

**Special Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**April 10, 2020**  
**Blackboard Collaborate**  
**3:30 p.m.**

The Board of Trustees met on Friday, April 10 at 3:30 p.m. via Blackboard Collaborate. The following were in attendance: Trey Berry (SAU President), Lawrence Bearden, Therral Story, Monty Harrington, Gary Golden, Erica Woods, Donna Allen, David Lanoue, Shawana Reed, Roger Giles, Jennifer Rowsam, Sarah Jennings, Jason Morrison (SAU Tech Chancellor), Gaye Manning, Valerie Wilson and David McLeane. Guests included Tim Schroeder (Faculty Senate), Sheryl Edwards, Caleigh Moyer (SAU Communications), Dan Marsh (SAU Communications) and John David Bailey (Banner News).

[00:20:27.21] Lawrence Bearden: This is a special called meeting for the Board of Trustees and a very unusually time. I wish to thank Dr. Berry and Jason and your staff and professors for handling this thing in a very timely and proper manner. I want to thank those who have worked so hard, the heroes and remember those who are no longer with us. Let's take a moment of silence.

We will suspend the approval of the minutes for our regularly scheduled meeting. The first item on the agenda will be Dr. Berry.

[00:21:23.01] Trey Berry: Thank you. I also want to thank you for being here for this special Board meeting. I also want to take this opportunity to welcome our newest Board member, Erica Woods. Erica welcome!

[00:21:41.20] Erica Woods - Thank you Dr. Berry and hello everybody.

[00:21:43.26] Trey Berry: This is not the way the kind of first Board meeting you would have mam.

[00:21:53.07] Erica Woods: You are right about that.

[00:21:53.07] Trey Berry: Mr. Bearden spoke of heroes and some of you may know that Erica is a nurse in Little Rock and she is one of those people providing care for people during this time so we kind of consider her our hero today. Erica thank you so much for all you're doing and we are so glad that you are a member of the Board.

[00:22:21.25] Erica Woods: Thank you Dr. Berry, so am I.

[00:22:22.22] Trey Berry: As you can tell, this is not the most optimal way to conduct a Board meeting. It is the only way we could meet during our current situation. I appreciate everybody being flexible in trying to adjust to this new reality. I think it is safe to say that our nation and our campus has never seen anything like this and we definitely living in unprecedented times. I want to give you a quick update on what has transpired on our campus and then Dr. Morrison will give

you the same about what is happening and has transpired on the SAU Tech campus. I will tell you that Dr. Morrison and I are in contact basically daily and multiple times sometimes during the day. In contact about what is going on and we are all monitoring this situation not just by the day but by the hour as it is changing by the hour.

I want to go over a couple of things real quickly about what has happened. As far as academics is concerned, some of our largest changes, you know on March 30, we changed the way we deliver our classes from face-to-face to online. We meet with our faculty and they underwent a week of training and I will have to take this opportunity to thank our faculty. What they did in that one week, to literally change their lives and change the way they do business and the way they educate our students was truly inspiring. I just want to say my personal thanks to be on the record for what our faculty did, that was also heroic and making that transition. We have had a few issues but it has been surprising smooth overall, this transition and I think that is a testament to our faculty and staff and our students for making that transition. Just to let you know, we are doing our best to work with students individually as they have made this transition and are adjusting to it. If we hear of an issue, we are jumping right on it. I will give you an example. One of our staff members heard of a student that had no computer access and lived in north Louisiana. Our staff member drove an hour both ways to deliver a laptop to that student so they could continue their studies. That is the kind of things that is going on our campuses. I want to thank everybody for doing that.

I want to let you know that on the SAU campus, to help students who don't have internet, we still have Wilson Hall, first floor computer labs open and we also created hotspots in parking lots around the campus to give access to students so if they are in driving distance, they can come and park in the parking lot and get some of their work done. We are trying to do our best to work with students and I will tell you one thing that I think the Board needs to know and some of you may have heard, that because of such a sudden transition for our students, they literally were uprooted in their face-to-face classes. Many of them were not use to online classes, we have been working with deans and with our faculty to come up with a different grading scale and policy for this semester only. I want to take just a second to go over this with you so you know what this new policy is for this semester only. Of course it is A, B, C, D and F grades. If a student makes an A, B, or C, that grade remains the same as it was before in their grading and in their classes. If they make a D in their class this semester, they receive credit for this course but the D will not affect their GPA. If they make an F in the course they will receive no credit for the course but it will not affect their GPA. We felt like this was fair, and the deans and faculty worked together for these student who are having a struggle and challenging time making this transition. So, I want you to know what the new grading scale and policy will be for this semester only.

