

Board of Trustees
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 21, 2021
Videoconference

MINUTES

Theme: SOU is on the forefront of rethinking liberal arts education

Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum

Committee Members:

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

Chair Jonathon Bullock called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. He said agenda items would be taken out of order to accommodate presenters' schedules. The secretary recorded the roll and a quorum was verified.

Other trustees in attendance: Lyn Hennion, Paul Nicholson and President Linda Schott.

Other attendees and Zoom panelists included: Dr. Neil Woolf, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs; Dr. Susan Walsh, Provost; Greg Perkinson, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Jason Catz, General Counsel; Janet Fratella, Vice President for University Advancement; Sabrina Prud'homme, Board Secretary; Dr. Jody Waters, Associate Provost; Dr. Matt Stillman, Registrar; Dr. Vincent Smith, Chair of Environmental Science and Policy; Dr. Fabrizio Soares, Chair of Computer Science; Andrew Gay, Communication Department; Dr. Brie Paddock, Biology Department; and Kathy Park, Office of the Board Secretary.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda

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

Provost's Report

Academic Affairs: Wildly Important Goals

Dr. Susan Walsh said the division directors met in the fall to discuss the framework from *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*. The intent was to focus on only a couple of goals to keep from getting mired in a "whirlwind of distractions." Those two goals are: 1) emphasizing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work within academic affairs and tying Strategic Direction I (transforming curriculum and pedagogy); and 2) improving enrollment, retention and access for underrepresented students.

Regarding the first goal, they are looking inward on what is being done to promote EDI work, looking at actions and values with regard to systemic racism and related issues. Dr. Walsh provided highlights on the work of various divisions on EDI issues, including

the integration of EDI into the curriculum; providing anti-racist education; curating lists of resources to share; participating in workshops and trainings; creating a strategic fund to purchase materials focused on racial diversity; and working with Orbis Cascade Alliance to replace certain Library of Congress subject headings (e.g., illegal aliens and undocumented immigrants).

Dr. Walsh also highlighted work the divisions are doing to support the second goal, including targeting recruitment and retention efforts at students from underrepresented populations; developing professional pathways scholarships for culturally and linguistically diverse candidates; developing and renewing contacts in community colleges to increase outreach; and identifying students who are at risk of failing their first term and creating support mechanisms to lead those students toward success. Dr. Walsh said it would be a few years before the goals are met but she is pleased with the progress.

Transfer Update and Provost's Council Update

Dr. Walsh said the Provost's Council has been working exclusively on transfers. House Bill 2998 involves post-secondary students transferring between community colleges and universities. The work has been progressing slowly. A bill around common course numbering will be introduced in the Senate which would either put off work on the master major transfer map or replace it. There is a lot of support from the provosts for common course numbering and it will likely be supported by the legislature.

Regarding transfers, Dr. Neil Woolf later added that a tie to the theme of rethinking liberal arts is rethinking how the success story of a liberal arts institution is told. Last fall and this fall, the Registrar's Office provided statistics on the percentage of courses that students submit for transfer that SOU accepts. This year, SOU accepted 93.1 percent. The remaining 7 percent are credits that no institution would accept (e.g., failed, remedial or less than college-level courses). The 93.1 percent is a high number and helps SOU retell the story of its success.

Tuition Advisory Council Update

Dr. Walsh said the Tuition Advisory Council (TAC) would meet the following week and that the TAC's composition will comply with the requirements of House Bill 4141.

Action, Information and Discussion Items

Curriculum Update

Chair Bullock reminded trustees that the board delegated to the committee the responsibility of approving new programs. The development of new programs is a part of rethinking how SOU is a leader in liberal arts education.

Program Approval: Bachelor of Science in Sustainability (Action) - Dr. Vincent Smith mentioned existing programs in Environmental Science, the proposed new programs (i.e., the Bachelor of Science and the minor in Sustainability and the Certificate in Geospatial Science); and he reviewed the proposal. He explained the new programs address needs in sustainability, one of the fastest growing industries and an area in which businesses are seeking to align their goals. SOU has also identified sustainability as a key component of its mission, vision and strategic direction and one of the ways to accomplish that is by inserting sustainability into the curriculum. Dr. Smith said the courses for the new programs exist so there is no need for new faculty.

Responding to Trustee Vincent's comments, Dr. Smith said the desired knowledge outcomes of the programs include the development of critical thinking skills and making decisions based on profit-loss. He hopes eventually to create a relationship with OIT in the energy generation area. Trustee Thalden recommended including "sustainability" in the title of the department. Responding to Vice Chair Santos' inquiry, Dr. Smith said faculty are working on how to insert EDI as a component of sustainability into the curriculum and a new course in environmental justice is being developed.

Trustee Thalden moved approval of the Bachelor of Science in Sustainability. Trustee Loverro seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Program Approval: Certificate in Geospatial Science (Action) - Dr. Vincent Smith said the geospatial science field has exploded in the last decade and is now being employed just about everywhere. It requires a working knowledge of remote sensing, geographic information systems, internet mapping, satellite data and drone work. SOU already has courses in these areas but students in other disciplines like biology, business, sociology, anthropology and archaeology are interested in being trained in this field. In lieu of getting a second major in environmental science, Environmental Science and Policy would like to offer a certificate. There has also been a lot of interest from local planning agencies to have their employees take these courses.

