



April 6, 2020

Dear Campus Community,

Texas Christian University's Board of Trustees held its regularly scheduled spring meeting last week under very irregular circumstances. The Board continues to focus on advancing TCU during this time of COVID-19. The meetings, hosted on Zoom, ended on Friday and I wanted to provide you with my usual update on the topics discussed. Please see below for a written summary as well as a link to Candid Conversations for Faculty & Staff: https://youtu.be/f0y4D_ZLvFU

Our world and our community are adjusting to new life and work patterns in service to the greater good of public health in the midst of this pandemic. Similarly, TCU's Board and senior leaders continue to be proactive in ensuring the University's continued success as a world-class, values-centered university.

Members of the Board unanimously praised the Herculean efforts of faculty and staff as they successfully moved more than 3,000 courses online in record time. Our Board Chair Mark L. Johnson summed it up best when he said:

"The privilege I have of being a Trustee of Texas Christian University has been greatly magnified in recent weeks. In these extraordinary times, as I have watched the effects of this pandemic unfold, it is most humbling and impressive to witness the amazing response of our faculty and staff to meet the needs of our 11,000 undergraduate and graduate students."

We have made and will continue to make appropriate adjustments to our ongoing operations that allow us to protect our students and campus community from the significant impacts COVID-19 will have on higher education in the short and long term. Fortunately, TCU is a strong and stable organization, but even we are not immune from the operational and financial impacts that will have an effect on our decision-making for months and years to come.

Be assured that TCU has served students for over 147 years and we will continue to do so. We have outlasted countries and many other societal institutions. We will continue to be a robust academic community, and we will continue to provide an unparalleled student experience. We excel at offering an in-person academic experience, one we are all proud of and that I look forward to resuming. We have just shown that we are also capable of providing a high quality online academic experience. Suffice to say, we have demonstrated that we can move to distance learning quickly; that we can continue essential operations remotely, and that we can connect and support one another from afar. ***We can be our best, even under the most challenging circumstances.***

I commend, with deep gratitude, the decisive actions and unwavering support from our Board of Trustees. ***Much has changed in the last few weeks. One thing has not: the Board's fiduciary duty to protect and sustain TCU for the future.*** This means they lead us on the path to make difficult decisions, which will

require adjustments to our careful planning, but will ensure our viability for future generations. In summary, the Board is asking all of us to focus on cost containment measures in every possible area of campus.

The Board asks for patience and grace from all of us, as we ride out the many effects, known and unknown at this time, of COVID-19. They offer their unconditional support, but also ask for your understanding that we will operate with extreme caution as we navigate the next few months.

I want to note a few very important Board decisions that affect us all, and are critical to highlight:

- 1) **The budget, as submitted, was passed unanimously.** Although the FY 2021 budget was passed, it was passed with the following conditions: Trustees approved the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget with the stipulation that the University’s Administration will evaluate the University’s financial position, liquidity, and the post COVID-19 financial conditions to determine whether or not aspects of the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget should be curtailed or modified. Key examples follow.
- 2) Cease hiring for all positions unless consent of the Chancellor is given.
- 3) Decisions on merit increases for the 2020-2021 academic year will be deferred until January 2021. The Board will review the results of our fall 2020 12th Class Day census prior to authorizing merit increases.
- 4) The M.E. Sadler Hall Repurposing Project (converting the building into academic space) was approved conditionally, but project initiation is pending fall 2020 enrollment results.

While I am anxious to get back to normalcy, pressing the “pause button” on some projects is the responsible path. I am continually reminded that our lives have been upended and priorities have shifted.

In all of this turmoil, our obligations to family and friends, our important work at TCU, and our opportunities to find joy in the day, march on. I hope that you are all finding ways to take care of yourselves and connect with your communities.

I also promise to join you, our amazing faculty and staff, in continuing to serve our students in the best possible ways. Please take advantage of the many resources that TCU has provided to give you flexibility, compassion and support on this long road back to normalcy.

