

**MINUTES**

**OF THE**

**SPECIAL TELEPHONIC MEETING OF THE**

**BOARD OF REGENTS**

**OF**

**THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

**HELD IN**

**COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS**

**August 15, 2008**

*(Approved September 25-26, 2008)*

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**MINUTES OF THE  
SPECIAL TELEPHONIC MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS**

**August 15, 2008**

Mr. Bill Jones, Chairman of the Board, convened a special telephonic meeting of the Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System, at 9:02 a.m., Friday, August 15, 2008, Board of Regents Meeting Room, Memorial Student Center, on the campus of Texas A&M University (TAMU), College Station, Texas.

The following member of the Board was present in the Board Meeting Room:

Mr. Bill Jones, Chairman

The following members of the Board were present by telephone:

Mr. John D. White, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Morris Foster  
Mr. Lupe Fraga  
Mr. J.L. Huffines  
Mr. Erle Nye  
Mr. Gene Stallings  
Ms. Ida Clement Steen  
Mr. Jim Wilson  
Mr. Anthony Cullins (Student Regent)

Mr. Jones said in accordance with the Texas Government Code, that allows governing boards to meet by telephone, each party to the conference call must clearly identify himself/herself prior to speaking. Mr. Jones called the roll and said a quorum was present.

Mr. Jones said the posted purpose of this special telephonic meeting was to consider the following item: Item 1 – To consider and take action on the appointment of the Vice President for Student Affairs at Texas A&M University.

Mr. Jones said if there was anyone who wished to provide public testimony on this agenda item to please sign in at the reception desk outside the meeting room. He said the Board would consider the public testimony before voting on Agenda Item 1.

**RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:05 a.m., Mr. Jones announced that having convened in open session, the Board would enter into executive session to consider matters as permitted by Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code (consultation with system attorneys regarding legal matters) and

Section 551.074 (deliberations regarding personnel matters relating to appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of an officer or employee, or to hear complaints or charges against an officer or employee, including Item 1.

Mr. Jones said in accordance with the law, no final action, decision, or vote with regard to any matter considered in the executive session would be made or taken. Mr. Jones asked the following members of the administration to stay for the executive session: Dr. Mike McKinney (Chancellor), Dr. Elsa Murano (President), Mr. Jay Kimbrough (Deputy Chancellor and General Counsel), and Ms. Vickie Spillers (Executive Secretary to the Board). Mr. Jones said all persons who had not been requested to stay for the executive session were requested to leave the meeting room.

*(Secretary's Note: The Board met in executive session from 9:05 a.m. until 9:19 a.m.)*

### **RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION**

Mr. Jones reconvened the meeting in open session at 9:20 a.m. Mr. Jones announced that the Board met in executive session from 9:05 a.m. until 9:19 a.m., and considered Item 1 and conferred with the Chancellor, several system and university administrators and their attorney on personnel and legal matters.

Mr. Jones said that four requests had been received to provide public testimony on Item 1. Mr. Jones said he would allow a total of 15 minutes for testimony and asked that comments be kept brief and void of repetitive comments. Mr. Jones gave instructions to the speakers regarding the timer used during their testimony. He then thanked each person for being at the meeting and welcomed their public testimony.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Mr. Jones called on Mr. Mark Gold, Student Body President at Texas A&M University. Mr. Gold thanked the members of the Board and the administration for allowing them to present public testimony. He said it goes without saying that students love this university very much and as Student Body President, he was there to speak on their behalf before the decision was made about the Vice President for Student Affairs. Mr. Gold said that immediately following the resignation of Dr. Dean Bresciani and continuing through the summer, there were a lot of concerns by the students about the lack of a formal process in this decision. He said there were two main reasons that he recommended a formal search process to be considered for this position. Mr. Gold said that one of the things that make Texas A&M so special and one of the reasons he liked being a student leader at this university was because of the principle of shared governance. He said using a formal search in this process would have helped to ensure that every voice was heard and that everyone has an opportunity to give input and be involved in this process which was very important to the future of our university. Mr. Gold said he would like to see shared governance practiced. Secondly, he said part of the success of the Vice President for Student Affairs was the support of the student body in his/her decisions. He asked that a formal search be recognized and held, including General Weber, in order to ensure that successes in the trust of the student body were seen. Mr. Gold thanked the members again for allowing him to come to the meeting and asked for consideration of his recommendation.

