

MINUTES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES FEATHER RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

President Elliott called the Special Meeting of the Feather River Community College District Board of Trustees to order at 9:01 a.m. on Tuesday, March 4, 2010 at Feather River College, Equine Studies Instructional Classroom, 570 Golden Eagle Avenue, Quincy, California.

Trustees present: Elliott, Schramel, Sheehan, West, Student Trustee Camp
Trustees absent: Shamberger

The regular and consent agenda for the March 4, 2010 Special Meeting at Feather River College, Equine Studies Instructional Classroom, 570 Golden Eagle Avenue, Quincy, California was approved as presented, (Sheehan/Schramel) unanimous.

A. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

Merle Trueblood, Director of Athletic Operations and Events, stated that he wanted to go forward with thought processes that need to be taken into account (with regards to agenda item C2a, Consideration of Resolution Regarding Academic Reduction in Force). He indicated that he has been working with the Council on Instruction to increase the accountability of athletics throughout its instruction model. He also stated that he wanted to remind those present that he has completed several presentations on Title IX and the important role that it plays currently and will in the future with regards to the planning decisions, litigation, and other priorities that affect the institution. Mr. Trueblood also stated that there had been a student forum on March 3, 2010 and that approximately 125 students attended the event to show their concern and let the campus know who they are and how they feel about the current situation.

Guy McNett, member of the public, stated that he has enrolled in classes taught by Dr. Joan Parkin, English Instructor, and Dr. Derek Lerch, Environmental Studies and Earth Sciences Instructor, and he has found them both to be exceptional members of the faculty at Feather River College. He also stated that as these faculty members are considered for tenure, it is his hope that the College will continue to be able to attract and retain this caliber of teaching individual in the future. He requested that the Board of Trustees consider these issues when making decisions regarding faculty and program reductions.

Dianne Lipscomb, Art Instructor, stated that she is aware that this is a difficult time for the College and that Ron Taylor, Superintendent/President, is doing his best to deal with the situation. She also stated that she feels it is very

important that the College not move forward with layoffs as it sends a message of weakness and lack of institutional cohesion to the community. Ms. Lipscomb also stated that Feather River College is extremely important to the community and that staff layoffs will convey a message to the citizens of Plumas County that the institution lacks the ability to problem solve and is unable to serve the students that enroll in its classes.

Mike Welser, Business Instructor and Faculty Union President, addressed agenda items B1a and B1b, Approval of Personnel Requisitions and Personnel Actions and agenda item C2a, Resolution for Consideration of Academic Reduction in Force. He stated that the agenda contained requests for approval of new positions and the renewal of administrator contracts in the face of also being asked to consider a resolution regarding a possible academic reduction in force. He additionally addressed handouts that had just been provided to the Board and he explained that the handouts, in terms of the programs recommended for elimination, provide approximately 250 FTE for the college and that the elimination of these programs would cut this revenue. Mr. Welser pointed out that the next handout indicated that there were twenty-four full-time faculty members at the College in 1993-1994 when there was 858 FTE, and that currently there are still twenty-four full-time faculty members with 1,559 FTE. He also stated that the ending fund balance was \$2,041,000 which indicates there are contingency funds available. He also stated that included in this ending fund balance, was \$1,347,000 that the Board of Trustees had decided to set aside in a self-insurance fund, that is really part of a reserve, and that the faculty union feels some of this funding could be used to solve the institution's budgetary problems. Mr. Welser also stated that another \$269,000 (documented in one of the handouts) is part of an enterprise fund balance as part of the bookstore that has never been this high. He also stated that another document provided to the Board reflects that the institution's entire budget amounts to approximately 15.9 million dollars and that if the institution can't find a way to spend 15.9 million dollars properly then the budget process needs to be examined. In closing remarks, Mr. Welser also noted that in terms of actual figures two people retired this year and one person left the institution amounting to a \$69,000 savings in faculty salaries this year and there would be approximately \$157,000 in savings if some of the new positions weren't hired and were filled with associate faculty. He also stated that the list of programs slated for elimination was not properly vetted even amongst the administrators and that there would be other consequences if the action was taken.

