



Board of Trustees Special Meeting

**Thursday, September 15, 2016
2:15 – 3:45 p.m. (or until business concludes)
DeBoer Room, Hannon Library**

MINUTES

Call to Order and Preliminary Business

Chair Thorndike called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. and welcomed President Schott, as this was her first meeting with the full board. Chair Thorndike mentioned the untimely loss of Senator Alan Bates.

The following trustees were present: Bill Thorndike, April Sevcik, Lyn Hennion, Paul Nicholson, Jeremy Nootenboom, Teresa Sayre, Judy Shih, Dennis Slattery and Joanna Steinman. President Linda Schott (ex officio) was also present. The following trustees were absent: Les AuCoin, Steve Vincent and Shea Washington.

Other meeting guests included: Jason Catz, General Counsel; Craig Morris, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Dr. Susan Walsh, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs; Janet Fratella, Vice President for Development; Dr. Jody Waters, Associate Provost; Melinda Joy, ASSOU; Olena Black, League of Women Voters; Tom Moyer; Gordon Carrier, Computing Coordinator; Sabrina Prud'homme, Board Secretary; and Kathy Park, Executive Assistant.

Trustee Slattery moved to approve the June 17, 2016, meeting minutes, as drafted. Trustee Sevcik seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

President's Report

Highlighting the first 34 days of her presidency, President Schott said she has spent much time getting to know the Ashland and Medford campuses; trustees, students, faculty and staff; ASSOU and SEIU leadership; and the communities. She has also met with educational, civic and business leaders; the RCC president; HECC leadership; her new presidential colleagues; and legislators. President Schott said she emailed faculty members offering private meetings and many have already scheduled appointments.

Enrollment is a high priority for President Schott. She said all seven public universities are reporting that they are down in new resident freshmen. Rogue and Klamath Community Colleges are also reporting decreased numbers. Portland Community College is reporting flat enrollment at best. There is no explanation for the decrease. There is also no clear understanding of the impact the Oregon Promise will have but it has not resulted in a flood of students to the regional community colleges.

The SOU Office of Admissions continues to work with students in all stages of the pipeline and resolve issues for those having difficulties. Efforts around continuing student enrollment have been going strong, primarily through a calling campaign and social media. Although it is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of such efforts, there has been a gradual increase in enrollment. President Schott reminded trustees that many students register late and SOU is still waiting to add the Advanced Southern Credit numbers. Final numbers will not be available until well into October.

President Schott mentioned some of her team-building efforts: filling vacancies; cabinet meetings and retreat; resurrecting the Executive Council (associate vice presidents, division directors, extended direct reports, etc.); creating a transparent culture of performance assessment and continuous improvement; and discussions on vision, mission and planning. She has also participated in friend and fund raising activities.

Naming of SOU Pavilion at the Farm (Action)

Chair Thorndike introduced this item by reminding the trustees that, in the Board Statement on Delegation of Authority, the board retains sole authority for gifts to the university requiring naming of a university building or outdoor area. The agenda item before the board is to consider the naming of a building and outdoor area in conjunction with a major gift, a proposed pavilion at the sustainability farm.

President Schott and Janet Fratella discussed the pledge commitment from some friends of SOU and the process the SOU Foundation and campus follow in such cases. Barry and Kathryn Thalden committed to fund all costs to build a pavilion, which can be used for performances and as educational space for SOU and the community.

President Schott proposed the motion: Southern Oregon University wishes to recognize Barry and Kathryn Thalden for their meaningful support, dedication and interest in the university and its future. Through the Thalden Foundation, they have committed to design and construct a performance and education pavilion at The Farm at SOU. The Board of Trustees of Southern Oregon University hereby approves the naming of this pavilion, the “Thalden Pavilion Dedicated to Outrageous Innovation in Sustainability and the Arts.” Trustee Slattery seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Appointment of Governance Working Group (Action)

Chair Thorndike reminded the trustees of earlier conversations regarding governance issues. It was decided that the board would appoint a work group to do some of the preliminary work of defining the functions of governance for the board, which is the purpose of this agenda item. The work group will bring recommendations back to the board for consideration.

Trustee Shih previously volunteered to serve on the work group. Trustee Steinman also volunteered. Given Trustee AuCoin’s interest in this topic, he was added, in absentia, as the final member of the work group.

