



**Western Oregon University Board of Trustees:
Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Meeting No. 39– April 8, 2025
1:00pm-3:00pm
Minutes**

I. CALL-TO-MEETING AND ROLL CALL

Chair Mitchell calls the meeting of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee to order at 1:00pm on Tuesday April 8, 2025. Chair Mitchell asked Secretary Sorce to call the roll.

Committee Members Present: Chair Leah Mitchell, Vice-Chair Kari Nelsestuen, Trustee Dana Schowalter, Quorum is Present.

Committee Members Excused: Trustee Hunter Hall, Trustee Juan Larios

Others Present: President Peters, Secretary Evan Sorce, Tina Fuchs, Dr. Jose Coll, Randi Lydum, Rip Horsey

II. COMMITTEE CHAIR’S WELCOME

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

Secretary Sorce reminded the committee that this meeting will be recorded and posted because of a new state law requiring the recording and posting of Board Meetings.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

[February 4, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)

Trustee Nelsestuen moved the approval of the February 4, 2025 meeting minutes, and Trustee Schowalter seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion.

Roll Call on the mention of the motion described above

Chair Mitchell	Aye
Board Vice Chair Nelsestuen	Aye
Trustee Hall	Excused
Trustee Larios	Excused
Trustee Schowalter	Aye

IV. ACTION ITEMS:

1) Update Committee Name to include Athletics | Evan Sorce

Chair Mitchell asked Secretary Sorce to lead the conversation around updating their name to include athletics, with suggestions such as “Academic Student and Athletic Affairs Committee” or “Academic, Student, Athletics, and Affairs Committee. The Committee discussed a number of options.

Trustee Nelsestuen moved to change the committee name from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee to Academic, Student and Athletic, Affairs Committee. Trustee Schowalter seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion.

Roll Call on the mention of the motion described above

Chair Mitchell	Aye
Board Vice Chair Nelsestuen	Aye
Trustee Hall	Excused
Trustee Larios	Excused
Trustee Schowalter	Aye

Motion Passes

V. REPORTS & DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1) Showcase & Discussion: | Director of Campus Recreation Rip Horsey

Chair Mitchell asked Rip Horsey, Director of Campus Recreation, to give his presentation to the committee. His presentation can be found on page six for review. Director Horsey discussed the facilities, programs, and student engagement that the team does. Director Horsey highlighted the Peter Courtney Health and Wellness Center, aquatic center, intermural sports, and club sports program. Director Horsey added that there has been an increase in student usage of the facilities and outlined efforts to secure funding for resurfacing the aging turf field. Additional. Director Horsey mentioned recent successes in club sports, including the women’s rugby team’s national appearance and the men’s lacrosse team’s regional qualification.

Director Horsey highlighted the commitment to student safety, student employment opportunities as well as professional development and growth for the student employees. He also discussed the challenges of attracting students, including factors such as inconvenient hours and lack of interest in certain programs. The Recreation Center generates revenue from outside groups using the turf field, focusing on connecting these events to recruitment activities. The board members expressed support for the presentation and raised questions about the revenue sources and student engagement. Chair Mitchell asked for a little bit of history of the referendum process for the turf. Director Horsey and Secretary Sorce mentioned the need for a referendum to replace the turf field at the campus recreation facility. They explained that the last time a referendum was asked for was in 2010, and since then, they have not requested any additional increases. The current request is due to the high cost of



replacing the turf, and they are seeking a Article F Bond from the state, which is essentially a low-interest loan for the state to help fund the project. The proposed fee increase would be \$10 per term, and the referendum would last for 12 years. Secretary Sorce added that this project is separate from the capital campaign for an athletic field for soccer.

