

## Staff Senate Minutes

April 18, 2023 (10:00am–11:30am)

Online Via Zoom

**In-Attendance:** Jenna Otto, Ambre Plahn, Amanda Bales, Keats Chaves, Michelle Gallagher, Jason Horne, Kelly Rush, Adrian Trujillo's proxy Dana Nunez-Silva, Michael Gonzalez

**Absent:** Keegan Gormally, Noah Carillo, Michael Reis

**Guests:** Tina Fuchs, Wendi Mars, Chris Solario, Michael Ellis

### Approval of minutes

- Minutes for April 4, 2023 are approved

### Guest Speaker

- Student Affairs - Tina Fuchs, VP for Student Affairs
  - As a first-generation college student Tina knew she wanted to go to college but came from a family of 12 children, so funding was a hurdle. After applying for financial aid and scholarships decided not to attend her local regional school in Washington, and instead enrolled at Pacific University here in Oregon. During the registration process things were becoming very overwhelming and she almost felt like not going through with registration until she was approached by a university member who noticed she was struggling and offered their guidance. It was at that moment Tina knew she was in the right place and her goal would be to become one day someone that worked in higher education and be the one to offer support and help students along their journey.
  - Presented a power point presentation about What is 'Student Affairs?'
    - Looking back 35 years ago, several of the key roles within student affairs were separated into other areas of campus. This posed several challenges including communication and collaboration.
    - Now, they are made up of 16 departments, 130 staff positions (67 unclassified/43 classified), of these staff members 39 (35%) are WOU alumni.
    - Mission – The Division of Student Affairs fosters students' academic, personal, and professional growth, educates students to recognize, respect and appreciate diversity, and prepares students to be responsible and engaged citizens in a global community.



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- Key services used to meet their mission:
  - Financial support through financial aid/scholarships
  - Educational programs
  - Leadership opportunities
  - Student support services
  - Medical and counselling services
  - Residential life and campus dining
  - Campus life and student engagement
  - Student government, clubs and organizations
  - Life design/career goals
- 2022-2023 core themes:
  - Enrollment Management
  - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging
  - Engagement & creating a culture of care for our community
  - Assessment
- Student Affairs Goals Cloud – at the heart of everything they do are the students and ensuring they are meeting the needs of them.
- Updates:
  - Admissions is up over 9
  - FA applications are up 12%
  - Housing reservations are up 28%
  - Overall, they are moving in the right direction
  - Currently in the process of looking for a new Director of Admissions. They are in the final stages of the search process. The new Director of Admissions will be set to start July 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Question & Answers:
    - In regard to our transfer numbers and our relationship with Chemeketa Community College?
      - We do have a partnership with CCC and have several key staff members who are coordinating efforts specifically for working with community colleges.
    - In terms of housing, how full are we in the dorms and what kind of

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capacity do we have?

- Currently, they are about 75% full. Gentle Hall is not being utilized and is no shape to house anyone at all. Unfortunately, there is a large cost to demolish this building. Our goal is to fill Ackerman, Barnum, Landers, and Butler with new students. Our numbers for fall are looking good and for the first time in a very long time, the cost of living on campus is now cheaper than living off campus.

### Reports

- Committee Reports
  - Shared Governance
    - NWCCU accreditation visit happened last week and overall, it went well. They did have a few comments for us before they left, and we should have the full report within about a week or so.
    - legislature Update – a few bills are being worked on that will have an impact on how Boards of Trustees operate within higher education. Overall, we are in line with the proposed changes, so if this does pass, we will see a few changes, but not a lot.
    - Minimum Wage is going up to \$14.25 July 1
    - Governor Kotek came to campus last Friday and met with folks over at the health and counseling center and learned a bit more about what services we offer. It was a good visit, and the hope is to welcome her back soon.
  - Cabinet
    - A new Board Secretary has been hired and is getting underway with their work.
    - Changes to advising holds are being discussed to potential decrease the number of holds that are placed on student accounts. This is to reduce the number of barriers students face in trying to register each term.
    - Provost search is well underway along with a Director of HR, Director of Marcom, and a few other searches happening.
    - Monmouth/Independence Trolley has opened and is a free service to offer transportation back and forth between Monmouth and Independence. It is open 7 days a week.

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- Question about whether we will have a restriction on travel next fiscal year or not and just general concerns with the updated travel policy/reimbursement process. Feedback has been inconsistent with folks across various areas. Some folks are not having any issues at all, while others have been facing significant difficulties with the business office. A suggestion made in Cabinet is for Staff Senate to reach out to the Business Office and notify them of the struggles we are hearing about and finding a way for them to provide more guidance on how the actual process works, maybe suggest a timeline is available and step by step instructions on how to navigate the process/forms.
- University Council -N/A
- Other - Administrative Equity, Staff Connections, Scholarship, etc.
  - Staff connections – will be doing the staff campus walk today at 2:30pm. Meeting near the steps in front of the WUC. Their plan is to hold a walk once a month.

