

**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**The Davidson Academy Governing Board**  
**February 18, 2020**

**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Governing Board was called to order at 2:02 p.m. in the Tahoe Room at The Davidson Academy located at 1164 N Virginia St, Reno Nevada 89503.

**A. Roll Call**

Roll call was completed by the Chair of the Meeting, Bob Davidson. Roger Davidson, Mark Herron, Brian Krolicki, Kristen McNeill, and Patricia Richard (representing Marc Johnson) were present. Lauralyn McCarthy Sandoval joined the meeting by conference call. Annette Whittemore, Richard Trachok and Jhone Ebert were not present. Academy Director Colleen Harsin, the Director of Online Learning Stacy Hawthorne, controller Karin Dixson, and governing Board clerk August Reich were present.

**B. Welcome and Introduction**

Bob Davidson welcomed Board members present and members of the public in attendance.

**C. Public Comments**

Bob Davidson welcomed members of the public attending the meeting. There were no comments from the public.

**D. Approval of Minutes for Meeting of November 4, 2019**

Bob Davidson requested approval of the minutes for the meeting of November 4, 2019, under Tab 1 of the Board book. Motion was made and seconded for approval of the minutes as submitted. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

**E. Approval of Agenda**

Bob Davidson requested approval of the Agenda as submitted to the Board. Motion was made and seconded for approval of the meeting Agenda. There was no discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

**F. Reports**

**1. Academy Director**

Davidson Academy Director, Colleen Harsin, began by informing Board members that the next meeting will include information on where seniors will be attending college along with the 2020-2021 calendar. Ms. Harsin stated that the Academy is entering the busiest part of the year which includes an increase in school travel. This increase in travel included the recent DECA state conference in Las Vegas which over a quarter of the student body

participated in. Bob Davidson asked for an explanation of DECA. Ms. Harsin asked August Reich, the DECA advisor, to explain. Mr. Reich explained that DECA prepares students for competitive events in Marketing, Business Administration, Entrepreneurship, and Hospitality. Ms. Harsin told Board members that majority of the students qualified for the international conference scheduled for later this semester.

Ms. Harsin explained that the students recently completed a survey to determine what the Academy is doing well and items students would like to see change. Ms. Harsin told the Board members that individual student responses were confidential and are not going to be given to the Board at this time. The results from the survey put an emphasis on making events that separate the middle and high school age students. The current action to address this is to have the spring dance be a high school formal while also adding an event for middle school students. Ms. Harsin mentioned that of the 135 students enrolled only 15 students did not respond to the survey. Bob Davidson stated that unlike other schools, students at the Davidson Academy have input regarding what clubs are offered. Bob Davidson then asked if community crusaders are still an active club. Ms. Harsin explained that there is not a club with the title community crusaders but there are still student led clubs that focus on helping the community. Some of these clubs include Print 3D Club, GECKO, Math Counts, Science Bowl, DECA, and Science Olympiad. Ms. Harsin explained that the larger competition clubs which are DECA and Science Olympiad are now classes with a curriculum. These two platforms are made possible because of help from parent volunteers which has brought the community closer together.

Ms. Harsin told the Board that the schools current population is 135 students. While this is lower than normal, the Davidson Academy has accepted 20 students from this year's assessment and 16 of these students have committed to enroll for the next school year. The assessment team has also recently assessed another 15 students and plan to assess more students throughout the remaining assessment dates this school year. Ms. Harsin explained that due to the amount of students assessing, she will have updated acceptance numbers at the next meeting scheduled on May 26<sup>th</sup>. Bob Davidson asked what percentage of students who assess become students? Ms. Harsin stated about 50% of the students who assess become students with a portion of the students assessing more than one time.

Ms. Harsin referred to tab 2 of the board book to discuss the Academy's current situation with accreditation. The accrediting body of the Davidson Academy is AdvancEd, which recently merged with Measured Progress creating Cognia. Ms. Harsin explained that the school accreditation was originally extended to the 2020-2021 but because the Academy was not classified as a school needing improvement, the accreditation was extended to June 2024. Bob Davidson asked if there are any obstacles that the Davidson Academy could face with accreditation. Ms. Harsin explained that there have not been any issues in the past and that the local reviewing team understands that the Academy is different than most other schools.

Ms. Harsin referred to tab 3 of the board book to discuss the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Ms. Harsin began by pointing out that two students who were originally listed have been removed from the list. The first student, Ellie Huh, has postponed graduating until 2021. The second student, May Thein, transferred to a school in California. The

remainder of the students listed are eligible to continue their application for the US Presidential Scholarship.

Ms. Harsin referred to tab 4 of the board book to discuss updates regarding National Merit Scholarship finalists. The students listed are graduating seniors who are eligible to receive direct scholarships. Ms. Harsin stated that there will be more information regarding student scholarships at the next board meeting.

## **2. Director of Online Learning**

Ms. Hawthorne referred to tab 5 of the board book to discuss course feedback surveys. Ms. Hawthorne explained that students complete one of these surveys for each class they are enrolled in. The survey includes optional student comments and a 5-point scale with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being disagree. For the fall semester there were 189 survey responses. These responses were reviewed, and student names were removed by Ms. Hawthorne before giving the feedback to instructors.

