



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS
LEE COLLEGE DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
September 18, 2025**

The Board of Regents of the Lee College District met on September 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at John B. Tucker Hall. Chairman Santana called the meeting to order stating that the meeting was duly posted and a quorum was present.

PRESENT: Gilbert Santana, Chairman; Pam Warford, Vice Chair; Mark Himsel, Secretary (virtual); Gina Guillory, Assistant Secretary; Weston Cotten, Daryl Fontenot, Mark Hall, Judy Jirrels (virtual), Heron Thomas
Dr. Lynda Villanueva, President

ABSENT: None

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Regent Weston Cotten said the Invocation and led the Pledge to United States Flag and Texas Flag.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Reo Cummings, Director of TRiO Student Support Services, said TRiO is a federal program created during the 1960s to support first-generation students, low-income students, or students with documented disabilities, helping to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed in higher education. Lee College is the recipient of a \$1.3 million TRiO grant for a five-year period, he said.

Through TRiO, 10 students and three chaperones went on a cultural and academic enrichment trip this summer to Boston, Mr. Cummings said, naming cultural, historical and educational destinations they visited. For many, this was their first time to travel by plane, and to travel outside of Texas. Students had to meet academic standards and other criteria to qualify for the trip, he said.

Student Deja Ballar, who is pursuing an associate degree in cybersecurity, said the trip to Boston exposed her to academic opportunities, including visits to Harvard University and Boston College where she spoke with students. She said she gained confidence to get out into the world by herself, realizes she has much yet to experience, and knows she can achieve great things she had not thought were possible. Memorable experiences included exploring the town of Salem, visiting the ship USS Constitution, and getting to know fellow Lee College students she had never before met.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Kids at College had a record-breaking summer, with 857 campers – more than double the previous record, said Marsha Tuha, Executive Director of Workforce & Community Development. She recognized Jordan Smith, Program Manager for Continuing Education and Senior Programs, and Interim Co-Manager of Kids at College, and Huda Eltayeb, who started at Lee College in July as Program Manager for Kids at College, for their work in making this milestone possible.

Ms. Smith said Kids at College provided 81 summer camp opportunities, from the beginning of June through the end of July for children in Kindergarten through grade 12. Offerings include arts

& crafts, reading, science & engineering, sports, and specialty programs such as cosmetology, gardening, and Humane Heroes. A scholarship program, funded by Lee College Foundation, provided \$4,550 for 149 scholarships, averaging \$62 per award, Ms. Smith said.

Ms. Eltayeb introduced Khodi Beville, a young child who participated; Savannah Shade, Khodi's mother; Heather Lussier, whose grandchildren participated; and Ava Palfrey, an older child who participated. Khodi said Lego camp was his favorite, and that he hopes to attend camps next year. His mother, Ms. Shade, said she appreciated the flexible schedule, the variety of opportunities, and that Kids at College is available to children as young as Khodi. Kindergarten camp positively affected Khodi's start to school this fall, she said, and a scholarship made it possible for him to participate in four camps, rather than just one. Ms. Lussier said her grandchildren visiting from Arizona each attended two camps – clay creations and photography for the teenager; young aviators and sports for the nine-year-old. Ava Palfrey attended cosmetology, Humane Heroes and hair braiding, learning new techniques for working with hair, and learning how to interact with and take care of animals in Humane Heroes.

86.25

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES

Regent Cotten made a motion, seconded by Regent Warford, that the Board approve the minutes for Special Board Meeting – Virtual, August 12, 2025; Building Committee Meeting, August 20, 2025; Special Board Meeting – Tour, August 20, 2025; Public Hearing – Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget, August 21, 2025; Board Meeting, August 21, 2025; Policy Committee Meeting, August 26, 2025.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN

Chairman Santana reported the Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT) conference in Austin included opportunities to attend informative sessions, and to collaborate with fellow Regents and trustees from across Texas. He said a new addition to the conference included importance of the board liaison position; Lee College's David Mohlman was a presenter for one of those sessions. The 2026 CCATT annual conference will be in Baytown at the Hyatt Regency.

