



# Termination in progress

## Lawsuit leads board to act against chancellor



Photos by Alex Hoben/*The Collegian*

The board voted to begin the termination process of Chancellor Eugene Giovannini’s contract March 17.

## Board unanimously agrees to begin Giovannini’s termination

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The board of trustees unanimously voted to begin the termination process of Chancellor Eugene Giovannini’s contract March 17.

The decision was made during a specially called board meeting and is in the wake of a lawsuit filed against TCC Feb. 7. Executive vice chancellor and provost Elva LeBlanc will continue serving as acting chancellor for the time being.

“We believe this action is in the college’s best long-term interest and that it is both appropriate and necessary in light of the information recently made available to the board through the independent third-party investigation,” board president Teresa Ayala read from a statement. “As this process gets underway, we

are confident that the operations of the college

are in good hands under the strong, capable leadership of Acting Chancellor Dr. Elva LeBlanc.”

Board members Gwen Morrison and Kenneth Barr declined to comment. The other trustees did not respond to requests seeking comment.

Associate general counsel Carol Bracken could not respond to requests seeking comment about the status of Giovannini’s termination, the status of the investigation by the Locke Lord law firm, LeBlanc’s acting chancellor term length or the lawsuit because it falls under ongoing personnel matters, pending or threatened litigation.

Giovannini has served as chancellor since 2016 and would’ve served until 2024 since his contract was amended, extending his term by a year.

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Vice chancellor and provost Elva LeBlanc was chosen as acting chancellor during a board meeting Feb. 17. LeBlanc will receive a monthly \$7,500 stipend.

## Provost, former student LeBlanc chosen as acting chancellor

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Elva LeBlanc began her time with TCC sitting in chairs on NE Campus as a student, but now she finds herself running the whole thing.

LeBlanc was chosen to serve as acting chancellor while the termination process for Chancellor Eugene Giovannini is underway during a board meeting Feb. 17. In the meeting, board vice president Kenneth Barr expressed his confidence in her, saying she’s “strong, respected in the community.”

“As the executive vice chancellor and provost, I was already the second in command and already had a lot of the big picture information which you garner as you move up,” LeBlanc said. “This next step, I am learning a lot. I would be exaggerating if

I suggested that I knew everything.”

During the duration of her appointment, she will receive a monthly \$7,500 stipend and will have the authority and responsibilities of chancellor.

While she serves, some of her main priorities are focusing on running the college and ensuring student needs are met. Student retention and recruitment are at the forefront of her current work.

Once the termination process for Giovannini is over, she’s undecided about applying for the permanent chancellor position and said it’s not something she’s prepared to answer just yet. Giovannini’s contract has due process clauses, allowing him 30 days to request a hearing.

LeBlanc referred questions about the status of Giovannini’s termination, the status of the investigation by the Locke Lord

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# TCC ending its COVID-related protocols amid declining cases

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TCC sent out an email March 24 informing students, staff and faculty that it’s ending COVID-19 related protocols, and the faculty’s response has been mixed.

According to the email, this decision was made “in response to current [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] guidance and declining cases across Tarrant County.” The protocols it’s ending are reporting, tracking and college notifications.

Previously, it was required that students and faculty that test positive for COVID submit a diagnosis and exposure form on TCC’s website.

“The TCC community has successfully adapted throughout the pandemic to circumstances as they change,” Chief Operating Officer Susan Alanis said.

Alanis ensured TCC would continue to monitor the prevalence of community spread in Tarrant County and make changes if necessary.

TCC has also decided to close all district vaccination and testing sites March 31. This decision

**“I understand that we want to get things back to normal, but define normal.”**

**Varnessa Dorsey**  
*TR instructor*

was made due to the decrease in demand and the Health Resources and Services administration’s decision to no longer fund COVID-19 testing or vaccinations, according to the TCC COVID-19 update webpage.

“Closing the vaccine and testing sites may be problematic for some students, but there are still widely available community resources,” TR assistant dean of nursing Virginia Covington said.

Despite that initial concern, Covington agrees with discontinuing self-reporting.

“Prevention protocols have always been optional at TCC, and many faculty, staff and students continue to choose that precaution,” Covington said. “The North Central Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council and the Tarrant County Public Health have determined that new Tarrant County

COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people are steadily decreasing at this time with a community classification level of low.”

Covington said it is a personal choice to take COVID precautions.

“Mask or no mask can be up to individuals,” she said. “However, we need to ensure that those with a positive case of COVID-19 stay away from others.

TR instructor Varnessa Dorsey said the public should still be cautious of COVID because the future is still uncertain.

