



## CAN Board of Directors Meeting 9/14/18 Minutes

**Location:** Boards & Commissions room, Austin City Hall

**Present:** **Tamara Atkinson**, Executive Director, Capital Area Workforce Solutions; **Colette Pearce Burnette**, Huston-Tillotson University; **Megan Cermak**, (for Mike Geeslin, Central Health); **Kelly Crook**, Del Valle ISD; **Jerry Davis**, Goodwill Industries of Central Texas; **Sara Eckhardt**, Travis County Commissioner's Court; **Hunter Ellinger**, CAN Community Council; **David Escamilla**, Community Justice Council member; **David Evans**, Austin Travis County Integral Care; **Sherri Fleming**, (for Jeff Travillion, Commissioner, Travis County Precinct One); **Simone Talma Flowers**, Interfaith Action of Central Texas; **Edgar Gierbolini**, Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce; **Laura Griebel**, CAN Community Council; **Stephanie Hayden**, (for Jimmy Flannigan, District 6, City of Austin); **Liz Johnson**, St. Edward's University; **Ryan Marcum**, Manor ISD; **Jeremy Martin**, Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; **Rudy Metayer**, Pflugerville City Council Member; **Ronda Rutledge**, One Voice Central Texas; **David Smith**, United Way for Greater Austin; **Luanne Southern**, Integral Care; **Ann Teich**, Austin ISD.

**CAN staff in attendance:** Raul Alvarez, Justin X. Hale, Carlos A Soto, and Jelina Tunstill

**Other guests:** **Trey Fletcher**, City of Pflugerville, **Vince Cobalis**, Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission, **Wayne Knox**, Huston-Tillotson University; **Ara Merjanian**, CAN Community Council; **Marion Sánchez**, City of Austin

**Call to order and Introductions:** Dr. Crook called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm and members introduced themselves.

**Approval of minutes from 8/10/18 meeting:** The 8/10/18 meeting minutes were approved with minor edits, after a motion by Simone Talma Flowers which was seconded by Ann Teich. The vote was unanimous.

**Community Council Report:** Laura Griebel mentioned the Legislative Panel scheduled for Monday, Sep 17 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, where we are going to be asking our representatives about their priorities for the coming session, specifically as it relates to our work around child poverty. Donna Howard and Gina Hinojosa have confirmed their participation. At this time 43 individuals have signed up to attend. Marketing committee continues to promote the child poverty report, while we are in the process of collapsing the report into a 1-2 page sheet so to ensure that information reaches the folks and organizations we visit. Griebel also invited board members to participate in one of the CAN Deliberative Dialogue on the Opioid Crisis, which Community Council will be hosting at the October meeting.

**Executive Director's Report:** Raúl Álvarez began the report mentioning the deliberative dialogues, calling attention to a flyer listing the planned dialogue dates and an invitation to be trained to facilitate the dialogs. The training, since it's at its core a facilitator training, can be useful to learn & develop facilitation skills that are useful in other conversations and dialogues. Next, Alvarez discussed the Central Texas Regional Summit, scheduled for Thursday, November 8, 2018. The summit will be held at the San Marcos Convention Center. Next, Alvarez briefly mentioned the state legislative forum scheduled for Monday. The final item on the Director's report was the 2018 CAN Stakeholder Survey. Alvarez encouraged members to complete the survey, then welcomed Edgar Gierbolini, the newest member of the CAN Board representing the Greater Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce.

**CAN Partner Spotlight, Huston-Tillotson University:** Dr. Collete Pearce Burnette, President & CEO of Huston-Tillotson University, joined by Wayne Knox, Vice President and COO, thanked Raul for the opportunity to speak, and shared a brief background about her work with the University. Her work with the Institutional Racism & Systemic Inequity Task Force has helped her “lift the cover” and see Austin through the lenses of many different individuals. As a resident she has high hopes for East Austin, calling for the need to have community partners and the important role the University plays in that aspect.