### Unfinished Business

- Committee Needs
  - UBAC - 2 Classified Staff
  - WUC Advisory Committee
- Reminder of upcoming elections
  - Executive – call for nominations have been sent out and hoping to hold a vote by next week.
  - “General” Senate seats
  - Remainder of Michelle Gallagher’s term
    - Vote to leave unfilled until Fall
      - Motion to leave Michelle Gallagher’s position open until fall 2023.
      - Motion passes
- Substitute Secretary/Recorder
  - Reach out to Ambre for more information.
- Performance Evaluations & Training
  - On hold
- Use of Direct Appointments
  - On hold

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- Search Committee processes
  - On hold
- Fundraiser Raffle
  - On Hold

### New Business

- Staff Listservs
  - There used to be an “all fac/staff” listserv that no longer exists. There is now one for classified staff and one for unclassified. The unclassified listserv is moderated by Rip Horsey and the classified listserv is moderated by HR, but not sure who oversees this. Jenna would like to propose that we have multiple people serve as moderators to ensure that communication is being sent out in a timely manner. Suggestion is to have the Staff Senate President be the moderator for both classified and unclassified along with someone from HR. Do we have thoughts on this? Many agree that this is something we should move forward with. Jenna will reach out to HR about getting added for the classified, and then will also reach out to Rip about getting added to the unclassified.
- Definition of Staff vs. Administration
  - What constitutes administrative staff? Example: The Strategic Planning Committee that was announced is comprised entirely of staff at the Administration level (VP, Director, etc). Unclassified staff tend to get lumped together with administrative staff which is not equivalent and needs to be changed.
  - How can we move forward with requesting a clearer definition of an unclassified staff member versus an administrative unclassified staff member?
    - Amanda has a spreadsheet that she worked on that separates out the various levels of staff across campus that she will share with Jenna. Once Jenna is able, she will create a letter that will be sent to the Board of Trustees along with cabinet, and HR.

### Announcements

- Agenda item suggestions
- Kudos/Recognition – Steve Munson is our April staff of the month.... YAY!!!
- Public Comments - Anything for the good of the order?



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**Adjourn**

### Upcoming

- May 2
  - President Peters
  - HR - Performance Reviews
- May 16
- June 6
- June 20

April 11, 2023

President's Senate Report:

- 1) Searches: First, I'd like to formally welcome Mr. Evan Sorce as the new Secretary to the Board of Trustees and Special Assistant to the President. Even is a proud graduate of Western Oregon University and has spent the last eight years as Chief of Staff for State Representative Paul Evans. He brings a wealth of experience to the position, and I am confident he will serve the Bot and the university well.

We are still engaged in the following searches. Note that most of these have either been vacant or filled by an interim for over a year, but I believe we will have them all filled by July 1st.

Executive Director of HR (Rebecca Chiles & Micheal Reis, co-chairs)  
Director of Marketing and Communication (Katie Wojke, Chair)  
Director of Admissions (Chelle Bachelor, chair)

Candidates for Director of Admissions are currently visiting campus. The Provost Search is also well underway, and the search firm indicates that there is a strong pool of candidates. As a reminder, Dominique Vargas is the chair of the search committee.

Below is the current anticipated timeline for this search:

Week of April 3 – Search committee review (complete)

Week of April 17 – Zoom interviews with search committee

Week of May 1 – Begin on campus interviews with finalists

- 2) Enrollment & Retention: If you are following the national and regional conversations around enrollment in higher education, you know that there is still much uncertainty. Our work with EAB is helping our recruitment of undergraduate, graduate, and adult learners. The admissions team is seeing marked increase in campus visits and is better strategizing their personal visits to schools and college fairs. They are also connecting directly with any groups of k-12 students that visit campus. We are improving systems of advising and student support as well. And we will continue to explore innovative ways to foster student success. MarCom is connecting throughout the region to increase our visibility and name recognition. They are actively working on website improvements, and our social media footprint is larger and more active than it was eight months ago. I remain hopeful and encouraged that all of these actions, along with numerous others, will eventually get us to where we need to be. As I've said before, everyone can have a positive impact on enrollment and retention. Whether its compiling data that helps us refine efforts, interacting

with a visiting family on campus, working on the grounds, delivering an exciting course, or improving our internal spaces, all of our activities establish the positive and student-focused environment that is WOU.

We must work together and focus on student recruitment, enrollment, and retention. We can't ignore the fact that if enrollment continues to fall and/or if state support does not increase, we may have to examine our budget again in the future. We can all have a positive influence on the retention of our students, regardless of our role.