Responding to Trustee Vincent's inquiry, Dr. Smith said the courses could eventually be offered remotely if there is enough interest from students.

Trustee Vincent moved approval of the Certificate in Geospatial Science. Trustee Rosenberg seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Program Approval: Certificate in Cybersecurity (Action) - Dr. Fabrizio Soares said cybersecurity is the practice of defending computers, servers, mobile devices, electronic systems, networks and data from malicious attacks. He reviewed the proposal.

Because this field changes so frequently, Dr. Soares said the proposal was created so it could be adapted every few years or so. Individuals who have a degree in cybersecurity can return to SOU, recycle their knowledge and get a cybersecurity certificate. A number of Oregon universities have cybersecurity majors. Dr. Soares said offering a certificate will differentiate SOU, opening cybersecurity to students looking to build expertise in this area to supplement their chosen major.

Trustee Thalden moved approval of the Certificate in Cybersecurity. Trustee wilson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Micro-Credentials - Update - Dr. Susan Walsh said numerous micro-credentials have been approved and a few are in progress. There is now a website that lists all the micro-credentials and the Marketing Department is drawing attention to the programs. The credentials are stackable and will make individuals more employable and versatile.

Responding to Chair Bullock's inquiry about advising students on the credentials at the outset, Dr. Walsh said the student success coordinators were involved in developing the

credentials and are the front line in advising for each division. The faculty also have had interdisciplinary engagement in developing the curriculum. Dr. Neil Woolf added that DegreeWorks helps students register for courses and complements the advising to help students create plans for graduation, which would include certificates and credentials.

Responding to Board Chair Nicholson's inquiry about marketing the credentials to non-traditional students, Dr. Jody Waters said several individuals have been working on ways to smooth entry into SOU for community members who want to come in as non-admitted students to take courses but not necessarily pursue a degree. The credentials will be advertised on social media, through existing community relationships and on the website.

Other General Updates - This agenda item was covered along with other discussions.

Preparing Students for Success

General Education - Andrew Gay and Dr. Brie Paddock provided highlights on the progress on transforming general education. The goals are to apply Strategic Direction I to general education; reduce the general education credit burden for students; make general education learning goals and requirements more transparent and purposeful for students; and make the model more attractive to prospective students. The plan is to launch the new general education model in Fall 2022.

Mr. Gay provided an overview of the six core capacities and their significance in the transformation process: purpose integration, communication, numerical literacy, inquiry and analysis, creativity and innovation, and EDI. Questions still remain about the new model, including the targeted number of credits, how to maintain the liberal arts identity, whether general education requirements should be connected to curricular pathways, the advantages and disadvantages of a first-year experience similar to the current University Seminar model, and what the general education portfolio should look like.

Responding to Trustee wilson's inquiry, Mr. Gay said one important concept is mentoring and coaching students. The task force has discussed the importance of faculty development and communication advising tools that are made available to students, faculty and student success coordinators. The task force would like to begin a transformation to formal advising as well as maximizing informal encounters with students. Mr. Gay later added that there will be an increase in faculty development to support the development and improvement of advising skills. Dr. Paddock noted the difference between a professional portfolio and a reflective one, saying the latter helps students, especially first generation and underrepresented minorities, develop academic identities that assist with inclusion, retention and success. Board Chair Nicholson said the reflective portfolio appeared to be the creation of a life plan that looks at values, strengths and weaknesses and includes goals and action steps.

Responding to Trustee Vincent's inquiry, Dr. Woolf said there are various ways to track the improvement these changes have on retention and progress towards graduation. He added that, with the revised general education curriculum, students can progress faster through SOU than transferring from a community college, which helps with affordability and progress to completion.

SOU Post-Graduation Employment Information - Dr. Neil Woolf said the National Association of Career Educators conducts a first-destination survey. The survey indicates that the percent of recent graduates from SOU who are employed is 68, compared to 58 percent nationally. The data is for students who are employed in their field or in a related field within six months of graduation. The percentage of graduates that continue on to graduate school is 17 at SOU and 19 percent nationally.

Vice President's Report

Enrollment Management Dashboard

Dr. Neil Woolf reviewed the dashboard and provided context for some of the information. The first-year retention rate is 67.9 percent, 1 percent higher than last year; the national norm is 73 percent. The first-year graduation rate is 46 percent. Although it seems low, the figure is based on first year, full-time students who begin at SOU and graduate within 6 years of starting. It does not include transfer, part-time or stop-out students. By comparison, the Department of Education cites a national rate for four-year public institutions of 48 percent. SOU is well within a standard deviation of the normal rate. The transfer graduation rate is 60 percent, which is a good number.

