

**Southern Oregon University  
Board of Trustees  
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting  
Thursday, January 16, 2020**

**MINUTES**

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

Committee Members:

Daniel Santos	Present	Barry Thalden	Present
Jonathon Bullock	Present	Steve Vincent	Absent
Dylann Loverro	Present	janelle wilson	Present
Deborah Rosenberg	Present		

Chair Daniel Santos called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. in the DeBoer Room of the Hannon Library and welcomed Dylann Loverro, the board's newest trustee. The secretary recorded the roll and a quorum was verified.

Other trustees in attendance: Lyn Hennion, Les AuCoin, Megan Davis Lightman and Dr. Linda Schott.

Other attendees included: Dr. Neil Woolf, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs; Greg Perkinson, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Dr. Susan Walsh, Provost; Janet Fratella, Vice President for University Advancement; Dr. Suresh Appavoo, Senior Executive for Equity and Diversity; Jason Catz, General Counsel; Sabrina Prud'homme, Board Secretary; Ryan Schnobrich, Internal Auditor; Taylor Burke, Dean of Students; Dr. Jody Waters, Associate Provost; Kelly Moutsatson, Erin Evans and Ian Parent, all from Admissions; Travis Lee and Nick Marshall, both from Oregon Army National Guard; Mark Timmons, John Maa, Kilisi Satele, O'Riley Leau, Judith Mulitalo, Akludina Taupo and Raelyn Grey, all from ROTC; Ria Galo, Poasa Galo and Leasapai Afoa, community members; Dr. Kylan de Vries, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies; Dr. Carey Sojka, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies; Joe Mosley, Marketing and Communications; Dr. Karen Stone, Associate Vice President for Academic Resource Management; Luke Williams, Enrollment Services; Karen Bolda, Center for the Arts; John Stevenson, Information Technology; and Kathy Park, Office of the Board Secretary.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Consent Agenda**

Trustee Deborah Rosenberg moved to approve the consent agenda, as presented. Trustee Barry Thalden seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Provost's Report**

Other General Updates

Dr. Susan Walsh first provided an organizational update: searches are underway for the Director for Business, Communication and the Environment as well as the University Librarian; the leadership team for The Farm is settling in.

Dr. Walsh said SOU is working on a proposal for a stand-alone minor in e-sports, which will serve the growing demand for e-sports industry leaders. President Linda Schott added that SOU has the opportunity to be the first in the market on the west coast. Dr. Walsh said the minor will be connected to several programs, including Emerging Media and Digital Arts (EMDA); Business, Communication and the Environment; and Computer Science. Dr. Neil Woolf added that the student affairs side is looking at including a competitive team/student club sport, hosting tournaments, carving out space in the Student Recreation Center and building in a wellness component.

Dr. Walsh said SOU has begun offering badges and micro-credentials and started the process by adding onto existing technology. Badges and micro-credentials are offered in the areas of adult learning, high school mental and behavioral health, paraprofessional and educational assistance, and transformative leadership.

Dr. Walsh said the SOHEC leadership teams continue to meet regularly and have a retreat planned for March 12. President Schott said the presidents have discussed how they can help move the work forward and have hired a facilitator to help with discussions on accomplishments and prioritizing work for the next several months. Dr. Woolf mentioned the dual admission transfer program with RCC, which should be implemented this year. The institutions have smoothed issues on the reverse transfer process. The consortium also is creating a website that will have information on transfer opportunities between the four schools.

Dr. Walsh said the general education task force is making progress. It recently presented its progress to Faculty Senate and has settled on six general education capacities and will develop learning outcomes and proficiencies.

#### Provost's Council Update

Dr. Walsh said her tenure as the chair of the Provost's Council will end in March. The provosts have been working on HB [2998], the idea of which is that students from Oregon's community colleges can transfer to one of the seven universities with a guarantee of 90 credits in the academic disciplines that offer a major. The work will take many years to accomplish.

The provosts are drafting a letter to send to the HECC regarding program duplication, taking a stand on the need for duplication when there is a demonstrable student need and evidence of market support.

