



**THE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF VALENCIA COLLEGE
REGULAR MEETING**

Minutes

December 7, 2023

Valencia College – East Campus
Building 8, Room 101
and
Zoom Meeting

Members Present

Ms. Beth Smith, Chair
Mr. Michael Sasso, Vice Chair
Mr. John Davis
Mr. Angel de la Portilla
Ms. Tracey Stockwell

Members Absent

Ms. Daisy Lopez-Cid
Mr. John Martinez

Dr. Kathleen Plinske, Secretary of the Board and President of the College

Call to Order

Chair Smith called the Regular Meeting of the District Board of Trustees of Valencia College to order at 9:33 a.m. A quorum was present.

**Approval of Minutes
November 2, 2023
Regular Meeting**

Ms. Stockwell moved to approve the meeting minutes of the November 2, 2023 Regular Meeting, as presented. Mr. de la Portilla seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

President's Report

Dr. Plinske thanked Mr. Joe Battista, Vice President, Workforce, Career and Professional Education, Ms. Carolyn McMorran, Assistant Vice President, Professional and Continuing Education, Mr. Steve Mammino, Manager, Risk Management, and the Transportation and Logistics training program instructors for the opportunity to experience the Valencia's CDL training program and drive a semi-truck.

Dr. Plinske stated that Valencia's Associate in Science Degree Paralegal Program will celebrate its 50th anniversary in Fall 2024. Valencia's paralegal program is the largest program in the state of Florida, and one of the only nine paralegal programs in the state that has been approved by the American Bar Association, the gold standard for paralegal programs nationwide.

Dr. Plinske then recognized Dr. Cathy Mestre, Professor, Paralegal Studies, East Campus, for being an integral part of Valencia's paralegal studies program's success for thirty years. Dr. Mestre secured the program's initial American Bar Association (ABA) approval in 1999. In the process, Dr. Mestre brought together a balanced and experienced Advisory Committee, developed an enhanced practical skills application curriculum, and built the original law library collection.

Dr. Plinske continued by recognizing Ms. Ellen Parker, who serves as General Counsel for Red Lobster. In 1997, as Valencia was preparing to apply for ABA approval, the College was required to establish an advisory committee to comply with ABA guidelines. The advisory committee needed to include at least one member from a corporate general counsel's office. Dr. Mestre contacted Ms. Parker, who graciously volunteered to serve as Chair of the Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee. Ms. Parker continued to serve for fifteen years, lending her time, wisdom, and skills to make Valencia's Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee a shining example of how advisory committees should be structured to enhance and inspire programs at the College.

Dr. Plinske thanked the Board for its participation in the Reaffirmation of Accreditation Committee's site visit activities, held November 13-16, 2023. Dr. Plinske thanked Mr. Darren Smith, Director, Institutional Effectiveness, and his team, for their great work with regard to these activities.

Dr. Plinske shared that Valencia received a \$4.1 million grant from Governor DeSantis' job growth grant fund, to expand the College's robotics and semiconductor lab at the Osceola Campus. This is an addition of \$17.5 million Governor DeSantis awarded to Osceola County for the expansion of NeoCity.

Dr. Plinske stated that Mr. Alex Kelly, Secretary of the Florida Department of Commerce, visited the College's Osceola Campus on November 30, 2023,

where he toured the robotics and semiconductor lab, as well as the optics and photonics lab. Secretary Kelly recognized the College's collaborative efforts to create workforce development opportunities that meet the need of local employers, such as SkyWater Technology and Lockheed Martin.

Dr. Plinske shared that she had been asked to testify before the Florida Senate Committee on Higher Education Policy. Both Orange County Public Schools and Valencia College were invited to speak about their successful partnership in workforce development programs, including the development and utilization of articulation agreements which guarantee college credits for students who complete workforce training.

Dr. Plinske reported that the College continues discussions regarding compliance with new statutes and rules in which became effective after the 2023 Legislative Session, and asked the Board for guidance as Valencia prepares to comply with changes in law related to the College's general education course requirements.

A summary of the provisions of Senate Bill 266 with respect to changes in Florida law affecting general education courses and requirements in public postsecondary institutions was distributed to the Board. A full discussion ensued.