Regent Hall commented that former Lee College administrator Dr. Christy Ponce made an excellent presentation at the conference about exciting changes at Temple College, where she works as President. Chairman Santana added that DeDe Griffith, a Vice President at Temple College, also previously worked at Lee College, and Regent Warford named Clarissa Martinez and Roberta Wright as former Lee College employees now working for Temple College.

Lee College Foundation Gala is Friday, Sept. 26, Chairman Santana said. He reported he and Regent Warford attended the Gulf Coast Industry Forum today in Pasadena, and noted the value in opportunities for Lee College and other area colleges to collaborate with industry partners. Next home match for the women's volleyball team is Tuesday, Sept. 23, Chairman Santana said.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Building Committee – Committee Chair Daryl Fontenot said the committee met yesterday and heard an update on on-going projects, and on facilities master plan work. A facilities master plan report to the full board is anticipated at an upcoming board meeting, he said.
- Policy Committee – Committee Chair Mark Hall reported the committee met August 26 and discussed TASB Update 49 policy recommendations for action later in this meeting, as well

as other local policy updates involving capitalization thresholds. Jacob Atkin, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Finance, elaborated on individual and collective asset purchases. Purchasing acquisition thresholds also are increased, Regent Hall said.

- **Audit & Investment Committee** – On behalf of Committee Chair Judy Jirrels, Regent Himsel reported the committee met September 2, and reviewed fiscal year 2025 internal audit outcomes, and discussed on-going and upcoming audits for fiscal year 2026. Selection of a new ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) solution to replace PeopleSoft is targeted for completion by December, with implementation to begin in January, he said. Also, he said a proposed regulation to establish consistent risk/control definitions and reporting standards is under development, intended for eventual approval by the full board.

Building and Facilities – Serving on the Building Committee are Daryl Fontenot, Chair; Mark Himsel and Pam Warford

Policy Committee – Serving on the Policy Committee are Mark Hall, Chair; Weston Cotten and Heron Thomas

Audit and Investment Committee – Serving on the Audit and Investment Committee are Judy Jirrels, Chair; Gina Guillory, and Mark Himsel

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

- **Enrollment** – Overall enrollment is flat – a difference of 13 students – compared to last year, Dr. Villanueva reported. At the main campus, enrollment is up by 4% compared to last year. She expressed pride in efforts by the entire Lee College team to ensure as many students as possible are enrolled, for the purpose of improving the quality of their lives.
- **Security Enhancements** – Dr. Villanueva read a note to the Board of Regents from Eric Williams, Chief of Security. In the note, the Chief thanked the board for its support, noting that the combination of camera upgrades, emergency alert badges, and license plate readers makes Lee College first in Texas to have all three of these security strategies, with manufacturers reporting demand on the part of other clients to follow Lee College's lead.
- **Termination of Federal Grant Funding** – The U.S. Department of Education has terminated \$1/3 of a billion in funding that had been appropriated for Hispanic-serving institutions and other minority-serving institutions, Dr. Villanueva reported. At this time, the college has one grant in this category which has \$150,000 remaining, she said. Loss of this funding source will not deter the college's mission to serve students with educational support services they need to succeed, Dr. Villanueva stated.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Resignations and Retirements – Dr. Lynda Villanueva, President

Mandy Jordan, Faculty, Speech – Resignation

Financial Report – Jacob Atkin, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Finance

Mr. Atkin cautioned that the financial report for the end of August does not represent the final financial position for FY 2025. A final report will be presented to the board after all closing entries for FY 2025 are completed and audited, he said.

Cash position as of August 31 includes \$17 million in operating funds, \$43 million in restricted funds, and \$8 million of other funds intended for capital improvement projects, Mr. Atkin said.

Essentially all revenue has been collected for FY 2025; transactions that still need to post are under expenses, Mr. Atkin said. Total revenue is a little over what was budgeted for the year – a shortfall of \$1.5 million in tax revenue was offset by tuition & fee income and other local income, he said.

