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**MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT  
GOVERNING BOARD RETREAT  
MARCH 2, 2010  
MINUTES**

A retreat of the Maricopa County Community College District Governing Board was scheduled to be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Governing Board Room at the District Support Services Center in Tempe, Arizona, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02, notice having been duly given.

**PRESENT**

**GOVERNING BOARD**

Randolph Lumm, President  
Jerry Walker, Secretary  
Don Campbell, Member  
Debra Pearson, Member  
ABSENT: Colleen Clark, Member

**ADMINISTRATION**

Rufus Glasper, Chancellor  
Lee Combs  
Gloria Smith  
Donna Schober  
Teresa Toney  
Maria Harper-Marinick  
Debra Thompson  
Linda Lujan  
Kay Martens for Ken Atwater  
Gene Giovannini  
Jan Gehler  
Anna Solley  
Paul Dale  
Steve Helfgot  
Ernie Lara  
Shouan Pan  
Chris Bustamante

**CALL TO ORDER**

The retreat was called to order at 5:45 p.m. by Governing Board President Randolph Lumm. Mr. Lumm welcomed everyone to this retreat intended to have discussion pertaining to Board policies supporting student learning, effective Board behaviors, Board relations, and civility. Mr. Lumm called upon the Chancellor to provide further opening remarks and comments.

Chancellor Glasper welcomed everyone present, including facilitator Narcisa Polonio from the Association of Community College Trustees who had agreed to conduct this retreat. Ms. Polonio was in town from Washington D.C. for the ACCT Governance Leadership Institute to be held March 4-6 at the Rio Conference Center.

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Ms. Polonio began by stating that she felt it was important for everyone to try and understand the role of the Board, create their own ground rules, understand the culture, and develop trust. She asked Board Members to try to imagine that all the other people in the room were not

present – they were irrelevant. Board Members needed to understand that they were the relevant body. Board Members must abide by all regulations and responsibilities of public office and the trust that the public has given them to protect the interests of community.

It is important to recognize that when it is working well and you are doing great, the District will credit itself. When things start going wrong within the body, the buck stops with the Board. It takes a while to get it. There is an incredible responsibility to guide and lead but there is no responsibility for managing or directing the staff. This is hard to understand. We are used to being accountable to one person. In governance the role is to protect, guide, and lead; however, you guide most of the time. As the Board, you are a brain without a body. The Board is supposed to do the thinking. The Chancellor and staff carry out the things you want. Setting the policy and helping guide – this is what the Board does. The Board decides where you want the organization to go and what is important. The responsibility of the Chancellor and staff is to determine how you are going to get there. Applying is the hard part.

Ms. Polonio explained that when the community college structure was created, it was determined they would be governed by lay people constituting a difference between knowledge and wisdom in the traditional way. A Board Member does not have to be a teacher. There is no expectation they will understand everything. The Board role is to set the guidelines and focus on quality. The organization wants you because you are a good citizen. Then you come to the Board and you are told you are not to do this and this and this because you can do damage to the reputation of the school. Help to focus more on the do's and don'ts. The point is real smart people can get together and do dumb things, and dumb people can get together and do brilliant things. If you don't have the fundamentals as a group, you will not do brilliant things. You will destroy things.

As a trustee you are seen as a person of power. When you speak, you speak for the Board. The world is looking at you and making assumptions. Different constituency groups will come to you and try to influence you. The Board needs to understand both the limitations and power of the Board. As trustees, you don't have to like each other but you must respect each other. The corporate body speaks once a decision is made and that decision must be supported. You are empowering people to get an education. An investment was made by the community. Nowhere does the community give you the power to destroy but only to build up. Most important, you are not going to heaven. This is about doing good work for people. Don't take the work lightly. Not the place that we place on earth. Spiritual sense of the Board is part of your responsibility.

What happens to people? Need to break down and come together. Right now you have over eighty trustees coming to visit Arizona. This reflects their interest in the District. Board Members have an opportunity to interact with these trustees.

