



Board Meeting (held via Zoom)
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2024
6:00PM - 8:25PM

Members Present:

Hector Torres, Chair
Robbie Dean, Vice-Chair & Treasurer
Allison R. Kokkoros, Member
Ana Mejia, Secretary
Johan Uvin, Member
Larry Villegas-Pérez, Member
John Goodman, Member (joined at 6:12pm)
Giovanni Delfino, Member
Yeshimebeth Belay, Member (joined at 6:18pm)

Members Absent:

Vilma Rosario, Member

Staff:

Angela Medina, Chief Operations Officer
Chrissey Klockner, Chief of Staff
Chelsea Bradford, HSC Principal and Interim Co-Chief Academic Officer
Elani Lawrence, SGC Principal and Interim Co-Chief Academic Officer
Karla Vasconez, Manager, Executive Administration
Robert M. Skelton, General Counsel

Other:

Mike Mesterharm, EdOps

Quorum: Yes

Welcome & Pre-Meeting Announcements

Board Chair Hector Torres provided opening comments and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm.

Review of Agenda

Mr. Torres asked if there were any proposed changes to the agenda previously sent to the Board. Board members did not propose any changes to the agenda.

Public Comment Period by members of school community

Mr. Torres confirmed that no members of the public had signed up to give comments during the Public Comment Period.

Consent Agenda Approval

The following items were brought forward for approval as part of the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of the Board’s regular meeting held on February 28, 2024.

Mr. Dean moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and Ms. Mejia seconded the motion. Following the invitation for discussion on the motion, a roll call vote was conducted, and the Consent Agenda item was approved unanimously.

Mr. Torres then requested that Mr. Dean provide a summary of the work conducted by the Board-Staff Task Force. Mr. Dean stated that the task force, which consisted of board members, teachers and staff members, met over two months and had very rich discussions about the duties of the board and about ways to increase interactions among the board, faculty and staff members. The Executive Summary shared with the board outlines the task force’s recommendations, which will be discussed in closed session.

Mission Moment

Ms. Kokkoros then introduced Ernest Yombo, Assistant Principal at the Sonia Gutierrez campus. Mr. Yombo said that he has been with the School for 6 years, and that he is glad to be in the place to serve his people. The students are him, and their joint mission is to better themselves. He works with the GED and ESL programs, and he checks on all of the students, even going to their homes, to make sure that the students are engaged and continuing their education. He wants to show that we care about the students. When the teachers needed additional classroom help, he reached out to American University and asked for student volunteers, and AU has provided 20 student volunteers since last semester. He is proud to be part of the School. Ms. Kokkoros noted that Mr. Yombo is always greeting the students when they enter for classes and that he is multi-lingual.

Mr. Torres and Mr. Dean thanked Mr. Yombo for his presentation.

CEO Report

CEO Allison Kokkoros referred to materials shared in advance and noted the following highlights in her report. Ms. Kokkoros also noted that, at this time in the School year, there is little new data to share until after the spring semester ends:

- The School’s 50th Anniversary Gala was a great success, and it was heart-warming to see the love, warmth and pride in the School for the efforts to educate over 80,000 students and to honor Sonia Gutierrez, Unidos and the Raza Development Fund. Ms. Uvin and Mr. Torres expressed their appreciation for the event, and Mr. Goodman noted the significance of Mayor Bowser’s presence there.
- The Gala also far exceeded its fundraising goals, which will be discussed later in the Strategic Planning & Oversight Committee report.
- Dr. Freso-Moore, the School’s Chief Academic Officer will be out of the office on extended medical leave through mid-August. Elani Lawrence and Chelsea Bradford are serving as interim co-CAO’s and are working very well together. In general, Ms. Bradford is responsible for curriculum, assessment, registration and attendance, and Ms. Lawrence

is responsible for learning, evaluation, compliance and board reporting. In addition, Ms. Kokkoros and Angela Medina, COO, have assumed some of the oversight for the role until Dr. Fresno-Moore returns. Ms. Kokkoros noted that she will send the Board an update with more details about the delegation of the various functions.

- Ms. Lawrence stated that she is also working with teachers and students affected by the wind-down of the Virtual Demonstration Pilot, and working on overall outreach to all existing students for retention and to the community for new students. There were about 200 students in the pilot program, in ESL classes in levels 1 through 8. Mr. Torres asked about the teachers affected, and Ms. Lawrence noted that one such teacher indicated that they may not return to the school in the fall.
- Ms. Bradford stated that she is working with faculty to strengthen the hybrid model and to develop a data driven culture that makes data driven instructional decisions. She noted that our students need more support services, and that she is working with the partnership with Georgetown University to understand best practices in the virtual space, and on other improvements. Ms. Kokkoros noted the importance of sharing performance data with faculty and helping them understand and use the data. Mr. Villegas-Pérez asked whether the DEIB Advocacy Group and other staff groups were involved in the decision-making rubric, and Ms. Kokkoros advised that the DEIB Advocacy Group was working to center the student voice in our work.
- Ms. Kokkoros noted that staff retention was high and voluntary turnover was low as shown in the board dashboard; however, those numbers could shift after the end of the semester when faculty traditionally decide if they might move on.
- Mr. Kokkoros then focused on the School's advocacy efforts. She noted that the School was included in the DC Digital Equity Plan, which will guide how federal funds are allocated. She also thanked Mr. Torres and Ms. Mejia for presenting at the DC Council budget hearings, which was very good for visibility and relationship building. The DC budget is still pending and may require additional advocacy efforts.
- Mr. Torres then acknowledged Ms. Kokkoros' nearly 30 years of service to the School.
- Mr. Uvin requested an update on the AIR project, and Ms. Kokkoros responded that she and Mr. Uvin will soon have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft final report.

