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Community college announces leadership positions; welcomes new member

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The Gila County Provisional Community College District Governing Board announced recently the election of Jan Bocker as board president, Samuel Moorhead as vice president, Connie Cockrell as secretary, and Kurt Knauss as treasurer and chief financial officer.

Bocker succeeds Jay Spehar who stepped down from the position earlier this month, and Moorhead replaces Bocker as vice president.

Cockrell and Knauss were elected to newly formed positions. Fernando Shipley was welcomed to the seat vacated by Spehar. Shipley's appointment extends through Dec. 31, 2022; the remaining four years of Spehar's vacated term will be filled by the successful candidate in the November 2022 election.

"Dr. Bocker's deep expertise in higher education and exceptional commitment to the Gila Pueblo and Payson campuses uniquely qualifies her to lead this governing board," said Todd Haynie, Eastern Arizona College president. "We look forward to working with her and the other board members to continue providing excellent academic programs to the citizens of Gila County through EAC's partnership with the Gila County Provisional Community College District."

Gila County School Superintendent Roy Sandoval appointed Shipley while the other members were selected through the governing board's annual election process.

Jan Bocker, president

Jan Brocker earned a bachelor's degree in human development and family studies, a master's in adult education from Colorado State University, and a Ph.D. in higher education administration from the University of Denver.

Brocker has held leadership roles in program development, student recruitment, admissions, and advising. She also taught marketing, business ethics, and other graduate and undergraduate courses at the University of Denver, Daniels College of Business.

Outside of academia, Brocker spent 10 years in private-sector sales and management, and has also been a teamwork and strategic performance consultant for several nonprofit groups.

Brocker continues to serve the community as a retiree and full-time resident of Payson, substitute teaching with Payson Unified School District, and serving as a volunteer with several local community organizations.

Samuel Moorhead,

vice president Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Samuel Moorhead brings military, higher education, and on-the-job experience to the board.

Moorhead served as a corpsman in the United States Navy for 14 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in education from Edinboro State University in Edinboro, Pa., and a master's degree in special education from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, N.M.

Moorhead was a commercial driver for Werner Enterprises until his retirement in 2007.

Moorhead joined the governing board in 2012.

Kurt Knauss, treasurer

and chief financial officer Kurt Knauss joined the board in 2016.

Knauss values public service and has been involved in many initiatives. He has served as commander of the American Legion Post 4 in Globe, has been a member of planning and zoning commissions for the City of Globe and Gila County, and served in the United States Army.

Knauss' professional career includes 28 years at Freeport-McMoRan, holding various positions. He began his career as a truck driver, moved into operations, and has served in a supervisory role for the past 25 years. He currently holds the position of superintendent of technical training. In this role, he handles employee training and safety compliance, educating Freeport-McMoRan employees locally and as far away as the Netherlands.

Knauss received his bachelor's degree in applied business management from Grand Canyon University. He received emergency medical technician and fire science credentials from Eastern Arizona College.

Away from public service, Knauss enjoys spending time with his wife and children. His hobbies include boating, riding motorcycles, hunting and fishing, snorkeling, and international travel.

Connie Cockrell, secretary

Connie Cockrell and her husband settled in Payson in 2010, after a 20-year career with the U.S. Air Force. Her military career included various assignments of increased responsibility — from switchboard operator to first sergeant, including 15 years in the Adirondacks working as a data entry supervisor, a technical support manager, and a project manager for Computer Services Corporation.

Besides her board assignments, Cockrell currently serves as the director for the Payson Book Festival.

Cockrell holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland in business administration and a master's degree in management information systems from Bowie State University. She is a member of the Arizona Professional Writers Association and the National Federation of Press Women.

Fernando Shipley,

board member Shipley moved with his family from Colorado to Arizona when he was in the eighth grade. He graduated from Mesa High School and then attended Mesa Community College and Arizona State University. He earned his bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Phoenix.

Shipley began his career at State Farm in 1988 at 21. After holding several positions in the Phoenix area, he then became an agent in Globe. In 1999, he started his own State Farm agency.

He and his wife Denise have three grown children, and are hoping for grandchildren one day soon.

Since 2005, Eastern Arizona College has contracted with the governing board to provide academic services at the Gila Pueblo and Payson campuses and the Miami Regional Training Center. The board includes five members who typically meet on a monthly basis.