Following full discussion, the Board recommended that the College, in its review of its general education courses, and in preparation for the Board's review and approval of recommendations of changes to the College's general education course requirements at the May 9, 2024 Regular Board Meeting:

1. Reduce the number of institutional general education courses offered, with particular emphasis on the courses that are offered by fewer than 10 FCS/SUS institutions.
2. Ensure that Valencia's institutional general education course offerings reflect the broad, survey nature of general education, avoiding niche or boutique courses, with a focus on preparing students for success in the workforce and in baccalaureate programs.
3. Ensure that Valencia's institutional general education course offerings meet the course standards outlined in 1007.25 F.S. and other requirements outlined in 1007.25 F.S. and 1007.55 F.S.
4. Consider courses that most other FCS/SUS institutions offer in the review and updating of Valencia's institutional general education course offerings.

Faculty Association Report

Dr. Jennifer Lawhon, President, Faculty Association, reported that the East Campus Strategic Planning Town Hall is working on the development of measurable goals toward the College's Strategic Plan. Dr. Lawhon stated that she attended the Valencia's Fall 2023 White Coat Pinning Ceremony

(WCPC), and stated that this ceremony amplifies the value of humanism which exists at the very core of healthcare.

Student Government Association Report

Mr. Andres Perez, Collegewide SGA President, and Ms. Hilda Chan, SGA Senator, East Campus, presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. Mr. Perez and Ms. Chan presented an update on Collegewide SGA activities, and ongoing initiatives.

The Board thanked the SGA leaders for their thoughtful contributions and leadership.

Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

New Business

- 1. Approval of 2024-2025 Student Block Tuition and Fee Rate Schedule:** Mr. Oscar Cristancho Mercado, Chief Financial Officer, presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. Mr. Cristancho Mercado presented the 2024-2025 Student Block Tuition & Fee Rate Schedule to the Board for its consideration and approval. For the eleventh consecutive year, this proposed schedule includes no recommended increase in tuition, or the technology, student financial aid, student activity, and capital improvement fees. These recommended fees are specified in the proposed Fee Schedule, which was distributed to the Board. Following discussion, Mr. de la Portilla moved to approve the 2024-2025 Student Block Tuition and Fee Rate Schedule, as presented. Mr. Sasso seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.
- 2. Valencia College Foundation Annual Audit Review/Affirmation of Certification of Valencia College Foundation:** Mr. Cristancho Mercado presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. Mr. Cristancho Mercado stated that, in accordance with Section 1004.70(6), F.S., each direct-support organization (college foundation) must conduct an annual financial audit which must be submitted to the District Board of Trustees for review. This year, the independent auditor's report was prepared by Berman Hopkins, LLP, which audited the Foundation's financial statements. In its audit report, the independent auditor rendered an unmodified opinion concluding that the financial statements of the Foundation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, are presented fairly in all material aspects in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

As required by law, the Board also reviewed the Foundation's Federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Application for Recognition of Exemption Form (Form 1023) and its most recent Federal IRS Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax Form (Form 990).

Following a discussion, Mr. Sasso moved to accept the Valencia Foundation's Internal Revenue Service Application for Recognition of

Exemption (Form 1023), Internal Revenue Service Return of Organization Exempt form 990, and the Audit report as presented and reviewed, and to reaffirm its official certification that the Foundation is operating in a manner consistent with the goals of Valencia College and in the best interest of the state. Mr. Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

- 3. Financial Aid Technical Consultant – Strata Information Systems (SIG):** Dr. Brandon McKelvey, Executive Vice President, Administrative Services, presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. Dr. McKelvey explained that Valencia desires to enter into an agreement with Strata Information Systems (SIG), to provide Financial Aid Technical consultants to support the technical configurations, integrations, and coding requirements for the operation of the Banner Financial Aid module. Given the heightened complexity of the federal FAFSA Simplification process and its impact on our internal procedures, securing specialized support is imperative.

Valencia leveraged State Board Rule 6A-14.0734 (2)(f), F.A.C., and E&I Cooperative Agreement (CNR01502) to obtain the best possible price with Strata Information Systems (SIG) at a total cost of \$574,800.

