

Board of Trustees
Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting
Thursday, June 18, 2020
Videoconference

MINUTES

Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum

Committee Members:

Daniel Santos	Present	Barry Thalden	Present
Jonathon Bullock	Present	Steve Vincent	Present
Dylann Loverro	Present	janelle wilson	Present
Deborah Rosenberg	Present		

Chair Daniel Santos called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. The secretary recorded the roll and a quorum was verified.

Other trustees in attendance: Lyn Hennion, Paul Nicholson and President Linda Schott.

Other attendees and Zoom panelists included: Dr. Neil Woolf, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs; Greg Perkinson, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Dr. Susan Walsh, Provost; Jason Catz, General Counsel; Janet Fratella, Vice President for University Advancement; Sabrina Prud'homme, Board Secretary; Taylor Burke, Dean of Students; Dr. Jody Waters, Associate Provost; Dr. Karen Stone, Associate Vice President for Academic Resource Management; Dr. Matt Stillman, Registrar; Anna D'Amato, Student Health and Wellness Center; Chris Stanek, Institutional Research; Danielle Mancuso, Student Life; Robin Williams, Student Success Coordinator; Kelly Moutsatson, Admissions; Luke Williams, Raider Student Services; Rachel Jones, Outreach and Engagement; Jonathan Chavez-Baez, Education; Dr. Kylan de Vries, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies; and Kathy Park, Office of the Board Secretary.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda

Trustee Vincent moved to approve the consent agenda, as presented. Trustee Rosenberg seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Provost's Report

Dr. Susan Walsh said several virtual commencement ceremonies were held by different programs across campus, which senior administrators attended. Faculty and staff worked hard to make the ceremonies very special for graduating students.

Faculty in the Environmental Science and Policy Program are moving forward with many proposed programs and certificates for next fall. Some of them will resonate with SOU's sustainability mission.

Following up on a conversation started last fall with students on an ethnic studies minor, Dr. Walsh said the proposal has not moved forward yet but she is hoping it will next year. Regarding efforts to transform general education, Dr. Walsh said work will continue through the summer into the next academic year and a new curriculum will be implemented in the fall of 2021.

Provost's Council Update

Dr. Walsh said the Provost's Council continues to meet 1-2 times per week. The council serves as a conduit for folks to come together and stay in touch. The institutions are closely tracking each other regarding procedures and compliance with COVID-19-related guidelines. Except for OIT [at the time of this report], the institutions are on track for starting the fall term as scheduled and in person or modified in person, with a pivot to remote learning at Thanksgiving break.

Dr. Walsh mentioned discussions regarding the increased oversight authority the governor has assigned to the HECC regarding issues related to COVID-19 rulemaking, oversight and compliance. The hope is that the HECC will continue to be consultative as it fulfills this role.

CARES Act Funding Distribution

Dr. Walsh said students are receiving \$1.7 million in CARES Act funding, which Dr. Neil Woolf is monitoring through financial aid. Another \$2.88 million will go to the university and must be spent in restricted ways, such as professional development for faculty to be ready with the best pedagogy for academic experiences for students and faculty.

Other General Updates

Provost Walsh said the open positions that have been frozen will be reviewed on July 1. The search for the university librarian was suspended; Dale Vidmar will serve as the interim librarian until the position is filled permanently.

Vice President's Report

Enrollment Management Dashboards and Completions Report

Dr. Neil Woolf reviewed the enrollment drivers website and highlighted some of the spring numbers. Headcount was down by 657 students (15.4 percent) and FTE was down 8.9 percent. Those figures are very different from those at the start of the spring term, before the transition to remote learning. Resident population was down 15 percent and the nonresident population by 10 percent. About one-third of the international students did not enroll for the spring term. Enrollment of Black/African American students declined by 22 percent; other student groups were much less impacted. Students from California decreased by 12 percent.

Dr. Woolf then turned to the degree completions report. The number of students who applied throughout the academic year decreased but the number of undergraduate degrees conferred increased by 15 (7.6 percent) compared to last year. This has been highlighted to the HECC and other external agencies. There was about a 50 percent increase in Master's degrees conferred.

Other General Updates

Dr. Woolf reported that almost half the \$1.7 million in CARES Act funding has been distributed to students to help with costs of COVID-19-related educational expenses (e.g., housing and job-related losses). So far, \$813,450 has been given to 843 students, with a maximum award of about \$1000 each. The balance of the funds is available through the end of the fall term.

He mentioned the diversity scholars program and said efforts are being made to create a more robust scholarship program for students of diverse backgrounds. The awards have increased by 61 percent, up to \$301,000. Responding to Chair Santos' later inquiry, Dr. Woolf confirmed that funds students receive through diversity scholarships are in addition to other financial aid they may be getting. Diversity scholarships are available to new and returning students.