Turning to Senate Bill 3, which permits community colleges to offer applied baccalaureate degrees in specific majors (e.g., business and nursing), Dr. Walsh said it continues to move forward. Responding to Trustee AuCoin's inquiry, Dr. Walsh said this could impact SOU's enrollment in the applied bachelor's degree in business.

#### **Vice President's Report**

##### Other General Updates

Dr. Neil Woolf provided an organizational update: Taylor Burke is the new Dean of Students and Executive Director of Student Life; in her staff capacity, Trustee janelle wilson is the new Associate Dean of Students.

Dr. Woolf discussed the audit of communications to students and the need to revise the tone of the messages to be more helpful and friendly. He compared old and revised versions of the Student Health and Wellness Center's message regarding the need for vaccination verification. Trustee Loverro said the new one feels less like a finger-wag and more like a helping hand. Student Affairs is exploring all of its communications.

Dr. Woolf said he and his counterparts at the other universities have created a student affairs and enrollment group. Some of the items they are working on include mental health services for students as well as enrollment and budget challenges.

Turning to the student satisfaction survey mentioned at the last meeting, Dr. Woolf said there is now a We Hear You/Frontline Committee to address issues raised in the survey. For example, the committee has created a student referral resource sheet. Additionally, SOU held workshops on the graduation application process, with over 200 students attending. Based on a report Dr. Woolf has requested, student focus groups will provide additional feedback on their experiences at SOU. Dr. Woolf and Trustee Wilson mentioned the Creating the Wardrobe initiative to assist students.

Dr. Woolf also described building renovations, department moves, space reconfigurations and rebranding. SOU is using artificial intelligence and now has Rocky-bot, a chatbot that responds to current and prospective students.

Dr. Woolf said SOU is the first school in Oregon to be designated a Purple Heart University, a military and veteran distinction. The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators has nominated the Financial Aid Office and its director, Kristen Gast, for an innovation and creativity award for their 5-minute wellness checks.

Discussing transfer students, Dr. Woolf said Enrollment Services and Institutional Research completed an audit of transfer students for fall 2019 and concluded that SOU applied 93.8 percent of the credits transferred towards students' degrees at SOU. There are three main reasons SOU will not accept credits for transfer: failed courses, remedial courses, and repeated credits.

Dr. Woolf mentioned changes being planned in student spaces to provide more opportunities for students of color and of different backgrounds to collaborate and work together. Chair Santos added that these efforts will help SOU meet its cultural competency requirements.

#### Enrollment Dashboard Update

Dr. Woolf reviewed the dashboards as included in the meeting materials, noting that revisions are responsive to the committee's request to see more longitudinal data. Responding to trustees' questions, discussion ensued on retention and graduation rates and possible reasons why students drop out and do not graduate.

#### **Action, Information and Discussion Items**

New Bachelor's Degree Program in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (Action)  
and New Certificate Program: Transgender Studies (Action)

Introducing the agenda items, Dr. Walsh reminded committee members of the curriculum approval process.

Dr. Kylan de Vries and Dr. Carey Sojka provided some history on the Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (GSWS) program and highlights of the proposals. The GSWS program is interdisciplinary and the proposals build on existing strengths in the program, the GSWS Council and the existing minor. Dr. Walsh later said the certificate will support several majors, especially the healthcare administration degree. The proposals are responsive to student interest, employment trends, and the diversifying world. Dr. de Vries said that, as far as he knows, there is no program in the nation that solely addresses transgender studies. He said one of the strengths of the new major and certificate is that few new resources are required.

Dr. Sojka discussed the community and regional benefits of the proposals: meeting needs of employers in the region; institutional and regional partnering, including on-campus events and resources as class projects, a year-long capstone for the major, and expanding the potential for service learning for students; and the transgender and queer training program that is available to local businesses. Responding to Chair Santos' inquiry, Dr. Sojka said fees are charged for the training.

Responding to President Schott's inquiry, Dr. de Vries said the program will not be available online but it would be something to consider. President Schott encouraged them to think about online components so others across the country can access them.

