



**Western Oregon University Board of Trustees:
Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Meeting No. 34 – March 21, 2024
8:30 am-10:00am
Via [Zoom](#) | By Phone: 1-253-215-8782
Meeting ID: 825 7941 0372 Passcode: 227505**

AGENDA

- I. CALL-TO-MEETING AND ROLL CALL** (08:30-8:33am)
- II. COMMITTEE CHAIR’S WELCOME** (08:33-8:34am)
- III. CONSENT AGENDA** (08:34-8:36am)
 - 1) [Meeting Minutes: January 16, 2024](#)
- IV. REPORT & DISCUSSION ITEMS:**
 - 1) Showcase & Discussion: [Financial Aid Status Update for the 2024-2025 Academic Year](#) (08:36 - 09:16am)
 - 2) [2023-2024 Academic Year \(Workplan\) Update](#) (09:16 – 09:56am)
- V. ADJOURNMENT**



Western Oregon University Board of Trustees:
Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Meeting No. 33– Jan 16, 2024
8:30am-10:00am
Minutes

I. CALL-TO-MEETING AND ROLL CALL

Chair Mitchell calls the meeting of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee to order at 8:30am on Tuesday January 16, 2024. Chair Mitchell asked Secretary Sorce to call the roll.

Committee members present: David Foster, Betty Komp, Cristian Mendez-Garcia, Chair Leah Mitchell, Kari Nelsestuen. Quorum is Present.

Others Present: President Peters, Secretary Evan Sorce

II. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Mitchell welcomes everyone to the meeting and thanks them all for being there.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

[October 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes](#)

Trustee Nelsestuen moved the approval of the May 31, 2023 meeting minutes, and Trustee Mendez-Garcia seconded the motion. The following Trustees voted in support of the motion. David Foster, Betty Komp, Cristian Mendez-Garcia, Leah Mitchell, Kari Nelsestuen. The motion passed unanimously with no changes.

IV. REPORTS & DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1) **Showcase & Discussion:** [Grade Change Policy – Provost Coll](#)

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Jose Coll gave an update on the Grade Change Policy. Provost Coll started off the conversation reminding folks that this is not an institutional policy but an academic regulation change. Starting in the Summer the D- and F grade will no longer exist in the catalogue. This will require Faculty to evaluate a student using the grade range from A to D with anything below a D receiving a no credit. This decision was made by looking at the data. Our data suggests that students who receive a F during the first quarter have about a 63% attrition rate versus students who do not earn an F which has about a 20% attrition rate. Leadership checked in the Department of Education, our accrediting body (NWCCU), and Veterans Affairs to ensure that financial aid would not be impacted. Other institutions have gone in this direction including Brown University, Evergreen University, Reed College. For more information on the Grade change policy [click here](#).

Trustee Nelsestuen asked if there was a timeframe to retake the course if they do not receive a no credit. The answer is no. Trustee Mendez Garcia asked how the University was going to get the word out intentionally to perspective students? The press release, the FAQ, and additional information has been shared with the list of perspective students database that we have which is about 76,000 perspective students. Trustee Foster asked if other grads such as SNC will be eliminated with this academic regulation change and the answer is yes.

The plan to present this to the full board will be to include it in Chair Mitchell's ASAC update at the February Board Meeting.

2) [Academic and Student Affairs Committee 2023-2024 Workplan](#) |

Chair Mitchell started this conversation by providing context of the importance of the development of the workplan and gave a basic orientation of the plan. Then asked VP Fuchs and Provost Coll to walk through the draft workplan. The draft workplan is included in the January 16th Docket for review. Trustee Mendez Garcia asked a question about students who receive a special admission and if that is different than a condition emission? VP Fuchs answered that it is roughly the same thing.

