



**Board of Trustees  
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, June 15, 2017  
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (or until business concludes)  
DeBoer Room, Hannon Library**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order and Preliminary Business**

Chair Sayre called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

The following members were present: Teresa Sayre, Daniel Santos, Judy Shih and Joanna Steinman. Trustee Les AuCoin participated via videoconference. Trustees Steve Vincent and Shea Washington were absent. Trustee and President Linda Schott (ex officio) also attended the meeting.

Other meeting guests included: Dr. Susan Walsh, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs; Joe Lynch, Academic Partnerships Executive Vice President; Colleen Walker, Academic Partnerships Vice President; Craig Morris, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Jason Catz, General Counsel; Dr. Karen Stone, Associate Vice President for Academic Resource Management; Janelle Wilson, Student Life; Carol Ferguson, Biology Professor; Marjorie Trueblood-Gamble, Director of Diversity and Inclusion; Dr. Greg Jones, Director of Business, Communication and the Environment; Vicki Suter, SOU; Jeff Gayton, University Librarian; Allie Bogard, Student Life; Ryan Schnobrich, Internal Auditor; Joe Mosley, Director of Community and Media Relations; Olena Black, League of Women Voters; Devon Backstrom, ASSOU/OSA; Alexander Fitzhugh, SOU student; John Stevenson, User Support Manager; Don Hill, Classroom and Media Services Manager; Sabrina Prud'homme, Board Secretary; and Kathy Park, Executive Assistant.

Trustee Santos moved to approve the minutes from the April 20, 2017 meeting as presented. Trustee Shih seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Provost's Report**

Dr. Susan Walsh said the Provosts' Council unanimously approved SOU's proposed BA/BS in Health Care Administration. The proposal will go to the HECC in August as a consent agenda item and the program will start in the fall.

Dr. Walsh discussed SB 54, saying that, if it passes, the university would submit institutional evaluations to the HECC only every other year. The large institutions would report in January 2018 and the TRUs would report in January 2019.

Dr. Walsh said two housing director candidates concluded their campus visits. Following background checks, she and the president will confer and make a decision.

Dr. Walsh mentioned the trauma-based Adverse Childhood Experiences training she requested for faculty and staff. This training may be a more consistent part of onboarding and professional development. The RCC president is interested in partnering with SOU to have training at both institutions.

Dr. Walsh updated the committee on several recent accomplishments: SOU has 50 bridge students, which is the maximum; SOU celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SOAR; education faculty are partnering with Klamath Falls and Coos Bay on the education satellite program; a math faculty member received a HECC open educational resources grant; three faculty members are putting together a work group to help faculty with textbook open sourcing to potentially reduce costs for students; the SOU Chamber Choir performed at the legislature on TRU Day; a theater faculty member received a Fulbright scholarship to study in Ireland; the first cohort of Honors College students are graduating; Kristen Gast and her financial aid team have been working tirelessly to provide information to students; and Dr. Mark Tveskov and Chelsea Rose are hosting radio shows on JPR to highlight the archaeology work of the SOU Lab of Anthropology.

Discussing enrollment, Dr. Walsh said the numbers are flat, compared with the same time last year, but reminded the committee the fall term is still 15 weeks away.

### **Programmatic Review and Recommendation of Relationship with Academic Partnerships (Action)**

Introducing this item, Chair Sayre said SOU is considering entering into an agreement with Academic Partnerships to deliver the MBA program in an online format. If entered into, this new relationship will be a significant commitment of time and resources. The Finance and Administration Committee will also review the proposed action. Recommendations from both committees will go to the full board.

President Schott said the online MBA would only be a change in the mode of delivery, as the curriculum already exists. The Academic Partnerships staff have been coordinating with faculty, marketing, SOU's registrar, financial aid personnel, and many others on campus to explore and ensure seamless program delivery.

Joe Lynch provided background information on Academic Partnerships and described the breadth of their experience of partnering with 50 public universities and their history of working with faculty in converting 3300 programs to an online format. The programs are primarily in business, education and health care. As detailed in the meeting materials, Mr. Lynch discussed the infrastructure Academic Partnerships provides in the areas of academic services; extensive marketing, recruitment and

retention; and partner support. Graduation and retention rates are 80-90 percent in the programs in which Academic Partnerships is involved.

Addressing the defined roles and responsibilities, Mr. Lynch stressed that, as SOU converts courses to online, any decision regarding content resides with the university. SOU also maintains control of academic quality, rigor, and intellectual property.

Collen Walker discussed market trends and online students. On-campus enrollment nationally is down 8 percent; online enrollment is up 56 percent. She reviewed the macro trends in higher education as detailed in the meeting materials, including the demand for graduate programs in business. The online space is well suited for mid-career, working adults as the top two factors in selecting an MBA program are tuition and convenience of taking classes remotely. Other factors include the duration of the program, entrance requirements, start dates and brand/ranking.

Answering Trustee Steinman's earlier question regarding the significance of enrolled students living geographically closer to campus, Ms. Walker said marketing starts within a 50-mile circle and builds the brand within that footprint because those individuals know SOU the best. With more click-throughs, ranking increases and the program expands in concentric circles.

Responding to Trustee Shih's inquiries, Dr. Walsh said SOU has MBA courses online, but not an online program, and Academic Partnerships has been talking with faculty about pedagogy as well as teaching schedules. Mr. Lynch added that the teaching structure is different and an academic services team assists faculty in that area.

Responding to Chair Sayre's inquiry about research on pedagogical perspectives, Mr. Lynch said Academic Partnerships would follow Quality Matters and complete a quality review of every course to ensure persistence and graduation. Academic Partnerships maintains a repository of best practices for faculty use.

