

Regents, Students Visit State Capitol

On Monday, Feb. 3, a group of Lee College students participated in Community College Day at the Texas State Capitol. The trip provided students with a firsthand look at the legislative process and an opportunity to engage with state lawmakers as part of the 89th Texas Legislative Session.

Lee College students — Armando Cardenas, Layla Leeah, Daniel Rodriguez, Victoria Jackson, Leydy Madrid Kratzer, Rick Reyes, and Camille Warren — represented the College's Student Government Association and other campus leadership organizations. Among the college delegates were Lee College President Dr. Lynda Villanueva; Board of Regent Chair Daryl Fontenot; Vice Chair Susan Moore-Fontenot; and Regents Pam Warford, Mark Hall, and Gilbert Santana. College representatives also included Jo Greathouse, Chris Dowdy, Melissa Valencia, and Brian Waddle.

The college delegation met with Texas State Representatives Briscoe Cain, Janis Holt, Terri Leo Wilson, and State Senators Mayes Middleton and Brandon Creighton. During these visits, the Board and students thanked these leaders for their support of the new state funding model. Lee College received record state-level funding validated by high levels of successful student outcomes.

Beginning the morning at a welcome rally on the Texas Capitol south steps, Board of Regents Vice Chair and chairman of the state board of trustees, Susan Moore-Fontenot formally welcomed the group of nearly 800 community college educators, students, and supporters from around the state.

"Today, as you meet with legislators, remember this: your voice matters. Share your story — let them know what your community college has meant to you. Speak about the professor who believed in you when you doubted yourself, the scholarship that made it possible to stay in school, or the program that opened doors you never thought you'd walk through," said Moore-Fontenot.

She reminded the audience that supporting community colleges is not just about funding education — it's about investing in Texas.

"For every dollar spent on community colleges, the returns ripple through our economy and strengthen our communities. Community colleges are preparing the workforce of tomorrow, solving the challenges of today, and ensuring that Texas remains bold, innovative, and prosperous."

Moore-Fontenot is passionate about higher education and has spent a lifetime working to advance the success of community colleges. She currently serves as the Chair on the Community College Association of Texas Trustee Board, which represents 50 community colleges and over 400 trustees across Texas.

In 2023, she was elected to the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Board of Directors that represents more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical and junior colleges in the United States and beyond.

Community College Day, which occurs biennially, is an opportunity for hundreds of students from the state's community colleges to visit the Capitol and advocate for community colleges, meet with elected officials, and discuss important issues facing their institution. The 89th Texas Legislative Session runs through June 2.

-

Photo caption (at top): Board of Regents Vice Chair and chairman of the state board of trustees, Susan Moore-Fontenot is shown speaking to the crowd of supporters during a welcome rally on the steps of the State Capitol.