Also, as far as summer school, this summer of 2020, we worked with the faculty and deans and we have concluded that our summer school needs to be all online as well. You may know that our summer school is already 90-92 percent online anyway. We decided to go ahead and take it all online so our faculty and staff are working toward making that happen for summer school for our students.

As far as our student body is concerned, you may know that we officially closed our resident's halls and apartments this past Monday, April 6. Most of our student had gone home by that time, but we felt like we needed to officially close them. Students wanting to make an exception to stay for various reasons or hardships could do that and this past Saturday, Sunday and Monday, the students who parents that could, came back to campus to retrieve their belongings, they were all screened before they came into the residence halls and we had a limited number of student that could be in the residence halls. After that happened, we have about 164 students still on campus that have made exceptions for staying in our residence halls and in our apartments. We are continuing to feed those students with brown bag grab and go from the cafeteria so they are still getting their meals. The labs are still open for our students that are on campus. I also what to say thank you to our dedicated staff who have gone above and beyond to help our students to make this transition, to help our students to get moved off campus and are continuing to help our students that remain on campus. Also, our staff are adapting to working at home.

As you all know, there have been some financial challenges happening in the nation and our state. Those challenges have trickled down to our campus. The beginning of April, the state of Arkansas announced that it had a budget shortfall and that we were informed that we were going to lose about 2.4 million dollars from our budget between April and June. That amounts to about 12 percent of our state allocations. As you can imagine, we have been working with the Vice President's and others about this budget shortfall. We are working hard every day to overcome that. We are also expecting some additional budget cuts from the state in the weeks and months ahead. We are working on our portion and SAU Tech's portion of the federal stimulus package and we will be able to give you a clearer picture about that in the next month or so. There is still a lot of unknown and we are still working through on that. We should be able to give you a clearer picture in about 30 days. Finally, I want to close by saying I have been personally inspired by our students, faculty and staff and what they have done. It has truly been heroic to watch them meet these challenges in unprecedented times. I want to say that we have a long road ahead but there is no doubt we will get through this together. I want to thank the Board for their leadership and for supporting to University and our faculty, staff and students because we are going to get through this together. Mr. Bearden that concludes my remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions.

[00:33:29.18] Lawrence Bearden: With there being no questions, we will ask Jason Morrison to give SAU Tech's report.

[00:34:01.14] Jason Morrison: I want to give a quick update of how SAU Tech is responding to Covid-19. We are working with a reduced workforce on campus with many of our people working virtually. All of our general education and a vast majority of our technical classes, all but about 14 of our technical classes have moved to online classes. Those technical classes have done some individual instruction, mail packet instruction, workbook type instruction and we really we have been working heavily on testing out the based procedures. Our welding academy in Magnolia

was able to go through that process and test out those students and finish those students last week.

Our housing is open. We have about 40-45 students residing in housing. A lot of our students have to return to our campus because they do not have reliable internet or even reliable homes. We screened those students and we monitor them daily. In a matter of fact, this weekend my wife, Stephanie and I will be moving into campus housing to just provide an added level of comfort and just for our students and to let them know we are there for them. We want to do that for our students to let them know we are there for them and they need that added comfort. I want to thank our community - John Dawson, Danny Glaze, Jim Golden and many others who, in hearing that we have students on campus and the dinner is closed, they have assured me that our students will get one hot meal a day. They are raising money and cooking meals themselves. They are delivering meals to our students each day. That is a tremendous show of support from our community. Some of our individual programs like our cosmetology is working through video recording of activities and practices and or individualized instruction to work through that program. Aviation has received approval through the FAA to conduct some online training while they are on pause from onsite training. Our nursing program completed a week of testing and are now engaged in some online instruction and will have one more line of testing to complete that program. With the nursing in mind, the RN and LPN program with delay their start from May to August.

Our adult education has moved their students to online education. Thanks to Robin for the work she has done on that. Our career academy with partnerships with high school has finished and those students have graded out. Our current students are working online and through their AMI packets.

We are still in the process to determine of how we are going to respond to graduation. It is postponed at the moment but we are looking at an alternative to having a commencement virtually or something along that line.

I appreciate our faculty and their willingness to work with the students, to go the extra mile and support our students. The staff has been a tremendous support to our students. I want to give a special thank you to one of our newest faculty members, Scottie Morrison, he is our new films study instructor. He has reported to campus and he has been assisting with our marketing and our enrollment office in order for them to conduct virtual tours. A special thank you to Scottie for what he has done.

