

**Southern Oregon University Board of Trustees  
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting**

**Thursday, July 16, 2015**

**1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (or until business concludes)**

**DeBoer Boardroom, Hannon Library, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, #303**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee Chair, Teresa Sayre, called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. The Chair and the committee welcomed the new board secretary, Sabrina Prud'homme and Kathy Park, Executive Assistant to the meeting. She also thanked Penny Thorpe for her work in assisting the committee prior to the secretary's arrival.

**Roll Call**

The following committee members were present and a quorum was established: Teresa Sayre, Les AuCoin, Sheri Bodager, Joanna Steinman, and Steve Vincent. The Chair welcomed Trustee Bodager to the meeting.

The following committee members were absent: Filiberto Bencomo, Judy Shih, and Shea Washington.

The following trustee also was present: Dennis Slattery.

Other meeting guests included: Ryan Brown, Head of Community and Media Relations; Lisa Garcia-Hanson, Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Retention; Don Hill, Classroom and Media Services Manager; Craig Morris, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Kathy Park, Executive Assistant; Sabrina Prud'homme, University Board Secretary; Liz Shelby, Chief of Staff and Director of Government Relations; Penny Thorpe, Executive Assistant; Sue Walsh, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs; and Jody Waters, Assistant Provost.

**Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

**Consent Agenda**

There were no changes or corrections to the minutes from the May 28, 2015 meeting. Trustee Vincent moved to approve the minutes, Trustee AuCoin seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Discussion Items**

**Accreditation Discussion**

Chair Sayre introduced the topic of accreditation and invited Dr. Jody Waters to lead a discussion about SOU's accreditation. Dr. Waters identified the university's accrediting body as the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) and later in her presentation, said the body oversees the states of Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Montana, Alaska, and Utah.

Dr. Waters first gave an overview of the accreditation process and the priorities, explaining that SOU is in year five of a one-three-five-and seven-year staggered cycle. Not much happens in year five, so the institution is ramping up for what will be an intense and challenging year-seven, culminating report.

There are five standards the institution needs to address for accreditation: 1) Mission, core themes and expectations: submitted in year one, 2011; 2) Resources and capacity: submitted in year three, 2013? 3) Planning and implementation: due year seven, 2017; 4) Effectiveness and improvement: due year seven, 2017; 5) Mission fulfillment, adaptation and sustainability: due year seven, 2017. The assessment standards are interconnected and build on each other, so, as the institution focuses on a standard for a given year, it also addresses, updates, expands or modifies previously addressed standards, which requires the institution's constant vigilance.

In response to a question from Trustee Steinman, Dr. Waters said the corresponding academic year to the current accreditation year five is the 2015-2016 academic year. Dr. Sue Walsh clarified that the report would be due in September of 2017.

Dr. Waters explained the purposes of accreditation as not only keeping the doors open to an institution but also 1) self-regulation through continuous improvement; 2) academic integrity demonstrated by mission fulfillment; and 3) the collective responsibility of higher education institutions to constituents.

Chair Sayre drew on her knowledge of the value of accreditation to high school students who plan to go to college, and asked about the significance of accreditation to college students. Dr. Waters believed the average student may not have a good sense of accreditation but noted that two important student considerations are for financial aid and attendance at an institution whose accreditation was revoked. In these cases, accreditation could be defining. Dr. Walsh added that students progressing to graduate school would find it much more important because listing a school's accrediting body could be part of the application process. Trustee Vincent noted that students trying to transfer from an unaccredited institution would have a hard time getting units accepted and Dr. Waters confirmed that in such a case, the student's classes may not be accepted at all.

At an NWCCU training workshop, several activity-guided questions addressed potential ways to assess institutional integrity. The following considerations were discussed: the degree to which institutional intentions match institutional accomplishments; enables accountability and quality assurance; what we claim to do; how well we do it; and the evidence we can provide to support our claims.

