

**Board of Trustees  
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting  
Thursday, January 19, 2023**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum - Chair Jonathon Bullock**

Chair Jon Bullock called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2023 and recognized special guests: Dr. Erik Palmer, Dr. Kelly Szott, Dr. Bill Hughes, Dr. Matt Stillman, Dr. Carrie Vath, Kristen Gast, Zac Olson, Miranda Stiles, Ria Galo, and Morgan Ulu.

Board Secretary Sabrina Prud'homme called the roll and a quorum was verified.

**Committee Members:**

Brent Barry	Present	Iris Maria Chavez	Present
Jon Bullock	Present	Andrew Gay	Present
Debra Lee	Present	Barry Thalden	Present
Mimi Pieper	Present		

**Other Trustees in Attendance:** President Rick Bailey, Katherine Cable, and Daniel Santos

**Public Comment**

No members of public offered comments

**Consent Agenda (Action)**

Trustee Barry moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of minutes of the October 20, 2022, meeting. Trustee Gay seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Provost's Report**

Provost Sue Walsh announced that realignment documents, with an emphasis on cost management, were uploaded to the President's realignment website. She continues to meet with directors and chairs to explore the President's request to figure out what SOU can do differently and what SOU can discontinue.

Provost Walsh provided additional updates on the statewide Provost's Council; the Transfer Council; the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) Guaranteed Admissions pilot, which SOU already has been doing; SOU's work regarding the elimination of transcript holds; and funding for the Strong Start program. She concluded by noting her hopes that the legislature would approve a funding model for the Oregon Promise Grant to benefit university students.

**Vice President's Report**

Dr. Neil Woolf, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, updated the committee on a variety of items in his unit. He started out by addressing the growing need of mental health services among students and reviewed the new

actions SOU is undertaking. The university is contracting with MySSP to offer students, faculty, and staff 24/7 mental health counseling, working with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and looking at providing professional development for faculty and staff to include an eight-hour course for mental health first aid as well as an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

President Bailey added that SOU is participating in a Suicide Prevention Campaign, "In this Together," with the United Way of Jackson County and KOB1 TV. This led to a discussion on the opportunity to create SOU's Oregon Behavioral and Mental Health Sciences Institute (OBMHSI) with a request for state funding of \$2.5M. SOU is the only public university in the state without an institute. This would be a partnership with Portland State University as a resource to the Rogue Valley for research support for local agencies. SOU is seeking ongoing funding from the legislature for OBMHSI.

Dr. Woolf expressed his appreciation of President Bailey and Rogue Community College's President Weber for growing their partnership and the creation of the inaugural Transfer Council. He also mentioned the continued growth of partnerships with other community colleges and K-12 on data-sharing agreements.

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

#### Curriculum Update (Action)

Dr. Susan Walsh shared her excitement around the new curricular developments and reviewed the process for new programs that starts with faculty ideas, includes board approval, and culminates with the HECC.

Trustee Gay provided background on the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science (BA/BS) in digital cinema and the proposal for the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Digital Cinema. A BFA is often requested by students and will help SOU be more competitive as it offers more specializations and concentration areas. He described benefits of the BFA and the proposed certificate programs: Cinematography and Production Technology; Directing for Scripted Narrative; Media Post-Production; and Producing and Production Management. There was discussion regarding offerings around the state and enrollment projections.

Dr. Walsh introduced Dr. Erik Palmer, who discussed the proposed BA/BS in Media Innovation. Dr. Palmer provided a description of media innovation as SOU's take on journalism, public relations and advertising. This major would replace the social media and public engagement concentration in the communication department to create additional visibility. He discussed changes in the curriculum that emphasize strategy and innovation; potential for online delivery to attract students from the Portland area; signature courses in the program; and trends of the declared majors/concentrations related disciplines and programs. Trustees discussed the naming of the degree, and how it may appeal to student groups.

Dr. Kelly Szott, Coordinator for the Human Services Program and Associate Professor of Sociology, presented the new program proposal for the BA/BS in Human Services. She stated that this program has functioned as a major for nearly 24 years, as the human services concentration under the social sciences major and was obscure on diplomas. SOU provides a similar education to a BS of social work with 270 hours of

practicum. It was designed for adult learners with courses in the evening at the Medford campus. There is high interest among students and a community need for behavioral health workers.

Dr. Bill Hughes, Associate Professor and Chair of International Studies, provided a history of the political science program at SOU. Regarding the BA/BS in Politics and Power, he shared his belief that the study of politics is as important as ever and his desire to take the “presumption of science out of it.” He explained that the proposed program is about how the various relations, dynamics, and institutional arrangements of power affect peoples’ lives, not only in the here and now but historically and around the world. The goal is to create an interdisciplinary degree to educate students on the connections between disciplines, areas of the world, and cultures, and relate that in a focused manner by way of Politics and Power. There was further discussion about courses and seminars; how the nomenclature will be perceived; how to increase an otherwise declining discipline; and the innovative thinking behind the program.