Dr. Sojka discussed the Campus Pride Index national ranking, saying SOU consistently has ranked highly. She hopes the creation of the new major and certificate will continue to be a draw for potential students. Discussion ensued on various aspects of the proposals and potential career opportunities.

Trustee Rosenberg moved to approve the new bachelor's degree program in gender, sexuality and women's studies; Trustee Wilson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Trustee Loverro then moved to approve the new certificate program in transgender studies; Trustee Rosenberg seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### Enrollment Council Update

*Financial Aid Leveraging Model* - Dr. Neil Woolf said financial aid is a tool to help students to come to SOU and to retain them. Price is the second-most important factor when choosing a college, with academic programs being first.

Dr. Woolf discussed the competition factor for Oregon high school graduates, as included in the meeting materials. With a 47.8 percent college continuation rate, reducing that number by those who leave Oregon to go to college and those who will attend the large Oregon state universities, there are then 54 higher education institutions in Oregon competing for the remaining 7,432 high school graduates. Many of those institutions use financial aid to recruit students.

In creating a model, SOU's financial aid leveraging consultant looks at three metrics: the yield and retention rates for students; what percent of their financial need is met; and yield by institutional gift. Dr. Woolf described the process to develop an aid strategy and a student's academic rating and index.

An awarding model has been developed for 2020-21, as included in the meeting materials. Dr. Woolf said the awards are included in admission letters and students do not need to apply for them. The model projects an increased enrollment of 46 new students, resulting in over \$522,000 in additional tuition revenue.

Discussion ensued on the desired discount rate, the importance of responsible growth, the basis for amounts awarded and not awarded, and accuracy of the FAFSA forms.

*Mentoring Collective* – Dr. Woolf highlighted SOU’s formal mentoring programs. The Student Life Office runs a peer mentoring program for first-year students; there are about 100 students involved in the program. Similarly, the Bridge Program has about 50 mentees in their program. The Outdoor Program also has a peer mentoring program that serves 35 students. The Honors College assigns each new student a community mentor and 25 new students participate each year. Faculty also serve as mentors.

SOU has to balance the benefits of mentoring programs with their cost and return. Not a lot of students choose to participate in the programs. The question is if it is a high-value retention strategy. Trustee Bullock provided information on a research study on mentoring. Trustee Thalden expressed strong support for mentoring programs.

*Implementation of Education Advisory Board’s Navigate System* - Luke Williams, the project lead, said stage 1 is complete; the app is fully developed and published to all first-time students; training materials have been created; and training has been conducted for employees. Stage 2 includes creating an intervention system to catch students before they fall and be an agent in their success. Stage 3, which will be in fall 2020, will be a push to all students across campus.

#### Programming for Students from American Samoa

Dr. Neil Woolf said that, when he arrived, there were concerns about recruiting students from American Samoa but not providing them support. He provided background information on American Samoa and mentioned SOU’s opportunity to help with educational attainment. Kelly Moutsatson described SOU’s recruiting efforts in American Samoa and its special relationship with the Oregon Army National Guard. Colonel Travis Lee and Major Mark Timmons discussed the partnership between the Oregon Army National Guard, ROTC and SOU; the mentorship program ROTC runs for the soldier-students; and the financial benefits available to qualified students.

Dr. Woolf stressed the critical importance of community support to SOU’s students from American Samoa and recognized board chair, Lyn Hennion, for her assistance in this area. He introduced Ria Galo, Poasa Galo and Leasapai Afoa, members of the Samoan community in the valley, and said they contribute immensely to that support. Ms. Galo, Mr. Galo and Mr. Afoa shared some personal background information and mentioned some of the ways they support students.

#### Future Meetings

Chair Santos said the next meeting would be on April 20.

#### **Adjournment**

Chair Santos adjourned the meeting at 3:38 p.m.

Date: April 20, 2020

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sabrina Prud'homme", written over a horizontal line.

Sabrina Prud'homme  
University Board Secretary