Trustee Mendez Garcia followed up with a question of what goes into the determination for us to give someone a special admit to the university? VP Fuchs said they look at all of the markers of requirements to be admitted into the University, so for example they might not have all the credits of language or science etc. The ones that are most scrutinized are the people that do not meet the GPA requirement. Trustee Mendez Garcia asked if WOU ensures that these special admit get support through Student Enrichment Program our Student Success Programs throughout their educational experience at WOU? VP Fuchs said that they do their best to connect students with those wrap around supports to ensure they will be successful but that there are certainly situations where students fall through the gaps. This prompted a conversation about what is the right percentage of conditional admits is appropriate.

Trustee Nelsestuen and Chair Komp both asked the question of how are we determining through the workplan of what are priorities for the committee and the Board and what are things that can just be updated in the plan? Chair Mitchell has asked staff to prioritize what issues need to come in front of the board and what we can just update through the plan.

3) [Academic Affairs Update](#) | *Provost Jose Coll*

Provost Coll presented the Academic Affairs Update. The report is available in the docket for the review. Provost Coll discussed working to develop a new process to work with the faculty senate to create a process that while looking at new academic programs considers the sustainability of the proposed plan that looks holistically at the resources needed to sustain the proposed program. He also mentioned the desire to create an Academic Master Plan.



4) [Student Affairs Update](#) | *Vice President Tina Fuchs*

VP Fuchs presented the Student Affairs Update. The report is available in the docket for review.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Mitchell adjourns the at 09:53am



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Financial Aid Status Update 2024-25 Academic Year



FAFSA Overhaul Overview

- First time major changes have taken place in 50 years
- The process has been simplified for the filer but changes have been massive to rollout
- This overhaul delayed the opening of FAFSA
- Expected Family Contribution (EFC) changed to Student Aid Index (SAI)
- Everybody is a contributor on the FAFSA
 - Student, parents, etc. (anyone with financial information to inform the student's aid eligibility)



Challenges

- Delayed opening of FAFSA
 - Delayed receipt of Institutional Student Information Records (ISIRs)
 - Limited batches of ISIRs (unknown application type)
 - **One positive note:** ED will be selecting fewer students for verification
- Compressed timeline
 - Limited time for students to file
 - Summer is term 1 of a FAFSA year
- Parents without SSNs
- Oregon Opportunity Grant impacted due to new Federal eligibility formula
- Internal systems need to be updated (more info on slide 5)
- Data sharing will be different
- Impact on enrollment because of the unknowns
 - Some new students taking gap year, current students stopping out



Proactive Measures

- Communicating to students and encouraging completion of the FAFSA
 - Email, website, during sessions noted below
- FAFSA Filing Program (Leap into the New Year - Feb 29)
- FAFSA presentations and Informational Sessions to campus organizations, classes, and high schools
- Office hours available to assist students with filing FAFSAs
- Updated information on the Financial Aid [website](#)
- Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA)
 - Students without an SSN are eligible to file for ORSAA since January



Preparation for timely processing of Awards

- Financial Aid is preparing systems to receive awards
 - Ensuring algorithms are accurate
 - SQL statements updated
 - Federal tracking requirements implemented
 - Setting accurate student budgets for 24-25
 - Tuition and all fees
 - Housing and meals
- Initial plan is to process awards weekly
 - **Challenge:** limited number of ISIRs received at a time
 - Unsure when all ISIRs will be received



General Scholarships

- Completely within WOU's control
- Application opened November 1 and closed March 1
- Feedback from ASWOU to keep the timeline the same as previous years
- 1151 scholarship applications
 - (1287 in 23-24, 1381 in 22-23)
- Review of applications is currently underway (due April 2)
- Students must accept scholarship offers by May 1
 - Once accepted they will be added to the Financial Aid award offer

Department Scholarships

- 53 different department scholarships available
- Applications close May 1
- Awarded by departments



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Questions?

Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASAC) Report - March 2024

Tina M. Fuchs, Vice President for Student Affairs

Belongingness is an important part of the student experience and relates directly to the yield of our admitted students and their retention and persistence to graduation. Student Affairs has embraced the phrase “where you belong” as a guiding principle in the work that we do. What follows are updates to work happening in many of the areas in Student Affairs, with undertones supporting a sense of belonging, not only for students, but for our staff within the division as well.

