Classified Staff Council President, reported on his meeting with Dr. Ramirez. He announced that the council's name has

changed to Staff Senate. He invited everyone to Fun Fest on February 24th from 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Rangel moved to approve all of the following items under Consent Agenda.

- Agenda Item 9.A. – Approval of Title V Learning, Engaging & Academic Support through Data Driven Action (LEAD) P031S230150 Matching Funds of \$50,000 per Year for Five Years as Per Grant Criteria
- Agenda Item 9.B. – Approval of Schedule of Fees for Usage of Laredo College Facilities, Personnel and Equipment as per Laredo College Policy GD(LOCAL): COMMUNITY EXPRESSION AND USE OF COLLEGE FACILITIES
- Agenda Item 9.C. – Approval of the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 Laredo Academic Calendars
- Agenda Item 9.D. – November 2023 Financial Report
- Agenda Item 9.E. – Ratification of Dell Apex Cloud Backup and Disaster Recovery Service Renewal

Mr. Delgado seconded the motion; motion carried.

10. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

10.A. APPOINTING AN INDIVIDUAL TO REPRESENT THE LAREDO COLLEGE DISTRICT AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF LAREDO TAX INCREMENT REINVESTMENT ZONE (TIRZ) NO. 2 ALSO KNOWN AS THE COVES AT WINFIELD – MS. LUPITA ZEPEDA

Ms. Leven-Ramos moved to appoint Ms. Zepeda to represent the Laredo College District as a member of the Board of Directors of The City of Laredo TIRZ No. 2. Ms. Benavides Garcia and Ms. Vela seconded the motion; motion carried. Dr. Ramirez noted for the record that in the past, the Board President was LC's appointee to the TIRZ Board.

10.B. APPROVAL OF DONATION OF COLLEGE DISTRICT PROPERTY FROM THE FERNANDO SALINAS TRUST DONATION INVENTORY FROM 1620 CLARK TO NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS FOR LESS THAN FAIR MARKET VALUE AS PER LAREDO COLLEGE POLICY CIB(LOCAL): EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES MANAGEMENT-DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY 3A. - THE PREDOMINANT PURPOSE OF THE ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF DISPOSAL IS TO ACCOMPLISH A PUBLIC PURPOSE, NOT TO BENEFIT PRIVATE PARTIES – DR. DIANA Y. ORTIZ

Dr. Diana Y. Ortiz, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, asked that the Board approve the disposal of furniture, artwork, equipment, and alike from the inventory from the 1620 Clark property for less than fair market value to non-profit organizations that could benefit from such items. Mr. Rangel moved to approve. Ms. Leven-Ramos seconded the motion. Dr. Ortiz and Dr. Ramirez answered questions from the Board. Mr. Rusty Meurer, college attorney, recommended an amendment to the motion by adding three findings – (1) the predominate purpose of the alternative method of disposal is to accomplish the public purpose not to benefit private parties, (2) that the Board is retaining sufficient control over the disposed items to ensure the public purpose is accomplished, to protect the public's investment, and (3) the College District shall receive a return benefit. Mr. Rangel amended his motion to include the findings as stated by Mr. Meurer. Ms. Leven-Ramos seconded the motion; motion carried. Mr. Meurer noted that the motion was amended; therefore, a vote needs to be taken on the amended motion. Mr. Rangel moved to approve the amended motion. Ms. Leven-Ramos seconded the motion; motion carried.

10.C. FY 2023 AUDIT – MR. CESAR VELA

Mr. Cesar Vela, Vice President of Finance & Administration, introduced Mr. Eli Mendoza from Garza/Gonzalez & Associates who presented the 2023 Audit and went over the Report on Conduct of Audit. Mr. Rangel

moved to approve. Ms. Leven-Ramos and Mr. Delgado seconded the motion; motion carried.