Trustee AuCoin raised a number of issues regarding campus practices, measurement capabilities, and items that could negatively impact assessment for the institution, particularly in university seminar (USEM), house and honors programs, about which the institution makes significant claims. Dr. Waters noted that USEM students are measured at entry and exit points, so the artifacts are available. Regarding the practice of interdisciplinary teaching by professors, Dr. Waters thought such instances may prompt a larger set of questions about why such actions may be taking place, how the actions fit into what the institution is trying to do; and how it fits in scope of the mission. Dr. Walsh added that the

honors programs are learning-outcome based and interdisciplinary by design, so the intended effect is that a trained professor should be able to teach to the learning outcomes regardless of disciplinary area.

Dr. Waters discussed the importance of actions supporting mission and intended purpose, then covered the year-seven report. The report will assess and explicitly document achievement of intended institutional and student outcomes to substantiate claims of quality and effectiveness (mission fulfillment); provide a “show me” view from constituents; or, in NWCCU terminology, adhere to a culture of evidence; and will provide artifacts, exhibits and tangible evidence.

Chair Sayre inquired about the types of artifacts, exhibits and tangible evidence the internal committee is seeing. Dr. Waters explained that the committee focuses on how to get academic programs to give substantive data. The committee asks for program assessment reports, papers, projects, internship info, capstones, etc. TracDat was mentioned as a tool that tracks learning outcomes identified as critical to a program; the program can upload the information and it could be accessed for accreditation documentation. In response to a question from Trustee Slattery, Dr. Waters defined the aforementioned “constituents” as everyone in the university community, but the degree to which each group would be involved would differ.

Finally, a timeline was shared with the committee. From July 2016 – August 2017 the accreditation committee would engage in information gathering, analysis, collaboration, commiseration, writing, revision and celebration. On August 1st the group plans to have a camera ready copy finished and in September 2017, the year seven report will be due and site visit scheduled.

Much discussion ensued about accreditation, beginning with Trustee Vincent’s characterization of NWCCU as being akin to a regulatory agency. Dr. Waters confirmed and added that it’s also a very good quality assurance or quality control resource to ensure the institution is compliant with and responsive to standards. Trustee Vincent then asked about institutional risk related to accreditation. Federal student funding was identified as the biggest risk. However, Dr. Walsh expressed that she is very confident that SOU’s report will be sound and robust.

Trustee AuCoin asked several questions relating to the biggest lifts or heartburn issues for the upcoming report. Dr. Walsh informed the committee that in 2007, the institution was “dinged” for lack of assessment tools for academics. The NWCCU also was concerned that SOU administration was thinly staffed. Significant progress has been made to build a culture of assessment with faculty and the institution. Mr. Morris added that the accreditors want to see clear evidence of ongoing academic assessment, use of that data in some type of continuous improvement cycle, clear connections between mission, core themes and budget to ensure the funding supports the strategy and is sustainable. Concluding the discussion, Dr. Waters added that the difficulty of assessment itself is an issue to focus on, as well as the continuous development of the culture of assessment.

## **Enrollment**

Lisa Garcia-Hanson then presented SOU's enrollment drivers website at <http://sou.edu/avper/staff.html> and showed the committee how to use the site. Explaining the site's barometer, she showed the committee enrollment noting that official reports are from end-of-term certifying dates. She also defined headcount, full time equivalent (FTE) and student credit hours (SCH).

Chair Sayre questioned how the enrollment goal was set. Ms. Garcia-Hanson and Mr. Morris explained that it was based on retrenchment metrics, specifically a goal of -1.1 percent, which also ties to the budget the full board will see.

Ms. Garcia-Hanson explained the enrollment report, funnel report targets, features and timing, and showed the retrenchment metrics on the site. She outlined the process of bringing students through the funnel of applications, admitted, confirmed (deposit paid), and enrolled students. Unlike the prior year, at the time of the meeting, the university was ahead on just about all stages of the funnel. Chair Sayre invited Ms. Garcia-Hanson to a future meeting to talk to the committee about what has been done to improve those enrollment metrics.

