

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING DEL MAR COLLEGE DISTRICT

April 7, 2026

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Regents of the Del Mar College District convened on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 1:00 p.m., at the Oso Creek Campus, 7002 Yorktown Road, Culinary Arts Bldg., Tres Grace Room, Corpus Christi, Texas with the following present:

From The Board:

Present: Chair Carol Scott, Dr. Nicholas Adame, Dr. Anantha Babbili, Mr. Carl Crull, Mr. Rudy Garza, Jr., Mr. David Loeb, and Dr. Laurie Turner.

Not present: Ms. Libby Averyt and Mr. Bill Kelly.

Chair Scott thanked and commended College staff for changing meeting locations due to the emergency CED temporary closure.

From The College:

Dr. Mark Escamilla, President and CEO; Mr. Raul Garcia, Vice President and CFO; Mr. Ali Kolahdouz, Vice President and Chief Information Officer; Dr. Jonda Halcomb, Vice President and Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Tammy McDonald, Vice President of Administration and Human Resources; Dr. Patricia Benavides-Dominguez, Vice President for Student Affairs; Mr. Augustin Rivera, Jr., General Counsel; Mr. Matthew Busby, Vice President of Development and Donor Advising; Mr. Jeff Olsen, Chief of Staff and Vice President of Communication and Marketing; Ms. Delia Perez, Director of CEO Office and Board Relations, Mr. Conrado Garcia, Superintendent in Residence, and other staff and faculty.

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM CALL

Chair Scott called the meeting to order with a quorum present. She requested a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Del Mar College Vision Statement.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The public was given the opportunity to provide public comments (both general and specific to any agenda item).

There were no public comments.

RECOGNITIONS:

- Dr. Daisy Zhang, Professor of Biotechnology, completed the requirement for DMC to receive an official certificate from the Office of the Governor of Texas recognizing the College's leadership in integrating the industry-defined Biotechnology and Biomedical skill standards for research and development into its Biotechnology Associate of Applied Science program which is recognized by the Texas Workforce Investment Council.

Presenter: Dr. Jonda Halcomb

(II: Elevate, Goal 1: Increase completion for all students)

Dr. Halcomb recognized Dr. Daisy Zhang, a biotechnology professor at Del Mar College, who received official recognition from the Governor of Texas for her leadership in integrating industry-defined biotechnology and biomedical skill standards into the College's Associate of Applied Science Biotechnology degree. This recognition highlights her commitment to innovation, workforce preparation, and student success, as well as the program's alignment with high-demand, high-wage industry needs. Her efforts have resulted in exceptional student outcomes with graduates often performing at a graduate-school level, earning widespread praise from universities, and achieving strong career and academic advancement. Since the program's inception, more than 90% of enrolled students have completed the degree, with many transferring to universities or graduate programs and some have earned doctorates as well as securing industry positions. Her focus on rigorous research training and internships has been central to these successes. Dr. Zhang provided words of appreciation and gratefulness.

- Laura Wright Bienek, Associate Professor of Architecture/Drafting Technology, received the 46th Annual Y-Women in Careers Rising Star Award

Presenter: Dr. Jonda Halcomb

(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Dr. Halcomb recognized Laura Wright Bienek, Associate Professor of Architecture and Drafting Technology, who was honored at the 46th Annual Y-Women In Careers Event, where she received the Rising Star Award in recognition of her dedication to education and workforce development. A licensed architect since 2005 with a master's degree from Texas Tech University, Ms. Bienek brings extensive professional experience as a project manager into the classroom, preparing students with practical, real-world skills. She has served as Chair of the Architecture, Aviation, and Automotive Department and later became Director of the Architecture Program to focus on strengthening and growing the discipline through collaboration with institutions such as Texas A&M Corpus Christi and other universities. She was recently selected to represent Del Mar College and community colleges statewide on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Transfer Advisory Committee. She has also played a key role in improving transfer pathways for architecture students with her leadership, expertise, and tireless commitment. Ms. Bienek provided words of appreciation and gratefulness.

