



**Western Oregon University Board of Trustees:
Academic & Student Affairs Committee**

Meeting No. 30 – March 22, 2023

2:00pm-4:00pm

Via [Zoom](#) | By Phone: 1-253-215-8782

Draft Minutes

I. CALL-TO-MEETING AND ROLL CALL (2:00-2:03pm)

Committee members present: David Foster, Betty Komp, Cristian Mendez-Garcia, Leah Mitchell, Kari Nelsestuen

Others present: Chelle Batchelor, Kathy Cassity, Keats Chaves, Amy Clark, Hillary Fouts, Tina Fuchs, Roseanna Garcia, Mark Girod, Paige Jackson, Margaret Manoogian, Sue Monahan, Jessica Murfin, Sean Roush, Judy Sylva, LouAnn Vickers, Rob Winningham

II. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S WELCOME (2:03-2:06pm)

Committee Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

III. CONSENT AGENDA (2:06-2:10pm)

1) [Meeting Minutes: January 25, 2023](#)

Trustee Nelsestuen moved to accept the minutes as written; Trustee Mendez-Garcia seconded. Minutes were approved with no changes.

IV. ACTION ITEMS:

1) **Academic proposals:**

- a) [Undergraduate Certificate: Healthcare Administration](#) | Kathy Cassity, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (2:10-2:15pm)

Dean Kathy Cassity introduced the Undergraduate Certificate in Healthcare Administration.

The Undergraduate Certificate in Healthcare Administration is closely related to the graduate certificate that the committee passed in the previous meeting; both certificates were developed by the same interdisciplinary group of faculty and went through the same focus groups (full details on the development of the Healthcare Administration certificates can be found starting on Page 4 of the [ASAC March 22, 2023 meeting docket](#)). The undergraduate certificate is open to undergraduate students in any discipline, but is expected to be particularly appealing to students majoring in Business, Gerontology, Psychology, Health and Exercise Science, and Public Health.

Dr. Margaret Manoogian and Dr. Dave Foster provided further information on the proposed undergraduate certificate.

Students majoring in Gerontology frequently go into healthcare administration, but require more on-the-job experience; this certificate will better prepare those students for careers in healthcare administration.

It's possible that the Healthcare Administration certificate can grow into a minor or even a major in the future, depending on demand (this was the case with Gerontology). By starting out slow, it's easier later on to identify the faculty who can teach in the program, should the certificate become one. The potential of creating partnerships with Corvallis Clinic and Salem Health also informs whether or not this certificate could be expanded into a full major (Partnerships Specialist Jessica Murfin noted in the chat that she is already speaking with Salem Health about this certificate). The community and employers in the region have identified a strong need for programs like this, and starting with a certificate is a relatively low-stakes, low-cost, way to meet immediate demand quickly.

The faculty group working on the certificate erred on the side of being conservative with the projected enrollment numbers. The certificate offers another option for students who anticipate being in a healthcare-related field, but decide partway through their degree that direct practice isn't for them; it also provides a route for students in non-healthcare majors (e.g., Business, Public Policy) to include a focus on healthcare administration to their studies.

The new Introduction to Healthcare Administration course included in the certificate will be offered by Gerontology, and is designated to be taught by someone who has experience in the industry.

Trustee Foster moved to approve the undergraduate certificate in Healthcare Administration. Trustee Mendez-Garcia seconded. The motion passed.

2) [Committee Charter \(revisions\)](#)

(2:15-2:45pm)

The committee agreed that the charter can be reviewed again if points need to be reevaluated or changes need to be made at any time in the future.

The committee discussed whether the Student Health Fee charged to students to provide Student Health and Counseling services falls under the committee's purview as part of the ASAC charter section on Student Health and Safety. The Finance and Administration Committee meets to discuss tuition and fees, and the health fee is one of the fees included in their discussions; ASAC is not responsible for determining or making decisions about fees, but can weigh in on what's important to university operation and services.

