Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum

Board Chair Sheila Clough called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Vice Chair Franks read the SOU Land Acknowledgment.

The secretary called the roll and a quorum was verified.

Rick Bailey	Present	Daniel Santos	Present
Brent Barry	Absent	Garima Sharma	Present
Iris Maria Chavez	Present	Liz Shelby	Present
Shaun Franks	Present	Hala Schepmann	Present
Debra Lee	Present	Julissa Taitano	Present
Christina Medina	Present	Barry Thalden	Present
Jason Mendoza	Absent	Bill Thorndike	Present

Public Comment

No members of the public offered public comments.

Information and Discussion Items

Due to the nonlinear nature of retreat discussions, the following summary reflects the true and accurate nature of the discussion among the Board of Trustees.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI): Envisioning Success at SOU

Chair Clough introduced the topic and thanked Jonathan Chavez Baez for joining the board. She also thanked the EDI Leadership Team for all their work and acknowledged that although the intended training was unable to occur due to the facilitator's availability, their tremendous work was greatly appreciated. The board's focus, and that of the immediate past chair, Daniel P. Santos, has been encouraging SOU to ensure that talk translates to action. President Bailey explained that to this end, the board would review a thorough list of EDI activities and consider how SOU measures its EDI progress.

Mr. Chavez Baez drew trustees' attention to the materials, which provide information on EDI programming, a snapshot of the year ahead, and more. Meanwhile, the framework will impact the way SOU does its work moving forward by helping the university strategize to address inequities that SOU hopes to solve or some of the achievement gaps that the university hopes to close. The nine areas of the framework provide a roadmap to success and can guide SOU to develop key performance indicators (KPIs) and goals to measure outcomes. All the work that SOU does needs to be embedded within the strategic focus of the institution and Mr. Chavez-Baez looks forward to collaborating with campus colleagues on these items. He added his appreciation that trustees shared their individual and collective vision for EDI at SOU, as these reflections show that success is not just one person's job.

Trustee Santos agreed and mentioned that the work has to be system-wide not only with students, but faculty, staff, procurement, etc. and he appreciated the NASH Equity Action Framework framework's holistic approach to this. Discussion ensued among trustees regarding EDI being "everyone's job" versus "no one's job," cultivating an environment where people don't feel like EDI is a burden, applying an equity lens, and a focus on training.

Chair Clough temporarily adjourned the meeting for lunch for approximately 75 minutes and reconvened the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Measuring EDI Success
Chair Clough and President Bailey asked trustees two questions: 1) What action should trustees consider taking as a board to move its [EDI] efforts forward this year; and 2) What do we need to see from the university in terms of measuring [EDI] success? Answering the latter first, trustees responded with the following items.

- Demographics
- Baseline information
- Goals
- Disaggregated data on recruitment, retention, completions, and closing the achievement gap
- Longitudinal data
- KPIs
- Metrics
- More training as a board on EDI topics, student needs, social justice
- Accountability and commitment to EDI
- SOU students' competitiveness in the workforce
- Anti-discrimination, anti-racist training
- Data on students' mental health

- Basic needs (food, housing, etc.)
- Student debt
- More cultural competency training
- Civil discourse
- Impacts on campus inclusivity
- Student support programs
- Calendar of EDI events
- Overview of the programs SOU has in place
- Impact of Support programs on student success and EDI
- Activities available to students
- Visits to student activities (when appropriate like identity-based graduations)

Trustees expressed wanting additional EDI training for themselves in their trustee roles. The group also questioned what the board could do in the upcoming academic year to advance EDI. Trustees agreed that it cannot be only Mr. Chavez Baez working in this area, as everyone has to be engaged in the work, and the board's deliverables need to be tangible. Trustees questioned how the board is advocating, being an ally for the campus community, engaging in mentorship, identifying its resources and connections, and how trustees can bring this all to bear for its progress and for SOU. Mr. Chavez Baez also explained to trustees that many of the items they listed would become available as SOU employs the NASH framework.

SOU Strategic Plan: General Discussion
President Bailey introduced the topic noting that SOU is in a much better place than it previously was, and although the campus is exhausted, delaying strategic planning comes with risks of its own. In an environment where SOU has to make decisions with limited resources, a strategic plan can be a tool to help the university do that. He

understood the last iteration of the strategic plan was a huge lift and believes it need not be for the next iteration. Trustees agreed and discussed their appreciation of the current plan's focus on environmental sustainability, financial sustainability, measurement of progress, and the volume of input and documents. However, the effort to capture data and provide reporting was so difficult that it required undue amounts of time among a large group of people. The president noted his goal to create a plan and measurement tools that give the board the information and fidelity it needs to recognize when SOU is moving in the right direction, without it becoming so bureaucratically soul-crushing that it dies under its own weight.