- Ceremonial swearing in of DMC Police Department Chief, Captain and Full-time Officers

Presenter: Ms. Tammy McDonald

(III: Cultivate, Goal 1: Prioritize campus safety)

Ms. McDonald first recognized Chief Lauren White who was appointed Chief of Police in 2024. Chief White brings more than four decades of law enforcement experience, including service with the Corpus Christi Police Department in patrol, juvenile community relations, criminal investigations, and long-term leadership on the hostage negotiation team before her initial retirement in 2013. She later joined Del Mar College in 2014 and progressed through leadership roles to become Chief of Police. Chief White has earned her degrees from Del Mar College, Corpus Christi State University, and Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, as well as her credentials as a licensed professional counselor and master peace officer.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Presenter: Dr. Mark Escamilla

- Introduction of Dr. Gerald F. Napoles, Executive Vice President and COO
(II: Elevate, Goal 1: Increase completion for all students)
Dr. Escamilla provided background information and introduced Dr. Gerald F. Napoles, as the new Executive Vice President and COO for Del Mar. College. Dr. Napoles provided words of thanks for the wonderful introduction and stated he was thankful to be at the College and in the city.
- March 4, 2026: La Quinta Channel Community Advisory Panel
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)
Dr. Escamilla attended the LaQuinta Channel Community Advisory Panel held in Gregory-Portland High School.
- March 23, 2026: TACC/CEO Virtual Meeting
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)
Dr. Escamilla attended the Texas Association of Community Colleges' CEO meeting virtually.
- March 25, 2026: DMC/Community in Schools Retreat, Retama Room
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)
Dr. Escamilla attended the Community in Schools Retreat in which DMC hosted.
- March 27, 2026: Community College Standing Advisory Committee Virtual Meeting
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)
Dr. Escamilla attended the Community College Standing Advisory Committee meeting virtually.
- April 2, 2026: Coastal Bend College Tour/Meeting
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)
Dr. Escamilla attended the Coastal Bend College tour led by President and CEO Dr. Zach Suarez.

STAFF REPORTS:

- DMC Police Department Update
Presenter: Ms. Tammy McDonald
(III: Cultivate, Goal 1: Prioritize campus safety)

Ms. McDonald provided introductory remarks and introduced Chief Lauren White. Chief White described recent progress in building a strong partnership between the College and the Corpus Christi Police Department to ensure a safe campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and the community. In 2024, the department moved into a new 6,100-square-foot facility that includes offices, a training room, interrogation rooms, and a modern evidence room. Visiting command staff from CCPD have been impressed with the setup.

The DMC Police Department meets all state requirements for a licensed police agency, has full-time and part-time officers along with licensed security staff, and recently established direct radio communication with MetroCom. Police offices are now located on all campuses.

DMC Police Department has acquired new vehicles—including another arriving today—and purchased utility vehicles to help officers engage more easily with the campus community. Uniforms, badges, and patches have been finalized, and the department is compliant with House Bill 33, which requires breaching tools and ballistic shields on all campuses.

Hiring remains ongoing. The DMC Police Department recently completed setup for access to statewide and national law-enforcement databases (TCIC, NCIC, TLETS). They are also assessing and upgrading the campus camera system, as some cameras are now obstructed by tree growth.

- Water Reduction Efforts, Including Proposed Options and Possible Additional Water Resources

Presenter: Ms. Tammy McDonald

(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)

Dr. Escamilla provided introductory remarks and introduced Ms. Tammy McDonald. Ms. McDonald stated the City of Corpus Christi (City) is considering a Level One water drought, prompting Del Mar College to review its current and planned water-reduction strategies and preparedness. The College had progressed through Stage One restrictions in June 2022, Stage Two in March 2024, and Stage Three in December 2024. In March 2026, Del Mar met with City officials to coordinate planning, resources, and response strategies.