Turning to the funnel for Fall 2021, Dr. Woolf said the admitted students are up 9 percent over last fall. Transfer students are down 27 percent, as community colleges were hit hard by COVID and locally by the fires [e.g., Rogue Community College (RCC) enrollment is down 28 percent].

Overall, there is a 5 percent increase in SOU's new-student admits. Dr. Woolf pointed out that this is a comparison during COVID times to pre-COVID times. Starting in March, COVID to COVID comparisons will be available. However, it is nice that enrollment is comparable to the pre-COVID world.

Enrollment Council Update

Dr. Woolf said he and Dr. Walsh chair the Enrollment Council, which has three committees. The Recruitment and Marketing Committee is working on institutional branding. In addition, the Constituent Relationship Management solutions allows better communication with more students.

The Financial Aid Working Group is working to increase the number of students who file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Nationally and at SOU, there is a decline in FAFSA rates, so, SOU will increase opportunities for students by holding workshops English and Spanish workshops. There also will be an increase in the marketing of federal work study opportunities at SOU, which is good for retention.

The Student Success and Retention Working Group has worked with the Education Advisory Board to create goals and strategies for use with Navigate. The number of students who have downloaded the Navigate app has increased to 65 percent, and 90 percent for freshmen. There is a 5 percent higher term-to-term persistence rate from app users compared to non-users.

Turning to the theme of rethinking liberal arts education, Dr. Woolf said co-curricular experiences allow students to become better citizens and there are a number of programs, discussions and resources available. Trustee wilson added that the equity

coordinators in the Social Justice and Equity Center oversee what the co-curricular experience is in relation to academics and the mission, vision and values of SOU. One of her favorites is the equity roundtables, which are very interactive and engaging.

Other General Updates

Dr. Woolf said SOU's e-sports team is now operational and is competing. It is ranked 60-something out of 500 teams.

There was \$1.7 million in CARES Act funding for students; approximately \$1.2 million has been disbursed to 1400 students. The average award is \$1600. Requests continue to be submitted as these are not one-time payments. SOU will receive more federal dollars and will continue to pass it along to students.

SOU received another national ranking. College Choice has named SOU one of the 50 best disability-friendly colleges and universities in the United States.

The Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC) recently was reaccredited for 3 years. Dr. Woolf expressed his appreciation for its work in medical and mental health.

Prior to returning in winter, students who live in the residence halls were required to provide a negative COVID test. They could either come with a test result or the SHWC would administer one. The SHWC staff have received their first doses of the vaccine.

Action, Information and Discussion Items (Continued)

Southern Oregon Higher Education Leadership Council

President Linda Schott said the Southern Oregon Higher Education Leadership Council was started by Representative Pam Marsh as "Reimagining Higher Education in the Rogue Valley." It involved RCC President Cathy Kemper-Pelle, Jim Fong from Rogue Workforce Partnership, superintendents of local school districts, herself and others.

The highest-level goal is to increase the number of students graduating from high school and pursuing post-secondary education. Dr. Walsh said she and Dr. Woolf have had several meetings with their counterparts at RCC to lay the foundation for this work. The next step is to reach out to K-12 then pull in the workforce element.

Dual Admission Transfer Program - Dr. Woolf said one of the challenges in the transfer area is early communication with community college students. Previously, SOU did not have access to RCC student information but in the new Constituent Relationship Management database, students can add their information early to SOU's database. For students who intend to transfer, the application process will be streamlined and transcripts will flow between SOU and RCC. The presidents are working on a signing ceremony to formalize the dual admissions Raider Transfer Program.

SOU-Rogue Community College Common Course Numbering - Dr. Walsh reminded trustees of the legislative initiative regarding common course numbering between institutions in Oregon. She said RCC and SOU already have many articulation agreements in place and SOU audited common courses in general education to compare them. Dr. Matt Stillman said SOU will be in great shape with RCC as a partner; however, SOU and RCC do not need to wait until the state is ready to move forward.

Preparing Students for Success (Continued)

Meta Majors - For students who have not declared a major, Dr. Walsh said the idea of meta majors is to focus them on a specific division. This would allow students to explore course work in a division that lines up with their interests. RCC is already doing this work with K-12 and calls it “guided pathways,” which line up with SOU’s academic divisions. The idea would be for RCC and SOU to work together with K-12 students and this is in the discussion stage between RCC and SOU. President Schott said this can help high school students make better choices when selecting dual credit courses, leaving more federal financial aid available to them later.

President Schott added that math is a barrier to students pursuing higher education. SOU will look at pedagogical approaches to teaching math from elementary ages to college.

Southern Oregon Higher Education Leadership Council (Continued)

Information Sharing Agreement: Rogue Valley College Access Network - Dr. Woolf described that the leadership council created information sharing agreements in the Southern Oregon College Access Network to allow higher education institutions to receive contact information on K-12 students. This will allow institutions to start building communication and outreach efforts and K-12 superintendents support the agreements. This will raise the aspirations of students, many of whom by the 3rd to 6th grade have decided if they will attend college.

Future Meetings

The committee’s next meeting will be on April 15, 2021.

Adjournment

Chair Bullock adjourned the meeting at 3:23 p.m.