

**Board of Trustees of Southern Oregon University  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Friday, March 22, 2019**

**MINUTES**

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

Board Members:

|                      |         |                           |         |
|----------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| Lyn Hennion          | Present | Deborah Rosenberg         | Present |
| Les AuCoin           | Absent  | Daniel Santos             | Present |
| Jonathon Bullock     | Present | Linda Schott (ex officio) | Present |
| Sheila Clough        | Present | Barry Thalden             | Present |
| Shaun Franks         | Present | Bill Thorndike            | Present |
| Megan Davis Lightman | Present | Steve Vincent             | Absent  |
| Paul Nicholson       | Present | janelle wilson            | Present |
| Shanztyn Nihipali    | Present |                           |         |

Chair Lyn Hennion called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. in the DeBoer Room of the Hannon Library. The Board Secretary recorded the roll and a quorum was verified.

In addition to some of the members of the President's Cabinet and individuals on the agenda, other attendees included: Joe Mosley, Marketing and Communications; Katie Pittman, Business, Communication and the Environment; Josh Lovern, Budget Office; Lee Ayers Preboski, Undergraduate Studies and HECC; Hart Wilson, Center for Instructional Support; Nicolle Aleman, Marketing and Communications; Ryan Schnobrich, Internal Audit; Chad Hamill, President's Office; John Stevenson, Information Technology; and Kathy Park, Office of the Board Secretary.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Consent Agenda**

Trustee Franks moved approval of the consent agenda, as presented. Trustee Lightman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Reports**

President's Report

President Linda Schott provided highlights of the town-gown relationship with Ashland leaders and the partnership between SOU and the city. She informed trustees of the HECC commissioners who will visit SOU and attend at least one of the May meetings. President Schott, Jeanne Stallman, and Greg Perkinson have been visiting legislators. She mentioned some of the federal issues with higher education, including the executive order regarding free speech on campuses as well as proposed budget cuts to Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and the federal work study program.

President Schott and Dr. Chad Hamill conducted visits to the Siletz, Grand Ronde and Cow Creek tribes. Future visits are planned to the Klamath and Warm Springs tribes. Dr. Hamill added that state universities have a role to play in these relationships. He is helping SOU establish good foundational relationships that it can continue.

Vice President Janet Fratella provided a fundraising update and said that, including pending gifts, gift revenue is at \$2.5 million of the \$3.2 million goal. She mentioned new gifts, pledges, scholarships, the SOU fund match, OLLI's fundraising efforts, volunteer leadership giving, and Raider Rendezvous. The SOU Foundation welcomed employees Jennifer Niedermeyer, Cristina Sanz and Mike McKelvey.

### Committee Reports

*Executive and Audit Committee* – Chair Hennion said Ryan Schnobrich gave an internal audit update identifying risks and reported that there have been no new allegations since his last report. Tom Battaglia discussed cybersecurity as well as the need to protect the university and ourselves; he also discussed risks to the university. The committee reviewed proposed changes to four board policies.

*Finance and Administration Committee* – Trustee Clough said Dr. Lee Ayers, a HECC commissioner, attended the meeting. The committee reviewed the financial dashboard and received a legislative update. Using a risk heat map, the committee had a robust discussion on risk management. Penny Burgess participated in the review of the endowment investment policy. The committee talked about preparing for the budget approval, including the tuition- and fee-setting processes, and the engagement activities to keep students and employees informed. The committee reviewed the pro forma and discussed an acceptable fund balance.

*Academic and Student Affairs Committee* – Trustee Santos said Drs. Karen Stone and Matt Stillman gave a presentation on Navigate, Education Advisory Board's student success software program. The committee received updates on various topics, including the Tuition Advisory Council (TAC); efforts to fill various positions; Retention Summit; Google search engine optimization; financial aid leveraging project; Enrollment Management Council; and student usage at the Student Health and Wellness Center. The Digital Cinema Program is in the final stages of approval by the HECC. The Provosts' Council is continuing its work to revise the program approval process. Trustee Wilson gave an informative presentation on SOU Social Justice and Service Programs; there was discussion on the existing peer-to-peer mentoring program and on ideas for potential community-based mentoring programs. President Schott provided an update on the Southern Oregon Higher Education Consortium. Dr. Jeff Gayton provided an update on the open educational resources program.