Ms. McDonald explained current water-saving measures include low-flow fixtures and automatic faucets, optimized HVAC operation to reduce chilled-water use, rapid repair of leaks, restricted exterior power washing, compliance with irrigation bans, and conversion of landscaping to xeriscape. Irrigation is currently not permitted.

Mr. John Strybos was introduced and discussed a project that focuses on a major effluent water reuse system at the Oso Creek Campus. This approximately \$1.5 million capital project (funded from the plant fund) will bring reclaimed water from the City's system to the campus pond, which will then supply irrigation and chilled water for HVAC. Construction is expected to take about 90 days and could significantly reduce potable water use and long-term costs. Cost-sharing with the City is being discussed, as nearby police facilities may also benefit. Additional water-reduction options under consideration include adjusting thermostats, purchasing water-efficient equipment, modifying operating schedules if needed, limiting certain campus events, and prioritizing instruction over discretionary uses. Alternative and supplemental water resources are being explored that include: capturing and reusing air-handler condensate, using water tankers for critical chilled-water needs, expanding reclaimed water use at other campuses, including

Windward, reclaiming water from fire training activities, investigating wells or alternative effluent connections for non-potable uses, and maintaining aquatic center operations efficiently and potentially supporting community needs during restrictions. Financial considerations that were highlighted include a chilled-water system uses about 39 million gallons annually (roughly \$200,000 at current rates). Reclaimed water costs about one-quarter of potable water rates, and with projected City rate increases of 50% or more, reuse projects could generate long-term savings. The College is also seeking grants and external funding, including federal opportunities.

Ms. Jackie Landrum discussed property tax impacts regarding drought-related valuation changes that would not affect tax revenues until future fiscal years (potentially FY 2028). Even modest reductions in property values could significantly affect operating revenue, so ongoing monitoring is critical.

The College's next steps include a continued study of all water-resource options, development of operational and financial impact models, and coordination through the Incident Management Team to ensure preparedness while protecting instruction.

Ms. McDonald, Dr. Escamilla, and Mr. Strybos responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

- Freedom to Dream Update

Presenters: Dr. Patricia Benavides-Dominguez and Mr. Ali Kollahdouz

(II: Elevate, Goal 1: Increase completion for all students)

Dr. Escamilla provided introductory remarks. Dr. Patricia Benavides-Dominguez presented and stated the Freedom to Dream (FTD) 1.0 program was designed to expand postsecondary access for both traditional and non-traditional learners within the Del Mar College taxing district. By establishing clear eligibility criteria, academic readiness standards, and participation expectations, the program supports recent high school graduates and early-stage adult learners while promoting accountability, persistence, and responsible stewardship of resources.

Cohort One demonstrated strong demand, with more than 5,000 applicants entering the pipeline and approximately one-third admitted through a selective yet access-oriented process. Enrolled students reflect a balanced mix of learners: 45% non-traditional students and 55% high school seniors (dual credit and non-dual credit), with non-dual credit seniors comprising the largest subgroup. Academic readiness data shows that 58% of students entered prepared for college-level coursework, while 42% required developmental or additional academic support—reinforcing the program's dual mission of access and readiness.

Student pathway and enrollment data confirm the program's impact. Over 60% of students entered with no prior college credits, indicating successful outreach to early-stage learners. Nearly 60% of participants selected transfer-oriented majors, reflecting strong aspirations toward bachelor's degree attainment and highlighting the importance of advising, academic planning, and transfer alignment.

Financial aid outcomes underscore both impact and opportunity. Participants received approximately \$3 - 3.8 million combined with Pell Grants, federal and state aid, loans, and scholarships. Sixty percent of students received some form of financial assistance, while 40% did not and much of the aid supports cost-of-living expenses, enabling full-time enrollment and reducing financial barriers.

Key insights from Cohort One revealed important planning adjustments such as more students than expected entered with zero college credits, especially adult learners and non-dual credit seniors. Dual credit students matriculated with significantly more credits (30+ hours) than anticipated. These findings provide valuable data to refine assumptions, improve program design, and strengthen outcomes as the program scales.

