

MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON 21ST CENTURY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Tuesday, February 15, 2000  
10:00 a.m.  
Texas State Technical College  
Harlingen, Texas

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Pursuant to a notice posted in accordance with Senate Rules, a public hearing of the Special Commission on 21st Century Colleges and Universities was held on Tuesday, February 15, 2000.

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chairman Jim Adams  
Commissioner Tony Garza  
Dr. Betsy Jones  
Margie Kintz  
Nancy Marcus  
Elaine Mendoza  
Jeff Sandefer  
Karen Shewbart  
Senator Carlos Truan  
Danny Vickers

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Teel Bivins  
Kirbyjon Caldwell  
Senator Bill Ratliff  
Senator Royce West  
Pam Willeford (ex-officio)

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The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. There being a quorum present, the following business was transacted.

The Chair advised that the first order of business was to approve the minutes of the December 15, 1999 and January 12, 2000 meetings. Elaine Mendoza moved to approve the minutes.

Without objection, the minutes were approved.

Chairman Adams introduced Ms. Diane Rath, Commissioner of the Texas Workforce Commission. Commissioner Rath gave an overview of workforce needs in Texas. She discussed emerging and high-demand occupations and noted that only twenty percent of Texas jobs require a four-year degree, while sixty percent require two years of training. She also stated that almost all Texas jobs will require technological skills in the next ten years. Chairman Rath stressed that higher education needs to adapt to workforce needs, class hours need to mesh with students' work schedules, and that adults need classes that are designed to teach specific skills.

Danny Vickers asked whether Texas K-12 education system is producing a trained or trainable workforce. Commissioner Rath replied that many workers lack soft skills.

Elaine Mendoza asked whether pre-K is an opportunity to initiate learning of soft skills. Commissioner Rath said that all students should be prepared to learn by first grade and stressed the need for quality childcare.

Danny Vickers asked whether there was a gap in education/training resources on the border. Rath cited that El Paso has the highest number of displaced workers, and that there are insufficient resources there for training or retraining those displaced workers.

Commissioner Adams introduced the first panel, which addressed the relationship between higher education and the workforce.

Dr. William E. Segura, Chancellor of Texas State Technical College, spoke on the role of Texas community and technical colleges in educating Texas' workforce. He cited that community and technical colleges account for ninety-two percent of all technical and vocational education. He stressed importance of the partnership between TSTC and employers, which ensure that the educational programs provided meet the needs of the workforce. He stated that the average community college or technical school graduate earns \$35,000 in his or her first year out of school, while the average four-year university graduate can expect to earn about \$25,000 in the first year after graduating.

Dr. Kem Bennett, Associate Vice Chancellor and Director of the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), gave a presentation on TEEX's role in providing workforce training. He stressed that the future of higher education is in partnerships. He said that, while TEEX is not a degree-granting institution, he believes TEEX credits should be accepted for community college and technical school credits. He also advocated that workforce development zones or centers be established for certain types of training for use by several area institutions, rather than having each institution duplicate similar programs at every location.

John Halton, Assistant Dean for College Relations at the College of Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin, represented the Texas Telecommunications Engineering Consortium (TxTEC). TxTEC is a partnership between business and academia which helps to consolidate research efforts, strengthen telecommunications engineering courses, establish special areas of teaching and research focus, and helps in recruiting telecommunications engineering graduates.

Dr. Shirley Reed, President of South Texas Community College (STCC), spoke on STCC's role in educating the workforce in South Texas. She advocated increased state funding for more workforce development programs and childcare services. STCC's current state funding is supplemented with Skills Development Fund grants and City of McAllen sales taxes.

Chairman Adams introduced Lieutenant Governor Rick Perry who addressed the Commission, followed by Senator Eddie Lucio.

The Chair introduced the panel on industry and the workforce.

Mr. James Mitchell, Vice President of Texas Instruments spoke on the qualities needed in Texas Instruments employees. Their focus is on technical skills and engineers. He said that, in cases where Texas' "best minds" go to school out-of-state for engineering training, they often do not return to Texas. He also stressed the need for career counselors in high schools, the need for math and science skills beginning with pre-K, and the need for more and better teachers.

Mr. Bill Junge, Manager of Industrial Training at Temple Inland Industries, and Chairman of the Deep East Texas Workforce Development Board, spoke on the need for colleges to align with industry. He cited a need for accurate labor market statistics, better teachers, and more partnerships.

Mr. Kelly Byers, Manager of Leveraged Engineering at DuPont Engineering, spoke on DuPont's efforts to recruit from colleges and universities. Their efforts include summer cooperatives, internships, and funds for research. He said their employees need to have skills in teamwork, communications and problem solving as well as a broader awareness of global business issues, finance, and information sciences. He recommends expanding existing programs.

Mr. Tom Kowalski, President of the Texas Health and Biosciences Institute, spoke of the fast-paced growth of the biosciences industry in Texas.

Chairman Adams opened the floor for public testimony.

Mr. Frank Field, representing the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, spoke on the tiered system of higher education.

Mr. Gerhardt Schulle, Jr., representing the Texas Society of Professional Engineers, spoke on the need for more engineering graduates.

Dr. Antonio "Tony" Zavaleta, representing the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, spoke on higher education and workforce training in Texas. He advocated full formula funding for community colleges, more funding for less developed regions, and for growing enrollments in inner city and border regions.

Mr. Mark Rainey, Assistant Administrator of the South Texas Health System spoke on workforce needs in health care.

Ms. Patricia G. "Pat" Bubb, representing the Lower Rio Grande Valley Tech Prep/School-to-Careers Partnership, discussed the role and mission of the Partnership.

Mr. Bob Obenhaus, representing Career Colleges and Schools of Texas, spoke of the importance of private career colleges.

Mr. Arnold Pedraza, representing the University of Texas - Pan American, spoke on the Rio Grande Valley Educational Initiative of the UT - Pan American Center of Manufacturing, which promotes K-16 technical education.

There being no further business, at 3:30 p.m. Chairman Adams moved that the Commission stand adjourned. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Jim Adams, Chair

Kimberly Berry, Commission Clerk