Regarding enrollment, Ms. Garcia-Hanson wasn't concerned about the volatility between the numbers of enrolled students in 2014 and 2015, which were 502 and 486, respectively, at this time in the year. It was believed to be a function of Raider Orientation and Registration (ROAR) dates. Last year there were three first year events and two transfer ROARs. This year there are four first year events and three transfer ROARs, with attendance capped at 225 instead of 300. Due to these variables and timing differences of the events, there was a bit of an apples to oranges effect and even as things normalize, there will be variances. After the final ROAR, a more apples to apples comparison will be available. The Fall 2015 Enrollment Report also was explained.

Trustee AuCoin asked if the committee should be concerned that resident FTE is down 5.8 percent, noting the HECC is monitoring. Ms. Garcia-Hanson was not very concerned yet, but is always paying attention, and added that at 11-weeks out from the beginning of the term, funnel indicators don't raise concern.

Trustee AuCoin stated that the university would need to do a better job on diversity and pointed out Indian, Asian, and native Alaskan populations were down. He advocated deployment of resources to reach targeted groups and maximize state funding. Mr. Morris explained that he and the provost were working on four initiatives that will address the funding model and once the president signs off on them, the initiatives will be brought forward to the appropriate committee meetings.

Trustee AuCoin added that retention also is important. As SOU increases enrollment, greater enrollment of ethnic groups is great. Retaining these students will require some institutional sociology. What does SOU have to offer these student groups? For example, veterans with PTSD will require more counseling services. Mr. Morris informed Trustee AuCoin that the legislature gave SOU \$582 thousand to spend in each year of the biennium on success initiatives or fee remissions to support affordability. Trustee AuCoin further noted that how the funds are split between the two areas will be very important.

Ms. Garcia-Hanson continued her presentation explaining the SCH report and said the SCH numbers are how budgeting is done. Mr. Morris added that SCH and FTE are the numbers that “ring the cash register.” In each division and program as well, SCH is a great way for division directors to be able to do a temperature check to see how they doing, and where they need to make course corrections or better deploy resources. Trustee Steinman inquired if SCH is by program, or course, or major and the answer was that it is by course.

Ms. Garcia-Hanson said the funnel report would include a breakdown by ethnic group in the future and in response to a trustee request, she will also explore adding veterans to the reporting.

### **Curriculum Approval**

Chair Sayre and Dr. Walsh led a discussion about new curriculum approval procedures required by HECC, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee’s role in this process, and scheduling curriculum reviews at future meetings. Introducing the topic, Chair Sayre asked the committee to think about this process, offer feedback today or in the next meeting and it would appear as an action item in the next meeting.

Dr. Walsh explained that the new process for SOU omits Oregon University System (OUS) approval and includes institutional board and HECC approval. A flowchart outlining the following steps in greater detail was presented.

1. Academic faculty submit a new program proposal to the provost’s office.
2. The curriculum committee, or the graduate council if it’s a graduate program, approves the proposal.
3. Faculty senate approves and if it’s for a graduate program an external review is required.
4. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee then reviews and approves proposal.
5. Statewide Provosts Council reviews the program proposal.
6. Proposal then goes to the HECC. (At this point, it must be a clean proposal. If there are any disagreements, HECC will send proposals back; these are expected to be consent agenda items.)
7. SOU notifies NWCCU of the new addition and this is the final step.

This process can be for certificates, major and minor programs, and other types of programs. Trustee Steinman asked if the full board was part of this process. Chair Sayre expressed the need for curriculum updates as a regular part of the committee’s meetings, as the proposal is for the Academic and Student Affairs Committee to take action and approve programs at the committee level. It would go to the full board as part of the committee’s report. However, if the committee does not approve a program, it goes back to the faculty senate body. She further explained that differing models exist across the state and Portland State uses this model as well. Jason Catz said what they probably did and what this committee should do, is take the defined process to the board and ask the board to delegate the approval authority to the committee.