10.D. SELECTION OF AN INVESTMENT ADVISORY SERVICES PROVIDER AND DELEGATE TO THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT THE AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE A CONTRACT AND FEES – MR. CESAR VELA

Mr. Vela asked that the Board approve the scores and ranking for Investment Advisory Services as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee. Valley View Consulting, L.L.C. was the highest-ranked investment advisory service firm. He also asked the Board to delegate to the College President the authority to negotiate a contract and fees with the highest-ranked firm. The second highest ranked firm was Vaughan Nelson Investment Management, L.P., and the third highest ranked firm was Meeder Public Funds, Inc. Mr. Vela indicated that if a contract and fees cannot be negotiated with the highest ranked firm, then negotiations will take place with the second highest ranked firm. Mr. Meurer explained the process taken for procuring professional services. Mr. Delgado moved to approve. Ms. Benavides Garcia seconded the motion; motion carried.

10.E. RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE LAREDO COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF TWO GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR A TOTAL OF \$80,000 IN GRANT FUNDING BY THE LAREDO COLLEGE GRANTS OFFICE FOR THE 2024-2025 LAREDO COLLEGE POLICE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT ENHANCEMENT PROJECT TO THE STATE OF TEXAS, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION – DR. DIANA Y. ORTIZ

Ms. Elizondo moved to approve. Mr. Rangel seconded the motion. Ms. Zepeda read the resolution.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Laredo College finds it in the best interest of the citizens of Laredo and South Texas that the Laredo College Police Department Equipment Enhancement Project be operated for the 2024-2025 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, The Laredo College Board of Trustees approves the submission of two grant applications by the Laredo College Grants Office in the amount of \$80,000 to the State of Texas – Office of the Governor for the 2024-2025 Laredo College Police Department Equipment Enhancement Project under the following funding programs:

*\$30,000 – FY 2025 Bullet-Resistant Shield Grant Program
State of Texas E-Grants Application #5054801*

*\$50,000 – FY 2025 Rifle-Resistant Body Armor Grant Program
State of Texas E-Grants Application #5057201*

WHEREAS, Laredo College agrees to provide applicable matching funds when required for the said projects but no matching funds are required for these two grant applications as noted by the State of Texas guidelines.

WHEREAS, Laredo College agrees that in the event of loss or misuse of the State of Texas, Office of the Governor funds, Laredo College assures that the funds will be returned to the Office of the Governor in full.

WHEREAS, Laredo College designates Dr. Minita Ramirez - President as the grantee's authorized official. The authorized official is given the power to apply for, accept, reject, alter or terminate the grants on behalf of the applicant agency.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Laredo College Board of Trustees approves the submission of two grant applications for a total of \$80,000 in grant funding by the Laredo College Grants Office for the 2024-2025 Laredo College Police Department Equipment Enhancement Project to the State of Texas, Office of the Governor Criminal Justice Division.

DULY RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Laredo College on this 31st day of January, 2024.

Motion carried. Ms. Leven-Ramos abstained.

**11. INFORMATION ITEMS
11.A. STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE REPORT AND SPRING 2024 ENROLLMENT REPORT – MS. ERICA BENAVIDES GARCIA/DR. FRED**

Ms. Benavides Garcia provided a recap of the January 29, 2024 Student Success Committee meeting.

Dr. Fred Solis, Vice President of Student Success and Enrollment, reported on enrollment for Wintermester, spring, and Quarters 1 & 2.

SOLIS/MS. JESSICA
TREVINO

Ms. Jessica Treviño, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, provided enrollment updates.

**11.B. LAREDO COLLEGE
TIMELINE FOR RAQUEL
GONZALEZ AUTOMOTIVE
TECHNOLOGY CENTER
EXPANSION – DR. MINITA
RAMÍREZ/MR. CESAR
VELA**

Mr. Rangel provided a summary of the Raquel Gonzalez Automotive Technology Center Expansion project which was discussed at the Building Committee and Finance & Audit Committee meeting held on January 30, 2024. The college will now be able to view the status of project permits.

**11.C. LAREDO COLLEGE
CONSTRUCTION UPDATE
– MR. CESAR VELA**

Mr. Rangel provided a summary of the construction projects that were discussed at the Building Committee and Finance & Audit Committee meeting held on January 30, 2024.