#### **FRAME OF REFERENCE**

Ms. Polonio explained that she had been in community colleges for thirty five years. One of the first she heard of was MCCC and that the best district was Maricopa. Incredible reputation out there. The visionary sense that this District had. To her personally it is difficult to understand some of the things that have happened. Board Members should be proud to serve in this District.

Mrs. Pearson stated that over the years prior to being on the Board the persona of Maricopa was surpassed when she began hearing the negative views of what was going on at the District. Heard “there could be a real problem.” After going through the elections and trying to get beyond anecdotal information and not finding evidence of what was being said, she wondered why there was a District element that had the ability to try to find dirt and negativity to pull something down? Why is there this political power appetite there of creating a problem so you can be the solution? Political rhetoric is poisoning the District. It is divisive and destructive. Politically it is difficult. Need to step back and ask how much of it is true. How can you validate the horrible things that are being said about the District. If you try to crush that you can get booted and crushed.

#### **DIALOGUE**

Ms. Polonio asked Mrs. Pearson if she ran for this Board because of the perception that there were a lot of things going wrong. Mrs. Pearson responded that she ran because of her passion for community colleges and felt she could be a benefit. After she started running, then she started hearing these bad things. Ms. Polonio reminded Board Members that there was no “I” on a Board – only a “we.” Dr. Campbell commented that many years ago when his brother ran for the legislature, he heard people were crooks in the legislature. When he personally ran for the elementary school Board, people were distrusted. He has heard this all through his life. Majority of people are decent and are working for the benefit of the public. Accept that some people make mistakes and others don’t. Focus on how the majority feel. Mr. Walker stated that this was reactive to some degree. Evidence is always going to be subjective and will depend on perception. Pinch us to see if we are awake and see if what we perceive is what others perceive. Community colleges are being used to develop workforce and support infrastructure. Press is like many things that are in public office – a control freak and he won’t be in contact. Ms. Polonio remarked that people know you and price you differently. This is all part of the human struggle. “I will not be controlled” sounds defensive. Republican Party and things that Debra Pearson is saying things about . Lot of stuff going on.

When she was a president she recalled one trustee calling the box office and leaving a message for six tickets. The story was misinterpreted and by the time it got to the president’s office it had been totally distorted. She urged Board Members to hear each other instead of listening to other people. Nobody joins the Board to be publicly humiliated or have feelings hurt. All of this is reflecting the anxiety within society around the country. Mrs. Pearson stated that when people use the name of God and use godly games, that is more of the Devil than of God. Hateful games you play. Mr. Lumm commented regarding the HLC attack on Jerry Walker and how this was similar to what she just did. Asked about and rationalized. Mrs. Pearson stated that when a district that is being attacked by a Board member, we do not confront that. Mr. Lumm responded that this did not have to be done with criticism. Ms. Polonio commented that each is perceived as being very powerful. No trustee can become a champion of a cause.

Mr. Lumm remarked that he did not come in with the same experience. People he spoke with were very positive about the District. There are systems problem within education itself. People want to make changes and improve education. Came in with that perspective. Mrs. Pearson agreed that there are always changes that can be improved. Need to increase retention and how people speak to each other. Ms. Polonio affirmed that Mrs. Pearson and Mr. Walker express themselves well and can express frustrations without verbal attack. Don’t make it personal. “I” does not belong in the boardroom – “we” is the policy. Brain stops functioning

when attacks come. Need to write down 2-3 points and articulate those points. They are very passionate people, however, you may not agree on what you are passionate about.

Mrs. Pearson commented that the problem and issue that needed to be addressed in this whole entire situation when she came on Board were the trust issues. Why were there trust issues and fear? We were up in a psychobabble of trust. As it began being explained, religion, political agenda coming from Jerry Walker. Coming from Arizona. Horrible things being said and as a Board we don't have to tolerate some Board member who created this. We as a Board have to see this is inappropriate. You don't treat people that way from the Board. You don't tell me what you say. As a Board, is this appropriate? Ms. Polonio asked if there is a difference now compared to when she came on Board. Mr. Walker stated they did have some positive things get done on the Board. It was said he was the only conservative on the Board. Started hate mongering. Dr. Campbell indicated he did not recall any people coming in front of the Board and saying that they felt someone was attacking them.

