



**MEETING OF THE WOU BOARD OF
TRUSTEES MEETING NO. 71
November 18-19, 2025**

**NOVEMBER 18, 2025
PUBLIC MEETING 3:00-5:00 PM
WERNER UNIVERSITY CENTER |
COLUMBIA ROOM
DRAFT MINUTES**

I. CALL-TO-MEETING / ROLL CALL

Chair Angela Fasana called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm and asked Secretary Sorce to take roll.

Roll Call:

Chair Angela Fasana	Present
Vice Chair Kari Nelsestuen	Present (Remote)
Trustee Jerry Ambris	Excused
Trustee Bob Dalton	Present
Trustee Bianca Espain*	Present
Trustee Gayle Evans	Present
Trustee Paige Jackson	Present
Trustee Juan Larios	Excused
Trustee Leah Mitchell	Present (Remote)
Trustee Rey Perez	Present
Trustee Dana Schowalter	Present
Trustee Kate Schwarzler	Present
Trustee Jim Vu	Present
Trustee Susanna Winkler	Present
Trustee Mark Zook	Excused

*Trustee Espain is a Ex-Officio Member of the Board

II. CHAIR’S WELCOME

Chair Fasana welcomed everyone to Western Oregon University's campus on a beautiful fall day and to her ancestral homelands of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

III. PRESIDENT’S WELCOME

President Jesse Peters welcomed trustees and expressed appreciation for their continued service. He acknowledged challenges facing higher education, including budget pressures and uncertainty, while emphasizing optimism, community, and collaboration.

1) *STUDENTS AT THE CENTER: 2025 FALL KICKOFF VIDEO*

The Fall 2025 Kickoff Video was shown to the Trustees; it can be found by [clicking here](#).

IV. STAKEHOLDER UPDATES

1) **SHARED GOVERNANCE**

a. ASWOU | Morgan Pemberton

ASWOU President, Morgan Pemberton delivered the ASWOU report. ASWOU leadership reported increased student engagement, expanded student feedback efforts, and initiatives addressing food insecurity, including resource tables, food distribution, and partnerships with campus services.

b. Faculty Senate | Dr. Michael Baltzley

Dr. Michael Baltzley delivered the Faculty Senate Report. Their full report can be reviewed on Page 4 of the docket. Faculty Senate leadership reported on curriculum review, academic program development, online education strategy, and faculty concerns regarding course availability, enrollment trends, and academic staffing.

c. Staff Senate | Rip Horsey

Rip Horsey delivered the Staff Senate Update. Their full report can be found on page nine of the docket for review. Staff Senate leadership reported on staff engagement programs, training initiatives, communication efforts, and remote work policy implementation.

2) **UNION**

a. SEIU | Jackson Stalley

Union leadership shared staff perspectives, emphasizing the importance of trust, communication, and shared governance. They highlighted staff pride in student support initiatives and community engagement.

b. WOUFT | Dr. Benjamin Coté

Dr. Benjamin Coté delivered the WOUFT report. The Faculty union leadership reported on the implementation of collective bargaining and on faculty compensation concerns. They emphasized the need for competitive faculty salaries.

V. RECESS

Chair Fasana recessed the Board until Wednesday, November 19, at 10 am.

**November 19, 2025
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
WERNER UNIVERSITY CENTER | COLUMBIA ROOM**

DRAFT MINUTES

I. CALL-TO-MEETING / ROLL CALL

Chair Fasana called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and asked Secretary Sorce to take roll.

Roll Call:

Chair Angela Fasana:	Present
Vice Chair Kari Nelsestuen:	Present (Remote)
Trustee Jerry Ambris:	Present
Trustee Bob Dalton	Present
Trustee Bianca Espain*:	Present
Trustee Gayle Evans:	Present
Trustee Juan Larios	Present
Trustee Paige Jackson	Present
Trustee Leah Mitchell	Present
Trustee Rey Perez	Present
Trustee Dana Schowalter	Present
Trustee Kate Schwarzler	Present
Trustee Jim Vu	Present
Trustee Susanna Winkler	Present
Trustee Mark Zook	Excused

* Trustee Bianca Espain is a non-voting member

A quorum was present

II. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Fasana welcomed attendees and acknowledged the ancestral lands of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. She shared historical reflections regarding the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, including forced relocation, termination of federal tribal recognition, and restoration in 1983. She highlighted Western Oregon University's role in supporting tribal education and leadership development. Chair Fasana emphasized the ongoing relationship between the university and the tribal community.

