

Board of Trustees
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting
Thursday, June 15, 2023

MINUTES

Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum

Chair Jon Bullock called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. and welcomed everyone including, trustees, staff, regular presenters, and special guests, Dr. Dan DeNeui and Dr. Carrie Vath. Chair Bullock acknowledged the day's theme as "Expanding Knowledge, Access, and Success."

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

Committee Members:

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

Other Trustees in Attendance: President Rick Bailey and Trustee Shaun Franks.

Public Comment

No members of the public offered comments.

Consent Agenda (Action)

Trustee Thalden moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of meeting minutes from April 20, 2023. Trusted Lee seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Provost's Report

Provost Sue Walsh reported on a variety of topics, beginning with acknowledgment of the year's distinguished faculty and outstanding staff awards. She noted that the public university provosts planned to retreat in Corvallis with their counterparts from the 17 community colleges for the first time in many years. The state-wide Provosts' Council met and Dr. Walsh noted that the Transfer Council and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff are still working on the master transfer map; they are about two-thirds of the way to finalizing the rules and they continue trying to resolve variances.

Dr. Walsh informed the committee that faculty are exploring workload as a result of concerns that were expressed during SOU Forward. This summer a workgroup will look at the national landscape and a number of workload issues. Jackie Apodaca, incoming Faculty Senate Chair, is leading the group and they hope to have a blueprint in the fall. The purpose of this work is to develop strategies to implement equity-minded workload reform, reduce redundancy in and efficacy of university policies and practices, and increase faculty satisfaction, productivity, and retention.

Provost Walsh reported that SOU's academic chairs are seeking greater autonomy, which SOU calls an agency model. Chairs' duties from the faculty collective bargaining

agreement were reviewed and mapped with how to provide greater agency in decision-making and other functions. President Bailey added that, as challenging as the last year was, it allowed SOU to approach this conversation with genuine interest. Although the hope is to accomplish this during the summertime, it is more important to get it done right rather than quickly. So, even if its resolution aligns more closely with Provost Walsh's departure, there is optimism that SOU will figure this out soon.

Vice President's Report

Dr. Woolf made several announcements, beginning with introducing Karinda Decker, the new director of financial aid, who has been with SOU for a number of years. He thanked Vice President Cooper and President Bailey for the Juneteenth Celebration and invited trustees to the upcoming Lavender Graduation. Dr. Woolf expressed his gratitude for Drs. Dan DeNeui and Vince Smith for traveling with him to the University of California at Merced for continued partnership conversations.

Joe Jackson in institutional research is making progress on fall profile reports. Currently, headcount is at 4,310 and full-time equivalent (FTE) is 2,865. He shared that although fall registration has not yet begun, the confirmed number of freshmen is up by 139, more than 20 percent. He shared various graphs and charts to show trends in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. There was further discussion on the strategies being used and the benefits of collaboration with faculty. Other strategies included Ruffalo Noel Levitz Demand Builder, athletics partnerships, and K-12 data-sharing partnerships.

Dr. Woolf also informed the committee of organizational updates including his continued collaboration with Dr. Matt Stillman in the enrollment services area, Dr. Carrie Vath in the student success area, and Zac Olsen in admissions

Information, Discussion, and Action Items

New Certificate Program Proposals (Action)

Provost Walsh explained that although some of these certificates are new, many of these certificates are converting minors to certificates. She shared that certificates are mutually-beneficial for both students and SOU as they allow students to build a better portfolio with credentials since the certificates are stackable. The certificates are a great way to build student resumes while they continue making progress toward a degree. These certificates included: Applied Learning and Essential Skills (Gen Ed); Character and Costume Design; Data Analytics; Directing and Devising for Theatre; English Studies; Environmental Data Science; Ethnic and Racial Studies; Foundations of Teaching English Language Arts; Lighting Design and Technology; Literary Studies; Production Fabrication; Scenic and Environmental Design; Social Justice; Spanish & Latinx Studies; Spanish & Latinx Studies for Educators; Spanish & Latinx Studies for Health Professions; Theatre and Arts Management; Wildlife Ecology and Conservation; and Writing and Rhetoric.

Trustee Gay moved to approve the committee's resolution on the new certificate programs. Trustee Thalden seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Continuation of Contract for EAB "Navigate Software" (Action)

Dr. Woolf led the discussion about renewing the contract for the EAB Navigate

software by providing a history of SOU's relationship EAB, which started six years ago with the Student Success Collaborative. Navigate is a tool to help improve student success and retention. Although it is not a perfect tool, it will continue to bridge the gap until Workday is available.

The indicators of success for Navigate were summarized as higher persistence and retention for users; improved attempted and completed credits; improved registration; improved communication between students and advisors; and early warning when students are off track. The interface helps SOU connect with students on their terms using a mobile app. It enables virtual student onboarding, peer support communities, and more. Navigate's student success analytics and predictive modeling help users understand which interventions are working and how to best adjust strategy. Standardized reports offer insight into ongoing advising activities and staff dashboards continuously monitor student progress to identify opportunities for better student support.