Discussion ensued on the online and face-to-face programs and the tuition rates for each. SOU will continue to offer a face-to-face program. Ms. Walker said there is a tremendous amount of discounting, which is the tuition reduction mentioned in the meeting materials. President Schott clarified that students in both programs at SOU would be charged the same rate. Mr. Lynch added that the on-campus program should grow as the online program grows because the clientele for each are different. The two programs are separate; it is not a mix of online and face-to-face courses. Dr. Greg Jones said there have been several meetings with faculty and they feel SOU cannot get to the same place without this kind of support.

Using the University of Texas at Arlington as an example, Ms. Walker described how Academic Partnerships recruits students, how leads turn into new enrollments.

Responding to Trustee AuCoin's inquiry, Mr. Lynch said Academic Partnerships hopes to expand a portfolio of programs with SOU. Dr. Walsh added that they have spoken with Dr. John King and education faculty regarding other programs, and concluded the

MBA is the good place to start. President Schott said her belief is that there are individuals in the region who would like to access the educational excellence SOU offers, but are unable to come to campus; this program will reach those individuals. She also hopes this will expand to other programs.

Ms. Walker then described the new student lifecycle, as detailed in the meeting materials, and Academic Partnerships' infrastructure that will provide enrollment and retention services. Responding to Trustee Shih's inquiry regarding marketing other universities' programs, Mr. Lynch said none of Academic Partnerships' clients has exclusivity. He added that Academic Partnerships is not in discussions with any universities in SOU's market and he does not see that changing in the near future.

Trustee Steinman expressed concern over SOU staff becoming overwhelmed by the additional students. Mr. Lynch said the partner support team could analyze where it can help and, if there is stress, it is usually in the bursar's or financial aid offices. He did not feel the initial cohort of 20 or so would overload the system.

Mr. Lynch discussed the sustainable and successful program design, which includes multiple starts and the carousel model. He praised the work of Drs. Karen Stone and Greg Jones in developing the carousel, which takes the number of faculty teaching at any one time down to two, three or four. For each course, there is one faculty of record; if there is a coach, the faculty member controls who the coach is. Responding to Chair Sayre's comment on the seven-week course duration, Dr. Jones said the group thought a five-start, 7-week model would work best with SOU's current quarter system.

Regarding academic coaches, Mr. Lynch said the turnover in coaches from Instructional Connections, a separate company, is less than 5 percent. Dr. Jones stressed that faculty control curriculum and coaches help deliver it. At President Schott's request, Mr. Lynch described the coaching positions and assured that the coaches are not exploited.

Mr. Lynch explained why the company approached SOU, focusing on SOU's current MBA offerings and limited online competitors from other Oregon public universities. Responding to Trustee Shih's inquiry, Mr. Lynch said the other universities with online programs with which SOU would be competing include Indiana University, Penn State, University of Nebraska and Arizona State and no university owns the Oregon market. He then discussed the market potential currently available to SOU.

At President Schott's request, Ms. Walker described how this online program would raise SOU's traditional programs and campus-based profile. She said it speaks to how much marketing is done. Raising the ranking on the Google profile increases awareness of SOU throughout the Rogue Valley. Marketing the online program includes marketing SOU as a whole, which can improve on-campus enrollment.

Discussing the implementation timeline, Ms. Walker said they like to have a six-month window to launch, four weeks of discovery conversations and ninety days to launch the brand before any students are enrolled. Time is critical to hit an early 2018 start. As

curriculum is converted to an online format, Mr. Lynch said the academic services team would come to campus and have a series of workshops with faculty. Dr. Walsh added that SOU would incentivize faculty to ensure workload is fair and equitable.

Responding to Trustee Shih's inquiry regarding costs, Mr. Lynch said it is a 50-50 revenue sharing model. There are no up-front costs to SOU. Academic Partnerships bears all costs of investing in marketing, recruiting and retention. Other than time and effort, the financial up front risk to SOU is what it pays its faculty. Academic Partnerships does not get paid until SOU enrolls a student, that student has paid the university, and passed a census date. Jason Catz said the contract is for ten years per program, with five-year renewals. Ms. Walker said the company puts a lot of money in marketing up front and those costs increase as SOU expands its reach.

Ms. Walker responded to Chair Sayre's inquiry on how to ensure the marketing has the look and feel of SOU. She indicated that branding would be coordinated with Nicolle [Aleman] as well as the business school and that Academic Partnerships would be invisible.

Responding to Trustee Shih's inquiry regarding the recruitment of coaches, Mr. Lynch said Instructional Connections would market in SOU's area initially, which would bolster employment in the community.

In response to Trustee AuCoin's inquiry, Mr. Catz said if Academic Partnerships goes bankrupt or cannot fulfill its responsibilities under the agreement, there will be terms in the contract for managing the termination of the contract.

Trustee Shih moved that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, having reviewed and considered the proposal for Southern Oregon University to engage Academic Partnerships to assist the university in the development, marketing and implementation of selected online programs, hereby recommends that the Board of Trustees authorize the president of the university to enter into a contractual agreement with Academic Partnerships to provide the online delivery of SOU's Master of Business Administration program and related services, as proposed.

Trustee Santos seconded the motion. Craig Morris clarified that the Finance and Administration Committee would review the terms of the contract and forward its recommendation to the board regarding the contract. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Information and Discussion: What are Safe Spaces at SOU?**

Due to time constraints, Chair Sayre postponed this item until October.

### **Future Meetings**

The next committee meeting will be on October 19. Chair Sayre asked trustees to let the board secretary know if they wish to include any items on the agenda.

### **Adjourn**

Chair Sayre adjourned the meeting at 3:24 p.m.

Date: October 19, 2017

Respectfully submitted by,

Sabrina Prud'homme

Sabrina Prud'homme  
University Board Secretary