

INFORMATION ITEM

Exercise of Grant of Temporary Emergency Authority by District President

Background

On March 17, 2020, the Collin College Board of Trustees held an emergency Board meeting pursuant to Texas Government Code §551.045. In light of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and upon motion and vote, the Board granted authority to the District President to implement emergency measures as needed for the health, safety, and well-being of Collin College students and employees, secure the College's academic integrity, and support the ongoing operations and workforce of the College. The grant of authority was provided to the District President initially through June 30, 2020. The District President's temporary emergency authority was extended three times, first through January 31, 2021, then June 30, 2021, and finally, January 30, 2022.

Specific Temporary Authority Granted

When the District President's temporary emergency authority was last extended in August 2021, the authority granted encompassed the following category of actions within existing Board-approved budget to address business and academic continuity priorities while responding to the pandemic emergency:

- In the event another shelter-in-place state order is issued, or similar government measures are implemented, examine and ensure continuity of pay on a temporary basis until the next regularly scheduled or emergency board meeting for all College employees for regularly scheduled work hours at either the normal or an approved premium rate of pay, when it is determined that employees should not be present on campus and when neither telecommuting nor working on campus are viable options, or similar personnel actions are warranted.
- Authorize the modification of class schedules, academic calendars, events such as graduations, pinnings, and other gatherings, and related matters as needed;
- Authorize the purchase of additional services or licenses, as required, for vendors such as Zoom, Proctor-U, Canvas, Kahoot, Techsmith, and other technological or educational resources as needed;
- Authorize the implementation of other academic and administrative measures, including but not limited to amending or modifying the college's Restart Plan (related to continuing operations of the College) student retention, and ensuring that the College may expend necessary funds in connection with the implementation of those measures;
- To issue certain refunds of fees or other expenses, as deemed appropriate in response to emergency declarations within Collin County and the College's service area;

- Authorize the purchase of additional Personal Protective Equipment and sanitization supplies, as needed to maintain the college facilities; and
- Authorize the development and implementation of a short-term program to encourage COVID-19 vaccinations, including exploring options for providing direct incentives, up to \$1M for full-time and part-time employees and/or up to \$5M for students utilizing CARES funds, where appropriate.

Action Items

Since March 18, 2020, the District President exercised the grant of emergency authority to accomplish the following significant actions during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Closed campuses starting on March 19, 2020 and extended closure through June 2020 based on various executive orders issued at the time.
- Submitted and received approval verification from SACSCOC on March 23, 2020, to transfer a significant majority of courses to online/distance learning format at the start of the pandemic.
- Revised 2019-2020 Academic Calendar, with appropriate notification to SACSCOC, to ensure continuity of academic programs during the pandemic.
- Directed the creation of a comprehensive plan to ensure that students completed Spring 2020 courses.
- Also directed the creation of a plan for emergency completion of in-person CTE/workforce courses and certain healthcare programs in accordance with applicable state health and safety guidelines.
- Implemented the extension of the course withdrawal dates in Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 to allow students flexibility.
- Resisted petitions and external influences to change the college's grading system to a Pass/Fail system.
- Implemented a plan to offer students a variety of sessions for online, in-person, or hybrid format courses, with continued health and safety conditions in place.
- Implemented Fall 2020 Restart Plan approved by the Board and updates to the Restart Plan as recommended by the college's Restart Task Force.
- Collaborated to petition Congress to reauthorize and provide increased funding for the National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program in order to position the college to respond to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and workforce.

- Secured bond sale of \$350 million cash at 2.657% for a debt of \$302.7 million over 20 years, with a premium of \$49.4 million.
- Approved expenditures authorized under the Higher Education Emergency Relief funds of the federal CARES Act and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA). This funding has been used to provide **\$32,207,512** in direct financial aid grants to students and approximately over **\$19,030,964** in institutional grant expenses to date.
- Developed and implemented the college's Vaccine Incentive Program (VIP) to provide incentives to employees and students who voluntarily received vaccines.
- Ensured continuity of pay for all faculty, staff, and student employees, without resorting to available measures such as furloughs or reductions-in-force of employees.
- Approved measures, such as modified work schedules and travel letters, to allow essential staff to work on campuses or construction work sites.
- Continued search committees and hiring of essential administrators, staff, and faculty for new campuses, while delaying other college-wide hiring.
- Collaborated with AECOM and construction managers to continue essential infrastructure construction work to complete Phase 1 and 2 projects and student housing remediation, and to keep Phase 3 and 4 projects on track.
- Invested in new online resources, including procurement of VPNs, and T-Mobile hotspots, some of which were delivered to our dual credit high schools.
- Approved the implementation of various measures to improve technology access for students, such as setting up a hotline for students who needed help with technology needs and Internet access.
- Continued operations of Student Housing and meals, not forcing students in housing to relocate or find alternative sources for meals, during the pandemic.
- Approved the donation of PPE supplies to hospital clinical partners. Under agreements, approved loaning ventilator equipment to hospital clinical partners.

Resource:

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