Demonstrating effectiveness, Dr. Woolf reviewed eight of the past ten terms and retention was higher among app users than nonusers. As shown in the materials, the return on investment far outpaced the annual cost of Navigate from 2019 to 2023. The contract proposal is for three years with a total cost of \$655K.

Provost Walsh stated that student success coordinators (SSCs) are the largest group of [employee] users with tens of thousands of messages sent to students and she pointed to a comprehensive report detailing SSC strategies, noting that they support the renewal of the contract. Dr. Dan DeNeui added that there are parts of the app that SOU is not fully utilizing but that Navigate is an effective way to reach students, as one of the worst ways to contact students is via email. Discussion ensued on predictive analytics and the ability to reach students before they leave the university. Navigate improves communication and helps address other concerns such as progress to graduation and advisement.

Responding to Chair Bullock, Dr. Woolf understood that the cost of the contract renewal is accounted for in the pro forma as part of the initiatives package.

Trustees had a robust discussion regarding Navigate's usage and the benefits among students, faculty, advisors, and student success coordinators. Concerns were shared about the expenditure as well as relevancy of the data provided. Dr. Woolf noted that Navigate data can be reviewed and reported to the board more frequently for tracking. Other administrative issues discussed included the cost of nonrenewal, internal support, and the common practice of three-year contracts.

Trustee Lee moved that the committee recommend the board approve the three-year EAB Navigate contract, as proposed, valued at \$655K. Trustee Barry seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Student Retention and Success

Dr. Woolf and Dean of Students, Dr. Carrie Vath, discussed student retention. They started with context and comparing it globally versus the individual student.

Dr. Woolf mentioned that he and his team have presented numerous retention topics to the board but wanted to focus on a few main issues. Over past years, SOU has built infrastructure to help staff understand why students leave SOU, as every student interaction is an opportunity to retain a student. President Bailey emphasized that every interaction matters and can even have the reverse effect.

Retention is measured by the percentage of first-time, full-time students who start in the fall term and return the following fall term. Dr. Woolf provided SOU's retention rate at 65.6 percent compared to the national average of 67.5 percent and expressed his dissatisfaction with that. Overall, this does not include part-time students and others who start in spring, winter, or summer, which contribute to 76 percent for all undergraduate retention. He provided breakdowns of freshman cohort graduation rate for those who complete a degree within six years at 46.5 percent and the transfer cohort rate is 59.2 percent. Although less than half the students that start at SOU do not finish, Dr. Woolf said this does not tell the whole story. He provided statistics that included the number one reason students leave is due to mental health. SOU is at the national mean for graduation rate.

Dr. Vath reviewed the professional standards and best practices for retention strategies from Ruffalo Noel Levitz. The university has identified which of those strategies exist at SOU and ascertained its strengths, weaknesses, and what can be built upon. She presented a slide on the five components of student belonging as it is equivalent to retention. These include: a seamless student experience; mental health and wellbeing; active and engaged learning; cocurricular and social engagement; and faculty mentoring and support.

Dr. Vath discussed a chart on the different strategies/tactics that four-year public institutions utilize and the percentages of how those are used. She then highlighted the most widely used strategies which include: programs designed specifically for first-year students; programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically; honors programs; programs for international students; and programs for veterans. Part of her work this summer is to determine the effectiveness of these strategies at SOU and evaluate if using too many will cause the team to be spread too thin. Dr. Woolf further broke down the five components of student belonging and provided examples of SOU's activities, strengths, and challenges in the fulfilling these strategies.

In response the student risk stratification for SOU's undergraduate data compared to the national benchmarks, President Bailey asked why SOU has so many more moderate risk students than low risk students. Dr. Woolf attributed it to SOU's withdrawal data and the "fit" issue with new students. The students persist though year one but in the second year, it's about belonging or possibly their major.

Dr. Vath talked about a national trend referred to as the "murky middle" which is students in good standing but not flourishing. SOU does not have a "murky middle." SOU students are skewed toward higher GPAs from 3.5 with 72 percent of student in good standing, so GPA is not an indicator. It is known that mental health is a large problem and does not impact poor students, it impacts everything.

For example, SOU students focus on academics but are falling apart and struggling in other areas of life. Dr. Woolf emphasized the message that retention work is more complex and comprehensive than ever before. He noted that the more students are engaged with areas of interest and people, the better retention will be.

Future Meeting

Chair Bullock announced that following the meeting at 3:30 p.m, trustees will attend the reception for American Samoan graduates. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled to take place on October 19, 2023, at noon. If any trustee has a specific item to suggest for a future meeting, please send them to the board secretary.

Adjournment

Chair Bullock adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

Date: October 19, 2023

Respectfully submitted by,



Sabrina Prud'homme, University Board Secretary