Trustee Lee moved to approve the resolution on new programs. Trustee Barry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### Updates to Financial Aid Processes

Director of Financial Aid, Kristen Gast, reviewed the Financial Aid Simplification Act of 2022, which brings major changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and to the processing of financial aid. The changes include replacing the “expected family contribution” with the “student aid index” beginning in the 2024-25 aid year. This will expand access to federal aid by expanding the Pell grant and linking eligibility to family size and the federal poverty level; it will allow incarcerated students to regain eligibility; and it repeals the lifetime limit on the period a borrower can receive subsidized loans of up to 150 percent of the program length.

The FAFSA will be simplified by reducing the number of questions, mandating the use of IRS data, and removing Selective Service and drug conviction questions; it will add questions on an applicant’s sex, race, and ethnicity. Improvements around costs of attendance include new categories for housing; food is budgeted at three meals a day; transportation will include to-and-from employment; and housing is budgeted at an average of all residence halls. Ms. Gast preliminarily estimated that these changes will benefit SOU students with an average total increase of \$3,016 per student in aid.

#### Student Retention: Performance Indicators

Dr. Matt Stillman began by framing the item as the first year of post-COVID data. He explained that before a student can drop a final credit, they complete a withdrawal survey. Dr. Stillman thanked Alicia Higley, Associate Registrar, for designing and implementing this survey. He reviewed the topics addressed: why students withdraw from SOU and when they leave, and how SOU can use this information to guide student success strategies. The reasons include (from highest to lowest): mental health; fit; unknown/no response; family issues; health issues; work obligations; financial; COVID-19 mandates; and “other.” Key findings showed significant differences in students who withdraw early and those who withdraw late; students in the first category leave due to fit and those who leave late and receive no refund do so for mental health reasons. Also, first and second-year students leave due to fit and mental health; and third and fourth

year students leave because of family issues, unknown, and for mental health. There were no significant differences in residency, gender, or ethnicity/race.

Dr. Stillman reviewed mental health services currently provided and ideas for the future. Dr. Vath emphasized the need for increased proactive interventions. There was discussion regarding training, mentoring, and coaching; identifying areas of concentration; and opportunities to increase funding for support of mental health.

Dr. Vath reviewed current practices that address the “fit” of SOU with students who withdraw. She believes the admissions department is doing a great job communicating the heart of SOU, and she described ways to extend that work once the students arrive through programs such as orientation, Bridge, and athletics. Student are more likely to stay if they have a sense of belonging. Dr. Vath reviewed the five components of student belonging that included seamless student experience; mental health and wellbeing; active and engaged learning; cocurricular and social engagement; and faculty mentoring and support.

Dr. Vath said she, Dr. Woolf, and Dr. Stillman brainstorm frequently to find creative solutions to make positive impacts on mental health. Dr. Woolf stated they will never give up on this and that is why they are looking for additional sources of funding because it is currently funded with student fees. There was further discussion of the surprising nature of the data; the shift from financial woes that typically have led the discussion on student retention; the opportunities for funding projects through grants and partnerships with K12; and the resiliency preparation of college students. SOU hopes to receive resources from the legislature.

#### Faculty Ambassador Recruitment (FAR) Program

Dr. Woolf discussed the objectives of educating faculty on how they can further participate in recruitment efforts and Admissions Director, Zac Olson, commended the amazing work of faculty to help recruit students. Assistant Director, Miranda Stiles, provided an overview of the FAR Program, which is a new initiative that helps bridge the gap between high school/community college students and SOU faculty, allowing for increased engagement in and outside of the classroom. Components of the program include faculty kits, faculty share, and Raider for a Day presentations.

Ms. Stiles described program benefits for students including early engagement, departmental focus, relationship management, and school connection. She also discussed school visits, which professors attend; a website for faculty and staff; monthly meetings; maps; FAQs; contact information and more. Chair Bullock commented on the importance of high school students interacting with college professors and praised the SOU team for its recent participation at Redmond Proficiency Academy on SOU Day.

#### Strategic Diversity Recruitment Efforts

Dr. Woolf introduced Morgan Ulu, Ria Galo, and Zac Olson, and mentioned others who went on the recruitment trip to American Samoa. Dr. Woolf discussed educational attainment in the U.S., American Samoa, and Oregon as well as SOU's history serving students from American Samoa. Ms. Ulu, ROTC company commander and senior at SOU, shared her experiences in upholding her culture and values at SOU as well as her appreciation for the opportunity to fulfill her academic dreams. Dr. Woolf, Ms. Galo,

and Ms. Ulu presented details about the recent trip to the island and outcomes of the efforts. Mr. Perkinson presented Ms. Ulu with a Service Excellence Award.

Future Meetings

Chair Bullock announced that the committee's next meeting will be on April 20, 2023, and asked that if any trustee has ideas for agenda items, please send them to him or to the board secretary.

Adjournment

Chair Bullock adjourned the meeting at 2:57 p.m.

Date: April 20, 2023

Respectfully submitted by,



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Sabrina Prud'homme University Board Secretary