Tom Davis, Library Director, spoke with regards to agenda item C2a, Consideration of Resolution for Academic Reduction in Force, specifically item #4, the elimination of the equivalent of 1.0 F.T.E., Library Science. He stated that it has only been a month since the Board of Trustees received its latest letter from the Accreditation Committee continuing the College on warning status. He stated that the warning status notification is due in large part to the college's continued failure to integrate planning and budget. Mr. Davis also stated that he is aware that there are significant budget issues at hand, but that he has a much greater difficulty understanding how the decision that would eliminate the position of Library Director is integrated with the planning process. He elaborated by stating that even though the position of the Library Director is not fully appreciated in house, it is appreciated by the

Accreditation Committee and is addressed specifically in accreditation standard IIc that addresses instructional support services delivered by the library to all programs on campus. Mr. Davis also stated that he believes that one of the primary goals of the Board is to see that the institution returns itself to a healthy accreditation status and that he did not believe that the elimination of the only librarian position on campus would render this a successful effort.

Judith Andrews, Administrative Office Management (AOM) Instructor, stated that she is the only full time instructor for AOM and she provided the Board with information that supports the fact that one of the missions of Feather River College is career and technical degrees and certificates. She stated that if the AOM program is eliminated, many of the career and technical courses that are offered would also end. She also stated that she recently attended a Western Business Education Association Conference attended by educators from eleven territories, states, and provinces and that the sessions all covered employability in some way and if the AOM Program is eliminated, the very types of employability skills and competencies that are needed in the work force would suffer. Ms. Andrews read emails from students regarding the possible elimination of the AOM Program and in closing remarks she stated that there needs to be a full explanation of what a reduction of one F.T.E. means to a program and what effect this reduction will have on other full-time faculty, students, and the college as a whole.

Steve Mooshagian, Head Football Coach, stated that he would like to echo the sentiments of his colleagues when he states that he is against elimination of programs. He indicated that he has learned through his years of coaching that common sense overrides all rules and that the decision to seek approval to eliminate programs and opportunities that serve 250 students is not a common sense approach to a solution. Mr. Mooshagian requested that the Board of Trustees vote no on the resolution seeking approval to consider an academic reduction in force.

Tamara Norton, student worker and member of the public, stated that she had attended the student forum on March 3, 2010 and informed Dr. Taylor during that discussion that she would be unable to adequately perform her job without the guidance of Tom Davis. She provided those present with a brief overview of the reference work and other professional work that Mr. Davis does for students and employees. She also agreed that the decision to cut programs does not make sense and that the mere proposal of such cuts is causing chaos within classrooms and in the community.

Heidi Von Dunker, student and member of the public, provided public comment in opposition to agenda item C2a. She indicated that the 125 students who attended the student forum on March 3, 2010 were a ten percent slice of the student population that have an opinion on the proposed cuts and how these reductions would affect employees and their own abilities to receive their degrees. She requested that the Board of Trustees delay their decision on the vote for academic reduction in force for ten days so additional information could be discovered and provided on the issue.

B. CONSENT AGENDA

Personnel Requisitions and Personnel Actions were approved as presented, (Sheehan/West) unanimous.

C. REGULAR AGENDA

*** 1. Motion Items**

a) Michael Bagley, Chief Instructional Officer, requested Approval to Grant Tenure. He stated that during the 2009-2010 academic year, two faculty members completed all requirements and standards for the four year process of tenure. He further stated that Dr. Derek Lerch, Environmental Studies & Earth Sciences Instructor, and Dr. Joan Parkin, English Instructor, have made steady improvement and growth in their positions and have been recommended for tenure by their respective tenure committees, the Chief Instructional Officer, and the Superintendent/President. There being no objection or further discussion, the request for Approval of Tenure was approved as presented, (Schramel/Sheehan) unanimous.

b) Ron Taylor requested Approval of Nomination – Outstanding Classified Employee of the Year. He stated that Rose Cortez is the employee and nominee that has been selected by the classified unit and that thorough documentation in support of the nomination had been attached for Board review. There being no objection or further discussion, the request for Approval of Nomination – Outstanding Classified Employee of the Year was approved as presented, (Sheehan/Camp) unanimous.

c) Ron Taylor, Superintendent/President, requested Approval of Support for Broadband Project. He stated that the grant proposal by a three-county consortium that includes other business and district entities will be submitted with the aim of bringing additional broadband access to Sierra, Lassen, and Plumas Counties. He also stated that in order for the application to be successful they need support from institutions like community colleges and hospitals and he requested Board approval of the request. After further discussion and there being no objection, the request for Approval of Support for Broadband Project was approved as presented, (Sheehan/Schramel) unanimous.