Ms. Hawthorne explained that the surveys are divided into three domains. The first domain is the course content in Blackboard which is primarily the instructional materials. This portion of the survey provided mixed results about Blackboard with some comments being helpful to instructors. The next domain from the survey focused on live sessions. Ms. Hawthorne explained that the live sessions are what make this online campus unique and the scores from this section reflect the positive impact the sessions have on students. Ms. Hawthorne discussed the third domain which has students rate the effectiveness of their instructors. This portion of this survey averaged the highest scores. Ms. Hawthorne then focused on the section of the survey regarding technology issues. The survey results show that 13% had minor issues with Blackboard and 18% had minor issues with Zoom.

Bob Davidson asked Ms. Hawthorne to provide a list of courses offered at the online campus. Ms. Hawthorne told Board members where this information is listed on the public website and that the online campus has majority of the classes offered at the Davidson Academy with the exception of Advanced Rhetoric which is currently being developed along with adding new electives. Ms. Hawthorne explained the process of building signature courses which takes about 300 person hours. Bob Davidson asked if Davidson Online has used MIT as a resource. Ms. Hawthorne stated that a current online student in Las Vegas tested out of Calculus 3 and is taking Differential Equations through our partnership with MIT.

Ms. Hawthorne told Board members that the Davidson Academy Online campus continues to have all online courses approved for A-G credit from the University of California system. The Online campus just had their first course approved by the UC for visual and performing arts credit. This means that Online campus students who live in California can now graduate from the Davidson Academy and meet all the UC requirements. Bob Davidson asked if there have been similar issues with any other states. Ms. Hawthorne explained that California is the only state with this specific requirement.

Ms. Hawthorne referred to tab 6 of the board book to discuss recruiting. This tab displays a chart showing a 117% increase in applications from February 2019 to February 2020. Bob Davidson asked how many applicants are accepted. Ms. Hawthorne stated that

about 50% of the students who assess are accepted and in the last two years 100% of the students who have been accepted enroll. Ms. Hawthorne stated that the increase in applicants led the Online campus to add more assessments in April and May.

Ms. Hawthorne discussed new monthly open houses. These open houses include panels with current students and their parents who want to share their stories about the Online campus. Along with the open houses, the Online team is hosting in-person regional recruiting events in select cities across the U.S. Ms. Hawthorne spoke about the success of these events by stating that one of the newly enrolled students is from Orlando, Florida and attended the in-person event.

Ms. Hawthorne referred to the back pocket of the board book to discuss the Online Learning Infographic. This handout is a tool used to help prospective families compare the different online programs. This infographic is divided into 6 domains which are level, time, support services, application process, assessment process, and tuition. Ms. Hawthorne noted that the Davidson Explore program, located in the first column, is run by the Davidson Institute and is a great alternative for students not ready for the full Academy experience yet.

Ms. Hawthorne referred back to tab 6 stating that the average age of accepted students is 13.1 years old. Ms. Hawthorne told Board members that they recently accepted their first students from Florida and Maryland. Both of these students have already enrolled for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Ms. Hawthorne recognized a Davidson Academy Online instructor, Dr. Potts, who recently won an Exemplary Course Program Award from Blackboard.

Ms. Hawthorne spoke about the recent winter retreat in Houston which gave students and parents the opportunity to meet in person. Bob Davidson and Brian Krolicki asked if the school was still using telepresence robots. Ms. Hawthorne responded affirmatively and told the Board of a teleconferencing award she is applying for with the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). Brian Krolicki asked if the school is looking to acquire more robots. Ms. Hawthorne explained that the original budget was to purchase two robots this current school year but after negotiating a price they were able to purchase four with the money budgeted. Bob Davidson asked if the online school continues to create more classes if the robots could possibly be used for UNR courses. Ms. Hawthorne explained that one of the online students will attend graduation using a robot this year and that it is possible to use the robots at UNR in the future.

### **3. Media and Outreach**

Ms. Hawthorne referred to tab 7 to discuss the media and outreach report. Ms. Hawthorne explained that there is a new section included in the report titled Notable Website Mentions. This section lists websites that have included the Davidson Academy in their articles. Ms. Hawthorne stated that the Nevada Governor retweeted a Davidson Academy post regarding Jason Liu. Ms. Hawthorne then discussed the monthly eNewsletter that is sent out monthly to more than 15,000 recipients. Ms. Hawthorne explained that Academy tours have concluded for the year, there is one more scheduled date for an in person event, and one remaining Online open house. Ms. Hawthorne told Board members that

the Davidson Academy is working closely with the Davidson Institute to attend outreach conferences to provide Young Scholars information about Academy options. Ms. Hawthorne informed Board members that Mark Dlugosz will be attending social media training to facilitate growth and best practices.

#### **G. General Business**

There were no General Business items. Brian Krolicki told Board members that he will not be in attendance for the meeting scheduled for May 26, 2020.

#### **H. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

#### **I. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board in public meeting, motion was made and seconded for adjournment; motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

*August Reich*

Respectfully submitted by August Reich, Clerk of the Board