Trustees agreed with each other that getting people involved is essential, and simply throwing out a survey will not yield rich responses. Trustee Sharma agreed and noted that to get student input, inviting students frequently to provide input has been valuable to her, as students may not readily perceive the relevance or the importance of their engagement. Trustees also noted the importance of remaining future-focused, as students are the university's investors, and centering past traditions doesn't necessarily help students today and going forward. President Bailey shared his nontraditional organizational chart that centers students instead of depicting a hierarchy. Trustees were delighted by the model and recommended adding K-12 and the university's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute unit to the chart.

Chair Clough concluded the discussion by advising the president that a shorter-term plan covering a few years may serve SOU well, as the higher education landscape is changing rapidly. Trustees also provided the following guidance: there may be a benefit to having a facilitator as well as listening sessions; the plan should be simple; it does not need to take two years to create; and the board would like to have a draft available for their action in June of 2025. This would allow the administration to plan over the summer and possibly begin implementation in the fall, and the board may be able to discuss it at next summer's retreat.

SOU Forward: Accountability Matters
Transitioning to the accountability discussion, Chair Clough reminded trustees that this is a governance conversation for the board and questioned what the board needs to do to hold itself and SOU accountable. President Bailey mentioned two ways he hopes the culture of SOU moves: One is from a culture of scarcity, where every answer is no, everyone is worried about their own "piece of cheese" and everyone is defensive--to a culture of opportunity where answers can start with yes or "yes, but." The second is a move to a culture that is about the team or the campus as one community.

President Bailey further explained that during SOU Forward, a popular refrain was that SOU is really good at starting things but not really good at stopping anything. So, when the board authorizes SOU to invest in something, the university needs to provide the results of that investment, even if it is bad news. The president noted how good the students already are at this, although it has been difficult, and they lead by example. The board discussed the completed accountability matrix for Phase 1 of SOU Forward, as provided in the meeting materials. They also examined the uncompleted step 2 of the matrix, which is intended to highlight variances of adding to the budget or investing where it was not previously expected. When that occurs, President Bailey explained, there are five questions that must be answered: How much will it cost? What will SOU

get for that? What's the return on investment? What's a reasonable timeline? And, how will SOU measure it? This matrix is a tool to help with that accountability.

Trustees further discussed the spreadsheet noting that the goal is commendable but the matrix highlights reductions, and as a result, is deficit-based. In moving to a culture of opportunity, the board would like to see the revenue side of things. How will SOU know if something works? Currently, it's missing a look toward the positive on things like efficiencies, advancements, Phase 2 of SOU Forward, doing more creative things with revenue, and capturing the ineffective activities that SOU stops. Trustees believed there was a lot that could be done to redesign it.

Shifting the accountability discussion to the university's current financial condition, President Bailey explained that the single fee the board approved in the spring had an incorrect assumption that was not previously known by the plan's architect. The error didn't cost SOU anything but it presented a rosier picture of revenue than what is now expected, especially due to the impacts of the nationwide Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It is an issue, however, because as fiduciaries, the board and the president make decisions based on the projections. Enrollment currently is down 2.8 percent but numbers are far from final. The single fee was approved at $104.22 but should have been $131 to meet revenue expectations with the enrollment decline. To fill the budget hole, of $1.6M, the president plans to sell some of SOU's excess properties. However, if the budget issues exist again next year, that will reveal a structural issue, and different decisions would need to be explored.

To present the most accurate budget picture, President Bailey explained that federal COVID funding has been exhausted and is nonrecurring and that sustainability funding from the HECC is no longer shown on the revenue line, which gave a false sense of confidence because it is one-time money. It is now shown as one-time money, so the ending fund balance is not artificially stable. Responding to trustee questions, President Bailey explained that to fix the revenue issues caused by the single fee, SOU has to do the math (including permutations of credit hours and student types) to figure out how to hold tuition low if the fee amount needs to increase.

Future Meetings
Chair Clough said the next meeting of the board is October 18, 2024, at noon. If trustees have agenda items for a future meeting, she asked trustees to send them to the board secretary.

Adjournment
Chair Clough adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:40 p.m.

Date: October 22, 2024

Respectfully submitted by,

Sabrina Prud'homme
University Board Secretary