



MALIA M. COHEN

CHAIR
STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

January 25, 2022

TO: Members of the Board of Equalization

FROM: Malia M. Cohen, Chair, Second District
Ted Gaines, Board Member, First District

RE: Board of Equalization Board Meeting, January 25, 2022, L.1.b.
Update on the Proposed Partnership with USC Sol Price School of
Public Policy

The Board will receive an update on the proposed partnership with the University of Southern California (USC) Sol Price School of Public Policy to proactively implement a key component of Goal 4 (Agency-Wide Branding Campaign) of the Board Members' Strategic Plan.

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Board an update on a potential collaborative project with USC and answer any questions Board Members may have about the project.

Background

The fourth goal in the Board Members' Strategic Plan is centered on developing an agency-wide branding campaign to ensure that California taxpayers, stakeholders, and other constituencies are knowledgeable about the agency, the Board, and their responsibility for property tax administration and other constitutional tax programs. After the passage of Assembly Bill 102 (July 2017), the current Board adopted this goal to ensure that taxpayers and other stakeholders are aware of the agency's mission, tax administration role, and functions.

Board Member offices and Agency Executive team discussions have currently determined that support of agency branding and communications efforts, supplemented by Member office efforts, is an appropriate branding strategy. The USC project offers additional resources that may lead to other approaches beneficial to the Board Members' Strategic Plan goals of increasing the public and other entities' awareness and understanding of the Board. The USC Master of Public Administration (MPA) program provides a unique opportunity to support the Board Members' Strategic Plan. At the same time, students gain direct experience in business operational issues and exposure to employment opportunities within state government.

ITEM L.1.b.
01/25/2022

USC is based in Los Angeles, but the USC Sol Price School offers its MPA program in Sacramento, tailored to full-time working professionals. The USC Sol Price School MPA program presents a unique experience for students to work alongside California state leaders, policymakers, and advocates. This nationally accredited school of public policy is ranked number four in the nation.

After completing their core curriculum, USC MPA students are required to complete the Capstone Project Course that provides them an opportunity to address complex issues facing government, nonprofits, and the private sector. The Capstone Project Course integrates the competencies attained in the core and electives courses in the MPA program with the student team's ability to solve a business challenge.

Over the years, USC Sol Price School Capstone projects have provided support and identified solutions for various California state agencies. Some recent examples of student team projects are listed below.

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)

In 2021, students worked with the Office of Private Sector/NGO Coordination to create a Strategic Plan for identifying and updating networks for resource and information dissemination. In 2020, students worked with the State Threat Assessment Center, where they developed a plan for revising the Homeland Security Strategic Plan for California. In 2018, they analyzed the State Threat Assessment Center's Strategic Plan and Mission Statement. In 2019, students worked with the Seismic Hazards Branch on a 21st Century Seismic Hazards Program Blueprint.

California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA)

In 2021, students worked with the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Planning and Modal Programs (PMP) to create a plan for PMP engagement focused on equity and inclusion (including rebranding and communications). In 2020, students worked with CalSTA on how to bring micro-mobility benefits to non-urban communities.

California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA)

In 2021, students worked with CalOSBA on data collection and the applicability of developing small business ecosystems.

California State Library, California Research Bureau (CRB)

In 2020, students worked with the CRB on enhancing engagement with the California Grants Portal.

Department of Water Resources (DWR)

In 2019, the student team evaluated how the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) collaborative changed interactions between stakeholders, with an emphasis on disadvantaged communities.

Key Deliverables

The partnership between the USC Sol Price School in Sacramento and the BOE would

consist of the following three components:

- Develop, in partnership with the Board Member co-chairs and the Executive Director, a project scope.
- Develop, in partnership with the Board Member co-chairs and the Executive Director, a strategy to define our brand to effectively connect and communicate with our stakeholders, serve our constituents, and successfully convey BOE's role in California's tax system and fiscal contributions.
- Develop, in partnership with the Board Member co-chairs and the Executive Director, a plan to implement the branding strategy.

The USC Sol Price School in Sacramento has provided the BOE with a project concept that includes a student team of four. The student team will review and analyze the BOE's current brand and associated assets (e.g., social media, website, print and marketing materials, etc.). The student team will conduct interviews with various stakeholders (e.g., Board Members, the BOE Executive Director and designated senior staff, County Assessors, Legislative representatives, other agencies, taxpayers, etc.). The student team will also analyze the branding best practices of other organizations. By doing so, the student team will use this information to determine our strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in this space and formulate their recommendations and associated strategy.

During the semester, the student team will provide the Board Member co-chairs and the Executive Director status reports every two weeks. At the completion of this partnership, the student team will present their recommended three-year branding strategy and implementation plan to the full Board. The student team will also deliver an executive summary/project brief, final report, and presentation slide deck to the Board Member co-chairs and the Executive Director.

Universities across the state recognize the value of public agency partnerships and offer them as part of their graduate programs. These partnerships not only provide a valuable professional experience to university students but position public agencies to address significant business challenges by looking beyond traditional organizational boundaries. In addition, university partnerships will also enhance our employee recruitment efforts while simultaneously, in this case, building upon our current BOE brand awareness. A renewed BOE brand helps to foster greater pride within our team members, builds upon awareness among taxpayers about our government role and services, and further amplifies the BOE as a trusted source for information.

Conclusion

Acknowledging all of the above, this opportunity positions the BOE to leverage a university project, at no cost, to achieve a strategic objective. In addition, it exposes post-secondary graduates to our agency as a potential organization to pursue their future career goals.

In partnership with the offices of Board Member Gaines and Vice Chair Schaefer, the Executive Director would support the implementation of the initiative.

Senator Gaines and I are available to answer any questions regarding this project.