Under expenses, salaries & benefits came in under budget. This, along with operating expense variants, indicates a surplus of up to \$8 million, Mr. Atkin said. Anticipating expenses in August for FY 2025 that will post in September, actual surplus should be \$6 million to \$7 million, he said. He cited several examples of line items that had surplus built in for FY 2025, for which the surplus has been eliminated in the FY 2026 budget.

Mr. Atkin discussed capital projects work completed during August. Regarding restricted funds, he said reimbursement for federally funded programs is being delayed – as a result there is more uneasiness than ever before as to whether federal grants/contracts commitments will be honored.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Isaac made references to phone conversations between a Regent and The Baytown Sun, called for establishment of a student newspaper, called for video recording of Board of Regents meetings, said investigations and an ethics committee are needed, made references to previous public comment sessions, and urged support for Harris County Transit.

Regent Hall took exception to Mr. Isaac's comments; Chairman Santana acknowledged this.

ITEMS OF ACTION

A. PERSONNEL

87.25 CONSENT Agenda – Consideration of New Hires

The Administration recommends that the Board approve the new hires as presented:

Mr. Cody Burris, Academic Advisor

Mr. Adam Flores, Academic Advisor

Regent Guillory made a motion, seconded by Regent Fontenot, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

B. NEW BUSINESS

88.25 Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the Establishment and Ratification of the Faculty Assembly in Accordance with Senate Bill 37 of the 89th Texas Legislative Session

The Administration recommends that the Board adopt this resolution.

After Chairman Santana read the resolution, Regent Warford made a motion, seconded by Regent Hall, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

89.25 Consideration of Adoption of Board Policy Revisions for Local Policies

The Administration and Board Policy Committee recommend that the Board approve and adopt the revisions to Local Board Policies as presented and recommended by Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Update 49, and Two Other Policies.

Regent Hall made a motion, seconded by Regent Cotten, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

90.25 Consideration of Redundant Firewalls Upgrade with Solid Border, Inc.

The Administration recommends that the Board authorize the President or her designee to negotiate final terms and approve a contract with Solid Border, Inc., in the amount of \$124,337.23.

Regent Guillory made a motion, seconded by Regent Cotten, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

91.25 Consideration of Oracle PeopleSoft Perpetual License Verification Form

The Administration recommends that the Board authorize the President or her designee to negotiate final terms and approve the amount of \$115,326.58 to Oracle America, Inc.

Regent Warford made a motion, seconded by Regent Fontenot, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

92.25 Consideration of Oracle PeopleSoft License and Technical Support Services

The Administration recommends that the Board authorize the President or her designee to negotiate final terms and approve the annual Oracle PeopleSoft Support Contract in the amount of \$201,964.59.

Regent Guillory made a motion, seconded by Regent Cotten, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

93.25 Consideration of Professional Services Contract with GlobalSource

The Administration recommends that the Board authorize the President or her designee to negotiate final terms and approve the contract with GlobalSource for PeopleSoft Consulting Services for an annual amount not to exceed \$295,000.

Regent Warford made a motion, seconded by Regent Cotten, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

94.25 Consideration and Approval of Resolution Adopting the Certified Appraisal Rolls for Chambers and Harris Counties for the 2025 Tax Roll Year

The Administration recommends in accordance with Section 26.04 of the State Property Tax Code that the governing board receive the submission and issue the attached resolution adopting the 2025 Certified Tax Appraisal Roll for Chambers County, and the Harris County Certified Tax Appraisal Rolls.

Regent Fontenot made a motion, seconded by Regent Cotten, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

95.25 Consideration of a Proposed Tax Rate and Setting Date for a Public Meeting to Adopt Tax Rate for the 2025-26 Fiscal Year

The Administration recommends, in accordance with current legislation, that the Board propose by recorded vote the 2025 proposed tax rate for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, and set the date for a public meeting for adoption of the proposed 2025-2026 tax rate.

Regent Warford made a motion, seconded by Regent Fontenot, that the Board approve the Administration's recommendation.