III. CONSENT AGENDA ([Appendix A](#))

- 1) [June 3-4, 2025 Meeting Minutes:](#)
- 2) [FY26 Management Report](#) (As of December 31, 2025)

Chair Fasana presented the consent agenda, which included approval of the June 3-4, 2025, Meeting Minutes and the FY 26 Management Report (As of December 31, 2025). Trustee Ambris moved to approve the consent agenda. Trustee Dalton seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion

Roll Call:

Chair Angela Fasana	Aye
Vice-Chair Kari Nelsestuen	Aye
Trustee Jerry Ambris	Aye
Trustee Bob Dalton	Aye
Trustee Gayle Evans	Aye
Trustee Juan Larios	Aye
Trustee Paige Jackson	Aye
Trustee Leah Mitchell	Aye
Trustee Rey Perez	Aye
Trustee Dana Schowalter	Aye
Trustee Kate Schwarzler	Aye
Trustee Jim Vu	Aye
Trustee Susanna Winkler	Aye

Motion passed 13-0-0

IV. FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was provided

V. STAKEHOLDER UPDATES

1) WOU FOUNDATION REPORT | Katie Wojke, Vice President for Advancement

Vice President for Advancement, Katie Wojke, presented the WOU Foundation report. The full foundation report is available in Appendix B of the docket for review. Foundation leadership presented an update on campaign progress, reporting approximately \$19.9 million raised, representing 99.6% of the campaign goal. Scholarship and student success goals exceeded targets, while athletics remains a priority area for area. The Foundation also reported major gift activity, successful fundraising events, and continued donor engagement efforts. The Foundation audit was completed with no findings.

2) LEGISLATIVE REPORT | Evan Sorce, Executive Director for Government Relations

Secretary Sorce presented the Legislative Report, which can be found in Appendix B in the docket for review. Secretary Sorce

provided an update on state and federal legislative activity impacting higher education. He reported state budget challenges, including potential reductions to public university funding. Updated revenue forecasts showed improvement but continued uncertainty. Advocacy efforts will continue, including participation in University Lobby Day scheduled for February 12, 2026.

VI. [PRESIDENT'S REPORT](#) | President Jesse Peters
(Senior Leadership Council Reports in [Appendix B](#))

President Peters delivered his report, which is available on page 12 of the docket for review. Highlights from his report:

State Funding and Financial Context:

President Peters reported continued declines in state funding for public universities in Oregon. Despite reduced inflation-adjusted support, Western Oregon University has maintained strong fiscal discipline, limiting operating expense growth below peer and national averages while maintaining the most affordable tuition among Oregon public universities.

Enrollment and Recruitment:

New student enrollment increased, with first-year students up 7% and transfers up 4%, though total enrollment declined approximately 3%, consistent with broader trends. Application numbers have increased significantly, particularly among Oregon residents, and enhanced enrollment management systems are supporting recruitment and yield efforts.

Financial Sustainability and Operations:

The university continues strengthening financial sustainability through improved budget planning, financial health monitoring, enterprise system optimization, and operational efficiency improvements across Human Resources and Academic Affairs.

Revenue Generation and Fundraising:

Western secured significant external funding and revenue through grants, conference operations, and donor support. The Wolves Rising campaign exceeded scholarship and student success goals, though athletics fundraising remains a priority area.

Student Success and Campus Engagement

Student engagement indicators remain strong, including increased campus housing occupancy, expanded participation in student success programs, and growth in veteran student enrollment. Support programs such as Abby's House continue to provide critical assistance.

Athletics and Institutional Engagement

Athletics continues to enhance student engagement and institutional visibility. Western maintains NCAA Division II membership after reviewing potential

alternatives and determining that no significant financial advantage would result from changing affiliation.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Academic Excellence

The university continues advancing inclusive teaching, professional development, and outreach efforts. Western remains Oregon's first public four-year Hispanic-Serving Institution and continues supporting access and student success.

Community Engagement and Institutional Visibility

Western continues to strengthen regional partnerships and expand its presence in Salem and surrounding communities. Students and student-athletes actively contribute to community service and institutional outreach.

Trustees expressed appreciation for the President's report and emphasized the importance of communicating Western's financial stewardship, affordability, and institutional strengths to stakeholders.

X. FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (FAC)

1) Committee Chair Report | Trustee Gayle Evans

Trustee Gayle Evans, Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee, gave an update on the last FAC meeting, which was on November 4th. Trustee Evans then reported that the committee with staff conducted an extensive review of the university's financial position, including the management report, sustainability planning, safety, cybersecurity, and financial operations. The Trustee Evans acknowledged ongoing financial challenges related to enrollment declines, rising costs, and external funding pressures, and noted that leadership is implementing improved budgeting processes and operational efficiencies to strengthen long-term financial sustainability.

2) Committee Recommendations for Board Discussion/Action

a. [FY2026 Adjusted Budget](#)

Vice President for Finance and Administration Kwabena Boakye and Budget Director Camarie Moreno presented the FY2026 adjusted budget. The budget can be found on page 47 of the docket for review. The adjusted budget reflects lower-than-projected enrollment, increased institutional financial aid commitments, and updated state funding estimates, resulting in an overall revenue reduction of approximately \$3.2 million. Expense reductions totaling approximately \$3.0 million were implemented through vacancy management, operational reductions, and

budget adjustments. Despite these efforts, the projected operating deficit increased from \$3.7 million to \$4.1 million. The projected ending fund balance remains within Board policy guidelines.

The Board discussed financial strategy, including enrollment trends, tuition and financial aid strategy, grant funding, and structural cost alignment. Leadership emphasized aligning institutional expenses with long-term revenue capacity, improving operational efficiency, and strategically investing in enrollment growth and student success.

Leadership noted that holding vacant positions is being used as a temporary cost containment measure while senior leadership develops longer-term structural and organizational plans to address the university's structural deficit and ensure sustainable operations.

Following the discussion, Trustee Evans moved that the Western Oregon University Board of Trustees approve the 2026 adjusted budget as presented. Trustee Schwarzler seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion

Roll Call:

Chair Angela Fasana	Aye
Vice-Chair Kari Nelsestuen	Aye
Trustee Jerry Ambris	Aye
Trustee Bob Dalton	Aye
Trustee Gayle Evans	Aye
Trustee Juan Larios	Aye
Trustee Paige Jackson	Aye
Trustee Leah Mitchell	Aye
Trustee Rey Perez	Aye
Trustee Dana Schowalter	Aye
Trustee Kate Schwarzler	Aye
Trustee Jim Vu	Aye
Trustee Susanna Winkler	Aye

Motion passed 13-0-0

Following the Approval of the FY26 Adjusted Budget, at 12:19 pm. Chair Fasana recessed the meeting for twenty minutes for a break and to allow the Trustees to get their lunches.

- XI. LUNCH / SHOWCASE PRESENTATION:** [Enrollment Insights: Recruitment & Retention](#)- Paige Jackson – Assistant Provost for Enrollment Management and Student Success & Joy Brown – Director of Admissions

Assistant Provost for Enrollment Management Paige Jackson and Director of Admissions Joy Brown provided an enrollment update, which is available on page 27 of the docket review. Their presentation highlighted current trends, recruitment strategies, and long-term enrollment outlook. Overall enrollment declined approximately 3%, primarily due to smaller incoming classes in prior years and declines in graduate and international student enrollment. Despite this, the university experienced positive indicators, including increased first-year and transfer student enrollment and improved retention rates of approximately 76%, the highest level in recent years.

Admissions staff reported significant growth in recruitment activity and application volume, with applications increasing approximately 50% year-over-year, driven primarily by Oregon-based students. Campus visit participation increased by 91%, reflecting stronger student engagement and increased likelihood of enrollment. Recruitment strategies include expanded marketing efforts, increased use of direct admissions and the Common Application, targeted geographic recruitment, and adjustments to financial aid awarding to improve access, competitiveness, and net tuition revenue.

Leadership noted that enrollment recovery requires sustained growth over multiple years due to demographic trends, including declining numbers of high school graduates in Oregon. The university is implementing data-informed recruitment strategies, strengthening partnerships, and aligning financial aid and communications efforts to stabilize enrollment.

Graduate enrollment remains more variable due to smaller program sizes and working-adult student populations. The university is restructuring graduate recruitment efforts, strengthening internal staffing, improving communications, and aligning pricing and program offerings to better compete in the graduate education market.

Trustees expressed support for enrollment efforts and discussed opportunities to assist recruitment through community engagement, alumni outreach, and partnerships to strengthen enrollment pipelines and institutional visibility.

XII. ACADEMIC, STUDENT & ATHLETIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (ASAAC)

- 1) Committee Chair Report | Trustee Leah Mitchell
Chair Fasana gave the Academic, Athletics, and Student Affairs Committee, presented on behalf of Committee Chair Leah Mitchell. The Committee highlighted student-centered affordability initiatives, including the expansion of Open Educational Resources (OER), which have saved more than 3,500 students approximately \$651,628 since 2015. Additional low- and no-cost course designations saved students an estimated \$231,000 between 2023 and 2025.