Admissions

Admissions continues to work on strategic initiatives around recruitment. While focusing on in-state recruitment as our primary target, Admissions is also creating strategy for out-of-state recruitment and communication outreach. This includes a level of engagement with [WUE affiliated states](#) and Texas. The Director and Multicultural Counselor are visiting Texas March 18-19 to meet with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and sign partnerships focused on college access. They include: [Academic Success Program](#) (Dallas, TX) and [IDEA Public Schools](#) (TX, LA, FL, OH)

Admissions is also working with Marketing and Communications on a Communications Campaign, which is in its final edits (may be finalized by the time the ASAC meets). This campaign includes a minimum of ten messages sent to all students engaging with WOU:

- Students who submit WOU's inquiry form
- Students who engage with WOU thru on-campus or off-campus events
- Student names purchased via search vendors (i.e., EAB, College Board, etc.)

These communications will automatically flow via Slate CRM once students have “raised their hand” (shown interest) or are imported into the system.

The work with The Parish Group (project based, training, and best practice thought partner) to guide the work Admissions is doing with Slate. This current phase of work with Parish includes expanding from some projects (i.e. report and query creation) to teach admissions and other offices best practices on how to use and work within the Slate Technolutions tools.

The Enrollment Deposit work continues. Some obstacles were encountered around the payment processing of student deposits. A small team of folks are looking at a workaround solution using V# + Elavon (USBank's online payment system) + the Slate portal. Due to these challenges, the deposit will not be introduced until Fall 2024

Admissions has worked on a virtual tour of campus buildings and spaces partnering with the Educational Advisory Board (EAB) subsidiary, YouVisit. Set to launch early spring term.

Fall 2024 Application Data

As of March 11, first time Freshmen applications are up for Fall 2024 from this time last year by 3.4%. Transfer applications are down 16.5%. Overall, applications are up 1.7% over this time last year (not including graduate student applications)

Financial Aid

Please refer to the email from Evan Sorce, Board Secretary, sent to the Board of Trustees on February 22. Kella Helyer, Director of Financial Aid, will be giving an update on the status of Financial Aid to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee at the March 21 committee meeting.

New Student & Family Programs (NSFP)

The NSFP team is gearing up for orientation and that includes all steps in the PACK Welcome process (Prepare, Advise, Connect, and Know). NSFP launched the Prepare step, which includes the following:

- A series of monthly emails with tasks students can be done to ease their onboarding process and get them connected to services early
- Staggered communications so that early admits get more information earlier so they receive more connection points, and as students are admitted they are entered into the communication pipeline
- An additional simultaneous communication called "Get to Know WOU" where students get monthly emails that recap campus events and introduce them to services without any action items. This is in line with best practices to engage with students more casually to encourage them to see WOU as a place where they belong.

University Housing

Occupancy in student housing is up 6.6% over last year at this time. In February, Housing completed their renewal process for current residents who wish to live on campus for the next academic year (24-25). They had record breaking numbers of current residents wishing to renew their contract for next year. More than half of all on campus students renewed which is up 15% from this time last year. On the flip-side, new housing reservations are currently down 15% from this time last year.

Abby's House, Center for Equity & Gender Justice

Per the last report to ASAC, Abby's House has been pursuing grant opportunities to supplement their funding and provide additional resources to students. To that end, Abby's House submitted an application for a \$50,000 grant through [Spirit Mountain Community Fund](#). This grant will assist with some salary of our confidential advocate (the grant that currently funds the salary which will end in September), as well as funding direct needs for students (assisting with emergency needs for survivors of interpersonal violence, as well as students who are struggling with basic needs insecurities).