Cohort One data reflects meaningful demand, strong enrollment conversion, high academic aspiration, and a balanced approach to inclusivity and preparedness—positioning Freedom to Dream as a promising model for expanding equitable postsecondary access and success.

Mr. Ali Kollahdouz presented and stated he would be focusing on eligibility criteria, growth opportunities, and early performance of the *Freedom to Dream* program. Leaders noted that the program currently excludes non-traditional students with more than 12–15 prior college credits (unless dual credit), a restriction originally intended to prevent large numbers of existing part-time students from shifting to full-time and creating financial strain. However, data showed that this concern did not materialize, part-time enrollment continued to grow, and there was no significant migration into the program. As a result, there is interest in reconsidering eligibility to allow adults who stopped out of college years ago to return and complete credentials.

Updates on Cohort Two highlighted improvements such as requiring students to be college or program ready, offering summer preparation camps, upgrading advising and CRM systems, and strengthening community and school partnerships. Preliminary data showed rapidly growing application numbers, with demographics and credit hour distributions closely resembling Cohort One, predominantly first-time college students with few or no credits. Transfer vs. non-transfer and high-demand vs. non-high-demand program enrollments also aligned with prior patterns. Overall, early indicators for Cohort Two were positive, with expectations of continued growth and further refinement of the program.

Mr. Raul Garcia stated the first-year financial performance of the *Freedom to Dream* pilot was expected and planned to operate at a financial loss in year one due to the timing of performance-based funding and the results align with those expectations. A \$1.7 million variance in anticipated funding is explained by three primary factors: delayed recognition of performance funding, student profile differences from the original model, and shifted expected revenue from year one into year two, without reducing total anticipated funding over the three-year pilot horizon.

Despite this timing shift, student persistence significantly exceeded expectations. Overall institutional fall-to-fall persistence is approximately 52%, while the first Freedom to

Dream cohort is tracking 82% persistence for full-time students, surpassing the original 75% forecast. This stronger persistence indicates higher completion rates and increased performance funding in year two.

On the cost side, expenditures were slightly higher than forecast due to increased instructional salary and benefit costs in programs operating near capacity. However, these increases were largely offset by lower-than-expected tuition waiver expenses. Additional insights highlighted positive early returns from short-term certificates and OSAs, with more than 90 completions expected to generate over \$300,000 in performance funding in the current year. The cohort also includes students with greater developmental and remediation needs, who are persisting at even higher rates than college-ready peers reinforcing the program's effectiveness and mission. Looking ahead, emphasis was made on expanded dual credit participation, stronger K-12 partnerships, and improved program readiness in future cohorts should accelerate time to completion and bring results closer to original projections. Overall, year one outcomes confirm the model is working as designed.

Dr. Benavides-Dominguez, Mr. Kolahdouz, Mr. Garcia and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

- TIRZ Task Force Update

Presenter: Ms. Jessica Alaniz Perez (Task Force staff liaison)

(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Ms. Jessica Alaniz Perez provided information regarding a TIRZ Task Force update. She stated that over the past month, the TIRZ Task Force met in late March to begin reviewing draft updates to Del Mar Policy B4.37. The primary focus of this initial review was to ensure continued compliance with Texas Tax Code Chapter 311, and we are pleased to report that the policy is currently in good standing. As part of the review, the Task Force compared the existing policy with the requirements of the Tax Code and identified opportunities to add clarity and strengthen guidance for external entities seeking the College's participation in TIRZ projects. Proposed additions include sections addressing board representation, district expectations, project plan approval processes, and procedures for amendments made during the life of a TIRZ.

The Task Force also proposed clarifying annual reporting requirements, including both financial and project status reporting, to ensure the district remains informed throughout its participation period. In addition, draft language has been added to address termination and withdrawal options should TIRZ fail to remain compliant or proceed as agreed. Another key focus has been aligning the TIRZ policy with the College's tax abatement policy to avoid overlapping or duplication of efforts.

