

Collin College

DigitalCommons@Collin

John Anthony Collection Supplemental
Documents

John Anthony Collection

Winter 11-4-1993

Planning and Policies by Sue Olivier

Sue Olivier

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/anthony_docs

PLANNING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN A NEW COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT

Address by Sue Olivier to South Texas Community College Trustees
November 4, 1993
McAllen, TX

It is a pleasure and privilege to address the Trustees and founding Staff of our states' newest, and I know destined to be one of the finest, Community College Districts. Thank you so much for including me on your panel.

We share a common interest and mission as my support for public education has been consistent throughout my adult life. As a teacher, as a mother volunteering in my children's schools, as a member of my local school board, and as a founder and initial Trustee of, until recently, our state's newest Community College District. Aside from family, I view this commitment as the most worthy and rewarding work of my life.

This work we share is of the greatest importance, and the reward we receive is the hope and inspiration on the face of our students, and the pride of their parents on graduation day. Through good times and difficult periods cherish the thought of these students; the young facing their first college experience; the homemaker seeking training for a new life or enrichment of a present condition; the wage earner, who because of desire or necessity must retrain in an ever-changing world. Their hope, their bewilderment at new situations, their achievement is the reward for the work we enter into as Trustees.

I believe it is this inspiration of our students presence that makes it possible for us as Trustees to put personal interests aside, as we always concentrate on the foremost task at hand of building and maintaining a Community College District.

The planning and work to create a Community College District began in Collin County in the Summer and Fall of 1984. The need, I believe, was like your need-crucial. Our County, formally an agricultural center, was rapidly moving to become the telecommunications corridor that it is today. There had been a tremendous influx of individuals from across the United States and from foreign countries into the cities of our County. Yet we had no Community College to train our workforce or to offer academic programs for the first two years of college for our students. Under the direction of the Commissioners Court and with the help of civic leaders the work began.

Committees were established to study Curriculum; Facilities; Mission and Goals and a Petition Committee was to provide the necessary signatures to place the College and its needed Bonding capacity on the April, 1985 ballot.

I have brought you the 1985 Feasibility Study that incorporates the reports of those Committees. My work was to serve as Co-Chair of the Petition Drive and organize and direct the effort to obtain 10% of our County's registered voters on a Petition in support of the new College and a seventy-million dollar Bond issue. I believe our experience in Collin County is of value to each of you as you face an election to approve your College District. I would like to share with you some of how we organized our potential District.

Our work was based on the premise that the more individuals that could be included, the better the understanding of our College drive would be. I believed that it was ongoing support, as well as, signatures on a Petition that would win for us a College in the Election of April, 1985. The organization and structure of the Petition Committee is summarized in the Feasibility Study. I began by dividing the County into geographic areas: North; South; East; West; in your case it would be the division of two counties. I placed Coordinators in each geographic area, and they in turn obtained workers in each voting precinct.

Every Precinct Chairman; Homeowners President; Civic Leader; Minister - in short every identifiable figure that influenced public opinion was contacted in person by either myself, or a designated Area Coordinator, or Precinct volunteer. We conducted block walks in populated areas, and distributed literature and petitions in libraries; city halls; and the courthouse and its branches. I also had volunteers at football games, school carnivals, supermarkets and the election polls in the November national election. Literature was distributed and petitions were gathered.

The Petition Drive was a tremendous effort, and proved to be the most successful drive in the history of our State as it gathered 25% of our area's voters on the Petition in support of the College. I believe it was the momentum generated by this drive, that gave our College and first Bond issue the tremendous voter approval it received in April of 1985.

Our experience will be duplicated in Starr and Hidalgo Counties. The need for a two-year college education and job skill training will be the catalyst to encourage a people-to-people drive that will garner support for this South Texas District. With organization and inclusion of as many citizens as possible, this District will be overwhelmingly approved when election time comes.

Voter approval of our College in April, 1985 also included election of our first Board. The work of creating a College District began.

Our planning priorities included:

1. Strong financial planning that actually began with the hiring of Dr. Walter Pike, an education trained financial planner, even before the College Election. Dr. Pike had the full support of every individual, as we believed fiscal responsibility was crucial in maintaining public support and in building and preserving a College District. We were fortunate to have elected Board Members who were knowledgeable of the Public Budget process and who insisted on financial prudence and planning in all that we did.
2. Hiring a College President. Our search was narrowed to five individuals by a professional consultant. Once we narrowed our search to five, we invited each candidate for an interview. They were given a tour of the area, and met with the Board over a meal in an informal setting.

I felt, and I'm sure my fellow Trustees did as well, that we needed a President with the expertise to create a District from the ground up, but that we also needed someone who could interact with the many population segments of our County. Collin County has been the fastest growing County in our state, and I believe the nation. The northern part has remained predominantly agricultural as the southern region has become an urban and telecommunications center. Headquarters of giant corporations are now located in Collin County with an accompanying population that at last count produced 17 languages in our Richardson schools. In 1985, we had to hire for the present and also for a future that we could then only dimly perceive. We were fortunate to find the individual needed in Dr. John Anthony.

Having a President that not only knows education, but with whom your present and future constituents can interact will be crucial to your efforts.

3. Adopting Board Policies. With a Financial Director and College President in place, we began the necessary logistical steps of creating a College; acquiring class room space; hiring faculty and staff; but even as the College was created the most critical work involved putting together a Board Policies manual and addressing policies effecting students, faculty and staff.

I have brought copies of our Board policies, as well as, our Faculty and Staff Handbook along with Student Handbooks. These contain Faculty and Student Policies as well as Board Policies. The Board Policy Handbook contains those segments of the Texas Code that address the duties and responsibilities of Trustees. Our actions are governed by this Code, along with the Provisions of the Texas Open Meeting Laws, and parliamentary procedure as addressed in Roberts Rule of Order.

As Trustees, it is imperative that we have knowledge and take time to study these three areas;

- 1) The Texas Code governing School Trustees
- 2) The Texas Open Meeting Laws
- 3) Robert Rules of Order

The documents I have brought to you include all of these as well as many policies and procedures that I hope you will find helpful. They are merely guides, except where the Code or Roberts Rules are cited. Policies and procedures are ongoing, and as they develop they will reflect your College and its constituency.

Thank you for letting me share your beginnings and the joy and excitement you feel for the job ahead. There will be times when you are tired and maybe discouraged, and feeling a bit put upon by demands upon your time. When those times come take a walk through your Community College, talk to your students about their dreams and hopes, discuss your College's mission and even its economic impact with area businessmen and women. You'll come away from these encounters inspired and rejuvenated, ready to go to any length to support quality public education for your area's citizens.

Now where else, as individuals, could we make a greater contribution?

Thank you.