2) Division Updates:

a. Academic Affairs | Provost Jose Coll

Dr. Jose Coll provided his update on Academic Affairs. His report can be found on page 21 for review. Dr. Coll mentioned that the international office is monitoring the executive branch's actions and their impact on international students. Dr. Coll mentioned that they are advising students not to travel abroad due to the likelihood of being unable to return. The university is also monitoring the impact of the Supreme Court's decisions on grants, particularly the bilingual teacher education grant. Dr. Coll reported a 26% increase in applications and a 25% increase in admitted student numbers. The university is proactively engaging students who have declared Western as their institution of interest. Dr. Coll also mentioned the successful search for the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the ongoing search for the Dean of the College of Education.

Trustee Schowalter asked about the reductions in graduate assistant positions and their potential impact on graduate enrollment. Dr. Coll clarified that the reduction should not directly affect enrollment, as the positions were not used as a recruiting tool. Trustee Schowalter asked about the workflow for faculty with grants without the Dean of Graduate studies and Sponsored Research position filled, to which Dr. Coll explained that the Director of Sponsored research would continue to work closely with faculty. Lastly, Trustee Schowalter expressed concerns about the ongoing uncertainty and trauma among faculty due to the annual budget cuts and the need for a more stable process. Dr. Coll acknowledged the challenging situation but emphasized that this challenge is not unique to Western Oregon University. Still, many universities in Oregon and nationwide are in this situation. President Peters acknowledged the uncertainty and stress and emphasized that it's not unique to faculty, but also to staff. He noted that it's not unique to higher education and is happening nationwide. He thanked the team for their work in mitigating the trauma going forward. Chair Mitchell asked about the frozen grants in teacher education. Dr. Coll discussed the challenges of managing federal grants and the potential impact of a freeze in funding, highlighting the need to secure reimbursement and evaluate the cash flow to support critical programs.

b. Student Affairs | Vice President Tina Fuchs

Vice President Fuchs gave the update for Student Affairs. Her report can be found on page 32 of the docket for review. She acknowledged the ongoing trauma experienced by staff due to budget reductions and the need for thoughtful discussions to maintain morale and keep staff whole. Vice President Fuchs discussed the positive developments in the financial aid office, which is now fully



staffed. This has led to a more efficient awarding process, with students receiving information about their Federal and Pell grants early in March. A postcard was sent to new students to inform them about their financial aid package, which was well-received. The financial aid team was able to build packages for all new students, including transfers and first-year students, and mailed them out a month earlier than the previous year. Chair Mitchell and Trustee Nelsestuen expressed their appreciation for the team's hard work and the improvements made in the financial aid process. Vice President Fuchs discussed the significant progress made by the MSSP program in persistence, with 97% persistence from fall to winter for first-time freshmen and transfers. She also highlighted the success of the TRIO Upward Bound program, which exceeded its performance objectives for the 2023-2024 academic year. Vice President Fuchs also mentioned the strong performance of the Student Health and Counseling team and the record number of walk-ins for the Veterans Resource Center during the winter quarter after they moved back to their regular space after a flooding incident earlier in the year.

c. Athletics | Athletic Director Randi Lydum

Athletic Director Lydum gave the athletics update, which can be found on page 37 in the docket for review. Athletic Director shared a ROI report and the impact of athletics. She also mentioned what the GPA impact would be with the elimination of D's and F's after the change to the grading policy last year. She mentioned that there has been an increase in athletics on the honor roll and GPAs were increased a bit. Athletic Director Lydum mentioned the partnership with Abby's House for Sexual Assault Awareness Month and shared other community engagement opportunities. Both Vice President Fuchs and Athletic Director expressed gratitude for the support received during the challenging times.

3) Committee Charter Review | Evan Sorce

Chair Mitchell asked Secretary Sorce to review its charter, focusing on responsibilities related to academic curriculum, education policy, co-curricular strategies, student health and safety, and student conduct policies. They discuss the need to clarify language around the board's role in reviewing student conduct codes, balancing oversight with protecting the process from politicization. The committee agrees to work on updating the charter language, particularly regarding athletics oversight. They also considered adding standing agenda items to align with charter responsibilities. Trustee Nelsestuen agreed to give the committee report at the next meeting in Chair Mitchell's absence.

4) **ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Mitchell adjourns the at 02:45pm