



To: Faculty and Staff

From: Steve Kinslow

Date: April 11, 2005

Subject: ALL-OF-AUSTIN ANNEXATION ELECTION/ETHICS GUIDELINES

ACC's Board of Trustees has called an annexation election on May 7th within portions of the City of Austin. This information is provided to ensure that you are able to accurately answer questions you may receive, and to inform you of appropriate election-related ethics.

Facts:

- The May 7 election calls for annexation of the portions of the City of Austin that are not currently in the ACC taxing district – this entails portions of the Eanes, Pflugerville and Round Rock ISDs (not the entire ISDs);
- The May 7 election does not increase the tax of current ACC tax payers (those who reside within Austin, Del Valle, Leander, and Manor ISDs);
- Current tax payers may vote, as well as those in the areas within the City of Austin which are proposed for annexation and whose property owners would subsequently also be taxed in support of ACC;
- State legislation allows this type of annexation election;
- Additional general information is attached via an FAQ, and also available on the ACC web site, <http://www.austincc.edu>, (Future of ACC).

Ethical Guidelines:

- ACC may use public funds and college resources (including its web site, mail boxes, e-mail, cable channel, etc.) to provide *factual, educational* information about the election issue, but may not *advocate* for or against the measure;
- Employees, in their private lives, may advocate for or against an election measure but may not advocate in their roles as employees nor use college resources in an advocacy manner;
- When responding to questions you may receive as an employee, it is best to limit comments to facts only, in an objective manner, without advocating a position. The website and FAQ are your best sources of accurate information.

If you have questions, please direct them to Linda Young, Dwayne Cox, or myself. Thanks.

SBK/pws

Frequently Asked Questions ACC All-of-Austin Annexation Election

What is this election about?

The ACC item on the May 7 ballot asks voters to decide on a proposal for ACC to annex into the College's taxing district portions of Round Rock, Eanes, and Pflugerville ISDs that are located within the City of Austin. If approved, they would join other residents in the City of Austin who are already part of the ACC taxing district.

To view a sample ballot, go to:

http://www.austincc.edu/future/news_40705-2.php

When will this election occur?

- Election Day is Saturday, May 7, 2005.
- Early voting is from April 20 through May 3.
- For a list of early voting times and locations go to:
http://www.austincc.edu/future/earlyvoting_guide.pdf

By what authority can ACC call this election, and who pays for it?

Texas Election Code Section 130.071 provides the authority for a community college district already located within part of a city to expand its district to that city's limits, by a majority vote of **all qualified voters in the district as proposed.** ACC pays for the election.

Does this election affect current ACC taxpayers?

No – there will not be an increase in ACC taxes for property owners in the Austin, Leander, Dell Valle and Manor ISDs who currently support ACC with their property taxes; however, these residents are allowed to vote to extend the tax to the portions of the City of Austin not currently in the ACC taxing district.

Who can vote in the election?

Registered voters in the ACC taxing district and in the areas to be annexed are eligible to vote. The current ACC taxing district includes the Austin, Leander, Manor, and Del Valle ISDs.

How would approval of this initiative affect residents in the areas to be annexed?

Tax impact

- If the measure passes, property owners in the affected areas will become part of the ACC taxing district and will begin paying a property tax to support ACC in 2006. The ACC property tax is 9 cents per \$100 property valuation, plus an additional 1 cent approved by voters in 2003 to retire general obligation bonds. So the total for taxpayers is 10 cents per \$100 valuation.
- ACC offers residential taxpayers a \$5,000 homestead exemption. Senior homeowners receive an additional \$75,000 exemption.
- ACC property taxes are capped at 9 cents and can be increased only with voter approval.

Lower Tuition

- Residents of these areas would also be **eligible immediately beginning with the Summer 2005 semester to pay the lower in-district ACC tuition**. Currently these residents are required to pay out-of-district tuition, which is about twice the cost of in-district.
- Students in the newly-annexed areas would realize an immediate **savings of \$174** for a typical 3-credit hour course at ACC. For a full-time student, the **cost-savings would be \$696 per semester**.

How would approval of this initiative affect Austin Community College?

- The annexation of these areas would increase ACC's net revenue by about \$6.46 million annually.
- The additional revenue would be used to expand programs, sustain instructional and technological competitiveness, maintain and upgrade facilities, and retire bonds.
- Additional revenues would allow ACC to compensate for declining state appropriations to higher education in recent years.
- Additional revenues would help minimize future tuition increases for all students.
- ACC enrolls about 29,000 students per semester and expects to enroll an additional 10,000 in the next decade. Additional revenues would allow ACC to offer affordable and accessible education to increasing numbers of students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college.

How can I get more information?

Call ACC's Public Information & Media Relations Office, (512) 223-7596 or (512) 223-7611 or e-mail dcox2@austincc.edu or vobregon@austincc.edu.