The Task Force will meet again with the goal of refining the language in consultation with legal counsel to ensure continued compliance with state law. A follow-up update will be provided next month.

PENDING BUSINESS:

Status Report on Requested Information

CONSENT AGENDA

Notice to the Public

The following items are of a routine or administrative nature. The Board of Regents has been furnished with background and support material on each item, and/or it has been discussed at a previous meeting. All items will be acted upon by one vote without being discussed separately unless requested by a Board member or a citizen, in which event the item(s) will immediately be withdrawn for individual consideration in their normal sequence after the items not requiring separate discussion have been acted upon. The remaining items will be adopted by one vote.

CONSENT MOTIONS:

(At this point the Board will vote on all motions not removed for individual consideration.)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting, March 3, 2026
(I: Communicate, Goal 2: Connect beyond the College)
2. Acceptance of Quarterly Investment Report for February 2026
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)
3. Acceptance of Quarterly Financial Report for February 2026
(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Motion: Approve the Consent Agenda.

Moved by: Regent Babbili | Seconded by: Regent Crull

Vote: Carried unanimously, 7–0 by show of hands

In favor: Regents Scott, Adame, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Loeb, and Turner

REGULAR AGENDA

4. Discussion and possible action relating to a Resolution authorizing the issuance of up to \$129,680,000 in principal amount of Limited Tax Refunding Bonds, Series 2026, approving and authorizing the execution of an Escrow Agreement, a Paying Agent/Registrar Agreement, a Purchase Contract and other instruments and procedures related thereto, delegating authority to certain District officials to select outstanding bonds to be refunded and approve all final terms of the bonds, approving an official statement, and calling certain bonds for redemption.

Presenter: Mr. Raul Garcia

(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Mr. Raul Garcia presented and provided introductory remarks and stated the College has received the results of a bond refunding analysis prepared by Dave Gordon of Estrada Hinojosa based on current market conditions. The analysis indicates a potential refunding opportunity that could generate meaningful debt service savings for the College. Consistent with the refunding process previously authorized by the Board in 2021, administration is requesting approval of a resolution authorizing the issuance of limited tax refunding bonds. The proposed resolution would delegate authority to the President, Vice President, or Chief Financial Officer to approve the final terms of the transaction, provided the refunding meets established Board parameters, including a minimum savings threshold (at least 3%), no extension of final maturities (final maturity remains August 15, 2048), and no increase to the College's debt service tax rate.

Mr. Dave Gordon of Estrada Hinojosa presented an overview of current market conditions, noting recent volatility but confirming that refunding remains economically viable. Of the College's approximately \$235 million in outstanding debt service tax-supported obligations, about \$91 million is currently "in the money" for refinancing, with authorization requested for up to \$129 million to allow flexibility should market conditions improve. Current estimates indicate potential savings of approximately \$11 million, or roughly 6.5%, depending on market conditions at pricing.

The proposed structure maintains the debt service tax rate at approximately 5.5 cents, consistent with the current year. The College's strong AA-category credit ratings from S&P, Fitch, and Moody's are expected to remain unaffected by external factors, including nearby municipal rating changes. If approved, staff and advisors would proceed with preparation of offering documents, rating reviews, and coordination with the underwriting syndicate. Pricing is tentatively scheduled for June 3, with closing anticipated around July 1. Administration will report back to the Board with final terms and results of the refund at the June Board meeting.

Mr. Garcia, Mr. Gordon, and Dr. Escamilla responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

Motion: Board to authorize a resolution authorizing the issuance of up to \$129,680,000 in principal amount of Del Mar College District Limited tax refunding bond series 2026, approving and authorizing the execution of an escrow account, a paying agent, registrar agreement, a purchase contract and other instruments and procedures related thereto delegating authority to certain district officials and to select outstanding bonds to be refunded and approve all final terms of the bonds. Approving an official statement and calling certain bonds for redemption.

