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Delta College
Board of Trustees Dinner Meeting
Delta College N7
Tuesday, February 4, 2025
5:30 pm

Board Present: A. Baldwin, A. Clark, S. Gannon, B. Handley-Miller, D. Middleton, A. Thomas

Board Absent: M. Rowley, M. Wood

Others Present: W. Awad, T. Brown, W. Burns, W. Childs, P. Clark, A. Cramer, R. Curry, C. DeEulis, J. DuFresne, J. Foco, M. Gavin, L. Govitz, D. Hopkins, K. Kiste-Toner, G. Luczak, D. McQuiston, E. Merkle, M. Muhammad, J. Mulders, S. Raube, S. Roche, K. Schuler, E. Suniga, A. Ursuy, R. Young

Press Present: None

Board Chair, S. Gannon called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm. She thanked everyone for staying focused on our students and for doing what needs to be done during this challenging time. She introduced President Gavin who welcomed Dr. Walaa Awad, Associate Dean, Health and Wellness Division; Karry Kiste-Toner, Dean of Student Success; Dr. Wendy Burns, Co-chair, Black Faculty and Staff Association; and Eric Merkle, Chair, Executive Committee of Administrative Professionals Staff. He also introduced Dr. Mursalata Muhammad, a faculty member from Grand Rapids Community College who is visiting our campus as part of the MI-ACE Senior Shadow Program. Dr. Muhammad is being mentored by Dr. Reva Curry, Vice President, Instruction and Learning Services, and Andrea Ursuy, Executive Director of Administrative Services and Institutional Effectiveness.

Dr. Gavin said that this meeting is an opportunity for Board Members to ask questions as he shares information about the recent executive orders and what they mean to the College. Board Chair Gannon, Board Vice Chair Baldwin, Pam Clark, Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and Dr. Gavin will be attending ACCT's National Legislative Summit in Washington, DC, next week. They will have opportunities to have further discussions with our local legislators. Delta College is in constant contact with a variety of groups – American Association of Community College (AACC), Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), Michigan Community College Association (MCCA), American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), American Council on Education (ACE).

Changes affecting higher education can be moved forward by Congress through legislation and appropriations or by the President through executive orders. Executive orders are not law but could become law. Remaining in contact with national and state groups helps highlight what changes are being considered, interprets how changes will affect the College, and provides a mechanism for an organized, more powerful response.

Policies and procedures affecting higher education include: diversity, equity, and inclusion; institutional autonomy; and academic freedom. Policies affecting students and employees include: citizenship and schools no longer being safe spaces; reduction of gender to sex at birth; and insurance companies and coverage of trans care. The College is not changing direction on anything unless our financial aid is put at risk or we are required to change by law.

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Potential financial impacts include threats of financial freezes on grants; potential tax of endowment holdings; and stress on employees who follow these announcements. There could be potential changes to many agencies including the Department of Education, Department of Labor, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and appropriations subcommittees: Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

President Gavin leads the national Education for All group that has been having discussions with college presidents about practical strategies for higher education leaders to use to navigate the current landscape in resisting anti-DEI legislation. He has trained approximately 1,600 leaders in the past month and a half.

Dr. Gavin said that pretty much everything he described tonight is “operational.” Board Members will be notified if necessary to address more pressing matters.

There being no further business, the dinner meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm.

Talisa Brown, Assistant Board Secretary (Kay Schuler, Proxy)

Andrea Ursuy, Board Secretary