Dr. Woolf said Marvin Woodard and Edward Derr, through Student Life, host "Let's Talk About It" conversations for students to address the deaths of George Floyd and others as well as other incidents of racial unrest; hundreds of participants attended.

Dr. Woolf said, when tuition was increased last year, the administration promised it would set aside dollars through the Tuition Assistance Program for the neediest students. In 2018-2019, \$600,000 was disseminated through that program. In the last year, that amount was increased by \$204,000.

Update on Student Spaces in the Stevenson Union

Danielle Mancuso provided an update on the Multicultural Commons Space in the Stevenson Union. The new space was created after consulting with students at four townhall meetings, conducting surveys and addressing questions and concerns. The space incorporates best practices for such spaces to increase student engagement, including open spaces and being able to see within the space but also maintaining privacy. Ms. Mancuso reviewed the construction plans, saying the construction will be completed in September.

Action, Information and Discussion Items

Curriculum Approvals (Action)

Certificate in Holistic Education, Certificate in Music Industry and Certificate in Sound Design

Dr. Susan Walsh introduced the agenda item, saying the certificates were discussed in detail at the last committee meeting and are before the committee now for approval. Responding to Trustee Vincent's inquiry about recommendations from faculty regarding items that should be added to required classes, Dr. Jody Waters said all the recommendations from faculty and others were incorporated into the proposals.

Trustee Bullock moved to approve all three certificates. Trustee Rosenberg seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Raider Registration and Orientation Preview

Taking agenda items out of order, Danielle Mancuso provided an overview of the new

online student orientation programs, which disseminate all the information normally provided in person. She said students persist at institutions where they feel valued and included and that have effective orientation programs that connect students to the campus community. There are three online orientation programs for new students: Online Orientation, Raider Registration and New Student Orientation. Ms. Mancuso mentioned some other programs that help ensure a more smooth transition for students, including the American Samoa Program, first year and transfer events, and fall orientation.

Update on Academic Operations for Spring and Summer Terms

Rachel Jones mentioned the COVID-19 impacts on the pre-college youth programs and how this summer will be different from previous summers. The Best of the Best Student Art Show was converted to a virtual art show, reaching more people than usual. The ACADEMY and Sea Camp were cancelled while other programs (e.g., Konaway Nika Tillicum and Academia Latina) were converted to virtual events. Ms. Jones said the summer day camps will be scaled back from 50 to 19, with only 8 students in each.

Ms. Jones described the greatest concerns in her office as the physical and emotional health of the program participants and mitigating the disparate impact COVID-19 on underrepresented populations. She said there is also concern over the impacts on SOU [enrollment] pipeline; her office is trying to maintain those connections. There is also the concern regarding the lack of revenue coming in over the summer and the uncertainty of the future. Retaining staff to support student needs is critical, especially for Latin-X and Native American families.

Overview of Student Health and Wellness and Mental Health Services

Taylor Burke provided an overview of the work being done to support students' mental health. Students come to SOU with a number of challenges and do not always have skills needed to navigate the college environment successfully. The university must provide the right support at the right time so students can grow and develop.

Ms. Burke discussed the SOU Cares reporting system, which faculty, staff and students use to refer students to support services. She stressed that, in most cases, students decide if and how they want to engage in support services. Ms. Burke reviewed the Cares reports data included in the meeting materials and said this year's numbers will surpass last year's numbers. The Office of the Dean of Students uses a case management approach. When the office receives a case involving a mental health concern, the case manager employs a pragmatic approach to support the whole student and build a support plan.

Ms. Burke said 32 percent of the cases involve student conduct, the rest are SOU Cares which are more personal in nature. The most common conduct concerns are academic misconduct, alcohol- or drug-related violations, noise, and violations of the law. Sanctions imposed are intended to help students develop and persist. The most common sanctions are warnings, educational conversations, case management or mandatory meetings, and reflection or research papers.

Anna D'Amato provided an overview of the mental health and medical services provided at the Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC), which is basically a primary care office. To accommodate students' current needs, she said the SHWC is in the process of contracting with therapists off campus who are experienced with mental health counseling on issues involving race and racism. She reviewed the health center data, as included in the meeting materials. As a result of COVID-19, the SHWC has seen fewer distinct students for mental health services but has seen the same students more frequently; for medical services, both the number of distinct students and visits declined. The retention rates for students who utilize SHWC services is a little higher than that for the general student population.

Trustee Thalden, Chair Santos and Dr. Woolf expressed their appreciation for the impressive work being done in the Office of the Dean of Students and the SHWC. These efforts, along with those of other staff and faculty, set SOU apart from other universities and show that the well-being of students is a top priority at SOU.

Navigate Implementation Update

Luke Williams provided information on student, faculty and staff usage of Navigate, predictive analytics, success markers and future promotions. To improve the current training plan, a centralized, module-based training model has been developed. Mr. Williams later said he will work with ASSOU, faculty, staff and various offices on campus to promote Navigate.

