

**Board of Trustees  
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting  
Thursday, January 20, 2022**

**MINUTES**

***Theme: Ensuring Student Engagement to Enhance the Student Experience***

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

Committee Members:

Jonathon Bullock	Present	Barry Thalden	Present
Debra Lee	Present	Steve Vincent	Present
Deborah Rosenberg	Present	janelle wilson	Present
Daniel Santos	Present		

Chair Jonathon Bullock called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. The secretary recorded the roll and a quorum was verified.

Other trustees in attendance: Lyn Hennion and President Rick Bailey.

Other attendees and Zoom webinar panelists included: Greg Perkinson, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Toya Cooper, Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Dr. Susan Walsh, Provost; Dr. Neil Woolf, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs; Janet Fratella, Vice President for University Advancement; Jason Catz, General Counsel; Dr. Pavlina McGrady, Assistant Professor; Dr. Vince Smith, Division Director/Associate Professor; Dr. Carrie Vath, Dean of Students; Dr. Matt Stillman, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management and University Registrar; Hugues Lecomte, Director of Campus Recreation and The Student Recreation Center; Sabrina Prud'homme, Board Secretary; Josh Lovern, Director of Budget and Planning; Lexi Sylvester, Assistant Director for Equity and Access; Pamela Tomac, Office of the Board Secretary; and various members of the community.

Happy New Year and thanks for joining this meeting. Welcome to President Bailey for his first meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee.

**Public Comment**

No members of the public provided comments.

**Consent Agenda (Action)**

Trustee wilson suggested a correction to the minutes: she said the position Jody Waters accepted was at Claremont Graduate University. Trustee Rosenberg moved to approve the consent agenda with this edit. Board Chair Santos seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Provost's Report**

Update on HECC Biennial Evaluation

Provost Walsh discussed the process of the HECC bi-annual evaluation, with the final report of 40 pages containing quantitative and qualitative information on 8 primary categories of accreditation, student access and service, affordability, academic quality and research, collaboration, shared administrative services, financial health and assessment, and the board.

It is an iterative process that began in November, which results in a full report that ultimately will be presented to the legislature.

Dr. Walsh also pointed out key differences between the HECC evaluation and university accreditation with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and University (NWCCU). About accreditation, she explained the criteria and procedures, process, requirements, receiving the accreditation designation, and the seven-year cycle. Accreditation is critically important because it creates a set of quality standards for all educational institutions or programs; it provides access to federal and state funding; it makes transferring credits easier; it ensures accountability of schools and degree programs which boosts public trust and confidence; and accredited institutions are able to attract a higher caliber of faculty than unaccredited institutions

#### Tuition Advisory Council Update

The Tuition Advisory Council (TAC) advises the president on all matters pertaining to the cost of attendance at the university and helps promote communication and engagement in the campus community. The recommendation comes around the early part of April after a long review process. Dr. Walsh described the requirements of the HB 4141 checklist, the composition of the committee, and said the first meeting of the committee will be next week.

#### Provost's Council Update

Later in the meeting, it was discussed that the Provost's Council is a remnant from the Oregon University System (OUS) that decided the provosts were functioned better collaboratively, although each provost is independent. The seven provosts, along with HECC, some faculty and staff from different institutions, plus a member from Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU), meets monthly. It is a tight-knit group that reviews curricular work, academic policy work, state-level work groups, legislation, COVID items, and the like.

The Oregon Council of Presidents (OCOP) asked the council to work with the HECC and other entities to come up with ideas for higher education for the sessions. Ben Cannon meets with the council to hear insight on ideas such as the value of degrees, or male achievement rates in higher education.

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

##### Enrollment Management Dashboard

Dr. Woolf provided a review of the enrollment management dashboard noting SOU's loss of approximately 4.6 percent of headcount due to challenges with California non-resident students. Responding to Vice Chair Bullock, Dr. Woolf replied that the increase in freshman is attributable largely to the partnership with Ruffalo Noel Levitz that has expanded the amount of communication sent to potential students and the ability to bring events back to high schools.

##### Enrollment Council Update and Student Affinity Groups

Dr. Woolf was pleased to report that a transfer audit found SOU accepts 93% of the credits that students present and the 7% not taken are failed grades or classes that are not college level.

Dr. Woolf also gave a brief update on the five, new, student affinity groups being created, and said their joint purpose is to work within the communities of race and ethnicity to support students in non-curricular types of functions.

##### Student Information System Update

Dr. Woolf highlighted for trustees that the administration is reviewing, through Tom Battaglia,

a new student information system and Banner replacement. A new system will give students a much easier experience in navigating some of the university computer systems.