Moved by: Regent Loeb | Seconded by: Regent Babbili

Vote: Carried unanimously, 7-0 by show of hands

In favor: Regents Scott, Adame, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Loeb, and Turner

5. Discussion and possible action regarding the College's 2026 Internal Audit Activity including: Maintenance; Institutional Research and Reporting (Reporting Data Validation); Senate Bill 17 Compliance; Grant Compliance; and Follow-Ups for Bursar's Office and Accounts Payable and Disbursements

Presenter: Ms. Tammy McDonald

(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Ms. McDonald provided introductory remarks and introduced Mr. Dan Graves with Weaver for the presentation. Mr. Graves reported that the Maintenance Internal Audit has been completed and issued on March 20, and it was included in the Board packet. Highlights of the report were previously discussed with the Audit Committee, and this update summarizes those results along with the status of remaining internal audit work for the year.

The maintenance audit evaluated the design and effectiveness of maintenance processes, focusing on facilities maintenance, grounds maintenance, construction and repairs, and integration of these functions within capital projects planning and maintenance management.

The audit resulted in four findings, all of which were risk-rated as Moderate. The overall audit rating was Satisfactory, indicating that while improvements are needed, the process is not fundamentally broken and many controls tested positively.

The four findings include the following: 1. Formalization of Maintenance Processes - Greater standardization is needed across the maintenance lifecycle, including budget development, documentation, system usage, and performance monitoring. While work is being completed, processes are largely informal and not consistently documented, limiting their usefulness for long-term planning and budgeting. 2. Long-Term Funding Strategy for Deferred Maintenance - The audit highlights the need for a formal, long-term strategy to address deferred maintenance. Without such a plan, deferred items may continue to drive higher costs over time. 3. Documentation of Unscheduled Maintenance - Improvements are needed in documenting unscheduled or break-fix work to ensure timely completion and reliable tracking within existing systems. 4. Integrated Maintenance Planning - The audit recommends a more integrated approach that combines planned maintenance, historical unscheduled maintenance, and deferred maintenance.

Mr. Graves indicated that the findings were not unexpected, particularly given the recent completion of over \$300 million in construction projects, which significantly stretched operational capacity. With those projects concluding, leadership sees an opportunity to strengthen processes and planning. He also reported on the Data Validation Audit and stated the audit focuses on how institutional data is validated and transformed into management reports, particularly in student-related reporting. Design controls have largely been reviewed, with testing and validation continuing through this month.

Regarding Senate Bill 17 Compliance, the audit is ongoing and has expanded from prior years in coordination with the General Counsel, incorporating new guidance from the State Auditor's Office. This work will help prepare the institution for a future state-level audit. Overall, internal audit activities remain on track, with a full slate of planned work for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Motion: Approve the Internal Audit Report.

Moved by: Regent Adame | Seconded by: Regent Babbili

Vote: Carried unanimously, 7-0 by show of hands

In favor: Regents Scott, Adame, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Loeb, and Turner

6. Discussion and possible action regarding annexation adopted by the City of Corpus Christi on February 10, 2026 – ZBK, LLC

Presenter: Ms. Tammy McDonald

(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Ms. Tammy McDonald provided information regarding the automatic annexation of certain territory pursuant to Texas Education Code Section 130.066. As the City of Corpus Christi annexes property, then Del Mar College may also annex the property. The City of Corpus Christi passed an ordinance, annexing 109.109-acre tract of land owned by ZBK LLC located along the south side of FM 2444 or South Staples Street, east of County Road 43 and west of County Road 41. So, the recommendation of an administration is to annex the property as annexed by the City of Corpus Christi.

Motion: Approve the annexation as recommended.