The committee also discussed whether policy changes need to be brought to the Board before they can be implemented (e.g., whether transfer students need to submit an official transcript to be admitted, particularly since a lot of schools are now only requiring unofficial transcripts for admission). Discussion touched on the difference between "policy", "Policy", and "procedure". Not everything referred to as a policy is a Policy. All Policies go through multiple stakeholder groups, and there are stopgaps within the stakeholder groups (particularly at the President's Cabinet) to

ensure equity in Policy. When Policies are taken to the President's Cabinet as part of the review process, the Cabinet can say that a specific Policy needs to be sent back to one or more Board subcommittees for further review (e.g., ASAC, DEIAC). A determination was made that, unlike Policy, procedures should be handled at the university/Cabinet level and do not need to come to the Board.

Trustee Mendez-Garcia moved to approve the committee charter with proposed changes. Trustee Foster seconded. The motion passed.

V. REPORTS & DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) **Showcase & Discussion:** [Retention Strategy](#) | Paige Jackson, Director of Student Success & Advising (2:45-3:30pm)

"Retention" is defined differently depending on which organization is requesting or receiving the information (e.g., IPEDS, federal government). The retention rates presented in this showcase represent the 2010-2020 historical average of first-time, full-time, students returning to WOU enrolling for their second year at WOU during Fall Term.

Four- and six-year graduation rates have seen a steady increase; this may be attributed to the revisions of general education requirement.

Transfer students have good retention and graduation rates, which is uncommon. WOU's Latina students have the highest six-year graduation rates. Black and indigenous students have fairly low retention and graduation rates.

Compared to peer institutions, WOU is below average for graduation and retention; however, in the state of Oregon, WOU is about even with EOU and SOU. This is likely linked to Oregon's funding model (based on graduation rates, rather than first year retention rates), transfer rates of students moving to other regional institutions, and the quarter system creating an extra opportunity a year to lose students.

Student Success and Advising is hoping to reach 76% retention rate. Per Sue Monahan, this aligns with work being done on a Department of Education Title III grant; one of the goals identified for the grant is to achieve a four-year average of 76%.

Retention is also linked to student engagement, as students who feel academically and socially integrated within the institution typically are retained. To address this, WOU has a shared, split model for Advising. Students interact with a combination of professional advisors (for individualized advising focused on individual students' needs) and faculty advisors (for expertise in content and curriculum); every student has at least one dedicated advisor, and mentorship and guidance are centered.

This model does present some challenges regarding consistency of access to advisors. The model also puts more focus on student engagement, and less on using advising as a strategic tool.

SSA has revised how they approach new students, starting in Fall 2022. This initiative intentionally deploys professional advisors to help first-year incoming students navigate systems and processes that aren't necessarily related to academics.

Another initiative started in Fall 2022 identifies faculty lead advisors to provide advising support, particularly during the Summer, when the bulk of incoming transfer students enter WOU. This initiative has also had the benefit of aiding communication and collaboration between academic units and central advising.

The degree completion program has currently identified over 400 students who were close to finishing their degree and hadn't. Most of these students have not needed financial assistance to complete their degree, but WOU does have a grant to help students who do need tuition assistance to complete their degree.

Highschool GPA is a valid indicator for college retention; SSA is boosting course-based tutoring and studying strategy to help incoming students to be prepared for college-level academics. This includes deploying tutors to study halls twice a week to meet students where they are; feedback has been positive, so the next step will be to deploy advisors to the study halls to help with lifting advising holds, etc. Another program currently being piloted to help strengthen academic support is supplemental instruction, a resource-intensive but effective form of peer-led tutoring.

The need for mandatory advising holds is being evaluated. IR data has shown disparities regarding vulnerable populations and mandatory advising holds, with notable equity gaps based on race and, to a lesser extent, Pell eligibility. Students who allow their registration holds to expire frequently do not register at all; those who do register are unlikely to have the opportunity to register for the courses they need in order to graduate on time. The mandatory advising holds also create equity issues for faculty in regards to uneven advising loads, since students need to meet with their advisor during a specific timeframe to lift the hold and register.

Proactive advising initiatives, including an early action system that alerts SSA when students start exhibiting concerning academic behavior (e.g., students who were very engaged but are now not attending class; students who don't log into Canvas during the first couple weeks of term); approximately 60 – 70% of faculty utilize this system. When SSA is alerted to issues early on, they can connect with students to help come up with study or time management strategies, and to identify when students need assistance meeting basic needs before they can effectively engage with their courses.

