

APPROVED MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD
FRIENDS of LACOE: A FOUNDATION for LEARNING
A California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation
9300 Imperial Highway, EC 107, Downey, California 90242

Wednesday, June 19, 2019

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Friends of LACOE: A Foundation for Learning was held on Wednesday, June 19, 2019 in EC 107 at the Los Angeles County Office of Education, 9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, California 90242-2890.

Present: Debra Duardo, Monte Perez, Michael Escalante, Gloria Rogers and Marsha Watkins
Absent: None
Others Present: Patricia Smith (FOL Executive Director), Candace Bond McKeever (Former LACOE Board Member), Kristen Elnicky (CCS Consulting), Jessi Uranga (LACOE staff),

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Duardo called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

During the call to order and after Dr. Duardo's opening remarks, Marsha Watkins announced her resignation from the Friends of LACOE Board of Directors. Ms. Watkins expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of the work undertaken by Friends of LACOE and wished the foundation success on its future endeavors.

COMMUNICATIONS (PUBLIC COMMENTS)

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes for the meeting of January 23, 2019.

It was MOVED to approve by Marsha Watkins; SECONDED by Gloria Rogers. Five approved; none opposed.

APPOINTMENT, NOMINATION, AND ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Duardo announced the departure of Dr. Candi Clark and Dr. Emily Hernandez from the Board of Directors. Dr. Duardo informed the Board that Dr. Clark resigned from her position as LACOE's CFO. Dr. Hernandez also resigned from the Board in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest after she accepted a position at LACOE. Dr. Duardo thanked both Directors for their time and dedication to FOL's mission.

Dr. Duardo then recommended Patricia Smith, Interim Executive Director of FOL and CFO of LACOE, to the Board. If approved, Pat Smith will be appointed to a two-year term and also be appointed as Treasurer by Dr. Duardo.

It was MOVED to approve by Gloria Rogers; SECONDED by Marsha Watkins. Five approved; none opposed

FINANCE

Dr. Duardo shared the Acceptance of Funds for the period of January 1, 2019 through May 31, 2019, for Board. Total income was \$369,094.21.

Dr. Duardo also updated the board about the receipt of the first payment for the Community Schools Director Grant. The first payment was for a total of \$100,000.

Finally, Dr. Duardo briefed the Board about two pledges that remain open. The Community Schools Director Grant awarded by Mountain Philanthropy Partners has a receivable balance of \$200,000. In addition, Cambridge Assessment, Inc. made a pledge of \$15,000 to sponsor the Superintendents' Collaborative Conference.

It was MOVED to approve by Dr. Monte Perez; SECONDED by Dr. Escalante. Five approved; none opposed.

The Board also reviewed the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities and the proposed budget for fiscal year 2019-20. This budget will be subject to revision during the upcoming redevelopment of FOL.

It was MOVED to approve by Marsha Watkins; SECONDED by Gloria Rogers. All in favor; none opposed.

DONATIONS, GRANTS and OTHER INCOME

Dr. Duardo informed the Board that Mountain Philanthropies awarded FOL an additional \$181,000 in order to retain the services of CCS Fundraising through the end of June 2019.

Additionally, Mountain Philanthropies awarded FOL two more grants geared toward the redevelopment of the Foundation. One grant, in the amount of \$125,000, secured the services of SpencerStuart for the recruitment of a permanent Executive Director. The second grant, totaling \$15,000, funded the services of EdFirst. EdFirst has been hired to assist with the plans to establish a new strategic vision for FOL.

PHILANTHROPY PLANNING INITIATIVE UPDATE

Dr. Duardo introduced Kristen Elnicky of CCS Fundraising for an update on FOL's Philanthropy Planning Initiative.

Kristen shared that four key components are currently driving the work of the initiative:

1. Rebranding Friends of LACOE
2. Building relationships with significant and influential partners and funders
3. Hiring an Executive Director who is a relationship builder with strong fundraising acumen
4. Enhancing the Board of Directors

The recommendation to rebrand FOL is that the name be changed to the Greater Los Angeles Public Education Foundation. It is believed that avoiding having LACOE in the name would be best. LACOE is not a widely recognized institution and could often require immediate explanation.

In addition to rebranding the name of FOL, the current recommendation as it relates to the nonprofit designation is to remain as a 501(c)(3) type 1 supporting organization. This will ensure that the Foundation will remain aligned with LACOE's strategic objectives and provides flexibility to partner with anyone who wants to support LACOE's initiatives.

Kristen also shared that the California Community Foundation has now offered to provide fiscal sponsorship for the initiative. This would allow CCF to be able to receive and administer contributions on behalf of the Foundation and LACOE and alleviate many of the concerns prospective funders may have about working with such a new Foundation.

Kristen continued by addressing the need to update FOL's bylaws. The recommendation is to increase the cap on directors from 9 to 30 over a period of time. This change would allow FOL to develop a robust Board with members who understand their role as a fiduciary but also allows room to bring on community members who are advocates, philanthropic supporters, and connectors with large philanthropic networks. There is also a need to enhance the structure of the Board committees.