**11.D. NOTIFICATION OF
THE SERVING OF
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
AT THE LAREDO
THEATER GUILD
INTERNATIONAL
PRODUCTION OF “HAND
TO GOD” AT THE
SHOEBOX THEATER (T-
30) AS PER LAREDO
COLLEGE BOARD
COMMUNITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS POLICY
GDA(LOCAL):
COMMUNITY
EXPRESSION AND USE
OF COLLEGE FACILITIES
- CONDUCT ON COLLEGE
DISTRICT PREMISES –
DR. DIANA Y. ORTIZ**

Dr. Ramirez informed the Board that the Laredo Theater Guild International (LTGI) served wine during the intermission of their production of “Hand to God”.

**11.E. NOTIFICATION OF
EMPLOYEE
COMPENSATION DURING
EMERGENCY CLOSURE
AS PER LAREDO
COLLEGE POLICY
DEA(LOCAL):
COMPENSATION AND
BENEFITS –
COMPENSATION PLAN –
DR. MINITA RAMÍREZ**

Dr. Ramirez informed the Board that, as per Laredo College Policy DEA(LOCAL), employees will be paid the one day in January when the college closed for inclement weather.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:34 p.m., Ms. Leven-Ramos moved to go into executive session on the following items:

- Agenda Item 12.A. – Level III Grievance Hearing Filed by a Laredo College Non-Exempt Employee as per Laredo College Board Policy DGBA(LOCAL): PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS - EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES. Closed Session Pursuant to Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 and 551.074.
- Agenda Item 12.B. – Due Process Termination Hearing Filed by a Laredo College Exempt Staff Member in Response to Recommendation for Termination as per Laredo College Board Policy DMAA(LOCAL): TERM CONTRACTS: TERMINATION MID-CONTRACT. Closed Session Pursuant to Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 and 551.074.
- Agenda Item 12.C. – Deliberations on the Level III Grievance Hearing and Due Process Termination Hearing as per Laredo College Board Policy DMAA(LOCAL): TERM CONTRACTS: TERMINATION MID-CONTRACT and Laredo College Board Policy DMAA(LOCAL): TERM CONTRACTS: TERMINATION MID-CONTRACT. Closed Session Pursuant to Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 and 551.074.

Mr. Rangel seconded the motion; motion carried.

The Board reconvened to open session at 11:14 p.m. Ms. Zepeda noted that no action was taken during executive session.

13. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

**13.A. LEVEL III
GRIEVANCE FILED BY A
LAREDO COLLEGE NON-
EXEMPT EMPLOYEE AS
PER BOARD POLICY
DGBA(LOCAL):
PERSONNEL-
MANAGEMENT
RELATIONS - EMPLOYEE
GRIEVANCES**

Ms. Elizondo moved “to positively revert . . . [the employee’s] evaluation based on the information provided in order to reflect a positive note and a willingness and compromise from both parties to enhance the work environment of this department”. Ms. Liendo seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Ms. Zepeda called for the vote. Additional discussion took place. Ms. Liendo rescinded her second to the motion. The motion died due to lack of a second. No other motions were put forward for consideration.

**13.B.
RECOMMENDATION TO
TERMINATE THE
EMPLOYMENT OF A
LAREDO COLLEGE
EXEMPT STAFF MEMBER
AS PER LAREDO
COLLEGE BOARD POLICY
DMAA(LOCAL): TERM
CONTRACTS:
TERMINATION MID-
CONTRACT**

Ms. Liendo moved to deny the recommendation. Ms. Elizondo seconded the motion; The motion failed with 3 in favor and 5 against. Mr. Delgado moved to approve the recommendation of termination. Ms. Vela seconded the motion; motion passed with 5 in favor.

14. PRESIDENT’S REMARKS

**14.A. CAMPUS POLICE,
PERSONNEL, AND
TRAVEL REPORTS – DR.
MINITA RAMÍREZ**

Dr. Ramirez indicated that the reports are in the Board meeting packet.

**14.B. PRESIDENT’S
REMARKS – DR. MINITA
RAMÍREZ**

Due to time, Dr. Ramirez forwent her remarks.

**15. NEXT MEETING DATE &
UPCOMING EVENTS:**

Thursday, February 22, 2024, 6:00 p.m. – Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

Saturday, February 24, 2024, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Laredo College Fun Fest

16. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:27 p.m., Mr. Delgado moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Leven-Ramos seconded the motion; motion carried.