What follows is a summary of the Board meeting, including important actions. These Board actions underscore our collective focus on fiscal sustainability in support of TCU’s long-range planning goals. They also show confidence in our ability to continue to move forward responsibly on behalf of our community. Thank you for your commitment to TCU; we will get through this together.

Sincerely,
Victor J. Boschini, Jr.

RESOLUTIONS ON BUDGET ITEMS

The budget, as submitted, was passed unanimously by the Board. However, the most important item to know is that every expense is being reviewed through the lens of fiscal responsibility. The Board reserves the right to delay or change expenditures as we re-prioritize campus-wide needs. This may mean delays or changes to hiring practices, merit pay, or benefits offerings.

As noted above, these projections were prepared prior to the unfurling of the COVID-19 global pandemic. However, the Board agreed to move forward with an approved budget with the caveat that cost-containment and re-direction of assets, would become common practice and enacted at an operational level.

APPROVAL OF FACULTY TENURE AND PROMOTION RECOMMENDATIONS

After thoughtful review at multiple levels within the University, per the process outlined in the *Handbook for Faculty and Staff*, the Board approved tenure and promotion recommendations as presented for 45 faculty members.

CHANCELLOR/PRESIDENT DISCUSSION

The addition of a president position has been previously discussed by the Board. The search for a President will begin in 2021, with fall 2022 as the proposed start date. The president will supervise day-to-day operations, which will allow the Chancellor to devote more time to fundraising duties and other external responsibilities.

TRUSTEESHIP, BOARD OFFICERS and EMERITUS TRUSTEESHIP STATUS

Fourteen members of the Trustee Class of 2020 were re-elected for four-year terms, which will conclude at the Spring Meeting 2024. The Board also approved five new Trustees for a four-year term, acceptances pending. The following Officers were elected to the Board, effective June 1, 2020:

- Chairman, Mr. Mark L. Johnson
- Vice Chairman, Ms. Kit Tennison Moncrief
- Secretary, Ms. Jean Mrasek
- Treasurer, Mr. Brian Gutierrez

Five individuals were awarded Emeritus Trustee status: Mr. J. Kelly Cox; Mr. G. Malcolm Loudon, Mr. Roger A. Ramsey, Mr. Trevor D. Rees-Jones, and Ms. Kimbell Fortson Wynne.

FALL APPLICATIONS, 2020

The Board heard an update on projections for fall enrollment. As of March 20, 2020, TCU had received a record number of applications at 20,889 for the fall 2020 entering class. TCU has admitted 484 early decision applicants, up from last year's high of 435. Given the potential impact of COVID-19 on our enrollment, we continue to place significant focus on recruiting and engaging Future Frogs. Please remember that while we have built prediction models to help us understand how many students will actually deposit and enroll, we must remember that those models were not built for this type of environment. We remain mindful that we will not know all the outcomes of our student enrollment efforts until later this year.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

The Board received an overview of recent DEI initiatives, including the addition of training workshops for faculty and staff in unconscious bias, cultural proficiency and intercultural conflict. The University has hosted these trainings, as well as campus-wide "listening sessions," roundtables and other discussions to encourage inclusive excellence. The Board was also informed that a DEI Inventory Forum was hosted on campus in February following the initial results of a campus-wide DEI inventory. As a result, a DEI Collaboration Committee was formed and continues to meet to create strategies to bridge gaps and support inclusive excellence actions on campus.

NOTIFICATION OF HONORARY DEGREE

The Executive Committee approved the recommendation for an Honorary Degree for Godelieve Mukasarasi. This honor was announced at the spring 2020 Board meeting and will be awarded at a future commencement in recognition for her work as a global leader in women's rights, social work, peace and reconciliation related to her advocacy of Rwandan female genocide survivors.

RESOLUTION IN MEMORIAM, ANNE W. MARION

Anne W. Marion, TCU Trustee from 1979-1992, Emeritus Trustee 1992–2006 and Honorary Trustee from 2006 until her death in February 2020, put her indelible mark on her community and TCU. Her legacy lives on at TCU through her investment in countless projects and her contributions to the Medical School and Minor House. The Board of Trustees conveys its profound gratitude and esteem to our late colleague and dear friend.