

Responding to Public Comments

BACKGROUND

Each year, trustees conduct a self-assessment of their efforts as individual Board members, committees, and the Board as a whole and identify opportunities for improvement. As they reflected on the results of the most recent self-assessment at the October 20, 2017 meeting, trustees discussed how the Board responds to public comments received during the general comment section of each Board meeting. During the public comment section, time is set aside for trustees to listen to concerns and feedback related to a broad range of topics.

In thinking about their work as a Board, trustees identified an opportunity to be more transparent about what the Board will do with the information received during public comment. Some trustees also expressed a desire to have a better understanding of how they can make follow-up requests and suggestions related to topics raised in public comment.

The current practice is for the Board Secretary to develop a recommended response for each public comment and present the recommendation to the Board Officers and President as follow-up to the meeting. Responses are typically made in writing with a copy sent to the full Board. Responses are administrative in nature and do not set out new positions or policies for the Board. Depending on the comment, the response could provide background information, describe university or Board follow-up or other efforts underway, and/or connect the member of the public with appropriate staff and resources on campus. If trustees would like specific follow-up on a public comment, they are encouraged to discuss this with the Board Chair or Secretary.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

As follow-up, the Board Secretary reached out to several individual trustees who were engaged in the October 20 discussion to gather additional input on how to make clearer what the Board will do with information received during public comment. Each of the trustees recognized that the Board and university would not be sufficiently prepared nor would it be appropriate to respond to comments in real-time. Rather, they felt it most appropriate to conduct follow-up after the meeting to ensure thoughtful consideration of the issue.

One trustee suggested that the Conduct of Board Meetings Policy be updated to set out more clearly for the public how the Board follows up on what it hears during public comments. The policy could also be amended to set out the path for trustees to request additional information or follow-up on topics raised in public comment. Based on this suggestion and the October discussion, staff developed proposed amendments to the Conduct of Board Meetings Policy, as shown in red text and strikethrough in Exhibit A of Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff propose that the Executive & Audit Committee recommend to the Board that it adopt the resolution amending the Conduct of Board Meetings policy as provided in Attachment 1.

RESOLUTION NO. ____



Oregon State University Conduct of Board Meetings

BACKGROUND

Under its Conduct of Board Meetings Policy, the public is invited to comment during the public comment section of meetings of the OSU Board of Trustees. Public comment periods are an opportunity for trustees to listen to concerns expressed by members of the public and, where appropriate, to take them under further consideration, following the Board meeting. In an effort to foster openness and transparency, the policy for Conduct of Board Meets was amended to set out more clearly how the Board follows up on what it hears during public comments.

RESOLUTION

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Board of Trustees that the amendments to the Conduct of Board Meetings Policy, attached as Exhibit A, are approved.

This Resolution is effective _____.

APPROVED by the Board of Trustees _____, 2018

_____	//2018
Secretary of the Board	Date



Oregon State University Conduct of Board Meetings

Board Agenda

Staff will make every effort to deliver the proposed agenda, and all available, pertinent materials, for each regular Public Meeting of the Board to each trustee by regular mail, electronic mail, or otherwise, not less than seven days before any regularly scheduled meeting. Each item on the agenda must be approved by either the Chair or the President before being placed on the agenda. Except in unusual circumstances, staff must submit proposed agenda items, including consent agenda items, and pertinent materials to be included with the agenda, to the Secretary of the Board at least fourteen days prior to a Board meeting.

Order of Regular Meetings

The following shall be the order of business at each regular Public Meeting of the Board:

1. Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum
2. Opening Comments and Reports
3. Public Comments
4. Consent Agenda (including approval of minutes)
5. Reports of Standing Committees of the Board
6. Reports of Special Committees of the Board
7. Action Items
8. Discussion Items
9. Adjournment

The order of business of the Board may be changed or suspended at any Public Meeting by the Chair or by a majority of the voting trustees present. An item may be moved from the consent agenda to the regular agenda by request of any trustee.

Procedure for Appearing Before the Board

Individuals who wish to provide public comment must sign up with the Secretary of the Board in advance of the public comment section of a meeting, stating their name, email address, affiliation, and the topic to be discussed. A sign-up sheet will be available at each meeting. Unless otherwise indicated on the agenda or by the Chair, each public comment period will be for up to 30 minutes with a five-minute limit per speaker.

The Chair is authorized to control meetings of the Board, to enforce requirements of order and decorum, and to limit comments that are duplicative, disruptive, or irrelevant.

Following each meeting, the Board Chair and Secretary will review each of the comments made during the public comment period of the meeting. Based on this review, the Board Chair may direct follow-up such as, but not limited to, providing a written response or acknowledgment, scheduling a topic for a future Board meeting, requesting further consideration within a

committee of the Board, requesting additional information from the university, or determining that no further action is needed. The Board Secretary will provide copies of any written responses to the Board.

Following each meeting, trustees may direct further questions or inquiries on a topic raised in public comment to the Board Chair or Board Secretary.

Procedure for Submitting Written Comments Related to Items on the Agenda

Individuals who wish to provide written comment related to a specific item on the agenda may do so by 1) sending that information electronically to trustees@oregonstate.edu; 2) delivering the materials to the Board Office; or 3) mailing the material to the Board Office.

Written material must be received at least two business days in advance of the meeting at which the agenda topic is scheduled. Material should be no more than three pages in length. Please note that documents provided to the Board may be subject to disclosure under Public Records Law. The Chair and Board Secretary will determine whether and, if so, when, submitted material is appropriate for dissemination to trustees and posting on the Board's website based on relevant Board actions. Written comments submitted to the Board not directed to a specific agenda item will be handled as general correspondence. The Board Chair will direct the distribution and response to these comments.

Document History

- Adopted by the Board of Trustees March 13, 2014
- Amended April 21, 2017