“I understand that we want to get things back to normal, but

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# Seasoning next batch of chefs



Alex Hoben/The Collegian

The SE culinary arts students practice making multiple dishes like poached eggs and omelettes. Full story on Pg. 3

DISTRICT

## Transgender community opens up

### TCC students share personal stories of finding their identities

JOSE ROMERO  
editor-in-chief

Allison couldn't take it anymore. In February of last year, she had a breakdown, refusing to deny her identity, something she had been doing since her days in the Navy. "I was in so deep denial that a couple of my very good shipmates called me out on it," she said. Now, she's sure about her identity. She's a trans woman. Her story is similar to others in the community at TCC, filled with ambiguity and stigma, but at peace with themselves after coming out. Allison — a South Campus student whose last name she wants to keep private — said if she would've come out while in the Navy, she would've most likely been kicked out. She served from 2007 to 2011, leaving a year after Don't Ask, Don't Tell was repealed. DADT was a policy issued in 1993 that allowed military personnel to kick out openly gay, lesbian and bisexual people from service. Once she fully transitioned and accepted it, it was simultaneously shattering and the easiest thing she's done. "It's kind of funny," Allison said. "The shattering of all the illusion and self-lie, yeah, that part sucked. But, everything else was like 'Oh, this is the easiest thing in the world.'" She said she was 12 years old the first time she had an idea of her identity. "At that point in time, I was living in backwood, rural Georgia," she said. "Nobody was going to teach me or give me any kind of representative media to tell me, 'Hey, this is a normal feeling you're feeling.' The closest thing I had was 'Rocky Horror Picture Show,' and that is not good." Allison said she has had pretty good support from her family as she transitions. She separated from her wife before they got bitter with each other. Her wife was mad at her because of how long she kept it to herself. "When I was in denial, particularly toward the end of that time period, I was a horrible person to be around," she said. "You would not have liked me. I was cruel, callous, dismissive of everyone." Allison is a parent with two kids, Lilith and John. She said she loves being a mom way



Alex Hoben/The Collegian

LGBTQ+ student Natalie Collins plays her guitar in the student common area at SE Campus. LGBTQ+ organizations can be found on TCC's website.

more than she did being a dad. "It's absolutely breathtaking whenever I get to hear 'mom, mom, mom,' and John wants me to help him with something, or he wants me to play 'Minecraft' with him," she said. NE student Jane Dubrow has been transitioning for four years. She said that people tend to have a lot of misconceptions about the transgender community. "I feel like if people just took time to understand people's perspectives, or understand why people make certain decisions, then instead of ignorance, you might actually start to have empathy," she said. In high school, Dubrow was an athlete. Once she came out as transgender, she had to quit. "I've been struggling with mental health for a while, and being trans definitely doesn't help," she said. Something LGBTQ+ Pride Club officer Grey Layden recommends that TCC should do for its transgender community is allow them to use their preferred name. Layden said

some students have even reached out to the administration to get this changed but heard no response. "It's really frustrating because it's such a simple thing," they said. Layden said when they're put in a situation in which someone calls them by their deadname — the name a transgender person went by before they transitioned — it can be an embarrassing, uncomfortable situation. Something that can be done to educate others on the community is safe space training because it focuses on how environments can be made more welcoming for people in the LGBTQ+ community, they said. "Find people in the community that you can talk to," Layden said. "The best support are people who understand what you're going through." NE Campus has the LGBTQ+ Pride Club which provides a safe space for the community. South and TR have the Power of Representation and Inclusion of Student Matters organization. The number for the Trans Lifeline is 877-565-8860.

DISTRICT

## Faculty share thoughts on short-staffing

JUAN SALINAS II  
campus editor

Public higher education institutions have lost 304,600 people since January, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Despite a drop in unemployment to 4.6% in the monthly job report done by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, colleges around the nation are still feeling the effects of the labor shortage. "It's partly true that the current market environment has led to a decrease in college hiring," NE economics professor Michael Kaluya said. The current market favors the working force, Kaluya said. It causes corporations to raise their wages and provide better benefits to compete with other companies for the best employees, which colleges can't compete with. Kaluya also said the pandemic was a factor, due to the sudden change to doing almost everything online, from admissions to courses. Before the pandemic — there were 4.7 million higher education jobs, but now, there are only nearly 4.1 million since December 2020, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor. NW career services coordinator Tracy Williams said this is reflective of what is going on outside the college and what is happening in the real world. "There are a lot of jobs available post-pandemic, so there is more opportunities to choose from," Williams said. "There are also life changes that students are experiencing that make them weigh their choices in life including the job they choose." According to the October federal jobs report, hourly wages have gone up by 5% from last year.

**"That is disturbing as hard as I am working for no extra pay – or appreciation."**

Anonymous  
administrative assistant

"Some of it may be that students do not realize the benefits available to them with working on campus, or maybe have not even heard there are great jobs open right here at TCC where they go to school," Williams said. Community colleges have seen a nearly 11% drop during the pandemic, according to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Even with the drop in enrollment among community colleges, Williams explained how career services have an abundance of student applications for work-study jobs around TCC. "It is more like a challenge finding the right person for the job," she said. Williams explained it has to do with positions requiring specific qualifications and the issue of keeping the student on staff. Kaluya has not been able to find staff for TCC's high growth student enrollment areas like dual credit and early college high schools. "There is a lot of bureaucratic linings for some of these hirings to take shape," Kaluya said. An administrative assistant who wished to remain anonymous due to fear of retaliation expressed her frustration with her workload. She said she is doing the duty of five admins and is near burnout and is thinking of finding a new job. "This used to be a great job," she said. "Love the people, the students and the atmosphere. It does not pay as well as the private sector, but it has benefits that made up for the lower pay. I am hanging on right now to see if things improve." She said she was not thrilled to hear about Chancellor Eugene Giovannini's recent raise in a board meeting a week ago. "That is disturbing as hard as I am working for no extra pay — or appreciation," she said.