Success markers are courses that are significant to successful academic careers. They are established in coordination with program chairs and help advise students on when to take particular courses. This is expected to be up and running for the fall term.

Robin Williams shared some of her experiences with Navigate as a student success coordinator and said it is currently the main way she is connecting with students. Navigate is being used for the first time to reach out to incoming students and the reception has been very positive.

Responding to Trustee Vincent's and Vice Chair Nicholson's inquiries, Dr. Woolf said the rollout was accelerated, is ahead of schedule, and now includes all students. Mr. Williams said the goal is to have 100 percent of students download and use Navigate.

COVID-19 Remote Instruction Student Survey, Spring 2020

Dr. Susan Walsh said the student survey was implemented to learn where students' experiences were most positive and most challenging. The results will be used in planning for the upcoming academic year and in faculty professional development. Dr. Jody Waters added the survey was followed by faculty focus groups. The purpose was to learn how the remote learning experience was for faculty and students. The data will be used not only to plan for the fall term but also to enhance instructional ability beyond that. Dr. Waters then discussed the survey results in detail.

Regarding quality of instruction and interactions with faculty, students reported moderate satisfaction and dissatisfaction with remote learning, in general. However,

students were less satisfied with their interactions with other students and their ability to stay current with their academic work during the term. Students were relatively neutral regarding the adequacy of the resources that were made available to them.

Dr. Waters reviewed the preliminary findings from the faculty focus groups, which focused on resources, student interaction, providing a positive learning environment and student learning. One significant finding was the high degree of emotional support students needed from faculty. Faculty also noted a desire to have a more intentional course design process, Zoom fatigue and a desire to learn more about course management in a remote environment.

Dr. Clay Austin discussed the coordinated effort by the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning and the Provost's Office to provide training and resources to support professional development of faculty.

Trustee Bullock commented that the spring term should be viewed not as an example of remote learning but rather crisis instruction during a global pandemic. He mentioned students' ability to stay engaged in remote learning each day is limited and stressed the need to include in the professional development discussions about the consistency in expectations for learning from course to course.

Trustee Loverro said this was the hardest term she has ever had and shared some of her personal experiences. She found herself spending seven hours each day on coursework and discussed the lack of consistency in faculty and department expectations. Summer will be an opportunity to improve so students will feel like they are getting the product and quality they are paying for come fall.

Race Equity at SOU

Introducing this agenda item, Chair Santos said the killing of George Floyd directed more attention in the US and worldwide on racism and social injustice. This is a chance for the committee and the board to have one of many conversations on these issues. He said the committee, the board and the university should not be silent and must be part of the solution; he also referenced the board's proposed resolution on the issue.

Trustee Wilson expressed her gratitude to Chair Santos for including this item on the agenda and for always being a voice of reason and aspiration. She mentioned her introduction to the board, during which the importance of equity and the use of an equity lens was discussed. Based on her experience, she thought the equity lens was not being used explicitly and wondered how it could be made a consistent part of the process to guide decisions and discussions and always be kept at the forefront.

Trustee Thalden tied the topic to student retention, saying people of color are most at risk in the group of students not being retained; in distressing times, these students will be disproportionately impacted. SOU needs to make sure these students succeed. His personal belief is that a mentorship program would benefit these students.

President Schott introduced Jonathan Chavez Baez and Dr. Kylan de Vries, who, along with Sabrina Prud'homme, form an interim leadership team for equity and diversity efforts at SOU. Dr. de Vries said he was glad this topic was added to the agenda; he, Mr. Chavez Baez and Ms. Prud'homme have been talking a lot about needed training and other issues surrounding these areas.

Ms. Prud'homme added that there are many things the board and the campuses can do and are doing to promote equity and diversity. Students have been deeply and acutely affected by recent events. There is much to do and it is everyone's job to do it.

Trustee Loverro concurred with the discussion and said, the sooner the board releases a statement followed by a plan, it will inspire confidence in the institution. A lot of institutions say they value equity and diversity but have no institutional history to back it up and do not present a plan. To inspire confidence and faith, she said it would be important to follow up any board statement with an announcement of changes that are being made.

Vice Chair Nicholson said it was important to identify and focus on actions that will have the greatest impact in the shortest amount of time. It should be made clear that as an institution SOU is committed to making a difference.

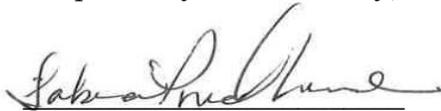
Chair Santos said this is a challenge and an opportunity. There will be more discussions which will be uncomfortable at times. Being part of the solution starts with learning and listening.

Adjournment

Chair Santos adjourned the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

Date: October 15, 2020

Respectfully submitted by,



Sabrina Prud'homme
University Board Secretary