

Staff Senate Minutes

February 3, 2026 (2:00-3:30pm)

Meeting location - Calapooia Room in the Werner University Center 130

<https://wou.edu/ces/conference-and-event-services/meeting-spaces/werner-university-center/22870-2/>

Welcome

- Conversation opportunities for personal and professional updates with guests and Senators

Staff Senate follows Simplified Robert's Rules

- Under simplified rules, it allows for a little less formal communication, still providing everyone opportunities to bring forth their ideas.

Approval of this agenda

- Approval as is, additions, or adjustments must be approved

In-Attendance: Gregg Vineyard, Ambre Plahn, Sandra Holland, Melissa Eddings, Ellie Baker, Tessa Paulsen, Robyn Lopez Melton

Absent: Rip Horsey, Emily Herb, Maya Guerra, Kodee Harding

Guests: Mike Hanson, Dominique Vargas, Michael Ellis,

Approval of past meeting minutes

- January 20 Minutes approved

Guest Speakers

- Director of Campus Public Safety (Mike Hanson) and our Executive Director of Diversity of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Dominique Vargas); dialogue around federal and state legal updates
 - Oregon is still considered a sanctuary state which has a potential to face financial impacts to federal funding. What this means is that our campus public safety does not and will not aid federal immigration law enforcement.
 - President Peters recently sent out an email explaining that although WOU is fully operating in compliance with Oregon's sanctuary laws, he has chosen not to publicly declare the university a "sanctuary campus." He outlines several reasons for this decision, including concerns that such a declaration could create confusion about legal limitations, attract unwanted attention from federal authorities, particularly given WOU's status as Oregon's only four-year public Hispanic-Serving Institution and raise safety concerns expressed by community members. He believes that maintaining a quieter approach better protects the campus community.
 - Despite not making a formal declaration, WOU remains deeply committed to supporting and protecting all students, faculty, and staff. The university has

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hosted multiple “Know Your Rights” sessions, distributed guidance for employees on interactions with ICE, reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding community members, and provided signage to designate private and reserved spaces, all to help ensure a safe and supportive environment.

- Reserved/Private Signs helps to create spaces that are generally considered to be public space and help clarify to anyone coming to campus about what rooms would be freely accessible or not. The Private sign indicates that a space, such as an individual office, may be considered a private university space. The reserved sign is for other spaces that are for general use, which can be transformed into private areas when reserved specifically for WOU events or activities. These reserved spaces will accommodate only guests associated with the respective events for their duration.
- Dec. 3rd demonstration on campus outside of the WUC plaza. As a result of this event, WOU has developed a taskforce to update the Time, Place and Manner Policy. The new name for this policy will now be the Freedom of Expression Policy. Along with the policy, the taskforce is developing a protocol/procedure that will align with the policy as well. They hope to have these out for stakeholder feedback in the coming weeks.
- From a community perspective, discussions are happening with the local mayors, police departments, etc. How can we implement policies and procedures here on campus that can be enforceable, etc. City of Monmouth held a town hall to address many of these issues as well, which was recorded and available to watch for anyone unable to view.
- Judicial Warrants vs Administrative Warrants
 - Public Safety is working with Craig to learn about the differences. If you are presented with one of those warrants, call campus public safety. They will take it from there and decipher how to best handle the situation.
- In the event someone comes to your office looking for a particular individual, it should always be best practice not to give out their location. Rather, call campus public safety and let them handle the situation.
- If you see someone or find yourself in immediate danger, call 911 and provide as much information as possible. Example, if approached by someone stating to be a federal ICE agent but does not provide identification and fear you or/the person is in danger of a possible kidnapping, you can call to request verification that the officer is a legitimate federal agent. Provide a description of the person(s), their vehicle, and your exact location etc.
- Another helpful tip is if you find yourself in a situation with federal agents it is important that you do not run, stay calm, remain silent, and cooperate.

