



**Western Oregon University Board of Trustees:  
Academic & Student Affairs Committee  
Meeting No. 41– Oct 28, 2025  
3:00 pm-5:00 pm**

**Draft Minutes**

**I. CALL-TO-MEETING AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Mitchell calls the Academic & Student Affairs Committee meeting to order at 3:01 pm on Tuesday, October 28, 2025. Chair Mitchell asked Secretary Sorce to call the roll.

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Leah Mitchell, Trustee Bob Dalton, Trustee Biannca Espan, Trustee Dana Schowalter

**Committee Members Excused:** None

**Others Present:** President Peters, Secretary Evan Sorce, Tina Fuchs, Dr. Jose Coll, Randi Lydum, Robin Lopez Melton, Malissa Larson.

**II. COMMITTEE CHAIR’S WELCOME**

Chair Mitchell welcomes everyone, especially the new members on the committee, to the meeting and thanks them all for being there.

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

**[May 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)**

Trustee Schowalter moved to approve the May 28, 2025, meeting minutes, and Trustee Larios seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion.

Roll Call on the mention of the motion described above

Chair Mitchell	Aye
Trustee Dalton	Aye
Trustee Larios	Aye
Trustee Schowalter	Aye

Please note: Trustee Espan is a non-voting member

The motion passes.

**IV. REPORTS & DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- 1) **Showcase & Discussion:** | The Research Institute (TRI) Overview  
Robyn Lopez Melton, Director for the Research Institute

Chair Mitchell asked Director of the Research Institute, Robyn Lopez Melton, to kick off her presentation, which can be found on page 5 of the docket for review.

Director Lopez Melton presented an overview of The Research Institute's work, highlighting its focus on early childhood education (i.e., Find Child Care Oregon and Child Care Substitutes of Oregon), traffic safety (training trainers in safety education), and community support. Director Lopez Melton mentioned that they have 54 full-time staff members working across Oregon on various projects and grants, as well as 87 hourly staff working as educators in schools and communities. Additional Director Lopez Melton explained TRI's funding structure, which receives no general fund support and relies entirely on grants and contracts. Some of TRI's funders include the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), the Oregon Department of Transportation, Multnomah County, the Ford Family Foundation, Oregon State University, and Pacific Lutheran University. Director Lopez Melton detailed their current projects, including a childcare database, a substitute care program, and a quality recognition system for childcare providers.

Trustee Larios asked how far the reach of the child care programs is. Director Lopez Melton emphasized that it is statewide and that the program is working hard to ensure substitutes are available in every community. Chair Mitchell asked how TRI starts new programs. Director Lopez Melton said that sometimes the programs start because the State or funders ask them to do something, and sometimes it's based on the university's mission. The conversation ended with Provost Coll thanking Director Lopez Melton and her team for the amazing work they are doing, for aligning TRI's work with Academic Affairs, and for leveraging TRI's success to secure more funding and recognition.

## 2) Division Updates:

### a. Academic Affairs | Provost Jose Coll

Dr. Jose Coll provided his update on Academic Affairs. His report is available as a supplemental document on the website for review. Dr Coll highlighted the ongoing effort to improve classroom environments, an issue raised at a Provost-led Fireside Chat listening session. This issue is particularly challenging in Bellamy Hall. The current furniture in that building is outdated and does not meet best practices for classroom learning and teaching, which will be installed soon. Provost Coll then discussed some classroom technology needs to continue modernizing our facilities and create a state-of-the-art learning environment for our students. This includes sound systems and multiple cameras, which truly enable dual teaching modalities. Additionally, Dr. Coll mentioned ongoing discussions about restructuring Academic Affairs to better align with the institution's mission and goals as a teaching institution and to better support our students.

Trustee Schowalter asked a couple of questions that led to a conversation about the university's approach to online and hybrid education with Provost Coll



explaining that while online education might be helpful or even necessary for some adult learners and transfer students, it is a strategic priority for the institution to maintain a in person, residential focus for our first-year students. Provost Coll outlined ongoing efforts to clarify the operational definitions of different course modalities and discussed plans to restructure certain academic divisions.

b. Student Affairs | Vice President for Student Affairs Tina Fuchs

Vice President for Student Affairs gave an overview of her report, which can be found on page seven of the docket. Vice President Fuchs emphasized the importance of on-campus community development to create an environment where our students can develop the skills and relationships to thrive. It is very difficult to do virtually. Vice President Fuchs highlighted the change to student week from a Sunday to a weekday, which allowed parents and students to visit offices like financial aid that are not open on weekends. This change was overwhelmingly well-received, and for families who had to move in on the weekend, there was a process in place to accommodate them. This year's orientation was very well attended and successful. Finally, the Freedom Center's transition to the MOSIAC Center is complete. It is now a central hub for leadership development for students involved in clubs that serve underrepresented communities. Vice President Fuchs also walked through a number of different offices within Student Affairs that have been pursuing and often receiving grants, including Veterans Resource Center, Abby's House, and Child Development Center.

c. Athletics | Executive Director Randi Lydum

Executive Director Lydum presented the Athletics report, which is available on page 20 of the docket. Executive Director Lydum reported on the success of fall sports teams. Executive Director Lydum talked about Athletics' intention to work with Admissions to develop a better partnership, so we can receive admissions information earlier and help our potential students get what they need more quickly. The Foundation has been incredibly helpful and has gone above and beyond to get new sponsorships and larger sponsorships. Mentioned the renaming of the New PE (Wolves Athletic Center) and Old PE (Dr. Ruth Lottenbach Hall) Dr. Lottenbach was a longtime PE teacher here and developed most of the women's sporting programs and classes in the 40s and 50s.

### 3) **ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Mitchell adjourns the at 04:36 pm