

**Board of Trustees
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting
Thursday, April 18, 2024**

MINUTES

Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum

Chair Brent Barry called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. and welcomed attendees. He extended a special welcome to new trustees and committee members, Dr. Hala Schepmann and Garima Sharma; Jessica LaBerge from Governor Kotek's office, and SOU's new provost, Dr. Casey Shillam.

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

Committee Members:

Brent Barry, Chair	Present	Jason Mendoza	Present
Iris Maria Chavez	Present	Hala Schepmann	Present
Debra Lee	Present	Garima Sharma (Non-Voting)	Present
Mimi Pieper	Present	Barry Thalden	Present

Other Trustees in Attendance:

President Rick Bailey, Danny Santos

Public Comment

No members of the public offered comments.

Consent Agenda

Trustee Sharma moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of minutes from the committee's January 18, 2024, meeting and the enrollment dashboard. Trustee Pieper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Provost's Report

Chair Barry introduced Provost Shillam to the committee noting her professional accomplishments in nursing education, aging and health policy, government leadership, and her undergraduate time at SOU.

Provost Shillam thanked the chair and discussed the early days of her transition to SOU. She noted that Academic Affairs has been focused on curriculum development and approvals, as evidenced by the committee's agenda for this meeting. She has attended dozens of meetings to listen and learn about what is working, points of pride, the impact of SOU Forward, challenges, opportunities, ways to support people's work, and their goals in the upcoming years. As student affairs is rejoining academic affairs under, Dr, Shillam will be blending the structures of the two units to ensure a synthesized rather than an additive approach.

Regarding the Statewide Provost's Council, Provost Shillam noted that the group continues its work on common course numbering (CCN) for future rulemaking purposes. Recommendations included that CCN courses have the same number of credits, with the level set at the minimum number of credit hours to achieve the learning outcomes for the maximum number of students.

Provost Shillam also updated the committee that the universities received \$4M in funding for behavioral health, of which, SOU will receive \$667K. Chair Barry commended Provost Shillam for her work in getting to know the community, her team, and her forward momentum. Some discussion ensued regarding Trustee Lee's recommendation to consider the new changes to the Oregon Health Plan in the Provost's analysis. Provost Shillam assured that this was included and welcomed further insight.

Student Affairs Report

Starting with organizational updates, Dr. Carrie Vath noted the following new hires: Kim Desimone, as Director of TRIO Programs; Ellie Debortoli, student affairs creative media coordinator; Clinton Lytle, Veteran's Resource Center Coordinator; and the associate dean position remains open.

Regarding SOU's First-Gen Forward program, Dr. Vath explained that SOU is one of four universities in Oregon with the distinction and she reviewed goals to improve, distribute, and assess lingo as a tool to help first-generation students; develop, implement, and assess imposter syndrome campaigns and workshops; and incorporate first-gen status as part of SOU's demographic dashboard. Trustee Pieper recommended marketing the program to the STEM fields.

Enrollment Management Report

Zac Olson explained that due to the difficulties and delays with Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), FAFSA submissions nationwide are about 40 percent behind, and California reported 46 percent slower submissions. Thanks to the work of the SOU Office of Admissions, SOU is only down 9.2 percent in enrollment deposits at this time. Private and regional schools are in total down 65.2 percent in enrollment deposits.

Regarding winter, Dr. Matt Stillman noted that SOU's enrollment heading into the fall term hopefully will stabilize and that effects of the pipeline from COVID persist among continuing students; the pool of new and continuing students is expected to continue to rise. Core revenue from student credit hours is flat. Headcount is down less than 1 percent and full-time equivalency is down; however, changes are expected later in the term, primarily due to Advanced Southern Credit.

Dr. Stillman explained that retention is doing well: freshman cohort retention is up 2 percent; overall undergraduate retention is up fractionally; and the freshman cohort six-year graduation is up fractionally. Responding to trustee Thalden's comments about seeing better results from retention programs, Dr. Stillman discussed that the issue is a combination of inflation, tuition raising, federal aid not increasing, and tax issues; Provost Shillam added that there are organizational issues contributing to this. Additionally, the FAFSA delays remain concerning for retention. Much discussion ensued about the long-term implications of FAFSA and the difficulties in accessing aid.

Accreditation Update

Dr. Dan DeNeui explained that the final visit to SOU's accreditor, NWCCU, was on Jan 31, 2024. The accreditor commended SOU on the following: 1) the planning and development of

the new innovative, thoughtful, and student-centered general education model; 2) the prioritization of student access and success amidst the pandemic, wildfires, financial constraints, and other challenges; 3) the resiliency and commitment of faculty and staff to the institution and its students; and 4) President Bailey's bold, transparent action to address financial health and management.