Invited forward by Chairman Santana, Mr. Atkin presented background and rationale for the tax rate as proposed. He explained the no-new-revenue rate, calculation of certified property values, explained the voter-approval rate, and effects of fluctuating property value estimates on the budgeting process. The no-new-revenue rate is 0.19057 per \$100 valuation, and the voter-approval rate is 0.18706 per \$100 valuation, he said.

The tax rate of 0.19510 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year was projected to generate \$40,571,501 in tax revenue, and actually generated \$40,130,996, Mr. Atkin said. In contrast, the proposed tax rate of 0.18706 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is projected to generate \$39,822,401 in tax revenue, he said.

Regent Hall advocated for 0.18320, as indicated in the board-approved FY 2026 budget, saying the college's financial position and reserves can support the corresponding decrease in tax revenue. He said he cannot support a rate higher than that. Regent Warford said the college has unmet needs, and must be prepared to respond to unanticipated developments and opportunities. Regent Fontenot noted the rate of 0.18706 now being proposed is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cent less than the 2024-2025 tax rate of 0.19510. Regent Cotten advocated for trusting persons responsible for providing the numbers and making recommendations. Regent Hall said those recommendations have resulted in consistent budget surpluses in recent years.

Answering a question by Regent Thomas, Mr. Atkin said decreasing the proposed 0.18706 rate by 0.004, down to 0.18320, would decrease tax revenue by about \$900,000. He said backfilling with surplus from 2024-2025 would limit funds available both to continue to maintain reserves, and to continue catching up on deferred maintenance and capital improvements. Longer term, future tax rate calculations will be affected, to the extent the rate is decreased. He said he strongly recommends adoption of 0.18706 this year.

Answering a question by Regent Warford, Dr. Villanueva discussed uncertainties with current and future federal grant funding. Also, she said state funding for 2025-2026 will decrease by \$1.8 million, compared to 2024-2025, and should not be expected to remain stable.

Answering a question by Regent Guillory, a decrease of 0.004 in the proposed tax rate would save the average homeowner about \$1 per month, Mr. Atkin said. Chairman Santana indicated this would add only slightly to savings already in the drop from 0.19510 to the proposed 0.18706.

Chairman Santana discussed accomplishments by the college in recent years while providing some tax rate cuts – accomplishments not possible had those tax rate cuts been greater.

Regent Guillory asked what the estimated budget surplus would be on a tax rate of 0.18706. The most recent decrease in property valuations already will require budget decrease adjustments, Mr. Atkin said, because \$924,000 less in tax revenue will be generated than budgeted. A tax rate of 0.18320 would decrease tax revenue by roughly \$1 million more, with an end result of no budget surplus, he said. Line items that previously built in a surplus were altered to remove that surplus during budget planning this year, he said.

The motion passed 7-2, with Regents Hall and Himsel dissenting.

(Regent Jirrels then discontinued virtual participation, and did not rejoin the meeting. Regent Himsel participated remotely in the Executive Session.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Regents closed the Open Session at 7:50 p.m. and convened into Executive Session at 7:54 p.m. in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act regarding:

1. Consult with Board Attorney regarding legal advice on any item on the agenda. [TX Gov't Code § 551.071]
2. Discussion of Lee College President's duties and responsibilities. [TX Gov't Code § 551.071]

No action is taken while the Board is recessed into Executive Session.

The Board ended Executive Session at 8:19 p.m. and reconvened into Open Session at 8:20 p.m.

MATTERS OF CONCERN FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Regent Hall noted the impressive presentation at CCATT by Dr. Christy Ponce and, in anticipation of facilities planning by Lee College, he suggested the board may want to consider a visit to Temple College. Chairman Santana and Regent Fontenot noted the same idea came up yesterday during the Building Committee meeting. They indicated such a visit would be premature at this time, but could be considered if appropriate, depending on results of the Lee College facilities master plan.

Regent Cotten encouraged contact with The Chinquapin School to investigate the possibility of dual credit offerings with Lee College.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Santana declared the meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Chairman, Board of Regents

Secretary, Board of Regents