### Student Leadership Report

Alexis Phillips was unable to attend the meeting but provided a written report for the Board Secretary to read. ASSOU has focused on concluding its student fee process; it identified issues with the process which will require a bylaws revision and changes to the process. The Speaker of the Senate has been leading efforts on the ban on blood drives; ASSOU will hold a panel discussion with representatives from the Red Cross, Student Life, and selected SOU faculty and students. ASSOU will begin elections, with a goal of completing the process by week 5 or 6 of the spring term. ASSOU has been making changes to and creating rules for its textbook sharing program.

### Faculty Senate Report

Andrew Gay said Faculty Senate has approved eight new courses, two academic policies and two new bylaws amendments. It has received reports from the Inter-institutional

Faculty Senate and Association of Oregon Faculties, primarily about legislative issues. The Association for the Advancement of Science considered holding the 100<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Pacific division at SOU. Faculty Senate also discussed contributions of professional-track faculty to shared governance and how to track professional activities each year. Faculty Senate has invited new programs to report back on their progress.

Responding to trustees' inquiries, Mr. Gay said Faculty Senate has discussed and supports open educational resources. Faculty have mixed reactions to Navigate. There is buy in from faculty on the strategic plan and, in particular, strategic direction 1; faculty feel strongly about ownership of curriculum and are excited and ready to move on the general education component. President Schott mentioned the Professional Learning Community Expo on April 26.

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

#### Governance Work Group: Work Plan and Update

Vice Chair Paul Nicholson said the governance work group has been reviewing the role of the board and he reviewed the work plan included in the meeting materials.

#### Update on New Programs

Dr. Susan Walsh provided updates on the bachelors of fine arts in creative writing, certificate in wine business, BA/BS in healthcare administration and master of outdoor adventure and expedition leadership, as included in the meeting materials. Regarding the BA/BS in healthcare administration, Dr. Walsh said gerontology may be added as a fourth concentration.

Phyllis Hauptfeld from Academic Partnerships provided highlights on the partnership with SOU, including having a shared vision, focusing on inclusion and access, meeting the needs of adult learners, and enterprise partners. One of the unique aspects of the partnership with SOU is that SOU created a project manager, Hart Wilson; Academic Partnerships now presents that as a best practice to its new partners.

Prospective student inquiries come from all across the country but most of the enrollments come from Oregon, California and Washington. Academic Partnerships studies the market of the non-traditional student population to help its partner institutions create a strategy for adult learners. At this early point, SOU's statistics for converting applications to enrollments are very positive, exceeding Academic Partnerships' averages.

The vast majority of non-traditional undergraduate students are looking for classes in the business, education and healthcare areas of study. Academic Partnerships encourages its partners to build a foundation in one of those areas then add additional concentrations, which would increase enrollment in each area. SOU launched four programs in December 2017 and one in January 2019; four additional programs will be launched in fall 2019 and possibly two more at a later date.

Academic Partnerships provides a fully-integrated marketing team. Because of the existing connections SOU has with the community, Academic Partnerships created a field representative position. Tiffany Mays, an SOU alumna, fills that position and cultivates relationships with various local entities.

### Enrollment Update

Dr. Neil Woolf was unable to attend the meeting so Dr. Walsh reported that confirmations are up over last year although applications are down. President Schott pointed out that the confirmed post-baccalaureate/graduate number is significantly, due in large part to the Academic Partnerships programs. Discussion ensued on prospective student visits to campus and recruitment ideas Dr. Woolf has.

### SOU Perception Survey

President Schott provided background information on the need to conduct a general perception survey, which is a fairly standard practice at many universities. SimpsonScarborough was selected to conduct the survey of SOU's primary market of Southern Oregon and Northern California, and secondary markets from Washington to San Francisco. In 2008, the firm did a similar study for SOU and provided SOU a copy of that study. President Schott described the detailed methodology and plan.

Discussion ensued on highlights of the final results of the survey, which were included in the meeting materials. Trustees noted the frequent connection to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; one-third of the prospects thought SOU was an academically excellent university; art, music and theater were selected as the best-known programs, with business being selected next; SOU was recognized as affordable compared to other universities; and diversity on campus was listed as a strength. Of concern, trustees noted the top stop-out reason was the cost of living in Ashland and discussion ensued on that issue. Other concerns included a lack of visibility and name recognition; lack of online programming; and the contradiction between being recognized for academic excellence and a low rating for having qualified faculty.