Starting in Fall 2023, SSA will begin outreach to the incoming first-year cohort, specifically to first generation students and students with low high school GPAs, to connect them early on to any services they may require to be successful in college. SSA has also been looking at data around First Year Seminar courses, and is planning to collaborate with faculty to implement progress reports for students who don't pass their FYS class. Under this initiative, SSA would connect with

faculty in Week 3 of the term to have them identify students in their classes who may be in danger of failing; SSA would then perform outreach to those students to connect them with resources.

Detailed degree plans show students how they can effectively meet goals, and also lets SSA find disparities (e.g., when courses aren't offered when the degree plan indicates students should be taking them).

The dips in retention rate reflect sociocultural conditions (nationally, retention dipped around the 2016 election cycle, and with COVID in 2020); WOU's specific retention trends could also be related to inconsistency in SSA administration and a lack of coordination over time across the university. It is especially notable, however, that the 5% increase in retention rates occurred during the lingering pandemic, which might be attributed to WOU's revised admissions requirements that same year.

2) Review of Goals for 2022-2023

(3:30-3:40pm)

The committee reviewed the progress of their 2022-2023 work plan.

The committee discussed when and how the work plan (specifically around enrollment and new programs) relates to/overlaps with strategic planning. President Peters and Associate Provost Judy Sylva are currently working on the strategic plan, with work starting in earnest during Spring Term. Discussion at a previous Board meeting prioritized work already taking place around university budget reductions and the upcoming NWCCU accreditation visit; the strategic planning process would begin when the timing was right for the organization and in relation to other initiatives. Board Chair Comp has not pushed for a faster timeline, favoring a thoughtful process that accounts for a new Provost and new Director of Human Resources.

The committee also acknowledged a need to review the goals to ensure they align with the expectations and needs of students.

The equity audit may be an opportunity to get a different perspective on campus climate/morale; the audit results could be brought to ASAC. Student Affairs and Academic Affairs are launching the National Survey on Student Engagement; the survey is conducted every three years with first-year students and seniors to gauge student satisfaction. This year's survey will be completed in May; the data from will be made available to ASAC and the Board to help inform future goal setting.

The goals for the committee were given to all committees by President Peters; they are the pillars of his focus for his first year as president. The Board will have a fall retreat where the committees can review the Board charter and set goals for the academic year around directives provided by Chair Komp. The retreat will also be opportunity to integrate the Board's goals into the individual committee charters.

3) Prep for May 31, 2023 Meeting

(3:40-3:45pm)

- **Suggestions for discussion topics at future meetings**

- **Increase length of meetings to 3 hours**

The Committee agreed to extend the meeting time to three hours to make space for presentations, and to allow for more discussion. Specific start times for subsequent already-scheduled meetings will be decided at a later date via an asynchronous poll.

4) [Student Affairs Update](#) | *Vice President Tina Fuchs* (3:45-3:52pm)

Tina Fuchs reviewed her report for Student Affairs, as provided in the docket materials.

Director of Admissions candidate search is currently underway; the intention is to have the new director start on July 1.

First year applications are up 9.1%; transfer numbers are down 28%, up from 50.4% in January. Transfer numbers are continuing to increase due to focused efforts by the Assistant Director for Transfer Students this month on transfer fairs and visits. Overall, applications are up 4.4%.

All but three days in April are scheduled with group visits to campus.

5) [Academic Affairs Update](#) | *Provost Rob Winningham* (3:52-3:59pm)

Rob Winningham reviewed his report for Academic Affairs, as provided in the docket materials.

Academic Affairs accounts for 56% of the university budget; as part of the five million dollar university-wide budget reduction, Academic Affairs reduced 2.8 million dollars of the FY24 budget. The majority of cuts came from reducing non-tenure track faculty from 105 full-time equivalents to 80, totally 1.9 million dollars. Most staff positions being cut in the reduction are vacant lines; very few are currently filled. Five tenure track faculty lines across the two colleges will not be filled following spring retirements and resignations, reducing the budget by another \$460,000. Remaining budget reductions included eliminating positions in the Writing Center and Institutional Research, as well as a restructure in Student Success and Advising.

VI. ADJOURNMENT (4:00pm)

Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 3:59pm.