



Board Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.

ATTENDING:

Dr. Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz, Dr. Michael Odell, Mr. Jeffry Kennemer, Mr. Daniel Rodriguez, Ms. Angela Wright, Dr. Jo Ann Simmons, multiple directors, staff and parents.

OPENING:

The board meeting of the UT Tyler University Academy was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz on Thursday, March 4, 2021 via Zoom teleconferencing.

1. Call to Order:

Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz confirmed a quorum of Board members were present.

2. Pledge:

Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

3. Open for Public Comment:

There were no requests related to public comment for the meeting. This information was confirmed by Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz.

ACTION ITEMS:

4. Consent Agenda

- Previous Minutes, January 14, 2021. No comments or review were made. 1st motion: Mr. Rodriguez, 2nd motion: Ms. Wright. Motion passed 5-0.
- Previous Minutes, February 23, 2021. No comments or review were made. 1st motion: Mr. Rodriguez, 2nd motion: Ms. Wright. Motion passed 5-0.

5. Request Approval to File Missed Instructional Day Waivers for February 17-19, February 22

- Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz gave the word to Dr. Simmons. As the winter storm hit the State of Texas, she explained how this unusual situation impacted the opportunity to provide instruction in person. She called the attention for the dates saying that the teachers had a "Teacher PD Day" on Monday, February 15th, meaning a holiday for the students. Checking the master calendar, as the University Academy has one Make-Up Day available, February 16th will be used as a Make-Up Day. As the Texas Education Agency is giving the permission to not add those dates to the end of the school year, Dr. Simmons requested the missed waiver for the Board Members' approval for February 17-19. 1st motion: Dr. Odell, 2nd motion: Mr. Kennemer. Motion passed 5-0.

6. Request Approval to File Other Waiver (Full-Time Remote Instruction) for February 23-26

- Dr. Simmons explained that there were issues across all of communities related to water, power outage, etc., at this specific time. Also, UA Campuses needed to receive some repairs. For that reason, UA did not provide instruction in person, but remote learning was provided to the students. The average attendance across the district was 97%. Instead of filing for missed instructional days during this time, Dr. Simmons requested the waiver to provide Full-Time Remote Instruction for the Board Members' approval for February 23-26.
- Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz was surprised by the percentage of attendance. Dr. Simmons confirmed how everyone was very pleased by the attendance number, and how she was so proud of receiving the feedback from parents and students. She mentioned that the students, without power at home, used their cellphones to attend remote learning.
1st motion: Ms. Wright, 2nd motion: Mr. Kennemer. Motion passed 5-0.

7. Request Approval to Pay Part-Time After School Personnel for Missed Work Days (February 16-26)

- Dr. Simmons explained that, as University Academy did not offer in person instruction due the winter storm, the UA Part-Time employees assigned to the Afterschool Program, were not able to work during those days, because the absence of students on their Campus respectively. Dr. Simmons requested for the Board Members' approval, the one-time payment to those individuals with the dollar amount based of their previous hours, so that there will be no hardships associated with the loss of income during this period for them.
- Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz said how she and the Board Members are appreciative for UA doing that for the part-time employees.
1st motion: Mr. Rodriguez, 2nd motion: Mr. Kennemer. Motion passed 5-0.

8. Request Approval to File Staff Development Waiver for 2021-2022 Calendar

- Dr. Simmons initiated saying "... how it is hard to believe..." that the planning for 2021-2022 already started. She explained that the next three topics in the agenda belong to the next school year. In order to provide any professional development days (Teacher PD Day) and allocate them in the calendar, there is a need to request a waiver to the Board. This specific waiver is up to 5 (five) days. The Board received a draft copy for the next district calendar (2021-2022), showing that the school district decided to include all five days for the next school year.
- Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz explained how these meetings are important for teacher development, and she appreciated the plan of using all five days.
1st motion: Mr. Kennemer, 2nd motion: Mr. Rodriguez. Motion passed 5-0.

9. Request Approval of 2021-2022 District Calendar

- Dr. Simmons mentioned how it is extremely difficult to align all different holidays, etc., for the three communities when the University Academy has its campuses on one calendar. She started asking if there are some Board Members that received any questions from parents related to Spring Break 2021. As University Academy is part of UT Tyler, she stated that the UA Spring Break is aligned with UT Tyler Spring Break. Other reason for doing that is because of the Dual Credit Students. She mentioned that she received a couple of emails from parents asking how UA develops its Master Calendar. She stated there is a great participation of the Leadership Team searching and looking at all the calendars to allocate Teacher PD Days, holidays, etc., to have the best UA Calendar to offer to students. She also mentioned how it is important to release the calendar as soon as possible for parents being able to plan their future vacation with their kids.
- Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz confirmed that all board members received some emails, and she agreed with Dr. Simmons' point of view. She also asked the parents that were attending the meeting to share this information with their peers. She appreciated Dr. Simmons' work related to UA Master Calendar.
1st motion: Dr. Odell, 2nd motion: Mr. Kennemer. Motion passed 5-0.

10. Request Approval of 2021-2022 Board Meeting Calendar

- Dr. Simmons discussed that in the six meetings we have a year, we can manage our agendas. In the event we have a situation arise we can have a special meeting. Meeting Dates will be posted to the website.
- Mr. Kennemer discussed getting back to in person meetings. Dr. Oliveras-Ortiz and Dr. Simmons mentioned it will depend on the University and there will come a time when the remote meetings will not be an option. Finding a location for an in-person meeting is becoming a problem as well. Dr. Simmons will verify the end date for the remote meetings option. 1st motion: Mr. Kennemer, 2nd motion: Mr. Rodriguez. Motion passed 5-0.