Reports

- Committee Reports
 - Shared Governance
 - Next Meeting: TBD
 - President’s Cabinet
 - Next Meeting: February 11, 2026
 - University Council
 - Next Meeting: February 11, 2026

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- Other - Administrative Equity, Staff Connections, University Advisory Committees, etc.

Vice President's Corner

- Other shared governance information, elections, reminders, etc.
- Recruitment for Staff Senate
 - Classified vacant seat - still looking

Secretary/Treasurer's Updates

- Financial, business-related, fun facts, random questions, etc.
 - Staff for Senate Scholarship Fund flyer
 - We would like to focus our efforts reaching out to staff to sign up for monthly payroll deductions.

Unfinished Business

- Discussing SMART Goals and Strategies for 2025-2026
 - Scholarship idea - payroll deduction forty staff asking for \$5 [drive]
 - Training/Refreshers recap, we had 24 folks and due to request, we sent out the slide deck from Malissa Larson, Dean of Students & Associate Vice President, Student Affairs ("Worries to warnings: Student Support Spectrum")
 - Establishing ways to enhance cross-communication among staff regarding the different areas of change, efficiencies, training, feedback, and data collection survey
 - How can we continue to advise and make recommendations to the university president on matters relevant to staff for the overall success of the university without input?
 - Dr. Peter's listed it out, "...we are always open to ideas and suggestions. We want to hear what is going well, but we also want to know what challenges people are facing."
 - Also with his statement in mind, "We have shifted systems, revised how we do our work, implemented a new strategic plan, implemented an equity action plan, changed recruiting strategies and marketing, achieved reaccreditation, engaged in new ways with communities, and opened a new student success center."
 - It seems to be a moment that it is okay to assess where we may be at in the [cycle of change](#). (This is not an endorsement of the specific model just an example of stages within change that seemed easy to look through)

New Business

- A conversation to find out if staff are still hesitant in providing honest, direct, and maybe not in alignment with the original direction feedback, survey idea to hear?
 - Feedback can cause comfortability or awkwardness
 - Culture is driven through moments of truth
 - It is part of Staff Senate's mission to, "Promoting positive, respectful, and constructive dialogue among staff, faculty, administrators, and students."
 - Perhaps, this is just something of lore, which is why we are asking.

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- Classified represented staff would strongly agree that providing honest feedback could come with potential repercussions.
- Several folks agreed that as Staff Senate, it would make sense for us to provide an opportunity for staff to share their feedback that can be given to the President as many are not comfortable providing it directly to him.
- Several voiced their concerns about how to conduct an anonymous survey that is truly anonymous.

Announcements and Reminders

- Announcements
 - Digital Accessibility Requirements 101
 - Newsletter section with a Did you know? And the tip of the week
 - WOU digital accessibility training underway
 - Agenda item suggestions can be made to staffsenate@wou.edu or wou.edu/staffsenate
- Important Training Reminders
 - Business Office
 - Campus-Wide Trainings-Watch for emails from Cheri Darby and Sandra Holland
 - Check out the @WOU Newsletter for more optional events, departmental updates, and training opportunities
- Kudos/Recognition
 - The following staff members received nominations for the good work they do on campus:
 - Sheree Solario – “Thanks for helping our team get started with the APR!”
 - Paloma Rodriguez – “.... she is GREAT with everyone on campus.” Thanks for ensuring the budget authorities received the proper training and were prepared to transition from using Wolfweb to Banner for approving invoices.
 - Nina Martinez – “She consistently goes above and beyond to support students.”
 - Erasmo Giron Cortes – “I appreciate their patience and support as I ask so many questions.”
 - Konnie Sayers – “Thank you for your hard work and dedication and congratulations on your upcoming retirement.”
 - We would like to thank these amazing staff members for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to making WOU a better place!
- Public Comments - Anything for the good of the order?

Upcoming

- Next meeting: February 17, 2026, @ 2 pm
 - Werner University Center (WUC) room 130
 - Guest: TBD

Adjourn