

## STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

September 8, 2021

**TOPIC:** Trinidad State College Phase I Residence Hall Complex Improvements  
Spending Authority Approval, Trinidad Campus

**PRESENTED BY:** Dr. Rhonda Epper, President

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN:

- Transform the student experience.
- Redefine our Value Proposition through accessibility, affordability, quality, accountability, resource development, and operational excellence.

### EXPLANATION:

Trinidad State College (also referred to as TSC or College) is requesting permission to spend \$2,171,625 to upgrade mechanical and electrical infrastructure to improve the indoor air quality and air filtration to mitigate COVID transmission for two of their dormitory buildings, the Romero and Johnson Residence Halls and two sleeping rooms at the Student Center assigned for COVID quarantine purposes on their Trinidad Campus in Trinidad, Colorado. The project will be the first phase ("Phase I") of a planned three-phase overall dormitory complex renovation. This first phase will be funded exclusively with federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

The College received an overall allocation of \$2,068,234 from CRRSAA. Of this amount, \$438,000 or 21% of the overall is being applied to the Phase I project. The College received an overall appropriation of \$3,531,074.00 from ARPA. Of this allocation, \$1,733,625 or 49% of the overall is being applied to the Phase I project. The combined federal funds that TSC is requesting Board spending authority for use in Phase I project is \$2,171,625 (\$438,000 in CRRSA + \$1,733,625 in ARPA).

TSC does plan to investigate fundraising during Phase I to supplement construction costs in Phase 1, if needed. And, the college is exploring a variety of options to fund the projects within future Phases 2 and 3, including a bond measure for student fees, fundraising from private donors, and institutional reserves as they become available. However, in this agenda item, TSC is only seeking spending authority and permission to proceed with Phase 1. TSC will come back to the Board and request separate approval for Phases 2 and 3.

Presently TSC has one performance period spending end date for both CRRSAA and ARPA funds, which is August 22, 2022. In the current pandemic / post-pandemic climate of broken supply chains and labor availability uncertainties leading to the potential for project or construction delays relative to the expenditure timelines (one-year spending period with each HEERF allocation) mandated for the use of CRRSAA and ARPA funds, the College may need to request a no-cost extension from the federal government and will assess the need as the project proceeds.

On-campus dormitories serve a vital role for supporting students in their educational pursuits, providing temporary residential facilities, as these students' permanent residence may be several hours drive away in-state, or further away in the case of out-of-state or international students. TSC, as one of the smaller colleges in the CCCS system with its Trinidad Campus located in the rural community of Trinidad, is one of five CCCS community colleges to provide dormitory housing for its students. TSC's diverse student body includes students from 34 states outside Colorado and 14 countries from 5 continents. Additionally, TSC is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), providing services to expand educational opportunities for Hispanic Americans and other underrepresented populations.

The dormitory complex of five buildings on the Trinidad Campus was built in the 1960s era. Four buildings, Romero Residence Hall, Johnson Residence Hall, O'Connor Residence Hall and Huggins Residence Hall are dormitories for TSC students, serving a maximum total of 308 students pre-pandemic. One building, the Student Center, functions as both a student lounge area with an apartment consisting of two sleeping rooms, a full bathroom and a kitchen, as well as the Central Facility, and the mechanical room housing the boiler serving both the Johnson and Romero Residence Halls. The apartment space and areas of the study lounge have notably been assigned as the COVID-19 quarantine area during the course of the 2020-2021 pandemic.

The building layout of TSC's existing multi-story dormitory housing can be described as traditional, with standard double occupancy sleeping rooms laid out linearly with centralized communal bathrooms per floor. The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for TSC's student housing operations: reducing overall room availability due to converting double occupancy rooms to single occupancy rooms; social distancing within the existing building code-deficient close quarters of bathroom fixtures in the communal bathrooms and other communal areas; strict adherence to added maintenance cleaning protocols in all occupied areas. But adding to these challenges for TSC's dormitories, have been the age of the buildings (average 58.8 years), with the realities of the energy-inefficiencies of the existing building envelope with single pane operable windows with bad seals (at Romero, Johnson, and Huggins) providing the only ventilation (no mechanical air filtering or humidity control), aged mechanical infrastructure currently providing only heating with significantly inefficient mechanical equipment performing decades beyond their serviceable life, and an undersized electrical service.

The decreasing equipment efficiency and the fact that one thermostat controls up to four rooms, have resulted in the lack of proper thermostatic control for individual sleeping rooms and overall thermal discomfort for all resident students. Though sleeping rooms and study lounges have natural ventilation via operable windows, this access to fresh air does not translate to a properly functioning HVAC, as it has become commonplace for windows to be opened during sub-freezing temperatures due to overheating. On days of warm to hot outdoor air temperatures, students resort to small box fans placed at windows, but there is inefficient air movement resulting in overheated rooms. These less-than-ideal conditions become impediments to a student's day-to-day living experience and overall sense of well-being.