Trustee Sevcik moved that the board establish a governance work group chaired by Trustee Shih, with Trustees AuCoin and Steinman as additional members, to work

with the board secretary in defining the internal governance structure and function for the board and bring that information back to the full board for consideration and action. Trustee Nicholson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Accreditation Report Update

President Schott reiterated that the accreditation process is extremely important for the institution and provided some history on the process. Recognizing this is a time- and resource-consuming process, she said when it is done well it really helps the institution learn about itself and identify how it can get better. On behalf of the board, Chair Thorndike thanked Dr. Jody Waters and her team for all the great work they have done to create the year 7 report.

Dr. Waters reminded the trustees that accreditation is crucial to the institution's access to federal financial funds, transferability of credit hours between institutions, attracting faculty and helping students move on to graduate programs. It also provides a good opportunity to learn about the university.

Highlighting one of the main findings, Dr. Waters said this report came at an ideal time because of retrenchment, changes at the state level, SOU's relationship with the HECC, the new board, movement toward a strategic plan and adaptation of the mission. SOU now has a good foundational groundwork to help define the institution moving forward.

Dr. Waters said the NWCCU report will come with commendations and recommendations. Recommendations are items that will need to be addressed; they are not necessarily shortcomings, but may be actions in process that need to be completed. One potential recommendation may be the absence of a strategic plan. However, SOU can gather evidence to demonstrate it has been making plans that are strategic, informed by data and are inclusive, despite changes in leadership at various levels. Other potential recommendations could include that SOU is not hitting all targets in academic learning outcomes and student assessments and how well it is able to gauge progress toward achieving certain goals; SOU is falling short in the integration strand in general education objectives; and that SOU's website is a work in progress.

One potential commendation may include an institutional commitment to assessment and improvement, which was noted in a previous report. Dr. Waters and Dr. Walsh pointed out, however, that the accreditors will not read the previous report but there are areas in the current report where SOU noted improvements. Other commendations may include strong evidence of collecting, analyzing and making transparent data and demonstration of the fulfillment of core themes and mission across the institution.

Responding to Trustee Shih's inquiry, Dr. Walsh said SOU has never lost its accreditation. Mr. Morris added that SOU has never been on probation and there is no risk of that happening this time.

Dr. Waters informed the board about campus-wide expectations for the October 24-26 site visit. Responding to Trustee Slattery's inquiry, Dr. Walsh said the final report will appear on SOU's website.

Presidential Evaluation Discussion

Chair Thorndike said the board needs to have expectations around the president's performance on items that are important to her and to the board. President Schott said it is too common to hear about boards and their presidents being at odds, which is not good for either party or the institution. She said she appreciates the openness to think together about the presidential evaluation process. She and the chair will need to agree on annual goals, sooner rather than later. She hopes to come to the board no later than the January meeting with a fully fleshed out proposal for a process and policy.

President Schott discussed her thoughts about common components of presidential evaluations. An annual evaluation is standard and usually consists of the president formulating goals, discussing them with the chair and getting them set. Near the end of the year, the president would do a self-evaluation and discuss it with the full board. The chair writes the evaluation, which is shared with the president, and the president has the opportunity to respond. At some interval (e.g., three, four or five years), a full 360 degree evaluation is also done, usually by an external entity that seeks input from all internal constituent groups and from some external constituent groups.

President Schott also mentioned the annual survey the faculty senate sends to faculty and staff to obtain their evaluation of the president, provost, vice president for finance and administration and vice president for development. In the past few years, the survey results have not been shared with the staff member being evaluated. However, President Schott said she plans to share the results with the individual evaluated.

Responding to Trustee Steinman's question regarding possible ramifications if the external evaluation of the president is less than sterling, President Schott said that, from personal experience with the chancellor's evaluation at the University of Maine system, the board counseled the chancellor. Rather than being a firing decision, such evaluations are normally formative assessments.

To prevent a situation from getting to the point that a president's performance cannot be remediated, Trustee Nicholson asked if universities do a regular snapshot survey to get a sense of any performance trends. President Schott said it was important to have clear communication between the president and the board regarding goals. She would not be in favor of pulse taking; the nature of a president's work can take a long time to deliver, which is why evaluations cover longer periods. Not being a fan of popularity contests, Trustee Sayre recommended developing a rubric with standards and goals.

Chair Thorndike ended the discussion by asking anyone with additional comments on the evaluation process to direct them to him, President Schott or the board secretary.

Adjourn

Chair Thorndike adjourned the meeting at 3:51 p.m.

Date: January 20, 2017

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sabrina Prud'homme". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Sabrina Prud'homme
University Board Secretary