



Trustee Ad Hoc Committee on Communication
Report to the Board of Trustees
January 26, 2016

INTRODUCTION

As a public institution, Long Beach City College (the “College”) places the highest value on openness, transparency and community trust. The College strives to maintain a culture of openness and transparency in its internal operations, with its constituent groups and with the public. The College also recognizes its ongoing responsibility to improve its communications.

The Board of Trustees has embraced the need for better communications by adopting a specific Board goal to support programs that create better communications among all campus stakeholders.¹ The Board is also identifying new ways to lead the College toward increased transparency by improving existing information delivery systems. For example, in 2015, the College implemented BoardDocs, an online system for posting and public viewing of Board of Trustees’ agendas and supporting documents. This has helped the College increase its transparency and the functionality of Board meetings.

To improve its communications in 2014, the College commissioned a broad survey of internal and external stakeholders to review the effectiveness of College communications and conducted a survey of local residents to assess general community knowledge and attitudes about LBCC. As a result, a Strategic Communications Plan was developed and adopted in April 2015 by the Board of Trustees to serve as a guiding document for a 3- to 5-year strategic vision for stronger communications with internal and external stakeholders.

In February 2015, the Board of Trustees appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to work with

¹ On October 28, 2014, the Board of Trustees adopted its 2014-2016 goals. Goal #3 provided as follows: “Support programs to build a more collegial campus community by creating better relationships and communications among all campus stakeholders by:

- Supporting the implementation of a leadership development program for LBCC faculty and staff.
- Expanding opportunities for interactions among the Board of Trustees and all campus stakeholders.”

staff to review and examine the Board's existing communications practices and make recommendations for improvement. The Ad Hoc Committee first outlined a scope of work and discussed issues and strategies. The results of the surveys and Strategic Communications Plan were presented to the Board in April 2015. That presentation informed the work of the Committee.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Committee focused on two areas for review:

- 1) Trustee communications with the community; and
- 2) Trustee protocols for training, meetings, and communication with college constituent groups.

This report includes Conclusions and Recommendations for the focus areas.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TRUSTEE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

The Board recognizes the importance of providing internal and external constituent groups with timely and relevant information about Board of Trustees' actions and activities. The Committee recommends that the following actions be undertaken to meet this goal:

- **Web:**
 - The College will create and distribute an easy-to-read summary of major Board actions within 24 hours of Board meetings to post on the College website and social media channels, and to distribute to the media and internal constituent groups via email. This communications tool will be in addition to meeting minutes and video coverage currently available to the public on the College's YouTube channel.
 - As part of the pending redesign of the College's website, www.lbcc.edu, the College will develop a comprehensive, user-friendly resource for Trustee contact information and Board meeting information in a simple format that facilitates public participation at Board meetings. The Trustee web pages, biographies and contact information will be redesigned for greater consistency and ease of access.
- **Email:**
 - The College will create personalized lbcc.edu emails for Trustees use for College-related correspondence and engagement with the public on College-related matters. Trustees will be expected to use their LBCC emails for College-related correspondence. On occasions when Trustees use personal email for College-related correspondence they will be expected to CC their LBCC email address.

- **E-newsletter:**
 - The College will repurpose the LBCC “Report to the Board” and use that content to develop a monthly e-newsletter to help city officials, community members and neighborhood leaders stay informed about and connected to the College. The revised newsletter will also notify residents about upcoming Board meetings and other opportunities to engage with the College.
- **Media:**