Financial Report

Mr. Dean, accompanied by Mr. Mesterharm of EdOps, presented the financial report as of March 31, 2024.

- Revenue is over budget due increased enrollment and fundraising which exceeded its goal before the Gala event. The proceeds from the Gala are not included in the current projections.
- Investment returns have been very strong, both in the increased fair market value of the portfolio and with dividends and interest. This line item is \$1.2 million over budget, although the fair market value could change with market fluctuations.
- Salary expenses are about \$700,000 under budget due to vacancies. These savings are somewhat offset by additional contractor expenses. In addition, salary costs will spike at the end of the fiscal year when the rest of salary expense for the 10-month employees who are paid over 12 months is recognized.

- Benefits costs are over budget, and the Finance department is investigating why this has occurred.
- Student data costs are significantly under budget.
- Overall, the School is projecting about \$3.9 million surplus, but additional fiscal year end expenses may reduce this amount. The School expects to make an investment back into reserves as required by the strategic plan.

The Board took a break at 7:05pm.

Finance & Development Committee

Mr. Delfino noted the following:

- The budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year will be presented to the Board on June 12 at the special board meeting.
- The School is on track to present and file all deliverables on time.
- The budget for FY 25 is based on the DC budget presented by the DC Mayor's Office. It may change as the DC Council continues its deliberations on the DC budget.
- The School's budget projects significant net income for next year, but the School may not be as fortunate in future years, so the budget is conservative, especially around staffing expenses.
- 70% of the board has participated in the School's fundraising efforts and Mr. Delfino asked that all members donate an amount that is meaningful to them. Ms. Klockner noted that grant-making organizations do ask for data on giving by the board.

Strategic Planning and Oversight Committee

Mr. Uvin noted the following:

- Ms. Lawrence had provided the Committee with a report on academic progress, and that Ms. Kokkoros had provided an update on the interim CAO plan.
- Mr. Uvin noted that he is excited about the Compass study progress, and that we should have the final report by the June board meeting.
- Ms. Klockner noted that the School is on track on progress toward our 2025 Strategic Plan goals. The School has already achieved its 3-year enrollment target; and has completed its roles and responsibilities work. The School continues its work on documenting its standard operating procedures.
- Ms. Klockner also noted that the Gala raised about \$374,000, which was over its target, and that the total contributions thus far for the fiscal year was \$1.17 million. She further noted and appreciated that everyone was involved in the fundraising effort.

Governance and Nominating Committee

Mr. Goodman noted the following:

- The Governance and Nominating Committee has reviewed the terms of existing board members and has been focusing on the skills and expertise that new board members could bring to enhance the performance of the Board.
- The committee realized that it did not have a good inventory of the current board members' expertise, and that the last data available was from a consultant's work from School Year 2021-22. In addition, that data was anonymous, and there have been several new board members since then.

- To update that data, which will help guide the Committee as it recruits candidates, the Committee has created a spreadsheet for each board member to complete.
- The spreadsheet lists several subject areas, such as DC Political and/or Community Involvement, Fundraising, Audit, and Educational Experience. Each board member should rate their expertise as low, medium or high for each area.
- The spreadsheet will be sent to board members by the end of the week, and each board member should return their answers by May 24.
- In addition, during the closed session, the Committee will be asking for additional guidance about the recruitment of new board members.

Closed Session

Mr. Torres noted the next item on the agenda is slated for closed session, citing the DC Code provision for doing so:

- Discussion in closed session pursuant to DC Code § 2-575(b)(10) – personnel matters and DC Code § 2-575(b)(11) – trade secrets and commercial or financial information.

Mr. Goodman made a motion to approve entering the closed session for the stated purposes. Mr. Dean seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted to approve entering the closed session as proposed. The Board voted unanimously to enter closed session. Following the vote, the Board entered closed session.

Following the closed session, the Board returned to the open meeting at about 8:20pm. Ms. Belay and Mr. Villegas-Pérez left the meeting during the closed session.

Open Session

Mr. Torres thanked everyone for a robust discussion during the closed session. The Board discussed new board member recruitment, the recommendations from the Board-Staff Task Force, and the contract renewal for the CEO, Ms. Kokkoros. Ms. Kokkoros recused herself from the portion of the closed session in which the contract renewal was discussed.

Mr. Torres then requested a motion to approve the contract between the School and Ms. Kokkoros upon the terms and conditions discussed with the board during the closed session. Mr. Dean made the motion, and John Goodman seconded the motion. All board members present voted in favor of the motion, except Ms. Kokkoros who abstained from voting.

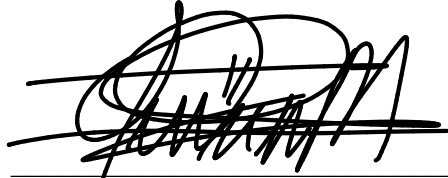
Mr. Torres then requested a motion to approve Board-Staff Task Force recommendations. Mr. Dean made the motion, and Mr. Torres seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

New Business

- There was no new business.

Adjourn

Mr. Torres adjourned the meeting at 8:25pm.



Respectfully submitted by Ana Mejia, Board Secretary