The next phase of the initiative discussed by Kristen is the recruitment of a new Executive Director. SpencerStuart is undertaking the recruitment of this position. The new title of this position is President and Chief Deputy of Strategic Partnerships and Innovation. The successful candidate will be an employee of the Foundation and a member of Dr. Duardo's cabinet. Kristen discussed the qualifications being sought out for the ideal candidate and indicated that the goal is to have the new President on board by September.

LACOE has also agreed to hire new employees directly under the Foundation instead of through LACOE. The legal implications for doing this are being discussed by LACOE's legal counsel to ensure the infrastructure is established correctly for this new hiring process.

The last item discussed by Kristen was the funding for the infrastructure of the redeveloped Foundation. She stated meetings have taken place with prospective funders for capacity building grants. Mountain Philanthropies will also be providing additional support with CCF assisting in the ongoing fundraising efforts. Partnerships are also being developed with foundations and individuals who have expressed supporting some of FOL's priority programs, such as the community schools initiative.

The floor was opened for questions. Ms. Bond McKeever asked if using a fiscal sponsor would discourage potential donors, but Kristen responded that feedback thus far has been positive.

A key concern raised during the question session was the similarity to efforts being made at LAUSD. Dr. Duardo assured the Board that the initiative is not looking to compete with efforts at LAUSD. The goal is to align and leverage resources to better serve the community and smaller school districts throughout the County.

Gloria Rogers suggested inviting a Director from LAUSD to join the Board. Dr. Duardo responded that LAUSD would be included in our efforts and a formal invitation would be extended.

The conversation turned to the structure and operations of the Foundation. Kristen mentioned the need to update the bylaws and increase the cap of board members up to 30. This process should be done slowly and thoughtfully. The need to change the structure of the FOL committees was also discussed, with the focus being on developing Nominating and Grant committees.

Dr. Perez wanted to clarify the timeline of when the new President would be hired and the staffing structure of the Foundation going forward. It was shared that the goal is to hire the new President by September and that the restructured foundation would hire staff independently from LACOE. Dr. Duardo added that the goal in doing all of this is to become the source for funders to give to public education.

The Board discussed the role of EdFirst in the initiative. Dr. Duardo informed the Board that EdFirst is helping with the strategy and action plan. They are also helping to develop methods to analyze outcomes and measure impact. The Foundation would not want to accept funds if the impact of the contribution can't be felt.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Duardo updated the Board on the status of FOL's submission of IRS form 990. Staff worked closely with the auditors from Quigley and Miron to ensure accuracy and a timely submission.

The Board Meeting Calendar was also shared, with the Annual Meeting taking place on August 12, 2019.

The final item brought to the Board's attention was a Computer Science Initiative proposal brought forward by Dr. Perez and Ms. Candace Bond McKeever. Dr. Perez began the conversation by sharing research about the state of Computer Science education in California public schools. Data shows that Computer Science courses are only offered at 39% of schools in the State. The percentage for LA County schools is 44%, with only 16% of them being offered as AP.

Dr. Perez continued by stating that improving the state of Computer Science education is something both LACOE and community colleges can help with. Dr. Perez shared information about the research efforts at UCLA regarding Computer Science education, as well as the new Computer Science czar for the State of California that was recently hired.

LACOE can play a role in these efforts by helping to gather relevant parties to the cause. Dr. Perez also shared that community colleges can be key by offering dual enrollment. This should help shift some of the focus away from AP courses and offer a more direct impact for students studying Computer Science.

The topic of Computer Science teacher scarcity was also addressed. Dr. Perez said this is an area that LACOE can impact by offering professional development opportunities and helping prepare teachers for the field.

Ms. Bond McKeever added that Computer Science is an area with opportunity for philanthropists to contribute. There is lack of access and equity in this field and large technology companies are noticing that talent in the Computer Science field is not being developed. Much of this is due to the gap in educational services.

Ms. Bond McKeever continued by sharing that there are models from other states that can be followed. The funders are there for this type of initiative, but they desire structure and accountability. A scalable idea would be something very enticing to funders.

Dr. Duardo added that this type of work is why the foundation was created. The vision is to address equity gaps in education.

There was lively discussion regarding LACOE's capacity to train teachers, the numbers showing that Computer Science courses are mostly offered in affluent communities, and that there is a strong desire among funders to give for this type of work.

Kristen added that funders would give if asked, but detail of a program need to be outlined. A detailed program, budget, and measurable impacts will go a long way to attract funders.

Marsha Watkins brought up the need to offer Computer Science educational opportunities to the schools and camps that LACOE serves directly.

Dr. Escalante brought up the potential to partner with companies such as Cisco, Oracle, Amazon, and Apple. He mentioned that these companies are always looking for opportunities to give when it comes to Computer Science. Dr. Perez shared a willingness to work with Arturo Valdez at LACOE to develop a Computer Science program that can attract potential partners. Dr. Duardo added that FOL will help with partnerships that LACOE is unable to enter.

ADJOURNMENT

It was MOVED to adjourn at 4:05 p.m. by Dr. Perez; SECONDED by Marsha Watkins. All in favor. None opposed.

APPROVED

August 29, 2019
Downey, California