

**Board of Trustees Retreat  
Friday, September 28, 2018  
Callahan's Mountain Lodge, 7100 Old Highway 99 South, Ashland, OR**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum**

Chair Lyn Hennion called the meeting to order at 8:17 a.m.

**Board Members:**

Lyn Hennion	Present	Deborah Rosenberg	Present
Les AuCoin	Present	Daniel Santos	Present
Jonathon Bullock	Present	Linda Schott (ex officio)	Present
Sheila Clough	Present	Barry Thalden	Absent
Shaun Franks	Present	Bill Thorndike	Present
Megan Davis Lightman	Present	Steve Vincent	Present
Paul Nicholson	Absent	janelle wilson	Present
Shanztyn Nihipali	Present		

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Retreat: Information and Discussion Items**

The purpose of the retreat was to provide the opportunity for the board to think about and discuss three major areas:

1. Equity, diversity, inclusion, and applying an equity lens
2. Government ethics and conflicts of interest
3. The optimal town-gown marriage

Due to the non-linear nature of the trustees' discussions, the report below serves as a record of the items discussed at the retreat.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Facilitator, Dr. Markisha Smith, discussed the concept and principles of equity. Adapted from the Oregon Department of Education, educational equity was defined as "the equitable implementation of policy, practices, procedures, and legislation that translates into resource allocation, educational rigor, and opportunities for historically and currently marginalized youth, students, and families, including civil rights protected classes. This means the restructuring and dismantling of systems and institutions that create the dichotomy of beneficiaries and the oppressed/marginalized." Trustees were encouraged to think about equity in familiar terms such as civil rights protected classes and especially with consideration of those whose needs or differences are not always visible, such as those who are disabled/differently abled, but whom the university should be serving equitably.

Equity and the importance of diversity and inclusion were applied to SOU's current context, namely its 2018 Strategic Plan where principles of equity, diversity and

inclusion were articulated in the mission, vision, values and strategic directions of the plan, in particular Strategic Direction IV: *SOU will create a diverse, equitable, inclusive community where learners flourish.*

Dr. Smith then introduced Discourses 1 and 2. Discourse 1 is language typically used to talk or ask questions about, and plan the work of institutions, changes, or reform. This language often is deficit-based and favors a traditional or customary, dominant framework. Discourse 2 is language that tends to be about uncomfortable, unequal, ineffective, prejudicial conditions in institutions. This language may be strengths-based, value multiple perspectives, and may challenge hegemony. Discourse 2 is thought to be a more productive way to discuss issues, as it encourages supporting the needs and interests of students rather than the dominant culture and systems.

The Oregon Equity Lens was discussed in-depth and examined as a tool for Discourse 2. Trustees discussed the application of the equity lens to deliberations and the decision making process.

#### Action Steps:

- Trustees to consider future use of the *Equity Decision Pocket Tool* to discuss potential impacts and implications.

#### **Government Ethics and Conflicts of Interest**

SOU General Counsel, Jason Catz, provided an overview of the Oregon Ethics Laws, including conflicts of interest. This was provided as an orientation component for new trustees and a refresher for continuing trustees, in order to fulfill the annual requirement to review this information.

In addition to laws, policies, and requirements, many situational examples were discussed.

#### **The Town-Gown Marriage: Next Steps and Role of the Board**

In preparation for the retreat, trustees were asked to read the book, The Optimal Town-Gown Marriage: Taking Campus-Community Outreach and Engagement to the Next Level.

Facilitator, Dr. Jon Lange, introduced this session of the retreat. President Schott discussed highlights of the book, which was written to assist campuses and their communities in understanding how the “town” and the “gown” components of college and university relationships come together to increase collaboration between institutions of higher education and the communities in which they are located. These relationships are seen as essential to a thriving campus and mutually supportive community. However, these relationships require nurturing and work to cultivate, maintain and even flourish.

President Schott asked the board to consider whether or not, and if so how, SOU could move forward with assessing SOU’s town-gown relationships and deepening them. The

president and her cabinet also discussed these topics recently. Dr. Lange asked trustees to consider benefits to deepening the town-gown marriage, entertain ideas about moving forward with some kind of deepening of the town-gown relationship, and ideas about how to do that. Dr. Lange also led exercises to help trustees consider the benefits and costs or downsides to conducting an assessment and to doing the work.

#### Conclusions and Actions Steps:

- Trustees were supportive of conducting an assessment to help identify strengths and opportunities, and better understand SOU's connections, collaborations, and where the mutual relationships could be improved.
- Trustees are willing to support and assist the president as needed or requested in the development and/or execution of these efforts.
- It was recommended that SOU move sequentially, beginning to deepen the town-gown relationships in steps, seeing how each step goes before going too much further with the others.

#### **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges 2018 Conference**

In addition to the three major topics, the board also discussed trustees' recent experiences attending AGB's 2018 National Conference on Trusteeship. Chair Hennion, President Schott, and trustees AuCoin, Clough, Thorndike, and Santos attended the conference and discussed the sessions they attended as well as their general takeaways from the conference. They mentioned specific key learnings on the following topics: Generation Z and different learning styles; socially responsible investing; income sharing agreements in the context of college affordability; navigating freedom of speech on campuses; intercollegiate athletics, including Title IX regulations; internationalism and looking abroad to help solve demographic challenges where populations are declining; and others.

Board members were reminded at the conference that they have fiduciary responsibilities to see that actions, assessments, and accountability measures are carried out—not necessarily to do it themselves—but to make sure it happens. Overall, trustees reported that they derived tremendous value from the sessions, the ability to talk with national peers, and their experiences at the conference with their Oregon board colleagues. Board members were encouraged to attend in 2019 if possible and as the board's budget may permit.

#### **Adjournment**

Chair Hennion adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

Date: January 18, 2019

Respectfully submitted by,



Sabrina Prud'homme  
University Board Secretary