We are steadily committed to recruiting our students. We have our Tech scholar's interviews coming up on May 19 and that will be done through Zoom. We have also been steadily recruiting choir and cheer. In fact, we have added three cheerleaders since covid-19 has taken place. Everyone on our campus has truly come together as a family. We appreciate the guidance from Dr. Berry, SAU and their support. In going through this process, we too were impacted by the budget in our last quarter losing quarter of a million dollars from the budget and also, the fire academy and the environmental academy were impacted. The fire academy is on pause right

now and they are doing interdepartmental training. They are training in other parts of the state only if it is an interdepartmental training. We set and watch to determine when the next rookie school will start. The environmental training has moved to online with their instruction and they are working with the listening body to extent their license that were about to expire. Our workforce training, we have seen it paused in some of our training partnerships with area industries. However, we do have a training that will start on Monday with one of our defense contractors. Since they are a defense industry, we have to serve them. That will be done with screening, reduced training population and it will be in short intervals for that industry partner. That is kind of a general update and how we have responded to Covid-19 at SAU Tech. Any questions?

[00:40:42.05] Lawrence Bearden: With there being no questions, I want to personally thank Dr. Berry and you, Jason for timely and appropriate decisions. I am very pleased with the way you are conducting business under these trying times. Our next agenda item will be executive session. I'll let Dr. Berry start that off.

[00:41:06.06] Trey Berry: Members of the press, JD and Dan, if you can give us your cell phone, we will have you and everyone else except the Board members, hang up and then we will let everyone know when to dial back in. Sheryl will let everyone else know when to dial back in.

The Board entered into executive session at 4:13 pm.

The Board returned from executive session at 4:43 pm.

[00:00:35.08] Lawrence Bearden: I will declare us back in session to complete the special meeting agenda. Mr. Golden do you have a resolution that you want to propose?

[00:00:52.12] Gary Golden: We need to give the staff and faculty the authority to pursue all stimulus program that they may be able to use for the University. All that is available now and in the future.

[00:01:14.09] Lawrence Bearden: I have a motion on the floor, do I have a second?

[00:01:18.02] Monty Harrington: Second.

[00:01:20.28] Lawrence Bearden: Discussion? All those in favor say "Aye."

[00:01:25.05] Therral Story: "Aye."

[00:01:25.05] Monty Harrington: "Aye."

[00:01:25.05] Gary Golden: "Aye."

[00:01:25.05] Erica Woods: "Aye."

[00:01:32.26] Trey Berry: Thank you!

[00:01:38.08] Lawrence Bearden: Dr. Berry, do we have any other items to consider at this time?

[00:01:38.08] Trey Berry: Yes sir. We have this other resolution. Would you like me to read it in open session?

[00:01:45.26] Lawrence Bearden: Yes, please.

[00:01:48.01] Trey Berry: We have a resolution as an endorsement from the Southern Arkansas University Board of Trustees.

This resolution is an endorsement of the decision of Southern Arkansas University to officially close its campus housing (with approved exceptions) on Monday, April 6. The Board of Trustees further endorses the campus staffs efforts to screen and keep areas of the campus free from disease.

In light of the COVID - 19 pandemic, the administration, staff, and faculty of Southern Arkansas University have taken extreme and appropriate steps to protect the students and the campus community over the past four weeks.

The Board of Trustees applauds the efforts of the SAU faculty to convert their teachings to online to accommodate students in the face of the COVID - 19 crisis. The Board also applauds the efforts of the SAU staff as they continue to work to continue the vital functions of the University going in the face of extremely difficult circumstances.

[00:03:06.03] Lawrence Bearden: Do I hear a motion that we accept this resolution?

[00:03:10.00] Monty Harrington: So moved.

[00:03:12.24] Therral Story: Second

[00:03:13.14] Lawrence Bearden: Decision? All those in favor of this resolution say "Aye."

[00:03:27.24] Therral Story: "Aye."

[00:03:27.24] Monty Harrington: "Aye."

[00:03:27.24] Gary Golden: "Aye."

[00:03:27.24] Erica Woods: "Aye."

[00:03:38.18] Lawrence Bearden: Motion carried.

[00:04:09.24] Trey Berry: That's all I have.

[00:04:09.24] Lawrence Bearden: I would like to thank to Board for all their hard work and even more so, the hard work that the University staff has done. I feel that timely decisions have been made and the things we don't know about yet. At this time, do I hear a motion to adjourn?

[00:04:38.27] Therral Story: Second

[00:04:38.27] Lawrence Bearden: All in favor say "Aye."

[00:04:38.27] Monty Harrington: "Aye."

[00:04:38.27] Gary Golden: "Aye."

[00:04:38.27] Therral Story: "Aye."

[00:04:38.27] Erica Woods: "Aye."

[00:04:42.15] Lawrence Bearden: At this time, we are officially adjourned. Thank you for your time and efforts.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

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Board of Trustee Chair

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Board of Trustee Secretary

Recorder of Record:  
La'Tricia Davis