

**Board of Trustees  
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting  
Thursday, June 20, 2024  
Minutes**

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

Chair Brent Barry called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. and welcomed attendees.

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

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

Other trustees in Attendance: President Rick Bailey, Board Chair Danny Santos

**Public Comment**

No members of the public offered comments.

**Consent Agenda (Action)**

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

**Provost's Report**

Dr. Casey Shillam, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at SOU, shared updates from a recent listening tour. Key issues included workload concerns, challenges related to integrating various entities, and the need to enhance support for scholarship and research. There is also a need to improve communication efficiency and address system inefficiencies.

On the integration of Academic Affairs (AA) with Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (EMSA), efforts are underway to embed workflows. The Campus Planning Committee (CPC) will work with the Vice President of Finance and Administration (VPFA) to analyze campus space utilization. The Institutional Budget Committee (IBC) is transitioning to a partnership model with co-chairs and will collaborate with the Enrollment Council for better enrollment support.

Provost Casey Shillam emphasized the importance of strengthening sponsored projects and aligning research, grants, and fundraising strategies. Plans are underway to engage with the foundation to establish training sessions for staff development and strategic planning. Integral to this evolution is collaboration with community outreach, the Sponsored Programs Office, and fundraising teams.

With the Statewide Provost's Council, discussions are ongoing about expanding dual enrollment programs, addressing statewide behavioral health needs, and navigating

federal reporting regulations. Trustees discussed opportunities for SOU visibility in Medford, citing that greater collaboration with RCC is a key goal.

### **Student Affairs Report**

Dean of Student, Dr. Carrie Vath, celebrated student support program participants: 35 students were inducted into the National Society of Leadership and Success. Other program graduates included 52 TRiO students, 20 Lavender Graduation participants, 21 Veterans, 37 Multicultural Coalition students, 82 from SOU's Disability Resources Center, and 9 university coaching and mentoring students. Dr. Vath also praised Jennifer Jones, the 2024 Outstanding Staff Award winner.

Introducing summer projects, Dr. Vath outlined goals including annual program reviews, professional development, a TRiO grant submission, office relocations, and the transition to La Clinica services. Discussion ensued regarding improving student access to healthcare through La Clinica, the transition for students and SOU, and the ease of access to services.

SOU would be participating in a summer workshop to increase the SOU presence at the Medford campus. Regarding enrollment, the focus is on developing strategies, tactics, and metrics for each of the four areas of the Strategic Enrollment Plan.

### **Enrollment Management Report**

Assistant vice president of enrollment management and university registrar, Dr. Matt Stillman, and budget director, Josh Lovern, reported on enrollment trends, noting a nationwide decrease in confirmed students due to FAFSA issues, with private and flagship universities seeing increases. Overall, there is an approximate 10 percent decline, while the number of transfer students has fluctuated by about one percent. Undergraduate enrollment numbers are slightly up, though there are variations in some populations. The director of financial aid, Karinda Decker, and her team, were praised for their efforts.

An analysis of student behavior shows that spring term enrollment is aligning well with historical averages for course-taking. Retention for the freshman cohort slightly improved this spring, overall undergraduate numbers are up marginally, and persistence behavior is stable. Trustee Barry noted a four to five percent drop in overall enrollment, but an increase in continuing students provides some buffer. The team is cautiously predicting a three percent decrease but modeling for up to a five percent adjustment. Recent spikes in new student enrollments are expected to lead to more continuing enrollments. President Bailey has asked SOU to plan for a three percent decline, a more conservative estimate than other Oregon schools, though FAFSA's impact on new students is more significant than for continuing students.

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

#### **New Curriculum (Action)**

Dr. Dan DeNeui, Associate Provost and Director of Graduate Studies at SOU, presented eight certificates for committee approval, following the SOU Faculty's

thorough review process. The certificates are in the subjects of applied statistics, biochemistry, chemical analysis, chemistry, mathematics, mathematics education, single-subject secondary teaching, and special education. Additionally, a special education endorsement was proposed to provide a career pathway for bachelor's degree holders who may pursue a master's later. If approved, the certificates will be available in fall 2025. Trustees discussed with Dr. DeNeui the target audiences and practical applicability of the applied statistics, biochemistry, and chemical analysis certificates, as well as career pathways for those and the added endorsement certificates.

Trustee Thalden moved to approve the resolution for the new certificate programs. Trustee Lee seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

#### SOU Strategic Enrollment Council Update

Provost Shillam, chair of the SOU Strategic Enrollment Council provided updates on the progress of the strategic enrollment plan, which began with committees focused in four areas: recruitment and marketing, financial aid, student success and retention, and academic programming. These committees were tasked with addressing goals such as mental health strategies identified in withdrawal surveys, streamlining progress reports through Navigate, promoting financial literacy, improving student retention in on-campus housing, enhancing student affairs, and staff training in areas like student development and mental health triage, and reviewing registration holds.