The Committee reported ongoing efforts to expand and better coordinate online course offerings to align with student needs and the university's strategic plan. Graduate studies restructuring is underway to create a more integrated, student-centered model, improving admissions coordination, academic quality oversight, and advising. The university is also implementing Scholarly software to streamline curriculum management and accreditation reporting, with full implementation anticipated by summer 2026.

Athletics updates included strong competitive performance, with football finishing second in conference competition and both men's and women's soccer qualifying for postseason play. Athletics programs continue to enhance institutional visibility and engagement through strong performance and expanded outreach.

Student Affairs reported progress across the university's strategic plan priorities, including the opening of the Mosaic Center, renewal of major funding such as the Preschool Promise grant and Abby's House support funding, and expanded basic needs and veteran support services. Community partnerships strengthened student support programs, including food assistance and expanded services for student veterans and their families.

XIII. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE (DEIAC)

1) Committee Chair Report | Trustee Jerry Ambris

The Board received updates from the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee, from Trustee Jerry Ambris, and from the Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, including progress on the university's equity assessment and action plan. The equity assessment, initiated in 2022, included focus groups, policy reviews, and a campus climate survey, resulting in an action plan aligned with the university's strategic plan. Leadership has prioritized six new initiatives: expanding student representation on athletic advisory committees; increasing support for basic student needs; reinstating health promotion programs; improving reporting and prevention education; reviewing university recognition programs; and assessing parking to reduce barriers to access.

The university also reported progress on completed and ongoing initiatives, including implementing the Common Application, expanding technology access through expanded equipment borrowing programs, and establishing a new tuition hold threshold to reduce registration barriers for students. Additional efforts include developing the university's first digital accessibility

policy in preparation for federal compliance requirements by April 2026 and implementing a new payment system to improve accessibility and efficiency for student financial transactions.

Leadership emphasized that equity and accessibility efforts are integrated with the university's mission and strategic plan and are intended to support student success, belonging, and access. Trustees discussed the importance of continuing to review policies and practices to ensure compliance with state and federal law while maintaining the university's commitment to serving a diverse student population and supporting institutional access and student success.

XIV. EXECUTIVE, GOVERNANCE & TRUSTEESHIP COMMITTEE (EGTC)

1) Committee Chair Report | Chair Angela Fasana

Chair Fasana gave the Executive Governance and Trusteeship Committee update. The Executive Governance and Trustee Committee, which met on October 23. The Committee reviewed internal audit updates, including findings related to payroll and voucher controls. The Board Secretary provided an update on trustee appointments, noting that several trustees were undergoing Senate confirmation and that applications for upcoming trustee vacancies were open. The Committee also debriefed the annual Board retreat and received preliminary information on the trustee self-evaluation process, which achieved a 100% response rate. Results will be reviewed by the Committee and used to identify strengths and areas for improvement, with recommendations to be shared with the full Board.

XV. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Emily Plec, who is a faculty member in Communications, provided information about the Fostering Success program, which supports students with foster care experience through advising, financial assistance, and community-building programs, and encouraged support for the program's toy drive.

XVI. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS

The Board recognized Senior Executive Assistant to the President LouAnn Vickers upon her retirement after 19 years of service to Western Oregon University. Trustees and President Peters expressed appreciation for her leadership, professionalism, and dedication to the institution. The Board approved a formal proclamation honoring her service and contributions to the university community, and President Peters read a letter informing her that he was awarding her with the Staff Emeritus designation.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT:

Before Chair Fasana adjourned the public meeting, the Chair announced that the board was about to enter executive session and asked staff, Evan Sorce, Cameron Mortenson, Nathan Sauer, Ryan McGlinchey, Craig Ashford, and Desiree Noah to attend the active session. She announced that no decision will be made and that the public meeting will therefore be adjourned. At 2:43 pm.

XVIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board met in executive session to discuss the termination of a faculty member, pending litigation, and the President's Performance Review. Pursuant to ORS 192.660(b) (discuss the dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent); ORS 192.660(h) (consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation); and (ORS 192.660(2)(f) (to review and evaluate the employment-related performance of the chief executive officer of any public body).

1. Regarding the Termination of a tenured professor
2. Pending Litigation
3. President's Performance Review