Moved by: Regent Garza | Seconded by: Regent Loeb

Vote: Carried unanimously, 7–0 by show of hands

In favor: Regents Scott, Adame, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Loeb, and Turner

7. Discussion and possible action regarding approval of Faculty Recommended for Tenure and Promotion for 2026-2027 in accordance with College Policy B6.7.7

Presenters: Dr. Mark Escamilla and Dr. Jonda Halcomb

(II: Elevate, Goal 2: Maximize resources entrusted to the College)

Dr. Escamilla provided introductory remarks regarding faculty recommendations for tenure per the new laws enacted by prior legislative action. Dr. Halcomb addressed the Board of Regents and requested they consider the approval of tenure for qualified faculty members, based on the recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This action is made pursuant to Texas Education Code §51.942, which authorizes the Board of Regents of an institution of higher education to approve tenure decisions upon the recommendation of the institution's chief executive officer.

In accordance with College Policy B6.7.7 (Granting of Tenure), the CEO annually recommends, by May 1, those faculty members who have met all requirements to be considered for tenure. Consistent with this policy, a memorandum dated March 6, 2026, from Dr. Jonda Halcomb, Vice President of Faculty and Chief Academic Officer, documents the results of a thorough tenure review process.

Dr. Halcomb reported that, in compliance with College Policy A6.6.8, each faculty member's tenure application was carefully reviewed in collaboration with department chairs and deans. All individuals listed in the March 6, 2026 memorandum have met the established criteria for tenure under college policy and based on this comprehensive review, the CEO recommends the conferral of tenure on the following faculty members: Dr. Kamal Adhikari, Mr. Brad Eilering, Dr. Robert Parrillo, Dr. Kelly Vinson, Mr. Paul Creacy, Mr. Albert Curry, Mr. Ryan Gutierrez, Ms. Preeti Kulkarni, Ms. Liza Torres, and Mr. Raymond Wallace.

Motion: Approve the CEO and staff recommendation to grant tenure to the people recommended by Dr. Escamilla and staff.

Moved by: Regent Crull | Seconded by: Regent Adame.

Vote: Carried unanimously, 7–0 by show of hands

In favor: Regents Scott, Adame, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Loeb, and Turner

8. Discussion and possible action regarding proposal for an Electrical Lineworker Level II Certificate

Presenters: Dr. Jonda Halcomb and Davis Merrell

(II: Elevate, Goal 1: Increase completion for all students)

Dr. Jonda Halcomb presented and provided information for a proposed Electrical Lineworker Level II Certificate. She stated Mr. Paul Creacy who was serving as Interim Chair over this proposed program was present for any questions. An industry partner with Malek Air Conditioning was also present to demonstrate industry support and was also actively involved in providing input on the development of the program.

The Electrical Lineworker Level II Certificate is part of a suite of stackable credentials. Students may begin with an Occupational Skills Award (OSA) as an electrical apprentice, progress to a Level I Certificate, and then advance into the Electrical Lineworker Level II Certificate.

An important feature of this Level II certificate is the inclusion of Commercial Driver's License (CDL) preparation, which industry partners identified as essential so that graduates are fully job-ready upon completion. All proposed lineworker courses are new to the course inventory, have been reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, and will proceed to Coordinating Board approval. In terms of workforce impact, students completing the OSA or Level I Certificate can expect earnings of around \$39,000, while graduates working as Electrical Power Line Installers and Repairers may earn between \$50,000 and \$126,000, with potential for higher earnings during emergency response situations such as hurricanes. This program is critical to meeting regional workforce needs and supporting both our community and industry partners. Dr. Halcomb introduced Dean Davis Merrell.

Dean Merrell stated the proposed Lineworker program transition has been developed through extensive collaboration with key industry stakeholders, including AEP Texas, Nueces Electric Cooperative, Robstown Utilities, and San Patricio Electric Cooperative. Engagement has included discussions with executive leadership, field personnel, and current electrical students to ensure alignment with workforce needs and industry expectations. This interest is supported by strong enrollment and completion trends within the existing electrician program, which currently serves 113 students. Associate degree completions have steadily increased from 11 in 2022, to 26 in 2023, and 45 in 2024, demonstrating sustained growth and clear progression pathways. The program design emphasizes a structured progression model, beginning with an Occupational Skills Award (OSA), followed by Level One certification prior to entering the Lineworker program. This approach distinguishes the program from others in Texas and allows students already enrolled in electrical pathways to advance without the need for additional recruitment efforts.