### **EXERCISE**

As a means of providing some insights into Board member personalities, Ms. Polonio asked the Board Members to think back about who their hero may have been when they were young. Responses were as follows:

- Mr. Lumm indicated he read about the Saints – St. Stephen and St. Patrick. St. Stephen known as first pope and martyr. St. Patrick was known for being kind to the poor. These two people had core values that represented being good.
- Mr. Walker indicated Mighty Mouse. He was a little guy and you wouldn't expect much of him. "Saving the system to find what's wrong and fix it." Unexpectedly powerful.
- Dr. Campbell stated his hero was Jesse Owens, a track star, or Joe Lewis, a boxer. Both were African-Americans. People were only relating to people they could envision. They represented success above all else.
- Mrs. Pearson stated she really didn't have a hero outside her family or her father. She remembers Senator Barry Goldwater coming to their home and her father golfing with him. They were important people in her life.

### **Analysis of Exercise**

Ms. Polonio explained that everyone is a product of where we come from. Mrs. Pearson's answer was very typical of women. Women did not have heroes. Not unusual for women not to have that point of reference. There is a generational difference in how we deal with power and the role that you bring on Board. Mr. Lumm is perceived as being good, helping bring people together. Doing good. The common good is most important. Mr. Walker as Mighty Mouse wants to fix it – "Here I come to fix the day!" That is what his basic values are. Dr. Campbell did not have a lot of heroes out there. Joe Lewis and Jesse Owen both wound up broke and went to jail. There is a need to understand that all of this shapes what goes on in the room. What is happening here has to do with Arizona and the struggle in America and its differences. Every voice is important -- I have to respect you. Your job is to find out what the best is for the school. Mr. Walker commented that anyone who has a problem with what he says, can come to him. Values are military and that is his purpose in being here. He is an individual who has an opinion and goal he will push for. Ms. Polonio remarked that he has been slandered and hurt which he tries to suppress. He loves dying and fighting.

Ms. Polonio further remarked that the problem with the Board environment is that it is powerful position. Short of the public record, when you become a Board member you are hearing “The Board Member said that.” A double-edged sword. As a member of the Board, you have a responsibility to your colleagues. You have to think about what you are saying. Many Boards have ground rules that only district business gets discussed at meetings, although many will say, “But I have the right to express myself.” Mr. Walker commented that we are all human beings. Mrs. Pearson stated she does not see this being fixed. Have to step up and stop this. This rift is personal. Cares about students and what is going on has something to do with education and improving society. Need to stop bringing to the Board room. Ms. Polonio indicated she could appreciate her thoughts. Principle of academic freedom but also a pissing contest. Mrs. Pearson stated this has something to do with students because students have been accosted and that is one of the things that caused her to speak up. Ms. Polonio stated that heart is in the right place. Mrs. Pearson commented on values. Not trying to change anyone’s values. Ironic thing is that she shares Mr. Walker’s values about 90%. The problem and issue is that when you have mannerisms bridging behaviors, you will be told how idiotic you are. Don’t use values to belittle others.

Ms. Polonio interjected that she wanted to bring it back and focus on what needs to be done now. Do some of this good work that needs to be done. There are Boards across the country that don’t agree but would not dare to share what has been shared today. Mr. Walker was elected by the public. Mrs. Pearson is not here to fix him. As a group the Board has to figure out the language of what it takes to help students. It is a privilege to serve on a Board of this nature. It is something to brag about. Jerry Walker has attended institutes and behaved at his best although he may not agree with all that was said. Human struggle does not give the right to hurt.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Four Points to Remember:

1. Don’t make it personal.
2. Make it about students.
3. Write things down before you say it.
4. Let go of anger you have towards each other.