***Roll Call Items**

a) Ron Taylor requested approval of Resolution #09/10-21 – Consideration of Resolution Regarding Academic Reduction in Force (4.5 F.T.E. – Layoff). He stated that he was glad to have had the opportunity to speak to so many of the students that attended the March 3, 2010 forum on this issue and that these types of forums as well as public comment heard in the meeting earlier are an important part of the budget process. He indicated that although he was in agreement with many of the comments made during the public discussion, this does not change the fact that the institution finds itself in a state budget crisis that is not of its own making. He also stated that even though there are some things that the college can do in relation to the crisis,

the issue is much broader than just Feather River College and that neighboring colleges are also considering varying degrees of cuts to programs. There was further discussion regarding the issue, and Dr. Taylor commented that until the state budget crisis is resolved the institution will likely continue to experience difficulty and uncertainty. He also stated that in an effort to reduce the uncertainty within our ability one of the primary objectives would be to bring the 2010-2011 budget into balance. Dr. Taylor also reported that currently the institution is operating in the red by approximately \$614,000 and that to address the gap between expenditures and revenues the college must implement reductions. He indicated that his recommendation for consideration of an academic reduction in force is a precautionary action and one that he hopes does not have to be implemented. He additionally stated that he empathizes profoundly with the anxiety that this action is causing to faculty, their families, and students currently enrolled in programs, but the long-term survival of the college and its ability to fulfill its mission is critical. Dr. Taylor also reported that he does intend to work with the staff to consider all options between now and the time the motion would be implemented, assuming it is approved.

Trustee Sheehan requested information on the means of implementation assuming the resolution was passed and Dr. Taylor replied that there are a number of legal options that the employees affected would have including a hearing before an administrative law judge where both sides would present argument to verify whether or not the District has the right to proceed with the action.

Chris Connell, Academic Senate President, stated that he does not support the resolution before the Board and that he has discussed his feelings on the topic with Dr. Taylor. He also stated that to cut faculty positions at this point will have effects that are unpredictable. Dr. Connell also stated that he has listened to comments from students indicating that they are leaving Feather River College because of a lack of options and a lack classes and that he considers reducing options for students even more a dangerous gamble. Dr. Connell also addressed the recovery time involved once a program has been eliminated. He reported that legally the college has to wait thirty-nine months before a program that has been cut can be reinstated and it has been his experience that it takes a program three years to become established so it realistically would take approximately six years before a program could be reestablished once it was eliminated. He also stated that although these are serious times, other ways to resolve the issue need to be considered. Dr. Connell also stated that the numbers Dr. Taylor used to develop his program reduction recommendations are in serious error, especially with regards to Outdoor Recreation Leadership. He urged the Board of Trustees to consider the ramifications of their decision, and he noted that if it was Dr. Taylor's intention to put the College on notice with the regards to the seriousness of the situation, he has made his point. Dr. Connell requested that the Board of Trustees vote no on agenda item C2a.

Jodi Beynon, Classified Senate President, stated that she has been hesitant to speak on the issue because she is in full support of all the academic and athletic programs. She also explained that she feels that the downside of the Board not approving the resolution request needs to be brought forward and

made public. Ms. Beynon further stated that if the institution is indeed facing a budget shortfall, the cuts are going to need to come from somewhere and if the resolution is not passed then no reduction can be implemented on the faculty side which would mean the cuts would fall on the classified staff and student employment program.

Trustee West stated that she appreciated everyone's attendance at the meeting and the interest and concern that staff and students show for Feather River College. She also stated that ultimately the Board of Trustees bears the responsibility of the future of the college and she additionally acknowledged the serious problems now facing the state and the nation. Trustee West extended her appreciation to those present for their time, energy, and passion for the serious issues that Feather River College is facing as it moves forward.

Trustee Sheehan responded to Steve Mooshagian's concerns about the football program and he stated that this situation presents itself because the Board and the administration feels the need to adhere to a state law that applies only to tenured faculty. He explained that in order to do this faculty need to be advised by March 15th regarding any reductions and it is for this reason only that action is being considered. He additionally indicated that he is not tied to acting on the resolution today and that he is open to having another meeting prior to March 15, 2010 to review serious and specific proposals presented by representatives of the bargaining units and the administration in an attempt to close the gap and an agreement, in general terms, of within \$200,000 of what the gap is. There was additional discussion regarding the budget process and options open to the District, and Board members listened to additional public comment in opposition of the resolution. After final remarks, Resolution ##09/10-21 failed by the following roll call vote and no action was taken.

Ayes: Elliott, West
Noes: Schramel, Sheehan, Camp
Absent: Shamberger
Abstain: None

Trustee Sheehan stated that his no vote on the resolution included a request to schedule another Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees to review substantive proposals on the budget shortfall. After further discussion, Tuesday, March 9, 2010 was selected as a possible meeting time. Dr. Taylor indicated that he would unavoidably be out of town but would be available to connect to the meeting via conference call.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

RT/ch