President Schott said SOU's next steps would include looking for new markets; emphasizing the high quality of programs in business, education and the sciences; leveraging SOU's recognition as a center of creativity; increasing communication methods preferred by students; acknowledging Ashland's high cost of living but balancing that with an emphasis on the cultural and recreational amenities available; more career preparation and engagement with employers; investing in search engine optimization; developing more specialized marketing; and more alumni engagement.

Nicolle Aleman added that SOU marketing messages are now resonating with its targeted audiences. A big takeaway is that talking about affordability is good but must be done the right way. SOU needs to develop a new theme to replace the current, "You're Home." Vice Chair Nicholson mentioned the importance of the creative industry, which should be an SOU focus. Discussion ensued on local employer needs, how SOU can meet those needs, and marketing strategies to reach targeted audiences.

### Legislative Update

Jeanne Stallman said the universities are tracking 770 bills of a couple of thousand bills overall, and 125 are top priorities. She highlighted several bills, most of which were referenced in the meeting materials, including those that affect SOU as an employer or that regulate business operations as well as those that legislate who, what and how SOU teaches. Ten bills address free or in-state tuition for certain groups in addition to Oregon Student Association's tuition freeze bill. On SOU's behalf, Representative Pam Marsh introduced two bills: one regarding competency-based

education and one regarding the Southern Oregon Higher Education Consortium.

Turning to state budget issues, Ms. Stallman mentioned legislative visits during which, the universities focused on accountability and transparency, rather than asking for money. Legislators are concerned about the sustainability of funding in this biennium and subsequent biennia. The Ways and Means Committee holds public hearings around the state; two SOU alumni testified at the hearing in Redmond.

There are upcoming meetings regarding the PUSF and statewide programs as well as a public input day.

#### State Funding and Budget Update

Greg Perkinson said the challenge is to determine the potential impacts of state funding on SOU's financial health. He reviewed a comparative analysis of having an 8 and a 5 percent primary reserve, showing optimistic, pessimistic and realistic scenarios for each based on funding using the co-chairs' budget and different levels of enrollment and cost cutting measures. Summarizing the discussion in the Finance and Administration Committee, he said a 5 percent ending fund balance was unacceptable.

Mr. Perkinson said he discussed financial health issues with Jim Pinkard, [Director of the Office of Postsecondary Finance and Capital] at the HECC. Mr. Pinkard said the HECC views financial health as unique to each institution.

Discussion ensued on marketing messages for tuition increases (dollar amount vs. percentage), the benefits of attending SOU and the value of higher education.

#### Tuition Advisory Council Update

Dr. Susan Walsh said the TAC has discussed affordability; cutting costs; and the need to discuss dollar amounts not just percentages for potential tuition increases. The TAC has been meeting weekly but will not meet the week of finals or spring break. Dr. Walsh mentioned the TAC website, which includes minutes, training on budget issues, and checklists, among other information. She reviewed the strategic communication plan for outreach to key stakeholders. Discussion ensued on Oregon's and the nation's disinvestment in higher education, thus increasing the costs to students. Dr. Walsh said the TAC's recommendation will probably include several alternatives for President Schott to consider, along with a minority report if there is one.

Mr. Perkinson mentioned the checklists that were created to ensure compliance with House Bill 4141 and the HECC's tuition increase criteria. With input from Dr. Ayers-Preboski, discussion ensued on the previous process the HECC followed when evaluating tuition increases over 5 percent and this year's process.

#### Future Meetings

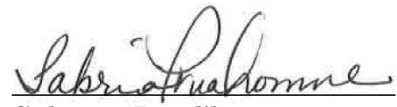
The board will hold a special meeting on May 16 to set tuition rates. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the board will take place on June 21, at which the board will discuss a new contract for President Schott.

#### **Adjournment**

Chair Hennion adjourned the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Date: May 16, 2019

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sabrina Prud'homme", is written over a horizontal line.

Sabrina Prud'homme  
University Board Secretary