



#### Agenda Item Details

Meeting	Feb 01, 2023 - Regular Board Meeting
Category	F. RESOLUTIONS
Subject	2. Los Angeles Southwest College, the Historical Black College of the LACCD
Type	Action
Recommended Action	Recommend approval as presented.

The following resolution is presented by Student Trustee Callahan, Trustees Vela, and Henderson.

**Subject: Los Angeles Southwest College, the Historical Black College of the LACCD**

WHEREAS, Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC), as a higher education institution of the Los Angeles Community College District, has a rich history with the community of South Central Los Angeles, and the African American history of Los Angeles as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Under the leadership of Odessa B. Cox and the South Central Junior College Committee, the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, which at the time oversaw community colleges, purchased 54 acres on the corner of Western Avenue and Imperial Highway in 1950, which would later become the site of LASC; and

WHEREAS, Given the long standing demographics upon which the advocacy for a community college in South Central Los Angeles was built; the collective voice of the tax-paying community that addressed the lack of access to higher education for a largely African American community; the backdrop of a historical context that left community college student prospects to travel more than 30 miles by bus to attend a distant college (leaving at an extraordinarily early hour in the morning, and returning very late at night), meant the largely African American citizens were clearly disenfranchised and deprived of a privilege provided to other Los Angeles citizens; these citizens were clearly marginalized as their student prospects were relegated to an area where no local higher education access was provided, yet their family tax base was used to advance higher education for other areas, which constituted substantial social, political, logistical and financial inequities for African Americans in South Central Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, Odessa B. Cox had a vision in 1950, where the intent, as verified in **"Challenging the Status quo, the Twenty-seven Year Campaign for Southwest Junior College"**, was for LASC to be constructed and serving students sooner than September 1967, seventeen years after the initial land purchase was made; thus, without what was perceived to be designed delay, the college should have been constructed by 1964, prior to the Watts Rebellion of 1965; and

WHEREAS, History contends that the advent of the Watts Rebellion of 1965 propelled movement, and therein, a context in which the Los Angeles Board of Education earmarked \$2 million to open LASC in January of 1967, long after the community's intended vision and after construction on the land was done; thus, the bureaucratic and



politically expedient delays caused by the Los Angeles Board of Education, cost the community not only access to higher education, but it also lost LASC's contention for HBCU status, due to the college's official founding being long overdue; and

WHEREAS, At 3:30am July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Odessa B. Cox, Adele Cannon, Dr. Agnes Moreland Jackson, and Sue Acosta, met at Western and Imperial to watch as the first of 13 bungalows were delivered from Los Angeles City College, with the first classes of LASC starting on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1967; and

WHEREAS, Given the tireless work of Odessa B. Cox and the South Central community, the fact that the community intended to construct and open the college long before 1964 (the date that denotes an HBCU), and waited nearly two decades for the Los Angeles Board of Education to act, and the drastic need to provide accessible educational opportunities for African Americans in South Central Los Angeles, only amplified by the reaction to the Watts Rebellion, LASC, by definition, should be recognized as a Historically Black College/University; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That, though LASC, as of February 2023, does not traditionally fit the federally recognized criteria of an HBCU, the college was a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) for 51 years as defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965, until 2018 where the ongoing districtwide loss of African American students caused the African American student population of LASC to fall under 40%; it is still

undeniable that the historical and cultural context of the college is fitting for that of an HBCU, and that the Chancellor, Board of Trustees, and greater LACCD community, should officially and openly acknowledge the injustice done by the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education in the 1950s and 1960s to LASC, in the context of its history, founding, and five decades of commitment to a predominantly African American population; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chancellor and Board of Trustees of the LACCD will work actively to ensure that LASC has the proper funding and resources to create, develop and improve academic programs, to hire more employees under quality contracts to counteract understaffing and to better support underserved students, and to develop the capacity and potential of the institution overall; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Trustees of the LACCD hereby designates September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, as "Southwest Day" to honor the work and contributions of the Cox family, to recognize the community of South Central Los Angeles, and to remember the history that followed the 1965 Watts Rebellion.

RESOLVED, That the District shall disseminate the information contained in this resolution to all nine colleges and will post it on the LACCD website in order to inform the greater LACCD community, interested stakeholders, and the public of the Board's dedication to the development, empowerment and strengthening of LASC as an educational institution, and the community of South Central Los Angeles that LASC was founded to serve; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Trustees and chancellor of the LACCD will actively work with the leadership of LASC, leaders in the local African American community, and state/federal officials, to change federal laws, or by other means, to ensure that LASC is federally recognized as an HBCU.

#### **Motion & Voting**

Recommend approval as presented.

Motion by Kelsey K Iino, second by Nichelle M Henderson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Andra Hoffman, Nichelle M Henderson, Kelsey K Iino, Sara Hernandez, Gabriel Buelna, Steven F Veres, David Vela