#### Other General Updates

Dr. Woolf explained the development of the faculty-share program that will have SOU faculty presenting specific academic areas of interest to Medford high school seniors. Additionally, with a \$50K grant from the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) and HECC, SOU is partnering with Rogue Community College (RCC) to launch an advertising campaign geared towards adult learners. He also mentioned the Raider Mentor program

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

#### New Program Proposal: Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Degree in Sustainable Tourism Management (Action)

Dr. Pavlina McGrady provided an overview of the proposed program as outlined in the materials and described how it aligns with local, statewide and national needs and goals. She cited economic drivers—especially new jobs both locally and globally. She highlighted careers as well as opportunities for partnerships and collaborations with international universities. The proposed program requires 32-36 credits of lower division core courses, 52 credits of upper-division courses, and 12 credits are available for electives.

Responding to Trustee Rosenberg, Dr. McGrady replied that the correlation of sustainable travel with Oregon's diverse transportation and diverse learner mix represents the idea that the program is multidisciplinary and therefore offers job opportunities from various sectors attracting a diverse learner mix. Dr. Smith added that rural is often thought of as agribusiness, but there is great potential in census-defined rural areas that are tourism-focused, and this will bring students and a more diverse mix of people to this community.

Trustee Thalden mentioned that as a former casino and resort developer, there is a need and a market for sustainable tourism and he is glad to support programs that advance SOU students. He later added that 50 years ago, the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in this country and everyone has had to build differently and retrofit to be responsive to the needs of disabled people. This is a tremendous opportunity for the same kind of sensitivities in the way that resources are utilized on the planet and SOU can be at the forefront of experts.

Responding to Trustee Vincent who asked if the program qualified students to go into an international, publicly-traded company, like Marriot, with the academic background and be part of a real estate development team and Dr. McGrady thought so. Additionally, Trustee Vincent noted that environmental, social, and governance (ESG) needs to be addressed, which Board Chair Santos later agreed with and Dr. Smith said that SOU intentionally has hired in that field and there is a good international mix of faculty. Dr. Smith later mentioned that the university is taking nine students to Guanajuato this summer to work on business planning and development for their tourism industry, and Guanajuato is reciprocating by sending nine students to SOU as part of a State Department-funded project.

Responding to Board Chair Santos' question of what this means for the hospitality program, Dr. Smith replied that the faculty will need to teach out some courses.

Trustee Thalden moved to approve the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Degree in Sustainable Tourism. Trustee Wilson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### Student Withdrawal Survey

Dr. Woolf said the committee previously posed a question about having Banner stop someone from withdrawing from their final credit hours in order for administration to intercede. In response, Dr. Stillman was able to create a survey that pops up before the student can continue a withdrawal process. This will be the first iteration of an entire cycle of registration from May through October. The hope is to learn and then think together of what can be done with this data.

Dr. Vath said that the majority of the students are withdrawing between May 28 and September 21, which is before the first day of classes when a 100 percent refund is available and students may be considering several institutions. There are two clear categories of students who that did not get a refund: early versus late. The numbers were highest for first and senior-year students; it is not uncommon to see first-year students drop out, the senior withdrawals are high because the senior category is a catch-all. Residents versus nonresidents and gender categories are trending similarly to other institutions, and there is no achievement gap seen on withdrawals. The numbers for some student populations are very low but there is no reason to infer much because no group (such as race or ethnicity) stands out as being over or under-disadvantaged in this early analysis.

The whys of dropping out are individual and different for each student; mental health is the top reason and next are family issues overall. The university cares about each student, and the whys help determine how to best reach out with help. Trustee Hennion said as this report is built out quarter by quarter, understanding the different “whys” will help identify trends over time.

President Bailey applauded the work and thanked Drs. Stillman and Vath, saying that coming from an institution where almost all the reasons for early and late withdrawals were financial, it seems to get more challenging with multiple explanatory factors involved. He then posed a question on stop-outs, which Dr. Woolf said the students usually explained as “it is me not you,” and many feel the investment in college is not worth it or question the value proposition. He added that it is challenging to get more information on why this occurs. President Bailey added there was a nationwide study last year about the perception by people if a higher education is worth it. The president said this question points to a misperception since the data is clear that the investment is worth it in terms of career earnings, life expectancy, and many other factors. He added that SOU will remind and communicate this to the public.

One takeaway for the team, Dr. Woolf said is convincing juniors and seniors that they are halfway through and to stick it out. Dr. Vath talked about early withdrawals with fit being the largest factor, and the second-largest factor showed unknown as students left this response blank. A positive response was work obligations that were often marked as students getting promotions or moving along in their career paths.