The accreditor's recommendations were for SOU to: 1) demonstrate a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness; 2) set goals and objectives to define mission fulfillment; 3) benchmark disaggregated student achievement and use the data to inform student achievement goals; 4) demonstrate the results to improve learning outcomes and support services; 5) publicize learning outcomes; and 6) create a regular and substantive interaction policy. President Bailey shared that the effort to fulfill these will require much effort but it will help SOU make better strategic decisions for the institution. Provost Shillam added that fulfilling these recommendations will foster continuous quality improvement and that SOU can use these recommendations to improve day-to-day practices.

Proposed New Curriculum (Action)

Dr. Dan DeNeui introduced two bachelor's degree programs and noted that while some of the 16 certificates are new, many of them are the conversion of minors to certificates. He 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, and they act as a great way to build students' resumes while they continue making progress toward a degree. These sixteen certificates that were included in the proposal and discussed were: biology; biomedical research; creative arts; digital journalism, environmental, horticulture; healthcare economics; honors college civic leadership and innovation; horticulture business; medical and clinical lab sciences; outdoor adventure leadership; physician's assistant and chiropractic; pre-counseling; pre-dental and pre-optometry; pre-medical; pre-nursing; and a graduate certificate in adult learning.

Dr. Vince Smith explained that the proposed biomedical sciences degree allows students a pathway to enter pre-professional fields and related disciplines such as biomedical research, and provides certificates along the way to demonstrate proficiency in a particular area. Faculty explained that the degree will create succinct and streamlined program that was not available previously without requiring a lot of extra coursework or that was only an advising pathway for some pre-professional programs. Trustee Schepmann recommended that the department work to notify and advise students on the different pathways to ensure clarity for students. Trustees discussed possible benefits to retention of the more efficient program. President Bailey commended the work of the faculty to meet students where they are and to provide these pathways for students in a relatively cost-neutral way. Discussing the benefits and expansion of SOU's pre-professional programming, Provost Shillam mentioned SOU's new pre-law partnership with Willamette University, which also gives students mentorship and guidance while at SOU and will send them intentionally to Willamette upon completion.

Dr. DeNeui noted that the bachelor of science degree in ecology and conservation leverages SOU faculty, much like the biomedical science degree. Jaime Trammel explained that the major is driven by marketing trends and is the perfect blending of SOU's Environmental Science and Policy and the Sustainability Programs, the degree is a truly integrated major.

Trustee Thalden moved to approve the resolution for the new bachelor's degrees and certificate programs. Trustee Lee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the voting members.

Academic Year (AY) 2024-25 Tuition and Fees Recommendations

President Rick Bailey introduced the topic and praised the sophistication of SOU's tuition-setting process. Provost Shillam explained that she joined the Tuition Advisory Council (TAC) toward the end of the process and commended the council's heartfelt, serious, and thoughtful deliberations. Josh Lovern reviewed the TAC's process, starting with the TAC including education, modeling, deliberating to a recommendation to the president before it is presented to the board. He reviewed the compliance checklist noting that all relevant items have been checked. Responding to Board Chair Danny Santos' questions about the meaningful engagement of students, Provost Shillam explained that although all members may not have been present due to class schedules, the TAC always had student representatives present and the meeting schedule always aimed to maximize participation of all members. No decisions were made without a quorum and she had outreach with students to ensure every effort was made to get their input.

Mr. Lovern explained the undergraduate and graduate tuition rates per SCH, and the increase to undergraduate resident tuition of 5.99 percent. He also presented in-depth information explaining the mandatory enrollment fees (building debt-service, technology infrastructure, and student health fees including the La Clinica details), statues governing the processes for determining them, their 1.91 percent rate of increase for AY 24-25, and historical fee increases. Next, he explained the student incidental fees: general incidental, green tag, and recreation fees, which the Student Fee Budget Committee determined, ASSOU approved, and which the board's approval is needed to collect. The one-time matriculation fee increase is \$25 for fall 2025. The composite of AY 24-25 fees changing is 2.85 percent.

Lovern also discussed the cost of attendance including tuition, fees, housing, meal plans, books. Showing the composite of tuition and fees, SOU is competitive with Oregon and California schools with the fourth-lowest among the seven OPU's plus OSU Cascades. Altogether, the composite increase is 4.82 percent, below the 5 percent threshold.

Proposed Amendment to Assessment of Mandatory Student Fees

This item is the committee's first look at a proposal that is expected to be presented to the board in June for action. Josh Lovern and Dr. Matt Stillman presented the "single fee" idea to change the way the student fee is assessed. It is not a proposal to change the TAC or ASSOU's processes or budgets in determining the fees—just the way those fees are assessed and collected. Currently, numerous student fees are assessed flatly (in most cases). This proposal aims to modernize the way these fees are collected and ultimately, help SOU devise a fee structure that aligns better with how courses and programs are offered.