Dr. Shillam highlighted the recent work of each committee. The Financial Aid Committee reviewed student balances, explored a single fee concept, and made changes to the scholarship matrix. The Recruitment and Marketing Committee conducted a website audit, created a Spanish version of the sou.edu website, and improved certificate visibility online. The Student Success and Retention Committee focused on refining survey data collection to better inform retention strategies. The Academic Program Planning Committee incorporated Lightcast career data on the SOU website.

Moving forward, the council will develop SMART goals to create specific strategies for enrollment management. Provost Shillam thanked co-chairs Matt Stillman, Carrie Vath, Nicolle Aleman, Zac Olsen, Karinda Decker, Josh Lovern, and Chair Dan DeNeui. President Bailey expressed gratitude to the team for their strategic work, and Committee Chair Barry emphasized the importance of monitoring progress to ensure institutional goals are achieved.

#### Core Information System Replacement Project (CISR) Update

Project Manager Hart Wilson delivered an update on Phase 2 of the CISR project. The upcoming Workday Student phase is larger and more complex than Phase 1, covering admissions, student financials, the course catalog, advising, student records, financial aid, and scheduling. This phase began in April and will continue through March 2026. Ms. Wilson emphasized that testing and reviews with student and faculty advisory groups will be ongoing throughout the process to ensure it meets SOU's needs. The project will follow a cycle of planning, designing, testing, building, and deployment, with increasing complexity and real data integrated over time. President Bailey

recognized that it is a challenging process and that faculty and staff are working hard; he applauded their work and noted that it will be worth it in the end. SOU will be first in the state and this will greatly benefit students and departments. Committee Chair Barry expressed the committee's support and appreciation.

#### Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Update

Dr. Matt Stillman introduced updates on the FAFSA, noting that significant changes by the Federal Department of Education (DOE) have caused technical and procedural challenges, including delays, calculation errors, and repeated testing. To mitigate issues, SOU implemented a proactive approach including: enhanced communication; FAFSA workshops; individual FAFSA assistance; strong collaboration between financial aid, admissions, information technology, and marketing; proactive technical work; adjusting deadlines; and more.

Financial Aid Director Karinda Decker updated the committee that SOU is up to date with applications due to heroic work. Financial aid offers are prepared within 40 minutes and 2,803 students have been packaged since April 1. There was a significant decrease in rejected FAFSAs and most foundation scholarships, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and need-based awards have been awarded. Director Decker also informed the committee of concerns including a possible negative shift in next year's enrollments. In response to President Bailey's question about when the process will improve, Director Decker estimated two years.

#### Student Withdrawal Survey Update

Dr. Carrie Vath, Mason Healy, a counselor at the Student Health and Wellness Center, and Dr. Matt Stillman delivered the update. Dean Vath explained that a withdrawal survey is administered when a student withdraws from one or more of their courses and a student cannot withdraw from the university without completing the survey. Once the survey is submitted the registrar drops the student, financial aid reviews the circumstances, a CARES report is filed, and the dean's office reviews the student's survey as well. The goal is to intervene if SOU can help them.

Reviewing the top reasons students report leaving, first is "fit," and second is mental health. Looking at trends by academic year, financial need is in line with last year, family issues are down, work obligations are way down, and health issues are down. Looking at trends by period, financial issues appear before the term begins. Regarding mental health, Mason Healy noted that family illness, stress, depression, anxiety, death/loss/grief, childcare, and adjustment distress contribute to these responses.

Recommendations were to collaborate with financial aid, business services, the benefits navigator, and admissions to help students understand finances before they enroll, and support students' transition to college, especially building programs that take a proactive approach to stress and time management. Dr. Vath added that SOU needs to be proactive, not reactive, as students said they loved SOU but there was nothing SOU could do to keep them enrolled.

Committee Chair Barry mentioned new financial literacy requirements for high school students and he recommended that SOU do everything possible to help students understand and stay enrolled. Much discussion ensued regarding strategic initiatives, first-generation college students, assessment, marketing, student stress and distress, tools for faculty empowerment to help students, CARES notes, and how the enrollment counsel is dedicated to supporting students.

### **Future Meetings**

Chair Barry stated that the next meeting of the committee is scheduled to take place on October 17, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. Trustees who would like to suggest a specific item for a future meeting were asked to send it to the board secretary.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Brent Barry adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m.

Date: October 22, 2024

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sabrina Prud'homme". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sabrina Prud'homme  
University Board Secretary