Following a discussion, Ms. Stockwell moved to authorize the College to enter into an agreement with Strata Information System, Inc., to provide Financial Aid technical consulting services at a cost of \$574,800. Mr. de la Portilla seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

- 4. Portal Replacement – Path Education, Inc.:** Dr. McKelvey presented the report, which was distributed to the Board. Dr. McKelvey shared that for more than 15 years Valencia College has used a technology product called Luminis, as the infrastructure base for an online portal the College calls Atlas. This Atlas portal serves as a “doorway or portal” to access systems and information that students, faculty, and staff use in their engagement with Valencia. The Luminis product that serves as infrastructure for the Atlas portal is reaching its End-Of-Life (EOL). While no exact date has been provided, the College is anticipating that product support will cease sometime after mid-2024.

On July 21, 2023, the College issued Request for Information (RFI) 2024-01 to request information that would assist the College in understanding options for replacement of Luminis, as well as the current environment and industry standards for this type of software solution. On August 25, 2023, five (5) vendors submitted information: Digital IT LLC, Ellucian Company L.P, Ex Libris North America, Path Education Inc, and

Youngsoft Inc.

When the RFI process was concluded, it was determined that Path Education, Inc and its Pathify product solution would best meet the needs of Valencia College for its replacement of the Luminis portal product.

Following a discussion, Ms. Stockwell moved to authorize the College to enter into an agreement with Path Education, Inc. to procure the Pathify product solution, for a period of three years (with the option of successive one (1) year renewal periods to ensure continuity of operations), at a total combined cost of \$697,065. Mr. Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. Policy Adoption: Dr. William Mallowney, Vice President for Policy and General Counsel, presented the following policies, which were distributed to the Board:

- ***Policy 6Hx28: 2-01 – Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct***
- ***Policy 6Hx28: 2-03 – Animals on Campus***
- ***Policy 6H28: 3B-02 – Pre-Employment Screening and Inprocessing of New Employees***
- ***Policy 6Hx28: 8-03 – Student Code of Conduct***
- ***Policy 6Hx28: 8-11 Academic Integrity***

A full discussion ensued. Following discussion, Mr. Sasso moved to adopt amended Policies 6Hx28: 2-01 Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct; 6Hx28: 2-03 Animals on Campus; 3B-02 Pre-Employment Screening and Inprocessing of Employees; 6Hx28: 8-03 Student Code of Conduct; and 6Hx28: 8-11 Academic Integrity, as presented. Mr. de la Portilla seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Mr. Sasso commended the College continued great work.

A motion was made by Mr. de la Portilla and seconded by Ms. Stockwell to consider, accept, and approve items 6, and 7 under New Business in the manner of a consent agenda. The Board unanimously approved the following items under New Business in the consent agenda, as recommended:

- 6. Additions, Deletions, or Modifications of Courses and Programs**
- 7. Property Deletion**

Reports

Chair Smith stated that the following report items are detailed in the written materials, which have been distributed to the Board:

A. Financial Report
B. Valencia Foundation Report
C. Legislative Implementation Report

Strategic Discussion

Dr. Plinske presented an update on the College’s 2030 Strategic Impact Plan with respect to the Graduation Goal. The written report was distributed to the Board. The presentation included a review of the 2030 Strategic Impact Plan Goal areas, graduation goal, a baseline visualization, graduation goal progress through 2022-2023, Integrated Postsecondary Education Statistics (IPEDS) comparison data, number of degrees awarded, and Florida College System: 2023-23 completers.

Board Comments

The Board members thanked Valencia’s Transportation and Logistics Program team for providing the opportunity to experience the College’s Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) training program and to drive a truck.

Chair Smith shared news of potential legislation at the Federal Government level, to allow Pell grants for workforce programs. Chair Smith thanked Mr. Brandon Arrington, Osceola County Commissioner, and Valencia College team for their work at the Association of Community Colleges (ACCT) Leadership Congress, held in Las Vegas, NV, October 9-12, 2023. Chair Smith praised the College for its Culinary Arts and Hospitality Grand Buffet, held at the Downtown Campus, December 1, 2023.

Trustee Davis commended the College for its work in planning for its implementation of changes in state law regarding general education. Mr. Davis thanked the College for its great partnerships and outreach strategies.

The Board thanked Valencia’s leadership, faculty, and staff for their work.

Adjourn

Chair Smith adjourned the Regular Meeting at 11:18 a.m.

Secretary

Chair