Mrs. Pearson asked for an explanation as to when this was going on in the Board room? Ms. Polonio responded that it could have been through body language. There is a need to come up with ground rules of civility that the Board could live with. Need to stop the sniping. Mr. Walker suggested talking with each other on a regular basis without being accusatory towards each other. God gave use two ears and one mouth.

Ms. Polonio suggested the following:

1. Talk and listen – practice active listening. Never attack or speak down to a speaker at a Board meeting.
2. Create an environment of respect even if Board Members disagree. Allow public to speak their points of view and the Board should not respond or carry on a discussion. This is a legal issue because the public has not been notified. Mrs. Pearson indicated that if a point of order is called, she is being told she doesn’t have a right to say what she wants to say. Ms. Polonio explained that a Point of Order is an individual going to

the Chair and saying I do not understand what is being said. Rules of Order are clouded when there is lack of clarity.

3. Each has a right to speak but must follow the rules that are established. Chair must bring the meeting back to order. Chair keeps order in the meeting. Follow these ground rules. Mr. Lumm stated that when we have a need to bring something before the Board, discuss why it happened. Make an investment.
4. Bring Board together and accommodate everyone,

**CONCLUSION:**

Ms. Polonio concluded the retreat by stating that the Board had to continuously practice to change it. America was created to allow people with different opinions to come together. This is the only country that allows this. At the end of the day, when you become a trustee, it has to become a priority. Never take people's pride away and embarrass them. Use passion a positive way.

**SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS OR ACTION STEPS RECOMMENDED:**

1. Need to understand the role of the Board, create own ground rules, understand the culture, and develop trust.
2. Board Members must abide by all regulations and responsibilities of public office and the trust that the public has given them to protect the interests of community.
3. In governance the role is to protect, guide, and lead; however, you guide most of the time. As the Board, you are a brain without a body. The Board is supposed to do the thinking. The Chancellor and staff carry out the things you want.
4. There is no expectation board members will understand everything. The role of the Board is to set the guidelines and focus on quality.
5. As a trustee you are seen as a person of power. When you speak, you speak for the Board. The world is looking at you and making assumptions. Different constituency groups will come to you and try to influence you. The Board needs to understand both the limitations and power of the Board. As trustees, you don't have to like each other but you must respect each other. The corporate body speaks once a decision is made and that decision must be supported.
6. Why is there this political power appetite there of creating a problem so you can be the solution? Political rhetoric is poisoning the District. It is divisive and destructive. Politically it is difficult. Need to step back and ask how much of it is true.
7. Board Members need to hear each other instead of listening to other people.
8. Express frustrations without verbal attack. Don't make it personal.
9. "I" does not belong in the bedroom – "we" is the policy. Need to write down 2-3 points and articulate those points. Very passionate people, however, may not agree on what you are passionate about.
10. The problem and issue that needed to be addressed in this whole entire situation were the trust issues. Why were there trust issues and fear?
11. Everyone is a product of where we come from.
12. Board environment is powerful position. Board Members have a responsibility to their colleagues. You have to think about what you are saying. Many Boards have ground rules that only district business gets discussed at meetings, although many will say, "But I have the right to express myself."
13. Four Points to Remember:
  - a. Don't make it personal.

- b. Make it about students.
  - c. Write things down before you say it.
  - d. Let go of anger you have towards each other.
- 14.** Come up with ground rules of civility that Board can live with. Need to stop the sniping.
  - 15.** Talk and listen – practice active listening. Never attack or speak down to a speaker at a Board meeting.
  - 16.** Create an environment of respect even if Board Members disagree. Allow public to speak their points of view and the Board should not respond or carry on a discussion.
  - 17.** Each has a right to speak but must follow the rules that are established. Chair must bring the meeting back to order. Chair keeps order in the meeting.
  - 18.** Bring Board together and accommodate everyone,

**Adjournment of Retreat:** The retreat adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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Jerry Walker  
Governing Board Secretary