Data Points: As of March 8, the Food Pantry/Stitch closet served 676 households in a variety of ways including providing 7,505 lbs of food during Winter term. They have entered into a contract with [Pantrysoft](#) to better track people served, while also providing a higher level of

confidentiality. They also supported 62 students for basic needs/insecurities, and 12 students for confidential advocacy.

Programming and Partnerships: Abby's House launched their first sexual assault survivor support group Winter term, and it's been very successful so far. Spring term they plan to have a support group around dating violence and unhealthy relationships. Additionally, Abby's House is developing a relationship with Polk County Resource Center to assist with students' basic needs.

Child Development Center

The Child Development Center is a highly used resource on campus. They continue to maintain full enrollment with a waitlist of families who are eager to use the resource if openings occur. To promote the Center and celebrate the work they do, they hosted a very successful Family Fun Night on February 8, 2024 with over 100 guests attending. Adding special value to the event, the staff handed out over 300 stuffed animals which were generously donated by WOU students, faculty, and staff.

Student Conduct

Per last meeting's report, the office of Student Conduct was in the final phases of updating the Code of Student Responsibility. Next step is an official Comment period through May 1, 2024. Moreover, the Code is being reviewed and will be translated into Spanish

Student Engagement

One of Student Engagement's goals is to help students see that the Werner University Center is a space where they belong. To support this goal, Student Engagement has been encouraging student groups to do more programming both in person and virtually. Groups such as the Stonewall Center, Student Activities Board, our Fraternities and Sororities, and Student Engagement staff have hosted numerous programs and activities this term to promote student life on campus. Activities have ranged from movie nights, game nights, a cookie event, Portland Trailblazer excursion, collaboration with Campus Recreation on a water polo event, Prep Week activities, and more.

Student Health and Counseling Center (SHCC)

The Student Health and Counseling Center continues to be a highly utilized resource on campus. In addition to medical and individual counseling sessions, Student Health and Counseling is launching a support group called "New Connections" which allows participants to gain skills to decrease loneliness, sadness, and negative thoughts after losing connections with family, friends and partners. The 7 week long support group begins in April.

Veterans Resource Center (VRC)

Student Veteran Enrollment is the same as last year's Winter term enrollment. 124 students are utilizing a Veterans Administration (VA) benefit of some kind. However, it does not include National Guardsman or Reservists using Financial Tuition Assistance ([FTA](#)) or Oregon National Guard State Tuition Assistance ([ONGSTA](#)) without a VA benefit.

The Veterans Resource Center has been hosting **Warrior Wellness**, a recurring Yoga & meditation program open to all WOU community & Alumni. This program is offered weekly this term from week six through finals week, 58 attendees so far. The VRC collaborated with Campus Recreation to hire a student Yoga instructor for multiple weeks. See [@wou_veterans on IG](#) for pictures!

The new [Strengths-Based Grading](#) system recently adopted at WOU has implications for Veteran students who receive the G.I. Bill Benefit. Admissions, Financial Aid, Office of The Registrar, Business Office, and the Veterans Resource Center met to ground leaders on these impacts to best communicate with students on potential impacts. Some of those impacts include:

- Students receiving a housing allowance (MHA) will receive a letter of debt from the VA if they receive an NC grade in a class which then drops their effective time below full-time (prorated, [see WOU's VA page here](#))
- Students using various chapters, especially our most common user CH33, will incur a debt to the school as the school pays back the VA for a letter of debt for **any** NC class outcome
- There are limited resources available to mitigate these debts internally. A key external resource is the ODVA Vocational Bridge Grant, a student can apply for this max \$ 5,000-lifetime award for educational debt. ODVA would pay the school directly, this does not refund MHA's financial losses.

VRC Director Logan Doerfler will be working closely with Veteran Students in collaboration with the Registrar and Financial Aid to educate Veteran students and assist them if they drop below full-time as a result of an NC grade.