The goals of the concept are to fix the fee-related challenges associated with students simultaneously registered for in-person and online courses. Goals of the single fee also would be to maintain current revenue levels, make low-credit thresholds more affordable, increase access to non-traditional students, stabilize mandatory fee revenue, maintain fee solvency, provide for greater flexibility, improve transparency, simplify billing, and prepare for the Workday Student implementation.

Mr. Lovern and Dr. Stillman used the previous academic year to model maintaining revenue levels, referring to a chart comparing proposed fees with current actual fees for a comprehensive overview. The current revenue is \$8.58M and this new model is expected, conservatively, to bring in \$8.87M. Much discussion ensued among trustees about the analysis for in-state students, possible challenges with part-time students getting full-time accommodations, and possible skewing of those results. Concluding, President Bailey commended the work to modernize SOU's approach to student fees.

Enrollment Metrics

President Bailey and Dr. Stillman introduced the board to a dynamic tool for tracking enrollment metrics, which is characterized by its adaptability, transcending the traditional year-by-year approach. This interactive framework seamlessly integrates multiple datasets across forthcoming years. Board Chair Santos questioned other factors in play such as retention, student credit hours, etc. President Bailey confirmed that those were accounted for in this model. Discussion ensued regarding the enthusiasm surrounding this tool, which promises to provide SOU with actionable metrics to guide decisions.

SOU Student Health and Wellness Center Transition to La Clinica

Dr. Carrie Vath presented updates for the current year, notably highlighting the adoption of La Clinica services for students commencing in September. Notable changes include students being billed directly or through their health insurance, rather than through their SOU bill. Additionally, appointments will be scheduled in person or via phone, with no online mechanism available. Registration paperwork will be provided in hard copy format and will require the presentation of an insurance card.

Efforts are underway to engage with prospective students and their families regarding these changes. Dr. Vath assured the board that all necessary communications will be prepared for dissemination ahead of the September transition. In response to inquiries concerning La Clinica's operations and services, Rob Patridge, general counsel, clarified that while La Clinica's primary focus will be on serving students, their licensing and contractual agreements do not preclude them from serving the general public.

Student Affairs Strategic Planning Priorities

Dr. Carrie Vath introduced the vision, mission, and values of SOU's Student Affairs unit. Upon arrival at SOU, Dr. Vath quickly oriented herself and her staff to understand students' needs. She discussed the vision, mission, and values established in the Student Affairs Strategic Plan. The four goals of the plan are to: 1) strengthen student affairs infrastructure; 2) cultivate environments that support a thriving community; 3) provide transformative learning experiences to enhance student engagement; and 4) promote engaged inclusivity.

To assess employed staff and student morale and help determine the next steps the National Survey of Student Engagement was administered to establish a baseline. They achieved a 53 percent response rate including a 100 percent response rate among professional staff. Respondents indicated the best thing about working in their departments was the support of work-life balance, interactions/connections with students, sportive team members, and autonomy and trust. Respondents also identified what could make working in their department better: professional development, salaries/wages, clearer work schedules, and

onboarding protocols. The next steps are for team members to be able to recite/memorize the vision, mission, and values; then, consider the values and ask if their department processes, and programs reflect those values. If not, they will determine what steps to take; barriers that must be overcome; share concerns with other areas; be willing to hear and reflect on constructive criticism; and help hold one another accountable. Concluding, Dr. Vath shared that they are creating an ethos, or “the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its beliefs and aspirations.” Trustee Thalden appreciated the enthusiasm, and commended the teamwork as well as Dr. Vath for not being afraid of a four-letter word: love.

Changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid: Impacts and Planning

Introducing the director of financial aid, Karinda Decker, President Bailey commended her team on their remarkable job for being on the front end of FASFA and positioning SOU ahead of other universities in its preparation for the changes, including processing of applications. Dr. Stillman thanked Ms. Decker and summarized with the recent changes to FASFA there are some long-term benefits: FASFA is simpler, Pell Grant eligibility has increased, and SOU is ahead of many competitors in terms of technical preparation and proactivity. There are concerns on a national level, that universities will likely see a negative enrollments next year; more students will delay decision-making and possibly take a gap year; there may be issues arising from the federal Department of Education; and although Pell eligibility has been increased, the award amounts have not.

President Bailey presented Karinda Decker with an SOU Service Excellence award coin for her exceptional handling of this national FAFSA crisis for SOU.

Chair Barry thanked Dr. Stillman and everyone for their efforts in alleviating as much stress as possible for students and their families by leading with “the L-O-V-E word.”

Future Meetings

Chair Barry said the next meeting of the committee is scheduled to take place on June 20, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. Trustees who would like to suggest a specific item for a future meeting were asked to send them to the board secretary.

Adjournment

Chair Barry adjourned the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

Date: June 25, 2024

Respectfully submitted by,



Sabrina Prud'homme
University Board Secretary