Chair Sayre explained that this agenda item is the first discussion for the board or committee and she proposes this model because the committee works most closely with the academic programs and

activities of the university. She also wants to ensure transparency in the process avoiding the surprises of the recent creative writing program. Dr. Walsh added that part of the design is pragmatic because of timing. The senate has their process, the HECC meets less frequently on these issues than OUS did, and SOU's process has to consider the timing of these or risk the inability to move program proposals along.

Trustee Steinman asked if a catalog schedule has been shared yet. Penny Thorpe shared some deadline dates and would send Trustee Steinman what was shared with division heads and chairs.

Trustee Bodager asked when these regular updates to the committee would happen so that when a program is submitted, they can be involved from the beginning and would not slow down the process. Dr. Walsh explained that it has to go through the curriculum committee first because it could be rejected or corrected at that step, but after that, it could be shared.

Trustee Slattery pointed out that the campus will need to have well-publicized deadlines in order to get programs submitted within timelines. Chair Sayre plans to have an annual meeting on the committee's calendar for thorough curricular updates. Dr. Walsh addressed additional trustees' questions noting that when OUS was involved in the process, it happened at step six, after the Provost's Council review.

Trustee AuCoin thought a strategic plan guiding program creation or decision-making would help the process and could avoid the squandering of costs on items outside of a plan. Dr. Walsh invited the committee to visit the provost's web site for more information on the new program proposal forms, which are comprehensive and ask for resources, program delivery, mission, etc. Through the forms, some of Trustee AuCoin's thoughts already are built-in. Also regarding strategic guidance, Trustee Vincent questioned how workforce demand is taken into consideration in the development of programs.

Looking forward to future meetings, Chair Sayre suggested several agenda items and solicited additional items. For the next meeting, the Chair asked the committee to complete some required reading. She also suggested Welcome Week activities, the Bridge Program, the HECC Evaluation, the College Transition Collaborative (CTC), enrollment updates, curriculum updates, the innovation and leadership degree program as future topics. Trustee AuCoin suggested spending some time on student life components and especially, student support programming, while Trustee Vincent requested a discussion on enrollment's report on the SOU secret shopper. He also expressed curiosity about whether or not the students have external advisers and explained his experience with Oregon Institute of Technology and the concept.

Chair Sayre stated the monthly meetings already have been set. She inquired if the committee could skip the August meeting because she has a prior commitment and resume their monthly meetings starting on September 17th at the same time. This was agreeable to the committee.

### **Provost's Report**

Dr. Walsh provided comments on several important topics, some of which had been mentioned by others earlier in the meeting. She and Mr. Morris will provide the president initiatives at the next

retreat. She expressed that the seven provosts continue to work on the HECC evaluation criteria, which will be presented to the committee in draft form soon.

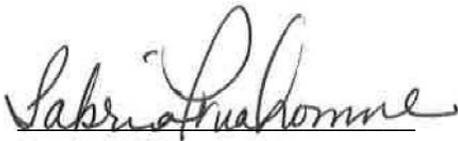
Dr. Walsh thanked the committee members for walking through the curriculum approval process. She stated that getting it right at the outset is so important. Trustee Slattery added that there are a lot of steps and resources expended to get new programs, majors, degrees, etc. to the Provosts Council. He asked if a pre-review was conducted before it gets to the council. Dr. Walsh explained that many conversations happen among the provosts before a faculty member does any work on a new initiative as the group would not want to get very far in the process before all those conversations happened. She commented on the good working relationships the seven TRU provosts have, as do the seven vice presidents for finance and administration. To the extent that the institutions are independent, they are coordinating well.

Trustee Slattery said that legislators feel very positive about the cohesiveness and coordination among the seven TRUs, and that relationships have never been better. Liz Shelby noted that legislators also have commented favorably on how well the seven TRUs have worked together, much better than ever before.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Date: September 17, 2015

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sabrina Prud'homme". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Sabrina Prud'homme  
University Board Secretary