- 3) **Government Relations:** Lobbying efforts continue, particularly the request to fund the PUSF at \$1.05 billion dollars. Additionally, the TRU presidents, along with union leadership, are lobbying for the \$15 million outlined in the Governor's budget that would go to help the TRUs implement strategies for sustainability. The joint Ways and Means Committee budget met neither of those goals, but there is still a lot of time for lobbying efforts in this session. TRU Lobby Day is May 4th, and Rico Lujan Valerio is actively planning strategies to make sure WOU has an impactful message and presence with legislators.
- 4) **Equity Assessment:** Our consultant, Jordan Shelby West, will be back on campus the first week of May to share her first report with the campus. We will then develop a list of actions to be implemented in the 23-24 academic year as we address these recommendations. Phase II of the process will be a review of students-related policies, practices, procedures, and programming.
- 5) **HSI Summit:** As we work towards our federal designation as an HSI institution, we are building professional networks across the state and region. The HSI Advisory Committee has planned the upcoming summit, and we are actively seeking collaborative partners as we engage with this journey. The goal is to serve our students in the best ways possible. We learn. We act. We share.

### Western Oregon University HSI Summit

#### **Making Conexiones**

8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. • April 26, 2023 • Werner University Center  
Western Oregon University, Monmouth, Oregon

- 6) **Academic Restructure:** The restructure Taskforce has completed the work that was started before I arrived at WOU. Their report was given to me and the Provost in December, followed by a presentation to us in January. I have indicated in a couple of venues that the next step would be a smaller implementation team. However, we also needed to engage in



a major budget reduction process as we also worked out an extension of the current CBA with WOUFT and prepared for the upcoming accreditation visit. In addition, we will be welcoming in a new Provost by July 1st and then launching a search for the next permanent Dean of LAS. And we are also still actively searching for an Executive Director of HR. Since there was never any intent of a major implementation of a restructure before Fall 2024, and since I feel it will be paramount to have input from the new leader in Academic Affairs, I have chosen to move forward cautiously.

But I also don't want to pause the momentum completely; there was much good work done by the Taskforce. After a lot of consideration and conversation, I plan to follow this process: I've asked Provost Winningham to choose a small team that will produce some specific recommendations/advice with regards to a potential restructure. I see this as a refining of the report produced by the Restructure Taskforce. Those recommendations should address questions such as: Are there multiple options for the configuration of an academic restructure? What would a gradual implementation look like? What does cost neutrality look like specifically? How would a new structure better serve students?

I expect to have this report by the first of June. Then, once the new Provost has been identified, that person and I will meet to discuss the recommendations and decide on timeline and actions for implementation. We must all bear in mind that there will be further room for adjustments to the recommendations and additional input as needed. And as always, we will be keeping a close eye on enrollment trends.

- 7) **Strategic Planning:** As I indicated in my last report, I have asked Associate Provost Judy Sylva to serve as project manager for our strategic planning process. We are putting together a team that will lead this work for us. Our timeline has been pushed back a bit, largely because of our budget reduction process. Now we anticipate bringing a new strategic plan to the trustees late in the Fall. I like to move quickly and efficiently, but I also want to balance having time for quality discussion and deliberation. The team is below:

- Malissa Larson, AVPSA
- Rian Gayle, Interim Director, ODS
- Jasmine Miller, Assistant Athletic Director
- Omar Melchor Ayala, Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice
- Denise Thew, Associate Professor, Division Chair, Deaf Studies and Professional Studies
- Connor Goehring, Student Senate President
- Chelle Batchelor, Dean, Library & Academic Innovation
- Luanne Carrillo, Interim Director, Multicultural Student Services & Programs
- Katie Wojke, VP Advancement & University Relations

8) NWCCU Accreditation Visit: As you know, this week is our NWCCU accreditation visit. This is an all hands on deck moment for us, and of course we want to present our institution in the best light possible. If you have not already, please make sure that your teams/constituents are aware of the visit. You should also encourage them to review the materials Sue Monahan has distributed (see below). Accrediting teams are often interested to see how aware the campus community is of strategic directions, improvements in systems, campus plans, etc.

I'll be headed to the airport tomorrow to pick up members of the team. The meetings will begin Wednesday morning, and I appreciate all that you are doing to help us make this a successful visit.

"It is important that folks attend sessions to which they are invited, if at all possible. This is our opportunity to interact with the visiting team, answer their questions, and give a human face to the work they have read about in our [Year 6](#) and [Year 7](#) reports.

Finally, over the past few months we have created monthly videos to better inform campus about NWCCU accreditation. Links to those videos are below:

- [Why accreditation?](#)
- [Overview of accreditation and institutional effectiveness](#)
- [Student Achievement](#)
- [Student Learning](#)

Thank you for your support of WOU's regional accreditation work.

Sue Monahan"

Jesse