11. Request Approval of Policy Updates

c. Governance

i. PG-1.3 – Board Policy and Administrative Procedures

- Dr. Jo Simmons discussed the board previously approving a large number of policies that were created by the Texas Charter School Association. This is one of the policies that was noted to need approval from the University. The University approved policy as written. There are no updates in this policy as there are in the student policy and the personnel policy. 1st motion: Ms. Wright, 2nd motion: Mr. Daniel Rodriguez. Motion passed 5-0.

ii. PG-1.18 – Disclosure of Campaign Contributions

- Dr. Simmons discussed that this is a new policy and not an existing policy that is being modified. Schools are not allowed to campaign or lobby for a specific politician or use funds to endorse them. This policy does apply to all school districts. 1st motion: Mr. Kennemer, 2nd motion: Ms. Wright. Motion passed 5-0.

d. Students

i. PG-3.2 – Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Title IX Update)

- Dr. Simmons discussed once the board approves the updated policy, this policy will override the previous policy. This policy is really specific to Title IX ensuring that we have a Title IX coordinator and Blake Bombard as well as the Handbook of Operating Procedures is referenced so requirements are aligned. Dr. Olivares mentioned that this policy does align with the UT Tyler Policy. The Title IX Coordinator for the University does support University Academy students and personnel. When there is a Title IX situation involving any of the University Academy students the first action is to gather all of the information and then contact the Title IX Coordinator at the University. 1st motion: Ms. Wright, 2nd motion: Mr. Kennemer. Motion passed 5-0.

e. Personnel

i. PG-4.2 Nondiscrimination Policy (Title IX Update)

- Dr. Simmons discussed the changes to this policy that are like the previous policy. The Title IX coordinator, Blake Bombard's information is noted in this policy. The Title IX coordinator's information needs to be noted in the case a student, parent or staff member wants some information or file a complaint, they have all of Blake Bombard's

contact information as well as the definitions listed in this policy. 1st motion: Dr. Odell, 2nd motion: Ms. Wright. Motion passed 5-0.

12. Request Approval of Budget Amendments for 2020-2021

- Ms. Chesnut discussed the Budget Amendment.
 - 1. This amendment is to move salaries around. These are budgeted salaries but as the year went on positions may have changed so funds are being moved to reflect their roles more appropriately.
 - 1.1 This amendment was to correct some errors in the original presented budget. The Afterschool Program expenses were under the incorrect function and needed to be moved to the correct one.
 - 1st motion: Mr. Rodrigues, 2nd motion: Mr. Kennemer. Motion passed 5-0.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

13. Superintendent Report

- Financial Updates
 - Ms. Chesnut went over current 2020-2021 budget figures.
 - As of January 31, the University Academy has received \$3,213,560 in revenue and has \$3,269,296 in expenses for the General Fund.
 - As of January 31, the University Academy has received \$134,458 in revenue and has \$183,836 in expenses for the Non-Gov Funds.
 - Mr. Kennemer: On line 35, the Food Service, what does that entail as far as the expenditures as far as the Food Service through January?
 - Ms. Christian Chesnut explained that these are the expenses for the 3 campuses that were budgeted. Also, the General Fund does end up covering some of our Food Service expenses. Dr. Simmons added that is for the Breakfast items provided to the students on all 3 campuses. Mr. Kennemer: Will we would be back on the food service for next year? Dr. Simmons will have more information under the campus updates pertaining to Food Service.
- District/Campus Enrollment/Attendance
 - Current enrollment is 818 students, with 316 in Tyler, 255 in Longview, and 247 in Palestine. Of those, 738 are on-campus and 80 are remote. Attendance is at 97.85% as of 2/12/2021.
 - Remote attendance is lower now than when it was first offered.
 - Dr. Simmons discussed mask mandate does have an affect on attendance.
- 2021-2022 Admissions Timeline
 - Dr. Simmons discussed important dates published on the timeline.
 - Monday, March 15: Commitment Letter are sent out.
 - Friday, April 9: Lottery.
 - The timeline will be published to the website and is a great resource for families and interested families.
- Campus Updates
 - Food Service: Dr. Simmons has met with facilities and are waiting on an estimate for the renovation of the Tyler kitchen. The renovation may cost more than the \$100,000 budgeted. There are plans to serve hot meals for breakfast and lunch on the Tyler Campus starting the 21-22 school year. Eventually, expanding to Longview and Palestine starting the 22-23 school year
 - Facilities: Dr. Simmons discussed facility needs in Tyler and Palestine that will begin this summer. Tyler will have the domestic water line updated at an estimated cost of \$80,000, the kitchen will be renovated at an estimated cost of \$125,000 to \$150,000 including equipment, and a canopy installed at an estimated cost of \$80,000. The Palestine campus will have brick façade installed on the building and have a sports court installed. The Palestine Development Board donated funds for these projects. The Palestine Lab will also be renovated at an

estimated cost of \$200,000. Dr. Simmons and Dr. Hickey are working with the University to explore payment options for these projects. Potentially adding a year onto our payment plan to the University and having our building paid off by 2025.

- Mask Mandate update: The University Academy will continue with the current procedures.
 - Next school year will have a 7:55 start time and a 2:15 dismissal.
- Administrative Updates
 - The University Academy will send out renewal letters in April.
 - The University Academy will evaluate personnel costs for next year's budget.

14. Motion for Adjournment:

1st motion: Mr. Kennemer, 2nd motion: Mr. Rodriguez. Motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment occurred at 1:12 p.m.