Wolfstore

The Wolfstore continues to make changes and updates to the store layout and selection of their retail items. Most notably, and aligning with the theme of Belongingness, the Wolfstore designed their 2024 Pride themed shirts with the caption, "Where You Belong." While Pride month is a few months away, it was important for the Wolfstore to have the shirt available in time for the Gay Student Alliance (GSA) day, which was hosted on campus on March 8.



Vice President for Student Affairs

Student Affairs has been working on several initiatives including parts of the [ASAC Work Plan](#) for 2023-24. Areas of focus include:

Academic Organization

The Vice President serves as one of the co-chairs, along with the interim Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, to the Enrollment Strategies Team. The team recently completed the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP) and the co-chairs are currently guiding

workgroups to develop outcomes alignment to the plan that will be assessed over time. The SEMP aligns with WOU's recent Strategic Plan.

Student Co-Curricular Strategies

Destination Western (DW) has been a model of retention, particularly for our underrepresented, first generation, and low income students. State funding helped build the robust program and allowed us to establish a New Student and Family Programs (NSFP) office. The legislature pulled back on funding after year two of the program, but WOU saw the value in the DW and in the work of NSFP around orientation and onboarding of our new students. The Director of NSFP, Megan Habermann, submitted a proposal to the President to continue the support of the programs in NSFP and that proposal was approved for the FY25 year. The funding will support DW, PACK events for both first year and transfer students, Winter and Spring term orientations, and Family Weekend.

Policies Governing Student Conduct and Student Organizations

As noted in the Student Conduct report above, the Code of Student Responsibility has been updated and is in its final draft form. It is in the official comment period (through May 1) and then will be published. The Student Conduct office will also have the document translated into Spanish.

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Report
Jose Coll, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
March 2024

Reimaging WOU Writing Center:

The Research and Writing Center is a new and exciting collaborative support model for students producing academic content across the curriculum and at all levels. The model conjoins the Writing Center and the library's Research and Access Programs; notable campus stakeholders include the Student Success and Advising Office, the First Year Writing Program, faculty in all disciplines, Library Instruction, Graduate Programs, and the Center for Teaching and Learning. The mission of the new Writing Center is to promote the development and success of WOU students as college writers and support faculty who assign writing in their classes. The Writing Center will include a fulltime Director, two professional staff members, and approximately 15 student-writing consultants from across the curriculum. In addition to serving the entire undergraduate and graduate student population, the Writing Center will provide programs that specifically address the writing needs of international students and Spanish-speaking students.

New Direction Center for Teaching & Learning (previously known academic innovation)

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is an academic support unit reporting to the Dean of Library and Academic Innovation. The Center for Teaching and Learning will provide opportunities and resources for the Western Oregon University community to identify and explore practices that optimize teaching and learning, both online and on-campus. CTL will do this by providing faculty development programming, instructional design consultations, and support for teaching with technology. The unit will include a Center for Teaching and Learning Director, an Instructional Technology Specialist (LMS Support), an Instructional Technology Specialist (Instructional Design), an Instructional Technology Specialist (Faculty Development Support) and two .5 FTE Graduate Assistants.

Study Abroad:

Provost met with the Faculty Senate International Committee to discuss study abroad. Challenges discussed included but were not limited to our existing lack of staff to administer study abroad programs, institutional capacity for ongoing compliance with federal regulations intersecting with study abroad, robust risk assessment, and crisis management.

As Provost, I do have concerns about cost barriers which prohibit many students from participating in these programs. A consequence to our quarter system: federal financial aid regulations dictate disbursements happen at the start of the home institution's term. With most schools on semesters that start earlier than us, students often can't get their financial aid until weeks or more after their SA program has started. This requires students have the ability to front costs and WOU currently does not have scholarships or financial support for study abroad.

The discussion also allowed us to discuss of how to support students who wish to participate as well as a discussion of what is needed for accountability, sustainability, and compliance. One existing viable option for students is the National Student Exchange while WOU explores institutional partnerships with PSU and OSU to support students who wish to take advantage of study abroad.