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Gold if he had heard of Dr. John Koldus and if so, had he heard of his success as Vice President for Student Services. Mr. Gold responded in the affirmative. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Gold if he knew that Dr. Koldus was selected by the President and there was not a nationwide search in the selection. Mr. Gold responded in the affirmative. Mr. Jones commented that Mr. Gold had written in his notes that he thought without this process and without student support, success would be very difficult to achieve. Mr. Jones said he does not know the outcome of the Board's vote, because they hadn't voted yet; however, if you assumed that the Board voted to support Dr. Murano's recommendation of General Joe Weber, Mr. Jones asked Mr. Gold, you're not indicating to this Board that the students would not do everything possible to ensure success in this particular arena, are you? Mr. Gold said he and the students would do everything in their power to support the decision. Mr. Gold commented that to his knowledge, Dr. Koldus was the first Vice President for Student Affairs, so to have a national search for a position that didn't exist at the time was, to his understanding, the reason it didn't happen. Mr. Jones said he was not concerned with the reason, but looking for the result and the result was that we had a very good Vice President for Student Services in Dr. Koldus and his wife. Mr. Gold agreed.

Mr. Nye excused himself from the meeting and commented that he understood the concerns about process, but that he was more concerned with results. Mr. Nye said he knew General Weber and his qualities, his family life and his background as an Aggie and a distinguished military person defending this country. Mr. Nye said he would support, if given the opportunity, his candidacy, but noted that he must withdraw from this meeting and catch a plane.

*(Secretary's Note: Mr. Nye departed the meeting at 9:25 a.m.)*

Mr. Jones then called on Mr. Nicholas "Nick" Petree, Memorial Student Center (MSC) President, for public testimony. Mr. Petree thanked the members of the Board and administration for the opportunity to speak. He said as MSC President, one of his primary responsibilities was representing students' opinions to the administration and would like to take the opportunity to address some of the student concerns on this process. He said that students have expressed concern in the seemingly closed manner of the process during the search for the Vice President. The lack of garnering input from students, faculty and administrators has concerned some students and they would like to see a formal search process so that their opinions could be heard and voiced. Mr. Petree commended Dr. Murano for the input she had garnered from student leaders. He thanked Dr. Murano for that opportunity and stated that he would like to see that go farther and continue in the same spirit of shared governance. Mr. Petree said not considering other candidates in this process had been another concern for students. He said although students do feel that General Weber can be very qualified for this position, they do think there might have been other candidates as qualified or possibly even more qualified. He said not considering other candidates in the process had been a very strong issue of concern for students. He added, to echo Mark Gold's sentiments, that the possibility of success for General Weber, if he was selected, in his opinion, would be extremely diminished because of the lack of process and not being able to issue their opinions in the process. Mr. Petree said he felt the backing from the student body would be extremely diminished and he noted that he believed

that was a very strong foundation in the possibility for success for this position. Mr. Petree said that he personally believed General Weber has very strong characteristics and seemed like a very good leader and a very strong administrator and in the long term, he may succeed. Mr. Petree reiterated that the strong foundation of coming to a position with the support of students, faculty and administrators was very paramount for the success of this position and it's important that the person selected had that best possible chance for success.

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Petree what was more important to him as a student leader – the process or the end result. Mr. Petree said that the end result in the long term is the most important thing, but as a student leader, his chance to impact that was right now, so he must speak for students right now and their concerns. He said there was also a dichotomy in his personal opinion and what students have expressed to him in their concerns. He said he must take the high road and express those concerns and those concerns are that this person might not have the possibility to succeed. Mr. Jones asked Nick his personal opinion. Mr. Petree responded that this person could succeed in the long run, but that was only one person's opinion and there were far more opinions stating that he would have a hard possibility for success and so he must echo those sentiments.