Responding to Trustee Vincent, Dr. Stillman replied that not enough information from the population mix to break down to differentiate the populations, but they will work on getting this information for the long term. Dr. Woolf said those closest to the students are doing great work in this, and the administration will continue to share this information throughout campus to get more insight and solutions.

Chair Bullock said this is further evidence of the work happening across campus to find ways to keep the students engaged, stay with SOU, graduate, and live lives of purpose.

### Campus Recreation and Student Engagement

Hugues Lecomte said the Student Recreation Center (SRC) is anchored in the student affairs

division, embraces a student-first philosophy, and has a strong network with related national organizations. Regarding the development of the center, he reviewed the timeline, its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold rating that exceeds sustainability standards and noted that it has biometric scanners as well as an esports hub.

The outdoor program is the longest-lived student recreation program with a revenue mix of 44 percent from alternative sales and events and 66 percent from the incidental fee. The SRC has \$550K of equipment in the rental fleet, collaborates on events such as the Banff festival, and hosts a ski swap and a cohort raider wilderness experience. Mr. Lecomte added that digital outreach is active with virtual wellness resources, over 1000 Instagram followers, and 1880 Facebook followers.

Regarding intramural and sports clubs, Mr. Lecomte showed 14 different modules of training that engaged students and staff by using over 22 software and platform operations. Learning outcomes range from time management skills, respect for others, academic performance, and sense of belonging and association, to multitasking abilities, friendship development, teamwork cooperation, communication skills, and problem-solving.

The overall budget is \$1.6M, with \$1M from the SRC fee and \$600K from the incidental fee. The expenses flow 48 percent to debt services and 40 percent to salaries, with 36 percent of that or \$245K going directly to student employment, and 12 percent to operating costs.

The SRC hosts successful programs to local youth in collaboration with Ashland and Medford School Districts, SOU Pre-College Youth Summer Camps and Academy, Ashland Parks and Recreation Camps, and Deaf Climbing Night.

Board Chair Santos commented that intramural participation seemed low compared to when he attended SOU. Mr. Lecomte said the figures were collected during the pandemic which relays low activity. That trend is sticking as there is difficulty with the outdoor fields due to the sustainability of watering, lighting, timing after 5 or 6 pm when the stadium is occupied by sports practices, and a shortage of field space.

Responding to Trustee Rosenberg, Mr. Lecomte said the wish list includes a wellness committee coming on board for the inclusive wellbeing of students and employees. Mr. Lecomte has seen data concerning mental health, so this is very much needed and would be for the campus, not just the SRC. Another wish is to have a dedicated space for a health promotion specialist and a demonstration kitchen so nutritional aspects can help set up healthy nutrition habits.

### Social Justice and Equity Center Overview

Vice Chair Bullock introduced the topic and said the Social Justice and Equity Center (SJEC), is an area in the Stevenson Union that is both a physical space and functionally is filled with people and resources to provide supportive services to SOU students. The SJEC specifically focuses on helping to fulfill the needs of students of specific diverse backgrounds, as well as student veterans and military families.

Trustee janelle wilson, who also serves as the associate dean of students and director of engagement and support programs, summarized the SJEC organization structure. Lexi Sylvester, assistant director for equity and access, said the mission of the SJEC is to provide advocacy, education, community, and resources at SOU, centering the needs of Black students,

Indigenous students, students of color, queer and trans students, women and femmes, as well as veterans and military families working towards a sustainable world. Areas of focus have included community building, education, and advocacy. The SJEC is excited to add direct resources and services as another focus area.

Ms. Sylvester described the programming and events of the SJEC, the role of equity coordinators who now work across equity spaces holistically and as a team, and some of the direct supportive services the SJEC provides for students. Dr. Woolf said his role is to listen to his team and then get out of the way.

Responding to Board Chair Santos, Ms. Sylvester replied that most, if not all, identity-based organizations are represented in a multi-cultural council and Marvin Woodard meets with them regularly.

Dr. Woolf added that Mr. Lecomte spoke earlier about campus recreation for engagement, and now SOU has identified social justice and equity services to build and engage in lives of purpose. The university is small but mighty and helps students with a pathway to identity creation, an important aspect of continued participation in college.

Trustee Wilson also commended Danielle Mancuso in the integral role of the development and space planning of the SJEC. Dr. Woolf added that trustees are invited to engage in the SJEC at a level that is most comfortable for them or stirs a particular interest.

### **Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the committee will be April 21, 2022. Trustees were invited to send future agenda items to the board secretary or Vice Chair Bullock for inclusion in a future meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



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Sabrina Prud'homme  
University Board Secretary

Date: April 21, 2022