The Board will strive to maintain a consistent voice in all communication channels by designating the Board President as the official spokesperson for the Board in all public and media situations. The Board President may designate another Board member to fulfill this role, if necessary or desirable. Board members will be expected to respect the Board President or designee as the official spokesperson for the Board to the media. Board members are expected to refer calls from the media to the Superintendent-President or Board President as necessary, for instance when the media is seeking the official Board spokesperson. As elected representatives, individual Trustees are free to speak directly to the media on any issue, so long as they clearly state that they are speaking as one individual Board member and not for the Board as a whole. As a courtesy, Trustees are asked to notify the Superintendent-President’s office when contacted by media regarding any College issue.
- **Community meetings:**
 - The College administration will work with Trustees to schedule community meetings in various neighborhoods of their districts to be held in partnership with neighborhood groups, community organizations and/or other District stakeholders. The meetings will be scheduled periodically and rotate among the District areas represented by the Trustees. The goal of these meetings is to engage residents by presenting College information about the College and its activities to the public in an informal setting that permits the public to ask questions of College Trustees and staff. A meeting in a particular district should not be scheduled within 60 days of a Trustee election in that district.
- **Live streaming Board meetings:**
 - The Committee considered whether Board of Trustees meetings could be broadcast live via the web. In considering this new option, the Committee obtained a cost estimate for live streaming (including one-time equipment purchases and ongoing staff costs), as well as surveyed other community colleges about their broadcast practices. The reasons commonly cited for not using live streaming include the ongoing expense of live streaming and low demand for the service. Also, the College already repeatedly broadcasts the Board meetings on two different cable stations that are available for local residents to view. The estimated costs for live streaming include hiring a new Senior Multi-Media Specialist, procuring closed-captioning services at the Board meeting, and preparing an encoder device. Combined, these would require an ongoing annual commitment of \$145,000. After reviewing these facts, the Committee decided to not recommend live streaming of Board meetings at this time. The Committee recommends that LBCC continue its current practice of videotaping all meetings and making them available to the public within 72 hours of

the meeting via the College's YouTube channel.

2. TRUSTEE PROTOCOLS FOR TRAINING, MEETINGS, AND COMMUNICATION WITH COLLEGE CONSTITUENT GROUPS.

In order to ensure Trustee preparedness at meetings, to maintain decorum and to support positive Trustee working relationships with one another, the Board recommends the following protocols and policies. Such protocols also help ensure that accreditation standards related to Trustees are met.

- **New Trustee Orientation:**
 - The College conducts orientations for all new Trustees upon taking office. The Committee recommends that the College standardize and formalize its orientation process to ensure consistent information is delivered to all new Trustees regarding the Brown Act, Board policies, administrative regulations, Board protocols, and practices.
- **Training:**
 - The College recognizes the importance of ongoing training for effective Board governance (see Board Policy 2017 and Administrative Regulations). The Committee recommends that the College provide ongoing training on board policies and regulations, the Brown Act, and other legislation to all Trustees. Trustees are encouraged, but not required, to participate in the Effective Trusteeship Program developed by the Community College League of California.
- **Meeting Preparation:**
 - Trustees often have questions about items on the Board agenda that require clarification prior to meetings. Trustees are asked to communicate directly with the Superintendent-President prior to Board meetings to obtain answers to questions and/or concerns about agenda items. The purpose of this procedure is to make Board meetings more efficient and effective by providing clarification to agenda items.
- **Interactions with internal constituent groups:**
 - Trustees are welcome to meet with internal constituent groups to share information and exchange ideas. As a courtesy, Trustees are asked to notify the Superintendent-President's office when meeting with internal constituent groups on campus.
- **Standards of Conduct:**
 - The Board will conduct its meetings consistent with Robert's Rules of Order. To maintain orderly discussion, Board members must be acknowledged by the Board President before speaking.
 - To help maintain focus and pace of meetings, Board members are expected to devote their full attention to the business of the Board during meetings.
 - Electronic devices are discouraged from use during Board meetings, especially on the dais. Use of such devices is a distraction both to the Board members and to the public and may create the impression that Board members are not paying attention to Board work.

- **Board minutes:**
 - The Committee recommends that the Board re-affirm its policy that the Board minutes will be taken and recorded as “action” minutes, i.e., that discussion around a specific issue or reports provided by Board members and/or others will only be reflected in the minutes as a discussion ensued and/or a report was given and by whom it was given, and will not include details of what was said. Further, written materials provided by Board members or others on agenda items will be made available for public inspection at the Board meeting, but will not be appended to the official minutes.