Dr. McKinney stated that this process was according to the rules that exist. He asked Mr. Petree to help him understand what process they would propose that would yield a better chance of success and said that it might actually yield the same person. Mr. Petree said the nature of students was that they were greedy on this process of shared governance. Dr. McKinney asked for clarification on the term "shared governance." Mr. Petree said although it might not be in the rules, it is something that is paramount to what makes Texas A&M unique. He said he had spoken at many public forums for former Aggies and one of the things he says that made A&M so unique is that students are the ones driving this university. Mr. Petree said he strongly believes that shared governance was the avenue for students to provide their input on important decisions for the university. Dr. McKinney said as he understood it, having more forums on campus before a decision was made was what the students were wanting. Mr. Petree said there was a very strong process for some of the other vice president positions and the provost as well. He said he believed there was a lot of input garnered from students on that process – so a search process where more input could be garnered for whatever candidate was available.

Mr. Jones called on Mr. Bruce Brown for public testimony. Mr. Brown announced that he did not wish to speak, as his concerns had been addressed.

Mr. Jones called on Mr. Jeremiah Sherman. Mr. Sherman announced that he did not wish to speak, as his concerns had also been addressed.

Mr. Jones asked before he closed the comment portion of the meeting, if there was any other student who wished to address the Board, whether or not they had signed up. There were no other comments. Mr. Jones commended the students for bringing their concerns to the Board, noting that their input was always valued, not only at this Board meeting but when they graduate.

Dr. Murano thanked the students for coming to the meeting because the students had actually practiced this shared governance, in a sense, whether they knew it or not. She said in e-mails that she had received and the focus groups that she led, even though it may not have taken place with all 46,000 students, were all forms of input. Dr. Murano said she appreciated very much the thoughts that had been brought forward. She said a process was followed – it may not have been the process that some may have wanted in terms of a national search and taking time to bring lots of candidates, but there was a process followed that allowed her to look informally at several potential candidates and then more formally at one candidate, General Joe Weber, when it became clearer and clearer to her that he had a high potential for succeeding in this position because of his background. She said having engaged some of you, not all the students for sure, but engaged some students to at least give her opinions on General Weber, knowing that on a professional level he certainly has experience that was very viable and very transferable skills that he could bring to the job. Dr. Murano said she was very interested in getting input from students about his qualities as a person because one could be very qualified with the best resume on the planet, but if the person could not get along with people and could not demonstrate the human qualities that were so important when dealing with people, which is really what student affairs is all about, then it would be a non-starter. She said those human qualities became extremely important. Dr. Murano thanked the students for their opinions and their input and said she expected it to continue even on this issue. She said if the Board does approve Mr. Weber, she would count on all of the students to give her feedback and give him feedback as to whether this is not working or yes, this is working. She said any search that you do in any process that you follow ultimately doesn't guarantee that the person was going to do a great job even after assessing all of the qualifications of the candidates. She said ultimately it's up to the individual to perform. Dr. Murano said we all need to avail ourselves of each other's feedback in terms of if things work out and how we could make sure that it works out for the benefit of the students. She said Mr. Gold, Mr. Petree and others had been tremendous representatives for all of the student body. Dr. Murano said she had met with them on a regular basis and would continue to do so. She said any suggestions, concerns and pats on the back were welcomed.

The Board took action as set forth below:

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**MINUTE ORDER 277-2008 (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

**APPOINTMENT OF MR. JOSEPH F. WEBER AS  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS,  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**

Mr. White moved adoption of the minute order. Mr. Stallings seconded the motion. Mr. Jones said he would call each regent's name so that their vote was properly recorded. The regents voted as follows: Foster – yes, Fraga – yes, Huffines – yes, Stallings – yes, Steen – yes, White – yes, Wilson – yes. Mr. Jones said that although he is not required to vote, he wanted to record his vote as a “yes.” Mr. Jones wanted to make sure that the students understood that the Student Regent does not vote. The following minute order was adopted.

Effective August 18, 2008, Mr. Joseph F. Weber is hereby appointed Vice President for Student Affairs at Texas A&M University, at an initial salary of \$250,000.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion of Mr. Stallings, seconded by Mr. Huffines and by a unanimous vote, the special telephonic meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m., the same day.

Vickie Burt Spillers  
Executive Secretary to the Board  
The Texas A&M University System