Starting with the university’s tagline “WE are you!”, Dr. Pearce Burnette highlighted grit and resilience as some of the strengths of the nearly 150 year old institution. She discussed the values and mission of the institution. In terms of demographics, of enrolled students, 62.4% are Black or African American, 26.7% are Hispanic, 6.1% are White, and 3.1% are international. Of HT students, 70% are Pell Grant eligible, 98% on financial aid, while the majority of full payers are international. The educational environment is very welcoming and intentional, with attention to details such staying away from “language of lack” frameworks and focusing instead on elevating students by calling them “geniuses”, “stars”, etc. This led to a conversation about the effect and role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in enriching the community and the country at a higher level. The University is the oldest institution of higher learning in Central Texas, is a member of the United Negro College Fund, is a Texas Parks and Wildlife Partner, certified Green Campus, and is designated as the only All Steinway School in Central Texas. T

Wayne Knox continued the presentation, elaborating on institutional priorities. First, Knox discussed the Ram Pact, the fund raising effort to help defer student costs of attending the institution. Often HT serves students on the higher end of the poverty scale, resulting in a large part of the student body needing to take out student loan debt in order to finance their education. The Ram Pact aims to raise enough to cover with a grant at least 2/3 of the loan debt that a student takes on. Next, Knox mentioned the Reach for a New Rhythm music initiative. Part of the outcome of an institution-wide asset mapping initiative was that the HT Choir was found to be nationally renowned on a number of stages. The intention of the investment is to shore up the program from a music perspective, offer new, cutting-edge music centered programs, as well as to endow a Chair for the first time. In addition to the impact HTU has had on the musical environment of the region, the University’s impact on the region’s educational environment was also found to be extensive. Goals of the initiative include: to establish a School of Education independent of the current College of Arts and Sciences, and to be very intentional about recruiting and educating male teachers of color to go into communities to help raise the standards of education. Another priority is the Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, which will take place as part of Dan Graham’s Social Innovation Center incubator. Huston-Tillotson also seeks to develop the Human Performance & Fine Arts Center to hold sporting events and fine art productions, as well as to provide the East Austin Community with access to a space to hold events.

Councilmember Metayer commended Dr. Pearce Burnette and her team for the outstanding work they are doing. He shared an example of a program that brings students of color into the legal field. He posed the question “what can we do to support Huston-Tillotson University?” Dr. Pearce Burnette responded by saying help us to tell our story & promote our work, particularly the Human Performance and Fine Arts Center, which the University will launch a capital campaign to help find funding for. Visit the campus, get a visual, feel the atmosphere, and you’ll get a very different impression of what goes on there. Tamara Atkinson echoed that she had a great experience when she visited the campus and commended Huston-Tillotson for their work on the Master Community Workforce Plan. In the response to the question, “where do you see Huston-Tillotson University in 10 years,” Dr. Pearce Burnette responded that she would like to see the University at a position of 3,000 students in 10 years, it’s probably going to take 20, but she’s determined to make it happen.

**CAN Priority Presentation on Addressing Institutional Racism: Asian American Quality of Life Final Report**  
Marion Sánchez, City of Austin Community Engagement Manager, described the Asian American Quality of Life

Initiative as a 3 year research project which is the first of its kind in the nation to engage the local Asian American community in a comprehensive way. The Asian American Quality of Life Final Report was presented to the City of Austin Health and Human Services Committee on June 13, 2018, and is available [on the CoA website](#). After a quick overview of the ordinances and resolutions that created the [Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission](#), Sánchez explained that the Asian American Quality of Life Report uses a framework designed to further the values of respect, equity, and belongingness while developing a better understanding of economic development, housing & community development, social & civic engagement, health & human services, and arts & culture. Some key takeaways from the report are that: language and cultural awareness are important consideration when serving the Asian American Community; the myth of model minority exist and creates gaps when it comes to meeting the needs of the diverse local Asian community; that there is a feeling of isolation that is felt by many communities within the Asian Community and that a more concerted effort at civic engagement is needed; that accessing public services, like public transportation and health/human services, is a challenge to many individuals; and the interest in (but lack of availability of) economic opportunities for members of the Asian-American Community. The issue of using culturally and linguistically acceptable practices, including translation and interpretation services, were seen as important step towards addressing the needs outlined and recommendations included in the report.

Vince Cobalis, who Chair of the Asian American Quality of Life Commission, added that an important thing to keep in mind is that Asian American poverty levels closely match poverty levels of the general population. Thus, the need for services is essentially the same. This is a very important point to consider because access to services can look very different across cultures.

Cobalis continued with an overview of the process that they undertook to conduct the assessment and identify recommendations. Community dialogue about the report are planned in the coming fiscal year. The data that was compiled by UT through this process has been used for a number of research studies. Recommendations from the report are becoming the basis for budget recommendations from the Commission. Cobalis added that next steps include outreach and engagement with the diverse group of stakeholders in the community.

**Adjournment: Dr. Crook** adjourned the meeting at 2:55 pm.