Development efforts have also included benchmarking and collaboration with peer institutions such as Tarrant County College, Lamar Community College, and Kilgore College. Tarrant County College, for example, operates a fall cohort model of 10–14 students, with partial internship placement through Encore Electric. Comparisons with CE-based lineworker programs, such as Kilgore College’s 10-week non-credit model and Lone Star College’s Level One certification, further informed program structure and credit alignment.

Industry partners have strongly endorsed the proposed model, emphasizing the value of producing graduates with broad-based electrical and utility distribution expertise rather than training limited to a single physically intensive role. Stakeholders also stressed the importance of embedding the program within an academic credential, providing lineworkers with opportunities for long-term career advancement into leadership and management roles.

The program currently has foundational equipment, including electrical trainers, a Derrick Digger truck, three support trailers, and a Ford F-150 transferred from Continuing Education to support field instruction. To fully meet industry training standards, additional equipment is required, including pole yard and climbing infrastructure, overhead and underground distribution training components, lineworker tools and PPE, bucket trucks, rigging and lifting equipment, and consumable materials necessary for hands-on lab activities.

Once students complete the Level One certification, they will be able to select from multiple advanced electrical pathways, including Lineworker Level Two certifications. Graduate projections anticipate continued growth in enrollment and completions over the next five years, driven by sustained student interest and strong industry support.

Ms. Jackie Landrum provided funding information and stated based on the information received, performance funding should be recognized in the year it is earned, not when the funds are received, as there is a known lag due to the state funding process. For Year One, the estimated performance funding totals \$152,000. Tuition revenue assumptions are based on 24 incoming students in the first year. Program costs include staffing for one full-time faculty member, two adjuncts, and associated benefits, along with approximately \$125,000 in supplies to support the initiatives discussed by Dean Merrell. In subsequent years, supply costs are projected to decrease to \$36,000 annually.

It is important to note a correction regarding faculty and adjunct costs. An amount of \$50,000 was unintentionally omitted from each category in the original calculations. This oversight occurred while preparations were underway, and accountability for the error is acknowledged. As a result, Year One is projected to operate at an estimated \$120,000 deficit, with no surplus expected. However, when adjusted for the corrected faculty and adjunct costs, the program is projected to generate positive income in the following years.

Dr. Halcomb, Mr. Merrell, and Ms. Landrum responded to questions from the Board of Regents.

Motion: Approve the staff recommendation to proceed with 2026–2027 Freedom to Dream cohort.

Moved by: Regent Adame | Seconded by: Regent Turner

Vote: Carried unanimously, 7–0 by show of hands

In favor: Regents Scott, Adame, Babbili, Crull, Garza, Loeb, and Turner

At 3:42 p.m., the Chair announced that the Board was going into Closed Session as follows:

CLOSED SESSION pursuant to:

a. TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.071: (Consultation with legal counsel), regarding pending or contemplated litigation, or a settlement offer, with possible discussion and action in open session; and the seeking of legal advice from counsel on pending legal or contemplated matters or claims, with possible discussion and action in open session; and,

b. TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.087: (Deliberation Regarding Economic Development), regarding discussion or deliberation of information received from a business prospect with which the College is conducting economic development negotiations and/or the deliberation of an offer of a financial or other incentive to a business prospect, with possible discussion and action in open session; and,

c. TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.074(a)(1): (Personnel matters), regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee.

The Board of Regents reconvened Open Session at 4:28 p.m. with no action taken and the meeting continued.

CALENDAR:

Discussion and possible action related to calendaring dates.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

MINUTES REVIEWED BY GC: /s/ARjr