TSC's intent for this Phase I project is to specifically address improving the indoor air quality (IAQ), the air filtration as a measure to suppress coronavirus, and also improve overall thermal comfort for the two oldest dormitories, Romero Residence Hall and Johnson Residence Hall, and the Student Center to support resident students. These buildings were all built in 1960, during a period of time with no energy performance codes. The two residence halls have the same floor plan, except Romero is a two-story building, and Johnson is a three-story building. The average sleeping room is approximately 174 square feet, while the average study lounge is approximately 333 square feet.

Phase I design will focus on bringing mechanical cooling to the sleeping rooms and study lounges of Romero Residence Hall, Johnson Residence Hall, and the two sleeping rooms in the Student Center via an air-cooled chiller located at the Student Center's Central Facility. To facilitate the installation of the new chiller and provide the physical components of the cooling system at the existing Central Facility space, the project will require two major equipment changes: (1) Replacing the inefficient boiler with an efficient boiler meeting current standards with a smaller footprint and an upgraded HVAC system and air filtration; and (2) Upgrading the capacity of the electrical transformer and panel boards to support the new cooling systems. These proposed equipment changes will not impact the existing Central Facility structure nor add or subtract building square footage, in meeting the ARPA criteria for use of the funds.

Architectural support for these proposed mechanical upgrades will entail building a better performing exterior wall envelope by furring the wall with closed-cell rigid insulation and housing new piping and fan coil units bringing mechanical heating, cooling and ventilation that will circulate outside air through an exterior brick vent for optimal conditions. All associated work meets permissible remodeling ARPA criteria with the goal to improve air filtration to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Improving the IAQ for the two sleeping rooms in the Student Center provides dedicated quarantine space that will be healthier space to directly support those students recovering from COVID, and maintaining safe distance from healthy students, which is an approved use of both the CRRSAA and ARPA funds.

The College, on the advice of the Office of the State Architect, will utilize the Design/Build Guaranteed Maximum Price Service process for this Phase I project. This process is suitable for "fast track" construction. With August 22, 2022 as the established performance period end date for the CRRSAA and ARPA funding and the ambitious nature of this project, it is imperative for TSC to prioritize time-sensitive activities, which would include engaging a project manager upfront and an electric engineer to design the electrical upgrade package, and selecting a Design Build team focused on mechanical specialties. The College will apply for a no-cost extension if the need arises out of unforeseen project and construction delays.

After initial development of the opinion of probable costs, it was decided the scope of work under Phase I would provide a complete installation of fan coil units to each sleeping room and study lounge at the Romero Residence Hall and the two sleeping rooms at the Student Center assigned as COVID quarantine rooms, while limiting the scope of work at the Johnson Residence Hall to the extent the budget will allow. Scope that is not accomplished under this phase will be addressed under a future project phase.

The scope of work under the remaining phases (Phase 2 and Phase 3) will continue the goals of COVID prevention: providing the complete installation of fan coil units with improved IAQ at Johnson Residence Hall; redesigning of the bathroom layouts implementing accessibility improvements at the Johnson, Romero, and O'Connor Residence Halls; providing an ADA bathroom at Huggins Residence Hall; upgrading plumbing fixtures, e.g. replacing sinks with trough sinks and sensor faucets as a touchless solution at all residence halls; and implementing the upgrade of mechanical and electrical infrastructure at the O'Connor and Huggins Residence Halls. Improving building energy performance with external metal trellis shades and metal screens and window replacements, replacing exterior doors, signage, improving overall accessibility, adding new interior finishes, and updating recreational fields are among other improvements TSC wants to accomplish through August 2025 with successful fundraising campaigns, student bond measure and/or potential College reserves. An additional option being identified under this full project is the replacement of windows; this work would be incorporated

under either Phase 2 or Phase 3, and subject to available funds. Attached are images and descriptions of the respective scopes of work for each Phase.

The utilization of these federal funds towards the upgrading of building infrastructure to improve building performance to suppress COVID transmission, as well as prevent COVID spread, and producing safer and healthier living environments for students demonstrates TSC's commitment to support its students for academic success and lifelong learning into the future, particularly with anticipating growth. The urgency for preventing, preparing for and responding to the coronavirus through the goals of the proposed project exemplifies the College's core value of "Students First". TSC's steadfast commitment to planned fundraising and building reserves, as part of their Institutional Centennial Goals 2025, for the projects encompassed in the future phases, underscores the College's roles and purposes to providing an environment that supports learners and learning.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Board approve Phase 1 spending authority for TSC as outlined above, with a do not exceed amount of \$2,171,625 in federal relief funds. Staff also recommends the Board delegate signature authority to the System Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration for related contract documents on the condition that all Board and State processes are followed.